

GOCO Hospitality

## Solving the Spa Problem

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Spas are complicated. Far more complicated than many assume. Get them wrong, and you'll spend a lot of money on something that doesn't make a profit and may even need a jackhammer to set right. However, there are ways to ensure success.

The problem with spas is ultimately one of mindset. Hotel owners, investors, developers and general managers have all been educated that a spa is a facility of the hotel, just included because a luxury hotel is expected to have a spa – otherwise how can you really call yourself a luxury hotel without one?

A spa can be just a facility, if you let it. However, it can be so much more than that.

With wellness tourism worth \$639 billion, and predicted to grow at 7.5% per year between now and 2022, this is a market that really shouldn't be ignored. Spas and other hotel wellness offerings, if planned and managed well, present a very attractive prospect for creating a strong profit centre within the hotel.

### How to Get the Spa Right

#### 1. Plan for Perfection

Getting things right at the end means getting them right at the very beginning. This includes working out whether you really should have a spa in the first place. Will it make money? How many guests can you expect? Who's your competition? What can you charge and for what services?

Good quality market research and feasibility studies are a must. Getting things right at this stage can make all the difference between having a spa that costs money and one that actually generates significant profit. Start your spa journey with top quality market research and fully understand the intricacies of your spa market.



#### 2. Know Who You Are

If you want a facility, then just having "The Spa" will do. But if you want to have a spa that attracts people to stay at your resort and also attracts wellness guests from other resorts, then you will need something much more.

You need a proper spa concept with a unique story, the right balance of different treatments and facilities inspired by your location, and a brand that resonates and is relevant to your target market.

#### 3. Design a Spa that Works

Any hospitality designer can design a spa that looks nice. However, it takes a specialist to design one that works well. Design for just aesthetics and you end up with equipment left out in view of guests because there is not enough storage space, with therapists unable to deliver treatments effectively and massages being interrupted by loud noises from the nearby salon and gym.

all guests.



#### 4. Don't Pick Your Menu From a Menu

Swedish massage, oriental massage, anti-ageing facial – all the other competing spas in your area have the same on their menus. What's more, regular spa goers have already experienced these treatments. They are looking for something new and different. Craft a menu of specially created spa treatments that reflect the location and you will have people talking to each other about the signature experiences that they can only experience at your spa.

#### 5. Your People Really Are Your Greatest Asset

It's a cliché. Yes. But, one that also happens to be true.

Your spa team will be the number one factor in how great an experience your guests have. They will tell their friends about that massage therapist that made them feel completely at ease and helped solve their backache with their skillful hands. Selection of skilled therapists and providing them with the training required to do their job in the most effective manner possible should be an absolute priority.

#### 6. Manage to Achieve a Long-Term Profit

Get all the previous parts right and you will have a great spa that will attract and delight guests and make a profit – at least at the start anyway.

However, a spa is not just some static facility that never changes. It requires constant and dynamic management to ensure that processes are optimised, the latest wellness trends get integrated into the offering, that training is kept up-to-date and that marketing activities adjust to changes in the target guests. Good spa management is an on-going effort but pays off with a constant stream of profit.

#### 7. Talk to the Right People

As mentioned, many average hospitality professionals are more focused on rooms and F&B, and don't have the necessary skills to create and manage spas and wellness. Because of this, it is prudent to talk to expert spa consultants to help with each of the tasks required to achieve a successful and profitable spa.

The problem in the spa industry at the moment is that most spa consultants can only effectively do one or two of these tasks.

This was the reason why Ingo Schweder – a hospitality expert with over 30 years' experience in wellness hospitality at Mandarin Oriental, Oberoi Hotels and the Rafael Hotel Group – created GOCO Hospitality in 2008 to provide the hotel industry with a single point of contact where they could find professional advice on everything needed to create and run a successful and profitable spa or wellness resort.



READ MORE: Ingo Schweder – Thailand is Among the Top Wellness Destinations Around the World



GOCO Hospitality provides leading global hospitality brands – such as Four Seasons, Viceroy, Ritz Carlton, Bulgari, Emaar Hospitality and Marriott – with turnkey wellness consultancy that ranges from market research and financial feasibility (through sister company Horwath HTL Health & Wellness) through to concept development, technical design, pre-opening services and on-going management.

The company offers consultancy services all around the world and currently manages its GOCO-branded spas in Venice, Crete and Ajman, and owns and manages the Glen Ivy Hot Springs in Southern California.

For more information on how GOCO Hospitality can support your next spa or wellness retreat project to achieve success, please visit [www.gocohospitality.com](http://www.gocohospitality.com) or email [info@gocohospitality.com](mailto:info@gocohospitality.com).