



THE AMERICAS: UNITED STATES

What are the most significant global issues facing us today?

Global Food shortage, clean water availability (likely the biggest spa challenge in the future), and urban population growths expanding into rural farming, and natural wildlife areas. An expected population of 9.9 billion by the year 2065. How are we to keep this population healthy? Farming practices have destroyed the environment and contaminated food and people. An aging population will live longer due to modern technology, drugs, and more educated lifestyle choices. Past, current and future destruction of native lands and species (people included), with no reverence for what we can learn from these populations about healing and longevity.

Wars are eating up too many resources at a time when we need to focus on building the planet together. Trillions of dollars have been spent over the past ten years and are now gone forever. And then we have to rebuild the countries where the wars took place.

Over consumption and physical decline of the industrialized world. Diabetes will be the greatest killer of the future, as people keep eating cheap, refined, unhealthy food while stressed out and living sedentary lives. The Western diet/lifestyle may kill us off faster than global warming. In areas where food is used as medicine, for enrichment and survival, Diabetes is unheard of. In the west most medical dollars pay for poor lifestyle choices. Trillions of dollars are spent on the sick, but only fraction of that is spent on the healthy.

The epidemic of cancer. New research from Cancer Research UK shows that 40 percent of cancers in women and 45 percent in men could be prevented by a healthier lifestyle.

All of these areas are a significant market where the global spa and wellness industry can do great things.

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

Game changing: Cleantech energy that doesn't pollute. LEED building, environmental awareness, natural capitalism. The technology of making the world closer, internet, computer technologies, medical technologies such as gene mapping, telomere testing, the ability to explore the human body and make diagnoses and give the client valuable information to change their destiny. Social media making the global market accessible to anyone.

Disruptive: GMO engineering of plants and food especially through global monopolies, pollution of our food and water (and thus our physical bodies). Use of pharmaceuticals before prevention and personal responsibility. Overuse of dangerous magnetic technologies that are disruptive to human health in the long run (the one drawback of the game-changing technology currently making the world smaller). Relying only on expensive diagnostic tools and not simple lifestyle approaches to wellness and disease prevention. Limitations in travel for most folks as we move into the future.

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

Moving towards healthy, non toxic products. Nutrition that is not just supplements (Aeroponically grown food and herbs that will have the highest level of nutrition and minerals). Using the simple, old-world ways of healing, while integrating the current nutritional technologies that are going to solve the global food crisis. Cutting-edge medical technologies in skin-care and other areas such as detoxification. In my field discovering treatments through innovation: a commitment to find the small, non-status quo line of treatments and practitioners that are coming up with solutions for the current health and wellness modalities. Teaching our patients to become their own healers and to become conscious of their local and global footprint.

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

Our greatest opportunity is to fill in the gap that the current medical system forgets - keeping the healthy healthy - while utilizing our expertise to solve the current medical crisis. The spa/wellness market can represent a larger percentage of the post and pre health concerns and problems that modern MD practices and large pharmaceuticals cannot, due to lack of time, understanding, or money. As a naturopathic physician I also see the importance of finding the root cause of disease, which in most cases is poor lifestyle choices, lack of education, no access to good wellness care, and preventive modalities. We have to think of the spa and wellness industry as being not only for the healthy and wealthy, but for the people that need our education the most. This also becomes our greatest challenge: how do you convince someone (governments) that, in the long run, utilizing the wellness industry will save them money while saving their health.

Spa and wellness practices that build on the idea that youth is not the ultimate goal. The boomer generation is the largest population currently spending the prevention dollar. Women are especially influenced by this market, always being told that they need to look and act younger. Inspiring women to be healthy in all ways, not just in the way they look. Internal health through nutrition, exercise, spirituality, mental challenges, and physical self contentment is our greatest opportunity and our greatest challenge in the spa market.

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

Everyone within the business must be working for the whole, not just the parts. Understanding their own bodies and health is vital for creativity and innovation. No matter what country, state, or town, a cohesive and healthy working environment is key, and breeds happiness and draws willing contributions. Always hire people that are smarter and more experienced than you. Thus there are multiple intelligent sounding boards for thoughts and ideas. Determine the traits, skills and talents of each person before hiring them. Hire into a well balanced team that rewards creativity and innovation and you'll get what you pay for. Use a "Mutual Interest" style of management for these folks. Essentially, if they win at work, you win at work, since we are judged on the collective efforts of the team, not our own efforts. Hire smart creative people, allow them to take risks and fail at times, learn from everything you do and always look to the future. You cannot change the past. Spend more time thinking about solutions to existing problems. Get involved in medical/political discussions in your local area. Think simple: what is the target market? What do they need? How can we best serve them with what works? Money flows where creativity grows.

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