

organic & wellness | the way to wellness for spa-preneurs

changes for 2013

IF YOU COULD INCREASE YOUR revenues by adding cash paid services that do not require a big investment in equipment, would you be interested? Although this is absolutely possible, it will take courage and an open mind to change some of your perspectives on healing and health care.

Do we know where the spa industry is heading, Ms. Day Spa Owner? If you are not a high-end spa catering to the

What about the wellness, alternative medicine, preventive health and complementary services? Wherefore art thou acupuncturists, naturopaths, nutritionists, Ayurvedic physicians and massage therapists? Are your practices growing? While we experienced a good level of growth between 2010 and 2011, revenues seem to have leveled off in 2012. Naturopathic and primary care physicians are actively seeking a

lent services are served up in a palace. How are we going to deliver that in today's market? The medical and wellness industries are looking for a way to stabilize their income, and want to escape from insurance paid services. In their mind, cash services are one way to go. The problem is, they still think that they are medical clinics, and can deliver their services in the same manner that they always have, sans hospitality and personalized service for the clientele.

Hospitals caught the "wellness fever" awhile back now, and started building facilities based on wellness and integrative health. This, however, is catering only to highly insured clientele who are not strapped for cash. The mainstream client is again left out in the cold. The mainstream clientele can only be reached if they are educated as to what preventive care is all about. They also need to be confident that investing their efforts and money into preventive care services will result in a declining need for health care services as they get older.

If we are going to flourish collectively as a group of health, wellness, medical and spa practitioners, we need to start working as a team.

We can make this happen with a fresh approach that encourages a blending of health, wellness, allopathic medicine and preventive care. What if I could show you how this could increase your revenues, profitability and business longevity?

continues



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financially elite, you are learning that the market rate for what mainstream clientele is willing to pay is \$59-\$69 per month for massage and facials. Yes, the market has shifted, and the mainstream has voted. They love spa services and are willing to carve some money out of their limited budgets for these indulgences. At these rates, however, it takes many services to pay your rent. As you're probably aware, this is especially true for skin care professionals, as product costs and supplies continue to rise.

profitable business model. I would recommend finding a way to merge with spas and other preventive health care professionals to establish a sustainable business model.

The short story is that Mr., Ms. and Teenage Mainstream are looking for results at a value. Our clientele is getting both younger and older, and they are strapped for cash. They want our services, but they can't afford to pay a king's ransom for them. The spa industry has created the expectation that these opu-

What if primary care medical clinics become the true gatekeepers of health care? Patients need to have a relationship with their physician, which is primarily for preventive health care counseling, as opposed to treatment of illness and symptoms. The next layer of this equation is that there is an available base of trained health care and spa professionals. Joining forces

are going to be competitive and earn your client's trust and repeat business.

Spas can benefit if they learn the standard medical practice of physician referral. This can happen either within a village setting or by establishing a working relationship with health care professionals located near your business. Referrals are earned and shared among professionals who know and trust each

Preventive health care professionals, spa and skin care therapists may not make as much money as M.D.s, but they appear to have a little more "heart." Treating the client as a whole and helping them maintain optimal wellness is much different than healing them when they are sick. It is also much less expensive. Preventive health care saves money. Doctors intuitively know this, and are looking for progressive ways to deliver these services.

Creating a healing and nurturing environment has been the goal of many spa operators. This is the case with a growing number of medical professionals. Beyond the scope of practice and licensing issues, physicians need to align with professionally trained therapists who can help them with stress relief, pain management, heart health, brain health, joint health, weight loss and fitness. Sounds like a spa and wellness facility, doesn't it?

Courageous skin care professionals, doctors, wellness practitioners and spa operators need to join forces, band together, form wellness teams and become ambassadors of preventive health care. If we jointly offer our services under a single roof, our clients will receive better care at a lower price. The long-term need for expensive health and disease care will be reduced. The services of both spa and medical clinics will become part of our clients' lifestyle, not a rarely afforded luxury. The end result will be a healthier population that can afford to stay that way—and longevity for our industry. ■

Monte Zwang is a principal at *Wellness Capital Management*, a company that provides cash flow and financial strategies to businesses in the wellness industry. He has been a consultant for more than 25 years, teaching business planning and cash flow management to entrepreneurs and company leaders in the health care, spa and hospitality industries.



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together in a "Wellness Village" allows several businesses to operate under one roof, sharing a reception area, retail area and perhaps even many overhead expenses such as rent, advertising and administrative costs.

Doctors need spas and spas need doctors. Often, having spa and wellness services offered by a medical professional in a more medical environment gives the client a boost of confidence. Medical clinics are a stressful place. Spas strive to create a peaceful and tranquil environment. I believe the two can co-exist, and together provide a calming place that offers both health care and spa services. Who does a better job of front desk hospitality? Who has more clarity regarding consultative procedure and patient/client care philosophy? These items need to be clearly defined in order to create a positive and inspiring work environment for your staff. The future spa/wellness center/neighborhood medical clinic will have to do this if you

other. Spas do a better job than medical practices in terms of the appreciation and care they exhibit toward the clients that come into their business.

Growing a spa business or medical practice depends on more than the knowledge and skill you have. It's the hospitable and caring manner in which you and your staff communicate how much the personal well being and results your clients experience matters to you. I can't tell you how many physicians' offices I have visited where I am met with a surly, over-stressed, multi-tasking front desk staff that is curt when they are on the phone. I am then seated in an exam room, where I wait for a physician who races in 20 minutes late, appears to be disinterested in the professional service he is providing for the 10 minutes he is in the room, then races out without communicating what my next steps should be. The need to incorporate hospitality into today's medical practices is what your patients demand. Spa professionals know how to do this.