



THE AMERICAS: UNITED STATES

What are the most significant global issues facing us today?

One of the most important global issues affecting the way we live is without a doubt linked to technology as it affects communication. With all the good that it brings it also carries a frightening side effect which is the potential that these technological advances may begin to rule the world, affecting the way we live, the way we work and ultimately the way we communicate with each other.

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

It is not so much technical innovations but the way we use them that have an incidence of change on the world. The internet and social media platforms are bringing attention to events and actions that previously would have been ignored or never seen by most. It overloads people's interests with facts and events that in fact are of no concern to them and at the same time affects them, sometimes positively, often negatively.

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

The innovations in the spa industry will come as a result of the globalization of information. It has begun with the fusion of East/West and will continue with the fusion of cultural perceptions of what wellness is. Cultures from Africa, Eastern Europe, South and Central America will appear more and more in the spa world. In different countries, due to government regulations and barriers, the delivery of services will be controlled, causing negative reactions. The perception of wellness will continue to head in the direction of prevention and anti-aging but also will become more a bridge between medical and well-being. Spas will focus on the world's pandemic maladies, such as obesity, stress-related ailments, and sexual dysfunctions.

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

There are great opportunities ahead for the spa industry but it will require the willingness to think out-of-the-box, and not merely to copy each other. Just as the cure of mental illness can only begin with the acceptance that one is sick, the spa industry will have to begin by accepting that it is in many ways inept and seek to improve, take chances and learn new approaches to well-being.

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

The only way to progress is to free businesses from nonsensical regulations that prevent it from innovating. This is particularly true in the spa industry which has been regulated by people to satisfy their egos and to impose on others their hang-ups and frustrations. Creativity cannot exist in an overly controlled environment.

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