



ASIA: THAILAND

What are the most significant global issues facing us today?

First, the continued economic crisis in Europe and the U.S. and the related stress is a negative development for resorts, as people are financially worse off. In addition, gradual disillusionment with Western medicine and the number of miracle cures developed by Alternative healing should further promote the type of holistic wellness that can be delivered by spas. Second, the scarcity of resources and environmental problems represent significant long-term challenges for our industry. As illustrated by the origin of the word *spa*, “Sanitas Per Aquam” meaning “health through water”, the nature of our business requires consumption of valuable resources such as water, even as many across the world struggle for access to clean water. It is critical that the spa industry is not branded by this negative social stigma.

What do you see as the main innovations happening around the world, those which are game changing and/or disruptive?

While technology is generating a lot of innovations, the more our society gets high-tech low-touch, the more people want to revert back to the high-touch ethos provided by the spa industry. In terms of encouraging developments, there is a growing worldwide belief in alternative healing. There will come a time when destination spas and alternative healing centers will have as much credibility as Western medicine. Finally, renewable energy and resource-saving technologies will allow the spa industry to reduce its consumption as well as increasingly generate the resources it requires through renewable sources. This should help avoid the negative social stigma mentioned earlier.

What do you see as the main innovations in the spa/wellness industry (existing and future)?

I think there will be more destination spas in the future and even ordinary spas will go beyond massage to focus on wellness and well-being. Attention to detail and service has also improved and will continue to improve in the future.

What do you see as the greatest opportunities/challenges for the global spa and wellness industry?

Continued stress and disillusion with the capitalist model of lifestyle, and with Western medicine will lead people to explore alternative healing and wellness philosophies which the spa industry is well-placed to deliver.

What are some practical ways for businesses to create a climate for creativity and innovation?

We practice several techniques to promote creativity and innovation in our organization including innovation room sessions, regular brainstorming, Edward de Bono’s Six Thinking Hats, among others. The key for an organization is to have clear and robust core values and aims which serve as a framework for the innovation process.

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