



## Corporate Wellness Forum

### *Leading the Future of Corporate Wellness: What Is Our Industry's Role?*

#### **Five Key Take-Aways from the World Café Led By**

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#### **Wellness Becomes a Corporate Priority**

Over the past decade, wellness has become a priority for corporations. Leaders of global companies in particular are recognizing that employee wellbeing affects the organization's productivity, innovativeness, and reputation. While many companies are addressing the [tremendous social and financial burden of chronic illnesses](#) through prevention-based initiatives such as healthy eating, stress management, or smoking cessation, today many also strive to build workplace cultures where wellness is an integral part of their growth strategies, business values, and everyday practices. As a result, wellness strategies now touch company activities in ways unheard of only a decade ago, such as:

- Recruiting, building, and managing workforces that are sustainably high-performing, resilient in crises and downturns, and ready to evolve for the future
- Designing safe, life-enhancing operational processes, facilities, and workspaces
- Engaging in activities that elevate the vitality of the communities and societies in which employees and consumers live
- Promoting health and wellness through branding, marketing, and delivery of products and services
- Assisting in developing the next generation of leaders for the future

More and more, it's clear that corporations (and their employees and consumers) are redefining wellness in three important ways. First, no longer is wellness seen as the absence of illness and disease; today wholeness, vitality, thriving, and growth characterize it. Consider, for instance, The Coca-Cola Company's definition of wellbeing that includes physical, emotional, financial, and social dimensions. Second, no longer are wellness actions motivated solely by compliance; many global companies are increasing employee engagement in wellness lifestyles by tapping into their inner motivations and desire for social connection. Google and Zappos are prime examples of company's that use wellness opportunities — be it healthy food, mindfulness classes, or do-good initiatives — to help employees connect with others who have similar personal life-work goals. Finally, wellness strategies are no longer measured solely by containing healthcare costs; now many businesses see the potential outcomes of wellness strategies as higher employee engagement, stronger trust in the company, and better business performance. Buck Consultants' latest *Working Well* survey of over 1,000 companies worldwide

reports that while [66% of companies see value in measuring the impact of wellness on employee satisfaction](#), only 10% of companies find such traditional measures as employee biometrics and the prevalence of health conditions helpful. Plus, when a 2013 study compared the stock market performance of S&P 500 companies to companies committed to a culture of health, the [culture of health companies consistently yielded greater bottom line performance for investors](#).

### What Role Can the Spa Industry Play in Corporate Wellness?

Within this changing corporate wellness landscape, we led a “World Café” at the 2014 Global Spa & Wellness Summit in Marrakech, Morocco entitled: *Leading the Future of Corporate*

*Wellness: What is Our Industry’s Role?* This allowed spa industry executives to explore three questions in a lively and enjoyable café-like atmosphere (complete with a standing group massage, pictured left!):



1. *How could our industry uniquely help corporations enhance employee wellness?*
2. *What would it take for us to be an authentic & credible partner in employee wellness?*
3. *What would it mean for our industry to lead the way in employee wellness?*

Through 90 minutes of rich dialogue, five key take-aways emerged.

	Key Take-Away	A Little More About It ...
1	<b>The time is ripe for spa industry leaders to collectively agree to the higher purpose of using the industry to advance wellness globally.</b>	A higher purpose answers the question, <i>Why do we exist?</i> It is a deeper leadership directive that goes beyond solely making a profit. (Making a profit is a necessary activity that becomes in service to this directive.) “Advancing wellness globally” can become the higher-purpose for the spa industry, providing a center-point for collaboration between organizations in the industry, as well as a legacy the industry can make on the planet. For this kind of purpose to come alive, however, key stakeholders in the industry must come together to declare it as such and chart a path forward for operating from it.
2	<b>Spa industry leaders should come together to give voice to the unique value the industry can bring to corporate</b>	Defining the value our industry can bring to corporate wellness could include the use of our assets, relationships, and core knowledge and capabilities. For example, the spa industry has unmatched insight into the science and practice of two areas that are critical for employee wellness in global companies:

**wellness.**

- Rest and rejuvenation as part of managing personal energy
- Built wellness-oriented physical spaces that foster personal reflection, focus and calm, and, as a result, productivity

**3**

**The spa industry must be a role model of employee wellness.**

To have credibility, clearly we must “walk our talk” if we want to position the industry as an employee wellness partner to global corporations. Taking care of the wellness of our employees not only benefits our own organizations, it allows us to authentically share the value we can bring to corporate wellness from our experience.

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**The spa industry should bring evidenced-based insights to corporate wellness.**

Our industry should provide evidence that healthy employees translate to the business health and growth. This will motivate leaders of companies worldwide to prioritize and invest in wellness initiatives. Based on WellnessEvidence.com, the science-based platform currently curated by our industry, this means we would need to expand our knowledge about what fosters wellness in the workplace. While the science behind massage, biofeedback, supplementation, and other treatments are important to our work, we realize that other factors beyond the scope of spa science facilitate employee wellness. As one example, an employees’ relationship with his or her immediate manager may be as critical a factor to their whole health as if they stop smoking.

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**The spa industry should actively seek and convene dialogues with other industries that are also driven to accelerate wellness globally.**

Other industries and strategic organizations are rallying around the wellness cry. For example, the World Economic Forum fuels the [Workplace Wellness Alliance](#), a consortium of companies committed to advancing wellness in the workplace, and the [Consumer Goods Forum](#) recently strengthened its commitment to employee and consumer wellness. Intersections with other aligned industries and partnerships can offer potential innovations and power that we would not have from the spa industry alone.

These five key take-aways are a good starting place for a strategic, concerted effort by spa industry leaders to determine the distinctive value the industry can play as part of a holistic and impactful corporate wellness strategy. The newly formed Global Wellness Institute can also use this thinking as input as it opens its doors to other industries.