

NORTH AMERICA: UNITED STATES

1. What is currently making news in your country when it comes to wellness or wellbeing?

Compassion. Research supports the precept that living a life of connection, meaning, equanimity, and compassion not only feels good but is associated with the prevention of inflammatory diseases, improvements in how we maintain our chromosomes to maintain the health of our cells, and immune system functionality to prevent and fight infection. It is also linked to longevity. Many organizations that already offer mindfulness training at the workplace are additionally offering compassion cultivation training to employees.

2. Please provide one sentence that describes what you think are important developments in your country for each of the following:

Spas: Any successful spa targeting Millennials must include comfortable social areas such as communal bathing as well as areas to eat and “hang out.”

Wellness Tourism: There are big shifts in the lodging industry - PricewaterhouseCoopers estimates that Airbnb received 155 million guest stays in 2014, nearly twenty-two percent more than Hilton Worldwide.

Wellness Living Communities/Real Estate: Most new luxury residential developments include a fitness and spa amenity in their project mix but, like the hotel industry twenty years ago, many don't know what “spa” is or how to offer it genuinely.

Beauty: Beauty-on-demand apps are gaining popularity for at-home services and it's a good idea to watch how Mink and Moda use 3D printers to digitalize makeup, creating products that are personalized and convenient.

Fitness: As an alternative to the traditional membership model, subscription services like Classpass - offering users unlimited monthly fitness and health classes - are not

only providing a way for boutique studios and gyms to be discovered but are actually creating the demand: Eighty-five percent of Classpass users are new to boutique fitness and sixty-five percent are new to fitness in general.

Nutrition: Chaga and mushroom coffees and teas are the new kombucha.

3. How would you describe the state of workplace wellness in your country?

Improving. Businesses are increasingly aware of the benefits of prevention. The latest survey on wellness programs from Fidelity Investments and the National Business Group on Health (NBGH) projects that employers will increase average spending per employee by 17% this year - even as Congress uses sequestration to make cuts to the Affordable Care Act's contribution to funding.

For some employers, the focus of wellness is shifting to include employee wellbeing and not just physical health. Employers are encouraging employees to use vacation time, providing tuition reimbursement, supporting community charity drives, and offering counseling on personal finances.

4. What has been the general attitude about investing in spa/wellness in your country in 2015? Specific examples?

Positive. IHG's new brand Even and Starwood's new extended stay concept Element are both being rolled out and a recent trend analysis report released by the Tisch Center for Hospitality and Tourism states that capital expenditures within the U.S. lodging industry have placed enhanced fitness facilities in the top 3 areas of expenditure, geared toward Millennial travelers.

5. Whose responsibility is it to create a well world?

Individually and collectively, we're all in this together.

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