



Industry Briefing Papers 2016

ASIA: THAILAND

1. What is currently making news in your country when it comes to spa, wellness, wellness travel or well-being?

Thailand continues to uphold its reputation as a top spa destination in South East Asia. With a substantial number of day spas, hotels spas, wellness centers and health resorts, Thailand accommodates travelers with all sorts of budgets. Year after year, more spa and wellness offerings are becoming available, standards are rising and the Thailand Authority of Tourism is implementing new campaigns to drive spa and wellness tourism.

New spa certification regulations implemented by the Ministry of Public Health are aimed at improving professionalism with regards to treatment delivery. Though it means many businesses will have to fork out expenses to cover certification requirements for current employees or risk losing their staff, it will raise overall spa standards, hygiene and consumer safety.

Thailand Authority of Tourism (TAT) is consistently working on ways to increase spa, wellness and medical tourism to Thailand. One of their latest campaigns is "You Care You Share". Participants who share a TAT spa awareness video clip to their social media accounts stand a chance to win prizes from a collection of over 500,000 Baht.

2. Please provide one sentence that describes what you think is the most important development in your country for each of the following wellness sectors:

Spas:

In September 2016 a law has been implemented that all spa therapists working in professional establishments in Thailand need to have legitimate certifications that come from government approved training centers and schools.

Beauty:

The Thai FDA continually enforces stricter regulation on what types of medical beauty equipment are allowed to be registered, encouraging the improvement of safety and professionalism with regards to delivery of treatment.

Fitness:

The fitness trend in Thailand has boomed with a multitude of different studio offerings, multi-studio membership programs, charity runs, internationally recognized marathons and triathlons and greater general interest from the local community in developing their physical fitness.

Nutrition:

Healthy food is now more accessible to the general populous through farmers markets, specialty shops, personalized food delivery, juice cleanse programs and the proliferation of health food products in supermarkets.

Wellness Tourism:

Wellness holidays including yoga, detox, spa and fitness are available all over Thailand at a variety of budgets and are expected as a regular feature on spa menu's rather than a unique offering.

Wellness Communities or Real Estate:

The latest development for wellness communities is the growth in e-commerce platforms that sell wellness retreats, providing a professional platform on which Thai wellness retreats can promote themselves.

3. Our theme this year is “Back to the Future.” What do you feel is your country’s most significant contribution to what is now a global wellness economy?

Thailand - Traditional Thai Massage / Thai Spa Concept

4. What do you feel is the biggest challenge in your country when it comes to growing the wellness economy?

International tourists, expats and affluent Thai's are the primary consumers of spa and wellness in Thailand. That leaves a vast majority of the local population not consuming spa and wellness services. In order to grow the wellness economy, there is an opportunity to tap into the budding middle class of consumers who can afford spa and wellness services, but are currently not aware of the benefits of healthy lifestyle and preventative practices. The challenge is to educate the local community to pay greater attention to their health in terms of diet, fitness, and overall lifestyle. The local population is a much more stable source of demand, as compared to tourism which is seasonal. With the correct marketing strategies there can be a higher marginal return on ad spending and loyalty programs directed at the local middle class. Additionally it will improve the longevity of the wellness and preventative industries.

5. While no answers are right or wrong, we would like to know what you feel is the difference - if any - between the terms/concepts of “wellness” and “well-being” in your country.

There is no significant difference between the concepts of wellness and well-being in that they both link to a healthy lifestyle. However, the terms are used differently for marketing purposes. Wellness is most often used to define an establishment or an experience that invites people to focus on improving their health. For example, a wellness center, a wellness resort, a wellness package, a wellness holiday. The term wellbeing is more often linked to the state of health of an individual. Someone may choose to improve their overall wellbeing by joining a gym, engaging in a meditation practice, changing their diet or going to a wellness resort that focuses on providing rejuvenating experiences through spa treatments, fitness and healthy cuisine.

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