
green corner | priorities of today's spa consumer

by Camille Hoheb



ACCORDING TO A RECENT report by Coyle Hospitality, "Today's economy has 89 percent of spa goers seeking treatments for relaxation and stress management." With some operators seeing a 40 percent reduction in monthly revenue, the steep decrease in spa revenue is forcing operators to re-think how they are providing services and marketing them to today's spa and wellness consumers.

There are five strategies that can potentially boost spa revenue without having to invest heavily in additional staffing, equipment or space requirements.

Educate with clinical data

Health and wellness consumers seek substantiation of claims regarding health benefits. Leverage existing clinical data to help educate clients and promote services. For example, massage has been shown to lower perceived pain and discomfort, and reduces stress hormones in pregnant women.

Provide solutions

Spas would do well to learn to develop services for specific health conditions and market by providing solutions to the symptoms—a marketing strategy successfully employed by healthcare providers, pharmaceutical companies and health product companies.

For example, as many women are postponing starting a family, many are experiencing the issues of stress and infertility. Healthy eating, mind/body awareness, acupuncture and massage can be combined to offer a niche service.

Collaborate with the medical community

One easy way for spa and medicine to work together is to coordinate spa services both pre- and post-procedure. For example, for breast cancer patients, bodywork techniques and mind-body modalities are being combined with conventional medicine to assist them with treatment and recovery. Head, neck and hand massage are given during inpatient treatments at a hospital infusion center.

Align with medical tourism

Consider providing a solution to manage jet lag, pre-procedure anxiety and post-procedure pampering and recovery. Day spas, hotel spas and single practitioners can provide services, typically with minor adjustments to accommodate wellness tourists.

Workplace wellness

Consider adopting language widely used with stakeholders in the health and wellness industry. For example, the medical community, employer groups and insurance companies may not be

aware of the term "hybrid spas" but do use the term "lifestyle management providers." Stress management is a top concern for employers in terms of costs and productivity. Because spas have a reputation for healing environments, they can increase the level of employees' engagement with regard to their workplace wellness programs, which is critical to the overall success of the program.

LOHAS movement

By taking steps to sell wellness, you are able to create sustainability within your spa, thus taking steps toward an eco-conscious, eco-wellness facility. Spas have the ability to improve lives through customer-centric nurturing that may go well beyond pampering. Many spa-goers seek respite from life's frantic pace to achieve a deeper sense of well-being by balancing mind, body and spirit. These spa clients are LOHAS consumers (Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability).

A large segment of the American population, there are 50 million LOHAS consumers who purchase based more on ethics and less on price. They value the environment, social justice, corporate responsibility, and organic foods and products. If this resonates strongly with your own values, consider developing a sustainability mission statement to share with your employees and clients. Get involved by giving back to the community, using organic and fair trade products and reducing your carbon footprint. What better way to sell wellness than by improving the lives of your staff and community? ■

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