



ASIA: THAILAND

What are the most significant global issues facing us today?

There are two significant global issues facing us today. One is the global economic downturn. The global economy is recovering but the pace is sluggish. There are factors influencing a slow recovery. It is expected that in 2012 the Euro-zone will experience a mild recession due mainly to the debt crisis and contractions in bank credit. Slow growth in emerging and developing economies like China is another factor. These will decrease the global demand for business services, and wellness is no exception.

The second has to do with environmental issues. My concerns are climate change and shortage of water for consumption. Extreme rain, flood or drought patterns, along with rising sea levels, demonstrate the abnormality of today's environment. Climate change can disrupt the well-being of mankind. An accumulation of greenhouse gases is the main cause.

On the Water Shortage front, the World Health Organization has revealed that one out of six people has no access to clean water for consumption. Thus it is important to note that intensive and inefficient uses of clean water in tourism, for example, will diminish the available stock of clean water.

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

I see the use of social media as the main innovation in our business and society. Nowadays you are dealing with media designed to be disseminated through social interaction. It creates the understanding of the role people play in reaching, sharing and dissemination information. It is also a shift from a one-to-many mechanism to a many-to-many model.

Social media can play a very important role in your business in the form of better PR outreach, marketing, and listening to the opinions and needs of customers. If you select the right social media, it can be effective both for personal and business networking. You can promote your products or services and invite social media users into your company as your customers through social media.

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

I see three key trends expanding the "Wellness industry:"

Products and services that expand the spa's influence on our guests' everyday lives. Examples of this are the boom in home-use products and appliances, the proliferation of wellness apps, and growth in services such as mobile spas and corporate wellness programs.

Changes in business structure by using outsourced and freelance labour, and the formation of alliances will reduce the burden of fixed payroll costs.

The use of science to refine and create new products and services, e.g., anti-aging, mind-body work, and disease prevention and management.

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

I see that Aging Populations will be a future trend that will have a profound impact on society and the economy. The fact is that birthrates subside and advanced healthcare extends life spans. Research studies have revealed that, by 2050, 21 percent of world population will be over 60 years old, and for some countries that share will be higher. A growing senior

population causes strains on social security and health care. It is a great opportunity for the wellness industry to explore ways of keeping senior populations active and productive for as long as possible. Therefore, developing the customized program for slowing down the aging process is crucial and becoming a big challenge to the wellness industry.

I also see preventing and managing chronic disease as an opportunity and challenge for the wellness industry. A recent report by the World Economic Forum indicates that chronic disease is the world's number one killer and costs the global economy a fortune. The wellness industry plays a role that conventional medical systems cannot. That is, it can inspire and support lifestyle change. To fulfill this role, education is a key.

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

I can see two levels of thought for businesses to create and maintain a climate for creativity and innovation. On a higher level, organizing or arranging workshops or forums led by experts would create an environment for creativity and innovation. He or she conducts brainstorming sessions and assigns specific tasks to the participants. They will share ideas and thoughts with other team members. When ideas and thoughts are crystallized, they will become the policy or direction of the organization.

On a practical level, developing a Strategic Business Plan consistent with policy or strategic direction is crucial. Thinking of initiatives or projects to support strategies and attain strategic objectives requires a lot of time and resources.

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