

**Breakout Session: Addressing the Global Labor Shortage**

Tuesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>  
2:15PM – 3:30PM  
Empire Room

**Moderator: Ken Greger**, CEO and Managing Director, Greger/Peterson Associates, Inc, Oregon

**SUMMARY**

An international panel discussed the labor shortage that has just begun and that is likely to intensify – high demand for talent, low supply – over the next three to five years. Panel presentations and interaction with the audience and Contributors painted a clear picture that the Global Labor Shortage is, in fact, a key issue worldwide. Discussion ranged from the practical reality top executives face in needing the right people NOW to how academia can play a role in generating talent for the future, as well as the need to focus on business talent and not just on therapists.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- The Spa industry must do a better job of presenting itself to college students and other potential managers and employees as a career, a credible, exciting and long-term profession.
- Partnering with academia in the design and promotion of appropriate spa-related curriculum could produce significant, positive results
- While the industry is experiencing a tremendous growth opportunity, growth by design is better than growth for growth's sake. Being reactive and throwing people into jobs risks quality and industry credibility, not to mention brand dilution. Better to develop quality leadership and grow at a pace that ensures quality and consistency.
- The industry is not just competing for talent with other spas and hospitality companies. The industry is competing with all companies. To be effective, spa companies must focus on attracting, training, growing and retaining suitable talent.
- The industry cannot meet the labor demand by recycling people, i.e., playing musical chairs from company to company. There simply aren't enough people. Instead, the spa industry needs some fresh faces, such as hotel and resort professionals, as well as employees currently with other high service businesses – high end retail, for example.
- The industry must train, train, train and train its people, not just therapists, but also those who are running – and being groomed to run – these multi-million dollar businesses.

## **NEXT STEPS**

At the Summit, it was clear that there are many good people doing many good things within the industry. To be optimally effective, we need to team up – on a global basis – in some areas. To help make this happen, a task force is being created to study, discuss and make industry-wide recommendations in regard to the Global Labor Shortage. At the Summit, several attendees volunteered to serve on the task force. However, prior to launching any formal activity, considered thought is being invested in regard to setting overall objectives, a realistic agenda, recruiting others to the task force as needed, and determining how to spread the workload evenly so that outcomes are achieved. Ideally, the task force will make a formal report at the Summit 2008, with progress reports during the interim.

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