



## Human Capital Collaboration

Pre-Summit Collaborative Problem Solving Session

Sunday, May 17th, 2009 2:00pm – 3:30pm

La Salle Ruchti, Victoria-Jungfrau Grand Hotel & Spa, Interlaken, Switzerland

**Chaired by Demian Hodari, Professor, Ecole Hoteliere de Lausanne and Professor Mary Tabacchi, PhD, Cornell School of Hotel Administration, United States**

*Scribe: Medea Grimm (Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne)*

We are here to state our views and needs regarding human capital needs for the spa industry to accomplish something together.

- Marc Cohen: interested in what the industry wants, wants to know if there is a global understanding
- Alison Bell: travel technology, representing Irish Spas and is interested in the people perspective, how they manage to retain staff
- Dzigbordi Dosoo: from Ghana, South Africa, setting up a college in August and currently has 12 Spas. She perceives the disconnect between the standards of the global Spa industry and the industry in Ghana, wants to know which standards to use for the recruitment of Spa managers
- Martine Fehr: Spa Manager at the Victoria Jungfrau and graduate of EHL
- Marion Schneider, Germany: built up a rehabilitation clinic and created a Spa as well. Medical staff transforming into Spa is a big challenge, and how to do it?
- Eva-Maria Adamer-König: head of Bachelor & Master in the Health Management and Tourism program in Austria since 2001, coming to pick up information to renew her program with spa managers and students
- Brian Hunter: bought a Spa academy two months ago in Scotland and wants to look more into business to teach his students spa management
- Sandra Skova: Managing Director & founder of a spa academy in Croatia. Here to understand what is most important to give to her students

*What do you think the greatest needs are?*

**Martine Fehr**

We need more collaboration, as of now we have either 1) Therapy people or 2) Business people. Either management people know the five star businesses but have no therapy point of view or therapists have no management skills.

*How can we be more efficient?*

**Brian Hunter**

We have a one year program – approx. 300 hours (coming from high school, ages 16-65 years) to train students on being therapists and at the same time give them some management knowledge and understanding.

**Dzigbordi Dosoo**

The fundamentals are the same. Why is there no Spa training in hotel schools?

**Demian Hodari (session co-chair)**

One example is the Spa Education Day taking place post Summit. We invited delegates and hotel managers of the industry and have classes for Hoteliers for the Spa and vice-versa. Unfortunately the hotel managers still see it only as an accessory, but some are starting to see the change. We had a lot of interest from spa delegates.



**Mary Tabacchi (session co-chair)**

We in the US are very connected with the Spa industry at Cornell. We have a Spa course (elective) which includes the management and design of spas for which students get three credits. We have a four year undergraduate program in hospitality. Business schools have a two year program for an executive MBA or Master's in Hospitality.

**Dzigbordi Dosoo**

It seems you just need to understand the concept, not necessarily know exactly how to do the treatments. Are there not sufficient Spa classes?

**Demian Hodari (session co-chair)**

We have no Spa class at EHL, except in the Resort stream I am teaching.

**Mary Tabacchi (session co-chair)**

I make sure that students understand the Spa industry by bringing in speakers from the industry. The deal I make: If you would offer an internship for my students, I will call you back when they are graduating.

**Eva-Maria Adamer-König**

My students study for three years, about 300 hours in business and do internships. Still our graduates are telling me that they need more business skills.

**Martine Fehr**

My EHL background allowed me to apply a great deal of what I learned from the hotel side, to understand the challenges, and I can communicate the needs of the Spa to the hotel & vice-versa.

### Brian Hunter

Therapists need to know more about business, so therapists can become managers as well. Not teaching them about the business doesn't give them a good chance to become managers.

### Mary Tabacchi (session co-chair)

These issues can be taught at any business school. The need is to produce a lot of business oriented people, and then to hire the ones with the heart.

### Marc Cohen

In Australia, entry level is a Bachelor degree. The program is a Masters, half core classes, half elective classes with business subjects, medical science, food, etc. We are looking for business people to do health subjects and vice-versa, but not forcing anybody.

### General Discussion

*Which one is the better manager – the person with a business background or the person with a therapy background?*  
Wellness is a lifestyle needed, but the business base has to be there first.

### *Raising awareness for the importance of the spa?*

GM's begin to understand the importance of spa as they start losing money. That's when they will hopefully make the spa manager a bigger part of their Executive Committee. Spa directors do sit on the executive committee of many chain hotel companies' individual properties. The industry has to help raise awareness in order to make future and current GM's understand the importance of the business impact of their spa.

### Debate Summary

Is there a shortage of labor? Not at the moment due to the recession and the increasing number of highly qualified hospitality/ business and technical school graduates. But the industry and academia must prepare for future growth of industry.

What does the industry need?

- Experienced applicants with business/hospitality school type training as well as technical training.
- University schooling in management training, massage, and cosmetology schools for therapists and technicians and in house continuing education for all employees. There is continued growth of in house schools (i.e. Banyan Tree and Six Senses).
- Internships. There is a need for industry sponsored internships in order to increase the labor pool for the future. This is necessary to increase the number of "experienced" job applicants.
- Online management schools are off to a good start here but consensus is that on line school curricula need to be "beefed up".

### Solutions?

- For the business people: there should be at least two year of business school program + doing an internship in a hotel with a spa + knowledge of the spa industry through classes or online modules + being exposed to speakers from the spa industry + walking your talk

- For the therapy people: Offer online classes at the post graduate level for six months to one year in forms of modules and include: managing people, forecasting, scheduling, accounting, business modeling, contracts, budgeting, marketing, and public relations.

#### After Summit thoughts from Mary Tabacchi (session co-chair)

Universities in the U.S., European Union and the Asia Pacific don't and can't offer courses in massage or cosmetology (due to stringent academic rules). Therapies should be taught in massage or cosmetology schools which may range from six months to two year programs. Universities offer either a four year business school, four year hospitality business school degree, or a two year graduate MBA (very prestigious). If a person really wants to rise in the spa industry to the corporate level, neither a two year undergraduate degree nor a massage or cosmetology degree will suffice. This was clearly evident in our discussion.

The real crux of the matter is twofold:

1. How to give the massage and cosmetology educated professionals enough business education for them to get by. This is where the online schools come in with business oriented program or, as Jack Morrison has done in his program at Elmcrest College in Canada, you can move business type courses into a two year residential cosmetology/massage program
2. How to get four year hospitality business schools, four year business school, or two year MBA students enough spa management experience.

As I place my students in jobs around the world, it's the business skills that are what is sought after by the companies who hire them. Most of my students don't have massage/cosmetology backgrounds, thus, they have to seek this outside of the University. The industry wants employees with "spa or hospitality" work experience. I have worked with Banyan Tree, Starwood, Fairmont/Raffles, Canyon Ranch, Miraval, Rancho La Puerta, Lake Austin, Red Mountain, Ritz, Four Seasons, and numerous others so that Cornell students get internships at spas before they graduate. This is the Cornell approach to giving business oriented students some "spa experience" before they go out in the world.

Our aim in the discussion was about how to get enough "spa industry" knowledge to the business/hospitality educated employees and how to get enough business knowledge to the massage/cosmetology students. This was the crux of the matter in the discussion and is the crux of the matter in the industry.



The Global Spa Summit is an international organization that brings together leaders and visionaries to positively impact and shape the future of the global spa and wellness industry.