



Wake Up...You Should Care about the Staffing Crisis!

Breakout Discussion Forum

Facilitators:

Wendy Bosalavage, Chair of the Internship Program, Global Career Development Initiative, Global Wellness Institute, U.S.; President, American Leisure, U.S.

Jean-Guy de Gabriac, Chair of Global Career Development Initiative, Global Wellness Institute, U.S.; Founder & CEO, TIP TOUCH International, Belgium

CG Funk, Chair of the Careership Program, Global Career Development Initiative, Global Wellness Institute, U.S.; Consultant, Funk Consulting, U.S.

The Global Career Development Initiative is comprised of three initiatives - Careership, Mentorship and Internship which focus on different aspects of supporting and sustaining industry staffing.

Global Careership Program provides content for spaandwellnesscareers.com and has completed career information and social media testimonial videos. This taskforce strives to bring awareness to career opportunities within the Spa and Wellness industries through a constant flow of content for the website including articles, editorials and career stories.

Global Mentorship Program launched a free mentorship online platform that serves to connect spa mentors with spa mentees. Through this platform, seasoned spa, wellness and hospitality executives connect with and share expertise with newer spa professionals.

Global Internship Committee aims at becoming the go-to source on standard processes and best practices for the Spa Management Experiential Learning Programs (ELPs), Internships, Externships, Manager in Training (MIT) and Job Shadowing.

Session Summary

Each committee within the initiative shared an overview of accomplishments and completed projects for 2016.

Careership Committee

The Careership Committee's focus has been to develop an open resource containing inspirational information for spa and wellness careers. In 2015, SpaandWellnessCareers.com was launched and in 2016 the committee members contributed content to keep site active and fresh.

In addition, two social media testimonial videos were created and released and available to all spa and wellness companies. The goal for the next couple of years is to create a global marketing & PR program geared towards promoting the careers in spa and wellness. In addition, committee members will continue to add content to site, as well as additional writers will be sought to contribute.

Mentorship Committee

The Global Mentorship Program is a program that allows seasoned spa professionals share time and expertise with mentees.

Launched in 2014 by a team of Spa and Wellness experts from around the world, the program now includes 50 mentors, working with 100 mentees in over 30 countries. Participants connect monthly via face-to-face, video conferencing platforms, or phone to discuss the Mentees goals and aspirations for their career growth.

For 2017, GMP has a goal to continue to grow the mentorship program to include spa professionals from 50 countries participating.

Internship Program

The Global Internship Committee recently published the “Experiential Learning Guide”. This guide is available to all spa and wellness companies and is a wonderful reference to creating an internal internship program.

This committee is under new leadership and is currently reorganizing with new volunteers and developing 2017 goals.

Once committee introductions and recaps were given to audience, the session focused on present and future global staffing shortages, review of 2012 SRI recommendations on addressing staff shortages and information on how the the “industry” can work together to resolve staffing issues.

Participants were given a pre-look at the Wellness Economy Report 2016 which will be published in 2017. This report indicates that staffing will continue to be a challenge over the next five years. Below is an excerpt from this report:

“Since 2013, spas added 237,424 jobs to the global economy. Projections for the Spa industry growth over the next 5 years indicate that there will be an estimated 2.8 million people employed by spas in 2018 (1 million in Asia-Pacific; 950,000 in Europe & 540,000 in North America). An additional 400,000 trained spa therapists and 70,000 experienced Spa managers/directors will be need by the industry in 2020.”

There are many ways to begin to address this deficient, one of which would be the development of a fully vetted marketing and PR campaign for massage, spa and wellness careers. Such a campaign would modernize the perception of spa careers.

This session was well attended and had very passionate discussions and input from the delegate attendees. Below is a list input and concerns offered by the attendees during the session:

- What is the spa & wellness industry actually offering to attract these Millennials?
- There is a need for more massage schools in the US today.
- There are very good massage schools in Germany, but the industry is not attractive for Millennials because of long hours, week-end schedules and sub-par compensation.
- There are no clear career paths with progression, in order to make Millennials stay. So not only is there an issue on staffing structure, but also on retention.
- Millennials are very drawn to helping others and are attracted to non-for profit organizations but our industry is not doing a good job highlighting the various paths in a spa career.
- In Germany with Hospitality studies, only a fraction of students are ready to major in Spa & Wellness. They are more interested in Investment Planning, or Cuisine. We have competition within our own program. There seems to be a discrepancy between the hands-on job & the management job. Candidates feel that at some point beauticians have an advantage to move forward in their career, but hospitality students do not want to go through beautician studies.
- There are good Spa Management schools from which about 4,000 students graduate (Cornell, Houston, Irvine, Bellus Academy to name just a few in the USA), even an MBA in Spa Management at Joanneum in Austria but it is just not enough to fill the gap. It is important to look at all the education pipeline as to where skills can be incorporated to the curriculum of Beauty therapists, not just the Spa Management curriculum.
- It would be beneficial to have a beauty schools tie in with digital platforms that enables students to connect and study whenever they want. Webinars are also a great format with short videos.
- Are therapists overpaid? For instance, how could a massage therapist earn 80,000 USD per year, when a Chef working 40h per week, including week-ends, earns between 40 & 60,000 USD a year? Some therapists may even have become prima-donnas!
- The Spa & Wellness industry is not the only one facing a staffing crisis. In order to address this gap, we should look deeper into what we actually do to create a culture of wellness for the staff, as well as giving them a sense of purpose.

- We should take advantage of the situation to do PR about the great opportunities of a Spa & Wellness Career, to bring new talented people to our industry.
- Staff is resource. What happens to our businesses if we do not take care of them?
- What our industry needs most are better leaders, not just better managers. Better leadership qualities should therefore be found at every level of the Spa operations. The staffing crisis gets bigger every year, making it harder to recruit & retain qualified & motivated Spa Managers/Directors.
- Comparable compensation plans, better incentives & advanced training programs are essential to retain the best people and help them thrive & flourish into "Spa & Wellness therapists".

In conclusion to the session, recommendations from the SRI 2012 report was shared in what employers, schools and the industry can do to close the staffing gap:

- Skill Development for Current Personnel
 - Disseminate information about education/training providers
 - Sponsor scholarships
 - Share information about Spa Internship programs
- Engaging Schools and Training Providers
 - Engage educators in major industry events
 - Connect with schools offering spa education programs
 - Encourage schools to add spa related programs
 - Encourage therapy schools to add management programs
 - Study best practices in education & training
 - Establish online forum for education exchanges
 - Help schools add spa lab training facilities
 - Promote research

From these discussions, the following were determined as possible focuses in the coming years for the Global Career Development Initiative:

- School and education program growth and sustainability
- Continuing education (outside the employer programs)
- Peer support groups for spa professionals (especially managers and directors)
- Employer responsibility
- Career promotion and visibility

For more information on the Career Development Initiative and/or full session transcription, please visit www.globalwellnessinstitute.org.

Submitted by:

Name: Jean-Guy de Gabriac

Company: TIP TOUCH International

Website: www.tiptouch.com