

NORTH AMERICA: MEXICO

1. What is currently making news in your country when it comes to wellness or wellbeing?

As an expat in Mexico since 2013, my perception is that wellness and wellbeing are not practiced by the majority of people. I see more a get well rather than be and stay well concept.

Instead of a challenge I see an opportunity for our Industry as we've got much to give to the population.

Mexico has beautiful and effective traditional medicine, wrongly set aside and I trust the Spa industry is reviving and supporting those traditions, to assist the prevention of illness on a natural and more organic way.

I've noticed an awakening...more and more involvement in sport activities, more awareness and demand on our industry services, at least the basic ones as massages. As well, more interest from the government to implement regulations for the wellness practitioner, setting guidelines and best practices, in order to protect the consumer and at the same time, the results given.

2. Please provide one sentence that describes what you think are important developments in your country for each of the following:

Spas: I can see the industry leaders working closer to each other to help the industry grow, to settle in a responsible way. As more of the higher-end Resorts and Hotels set its interest on Mexico, a higher quality of spas will appear, improving the spas perception as well as increasing the qualifications expected from their staff.

Wellness Tourism: Mexico has a rich heritage from its natives. The knowledge they had somehow has been preserved on how to maintain health and will continue to expand to the wellness industry. I can see, how some of the currently small wellness center, may evolve to a more sophisticated concept to attract a more affluent tourism. I just hope it doesn't lose its essence! The government has created a new concept of Pueblos Mágicos - Magic Towns, where the main motive is to share the intact cultural heritage that those towns has to offer, including natural medicine.

Wellness Living Communities/Real Estate: We can see a few communities established around the country that offer such alternative, however is still in its development stage. Lots of potential and opportunity!

Beauty: A booming industry, Mexican women has always liked to look pretty.

Fitness: Great potential, mainly to start with young kids at schools to help and control weigh gain and fight against obesity.

Nutrition: Again, a big opportunity, the challenge is the well-established Mexican cuisine and finding alternatives that are healthier yet delicious.

In resume for all of them. Mexico is a rich country, with amazing welcoming people that provide top quality caring service, core of our industry. It's also rich in the resources, capable of producing and manufacturing top quality ingredients for cosmetics and linens. Capable of sharing the richness of its culture in a perfect and accessible location. Mexico has what it takes to be a leader in the wellness industry, it needs the right guidance.

3. How would you describe the state of workplace wellness in your country?

In diapers. Many international companies are bringing those programs into the country and has spread around. I consider like in any country, many of us spend more time at work than at home and having a healthy work environment, that also invest on keeping their team healthy is not only smart but profitable.

I've notice at our company, that we organized many wellness activities for the staff and only a few participate, we make small changes for healthy eating options and the staff complaints which tells us that we do need to train the staff and teach them and guide them. Many of us changed habits once we realize that it wasn't healthy, for some it may take more time to come to that decision.

I think, like in everything that is worth to achieve, we need to persist, even against majority sometimes, in a gentle way and with education - for me the key to change - and we will be able to slowly impact lives to live well. If we change one person's life, that person will create a ripple effect toward hers/his close circle of people. That is how we start!

4. What has been the general attitude about investing in spa/wellness in your country in 2015? Specific examples?

I think in general, Mexican economy has improved, attracting international investment once again. The wellness industry is booming again in Mexico and hasn't reach its full potential yet, still has much to give and investors can see that. Hence a sample that the Global Wellness Summit is been held at Mexico City! This will also help to direct eyes to our wellness industry. Now is our turn to prove that this country has much to offer to the wellness segment.

In the specific area I live currently, the spas are center of attention on the Hotels/Resort of the area, with large facilities and menu offerings. The renovations of spas are constantly happening, attracting new markets and driving Hotels revenue. Many of the top incentive groups programs, based their programs on the Spa and it's offering; same is happening for many guests, when choosing a destination for their holiday, investing in the wellness industry has proven to be a smart business decision!

5. Whose responsibility is it to create a well world?

Each of us! I love the Gandhi phrase that says "Be the change you want to see in the world". We need to be the change and lead that change. This are exciting times for the wellness industry in Mexico!

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