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CONTENTS

10



22



SpaInc.
SPRING 2014

Cover photo: Pretty In Pink Spa Studio

*SPA*talk

News from the
spa industry
6

BALANCE

Health and
wellness news
8

AMBIANCE

Pretty In Pink Spa Studio
10

STRATEGIES

Building relationships with
distributors for business success
13

Incorporating "medi" into spas:
Part One
16

Building a fabric of trust
for client loyalty
20

Sanctuary Day Spas:
a case study of the
spa-supplier connection
22

16



BEAUTY*marks*

Hot products for
summer beauty
26

FRESH*&new*

New products, tools and
equipment for your spa
28

SOUL*to sole*

Mary van Praag
30

THE BUSINESS OF PEOPLE



What is the single, most important part of your business? For most of us, it comes down to the people. We have clients, employees, consultants, suppliers, distributors, the media, colleagues, and friends and family that are the building blocks of what makes our business, and ourselves, successful.

These relationships all need to be cared for, enjoyed, explored and developed. The savvy spa owner knows every relationship is unique, and all

are equally important to the overall success of their spa.

This issue of *Spa Inc.* sheds some light on some of these relationships, and ways to build strong ties that are mutually beneficial. From the tailored services built around the mother-daughter relationships at Pretty in Pink Spa (p. 10), to the very strategic distributor relationship management at Sanctuary Day Spas across southern Ontario (p. 22), spa managers know it takes more than a menu of services, tools and products to nurture the very best business.

Our team at *Spa Inc.* relies on our relationships with spa owners, managers, distributors, suppliers, consultants, and supporters to bring the top information on the Canadian spa market to our readers throughout the year. We benefit incredibly from the relationships we form, and our magazine, website, blog and other media would simply not be possible without those strong ties.

So, take the time to enjoy and evolve your relationships with the people that matter for your spa. And please don't hesitate to reach out to us at *Spa Inc.* – we're always eager to get to know another spa friend.

Happy springtime!

Heather Ednie



Check us out online @SpaMagInc

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JANE IREDALE TO RECEIVE VISIONARY AWARD



Jane Iredale, founder, president and CEO of Iredale Mineral Cosmetics, will be presented the 2014 ISPA Visionary Award during the annual ISPA Conference & Expo in Las Vegas, in October. Iredale was a pioneer in the aesthetics industry, as the first to offer a full line of makeup that is good for the skin, and the

first to offer physicians makeup to be used to enhance patients' experience post-procedures.

"Jane has been a supporter and leader of the spa industry since day one," says ISPA President Lynne McNees. "She has made great strides in reaching women of all ages and nationalities and working to improve their self-confidence."

The ISPA Visionary Award is presented annually to someone who has made significant contributions to the definition and positive movement of health and wellness over a lifetime career in the spa industry.

"It's hard to find the words to express how honoured I am to receive this award, particularly from an organization that I have always respected so highly," says Iredale.

NEW PARTNERSHIP REDEFINING BEAUTY

Canadian-made skincare line Face Addiction has partnered with AboutFace, a Canadian charity that promotes the importance of self-confidence and uniqueness, instead of physical perfection. The partnership demonstrates a shared desire to challenge current perceptions of beauty and takes aim at promoting a positive self-image and confidence among all Canadians, beginning with healthy skin.

Founded in 1985, AboutFace promotes mental and emotional well-being of individuals with facial differences through social and peer support, information and educational programs. Every year, more than 10,000 babies are born with facial birth defects in Canada, and another 50,000 Canadians acquire a facial disfigurement as a result of accident or disease. In total, over 1.5 million Canadians are living with facial differences, which can lead to low self-esteem, social rejection and isolation.

Through this partnership, events will be organized benefiting AboutFace.

CARING FOR THE BODY AND THE PLANET

Spa-goers can now pamper themselves knowing they are contributing to the health and well-being of Mother Earth. Balanced Guru has launched its Giving Back Program, which offers customized limited edition product collections that are designed to assist non-profit organizations to sell and fund their causes.

Through this program, 100% of the profits from the Balanced Guru Seva Amazon Line, featuring Rainforest Body Balm, Rainforest Body Oil, and Rainforest Body Scrub, will go toward saving the Yasuni National Park in Ecuador. Balanced Guru has partnered with Off The Mat Into The World with the aim of saving one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world, the Amazon Rainforest.



THE L SPA GETS RECOGNIZED

Canadian spa owners are among the top business minds in the country, and Leah Podollan, owner of The L Spa and Wellness Centre at the Podollan Inn & Spa Grande Prairie, demonstrates the savvy entrepreneurial spirit it takes to develop and maintain a top-rate spa. Podollan recently was included as one of 33 Alberta women entrepreneurs recognized at the Celebration of Achievement Nominee Reception of the Alberta Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) on January 30.

Podollan was nominated by the Grande Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce, and CEO Dan Percy explained the nomination. "The L Spa & Wellness Centre uses their online presence to stay connected with their clients in every way possible and boasts thousands of Facebook fans and Twitter followers... Community is important to Leah [Podollan], and her entire team. L Spa has hosted and or sponsored countless fundraisers for organizations, including the local women's shelter and youth shelter, Big Brothers Big Sisters, STARS, the Hearth & Stroke Foundation, and many more."

The only event of its kind in the province, the AWE reception brings together female entrepreneurs with representatives from government, industry, media and educational institutions.

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“ She booked the appointments and the next day my brother, the tradesman, and my boyfriend, the construction worker, headed to the spa.

And you know what? They LOVED it! ”

- Spa writer Lindsay Grummett sheds light on getting more men through the spa doors.

Spa Experiences

Spa Inc's blog: sharing personal tales, trials, and trips to the spa.

www.spainc.ca/spa-blog



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BALANCE



EAT FOR THE FUTURE

We eat for our future. A study recently published by the University of Eastern Finland suggests eating healthy foods in midlife could result in nearly a 90 per cent lower risk of dementia later. Researchers defined healthy foods as vegetables, berries and fruits, fish and unsaturated fats, and unhealthy foods as sausages, eggs, salty fish, sugars, and saturated fats.

The Alzheimer's Association recommends eating certain foods for a healthy brain, including dark-skinned fruits and vegetables, nuts, and cold-water fish. A healthy, balanced diet is an important part of any wellness program.

SKIN CANCER RATES ON THE RISE

The incidence of skin cancer among middle-aged people is on a steady rise, bringing to light the need to take preventative measures before enjoying the summer's sun this year. A Mayo Clinic study published in January found that for both men and women, 40 to 60 years old, the incidence of skin cancer increased nearly 80 per cent between 1970 and 2009, with women between ages 40 and 50 showing the highest rates of increase.

The study also found that the melanoma survival rates increased by seven per cent, each year of the study, possibly due to increased awareness and screenings resulting in cancer detection at earlier stages.

Take preventative steps; wear sunscreen daily and reapply throughout the day, when possible avoid direct skin exposure to the sun, know your skin and conduct self-exams, and consult a dermatologist regularly.





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Pretty in Pink

SPA STUDIO

BY LINDSAY GRUMMETT

Tucked into the quiet community of Oakville, Ontario is a spa where guests munch on sweet treats and sit in perfectly pink robes while waiting for a pedicure or, perhaps, a chocolate face mask. They talk about pop culture, their social circle and who's dating who. While much of this is typical in spas across the country, there's one big difference: the guests are young girls and this spa is just for them.

THE A-HA MOMENT

Pretty in Pink Spa Studio was developed as a spa specifically for young girls, tweens and teens. Owner and founder, Sonia Imerti, is a mother of two who says she was inspired to create an age-appropriate spa environment after she unknowingly brought her young daughter, Sofia, to a spa with a strict "no children" policy.

"She said, 'Mommy, if you ever take me again can you make sure it's where I'm allowed,'" says Imerti. "That was an a-ha

moment. I thought, you're right; there should be a place where you can go to do this because girls love this too, especially with their moms."

Imerti spent the next three years researching kid spas in North America and noticed a substantial gap in the Canadian market. In 2011, she was finally ready and opened Pretty in Pink in the upper-class community of Oakville located approximately 30 minutes from Toronto.

IT'S A FEELING

With a name like Pretty in Pink, first time spa-goers might expect a candy-coated wonderland splashed in fuchsia and rose. Instead, Imerti's created a stylish spa atmosphere perfect for both mom and daughter. In the main space, the walls are painted in demure colours with a bold stripe to accent the elegance. Pops of colour appear everywhere from the light fixtures to the foot baths.

"My place is not pink," says Imerti. "It's





just how pink makes you feel.”

The spa setting is chic, encouraging and positive. Her wall of inspiration, located in the pedicure area, showcases quotes she’s collected over the years like “No one is perfect, that is why pencils have erasers” and “Little girls with dreams become women with vision.”

“We’re creating an environment that’s inspiring and builds self esteem,” she says.

PACKAGED APPEAL

Pretty in Pink offers a range of natural spa services and themed packages in a chemical-free environment. The packages



AMBIANCE

range from “Besties Day” to “Teen Dream” to “Mom and Daughter Day at the Spa,” and Imerti says the last package is the most popular.

The mom and daughter day starts with relaxing side-by-side facials as well as light shoulder massages. The facials are followed by a “Signature Pink Manicure” for mom and a “Mini Manicure” for daughter. Champagne flutes filled with pink lemonade, pink robes, and a photo keepsake are just some of the little details that make the day extra special.

Pretty in Pink will often modify the packages depending on the guest’s needs says Imerti.

“Some moms will have Shellac nails and ask for pedicures instead or they’ll ask to bring two daughters and we can do that. We just want you to come and have that great bonding time with your daughter.”

MAKING MOMS STRESS LESS

Birthday party packages are also available and come with themes such as “Lovely in Lavender” and “Gorgeous in Green.” Each weekend, Pretty in Pink hosts three to four spa parties which require a minimum of six girls, but have been as big as 15.

Even during the larger parties, the spa environment stays as it should: serene and relaxing.

“We’re playing their choice of music and we have videos going on in the background, but we really keep that spa environment,” says Imerti.

Although the spa has two party rooms, Imerti never hosts two birthdays simultaneously.

“It’s kind of like two brides sharing the same hall. We want each girl to know it’s all about her,” she says.

The birthday packages have been very successful since the spa’s opening. Everything from the invitations to signature cupcakes are provided by the spa, and it’s this attention to detail that brings girls back year after year.

“We have girls who have celebrated their birthday for the third year in a row. One year they might get ‘Pretty in Pink’ and the next they’ll get ‘Gorgeous in Green.’”

For mom, it’s the simplicity of the



experience that makes her return to Pretty in Pink. The spa’s dedication to detail lets her sit back and enjoy the moments she’ll miss sooner than she knows and Imerti considers that the biggest compliment of all.

“The number one piece of feedback we get for parties is, ‘Thank you so much, that was the most stress-free experience!’”

Imerti’s received such a positive response to Pretty in Pink that she recently decided to expand the brand through franchising. Imerti’s first franchise location will launch in Ontario and if it’s successful she plans to continue expanding across Canada and into the U.S.

“This is all new to me. It’s a dream I didn’t even think I had the potential to dream,” she says.

Imerti says she’s not looking for mass immediate expansion and is instead taking her time to find the perfect franchisee for partnership.

“I’m looking for the right person, the right fit,” she says. “At the end of the day it’s my reputation and my brand. I take that very, very seriously.” **S**

PRETTY IN PINK SPA STUDIO

OPENED: 2011

SIZE: 1,700 square-feet

NUMBER OF TREATMENT
ROOMS: 1 treatment room/
2 party rooms

NUMBER OF STAFF: 8

RETAIL: Eminence, 100% Pure





STRATEGIES

IN GOOD COMPANY

A solid relationship with the right distributor can mean less stress and more success

BY SAREEMA HUSAIN

For the savvy spa owner, a healthy relationship with the right distributor can translate directly into increased sales, not to mention reduced stress. Find the right distributor to meet your spa's needs and enjoy one-stop access to a variety of product lines, training and marketing support material to accentuate your clients' experiences at the spa and dramatically increase your retail sales.

Distributors play the role of the middleman between manufacturers and spas and are vital to the functioning of a market economy. Spa personnel often choose to work through distributors for a multitude of reasons including an abundance of extra services, marketing materials and a much more cost-effective method to buy supplies.

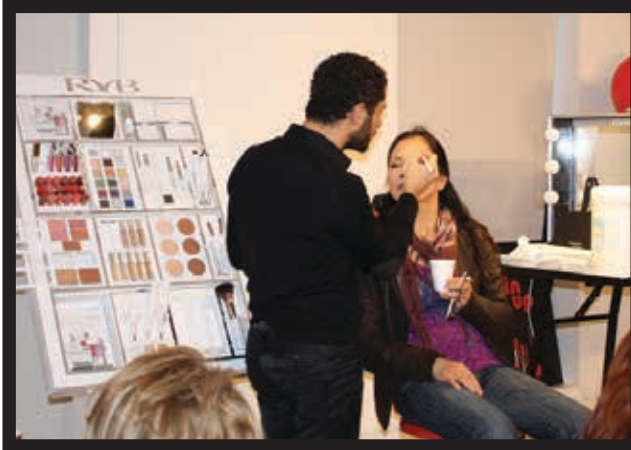
The conveniences of working through a distributor are many. The simplicity of buying all products from one main channel, the ease of checking on multiple orders through one contact, smaller shipping costs, and general aid in miscellaneous chores are all deciding factors for working with a distributor.

Unlike wholesalers, distributors take a much more active role in the business and can take much of the workload off a spa's shoulders such as handling payments, educating resellers about new products, and even providing services such as contract negotiation and warranties. Ultimately, distributors can help a spa grow expediently in the industry.

CHOOSING A DISTRIBUTOR

There are many things a spa should consider when looking for the right distributor. It is essential that the distributor and spa share the same vision for their business. When a distributor is educated about your needs, they

STRATEGIES



Intercosmetics hosts training sessions for aestheticians and spa owners looking to upgrade their skills, learn a new technique or learn more about one of the distributor's leading skincare lines.



understand what is important to help your business grow. Spa personnel should make it a priority to familiarize themselves with the distributor's policies, availability, and how they communicate.

Partnering with distributors that are very involved in the industry is the smart choice. Look for distributors that are well established, belong to professional organizations, attend trade shows, and are always actively researching about new products and trends. Most importantly, always check that the distributor is authorized by the manufacturer to sell the product. This ensures you are receiving fresh, top-quality products and you can protect your investments by having full warranty in case of any defects.

One thing spas tend to hone in on is the marketing materials a distributor offers. "One of the biggest advantages of working with distributors is the marketing materials they can provide; posters, marketing on social media, handouts, and samples are always a great plus," says Angela Bishop from Remedy Facial Bar and Spa, in Halifax, Nova Scotia. "When looking for a distributor, we usually go by the product line, however, we'd like to see more intensive training for products. Classes and hands-on training as opposed to pamphlets and DVDs are always great."

Intercosmetics stays on top of business by contributing to the education process. "We work hard to keep ourselves ahead of new trends, new industry developments, and new knowledge that comes through with that development," says Analia Ramirez. "We do a lot of research to make sure the products we represent are safe and we make sure to educate our customers how to properly use the products. We're aware of Health Canada regulations and board regulations, and provide this knowledge to our customers."

Though most spas prioritize the product lines when choosing distributors, it is a good idea to see what else they offer and browse through their other product lines. Most people work through distributors for the convenience of a one-stop shop. Those who opt for the manufacturer also miss out on the backup training that comes with the products.

While manufacturers can only give you information about that one line they produce, distributors have a variety of lines so they can provide spas with a number of brands, price comparisons, and marketing strategies for the products. This is why it's important to look for a distributor that will support your business by presenting new products, new product launches, events, and



Distributors like Intercosmetics host seminars on everything from nail technology, makeup artistry and airbrush makeup to advanced skincare techniques and spa retailing.

having a diverse range of products.

Sally Sue from Soluzione Spa Products believes product mix is key. "Product mix is very important because there are so many different products lines out there. There are pros and cons of every single product line and everyone in your market is looking for something different so it's important to offer many different lines and keep introducing new ones as well."

A WIN-WIN RELATIONSHIP

In the end, you want a distributor that is very involved with spa life and a company that you can see yourself having a lasting relationship with.

Kate Kaptur, manager at distributor Euro Essentials, says good communication makes close connections in business. "We are very much involved in the life of our customers, the spas and salons, so we continue meeting with them on a monthly or weekly basis, depending on what their needs are. We are aware of issues and problems and we try to help resolve them. We have a very close connection with our customers, the spas. We also try to conform to their schedules and be available 24/7 even after hours and on weekends, if that is when they're free."

A successful relationship requires consistent communication and spas will receive greater support from distributors who are always available. It eliminates issues such as back orders and not being able to reach customer service, both annoying hindrances that can be detrimental for business.

In the end, fostering a strong relationship with a distributor can become the foundation for your spa's success. **S**

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PART ONE

INCORPORATING MEDI into SPAS

*Part One:
the bad and the ugly*



Dr. Diane Wong, MD, is a cosmetic physician, and owner and founder of Glow Medi Spa in Toronto. Her focus is on non-surgical cosmetic treatments and enhancements such as cosmetic injections, lasers, and skin treatments.

BY DR. DIANE WONG

Many spas have considered incorporating or have already incorporated medical spa treatments into their existing menu of services. The lure of all the potential benefits have outshone the reality of the risks and liabilities. It is imperative, however, to closely examine the drawbacks of becoming involved in medical spa treatments.

In this first part of a two-part series, we will examine the incorporation of laser treatments which are now in widespread use throughout spas and salons. In the second part, we will evaluate the incorporation of injectable treatments such as botox and dermal filler treatments. Keep in mind that other skin treatments such as chemical peels, microdermabrasion, and cosmeceuticals can also create short- and long-term complications, especially pigmentation issues.



WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF LASER TREATMENTS?

The risks of laser treatments are not trivial and cannot be overlooked. Unfortunately, one of the most common complications is burns from laser hair removal (performed with either a laser or IPL machine) which can lead to serious problems. Temporary problems include prolonged discomfort or pain, swelling, redness, blisters, infection, and discolouration. Permanent problems can include scarring, or hyper or hypopigmentation (darker or lighter discolouration of the skin).

Lasers or IPL are often used to treat other skin conditions such as sun spots, pigmentation, redness, rosacea, or spider veins. Photofacials or photorejuvenation

carry additional risks. If a suspicious skin lesion is not recognized, a potentially harmful medical condition, such as skin cancer, can be left undiagnosed. Also, laser vein treatments can cause even more serious complications such as vascular impairment leading to poor circulation in the foot, wounds, infections, ulcers, burns, scarring, etc.

WHY DO COMPLICATIONS OCCUR?

Most complications with lasers occur due to inaccurate skin typing, choosing the wrong laser, inappropriately treating tanned skin, not screening for contraindications (such as use of certain medications), and laser malfunction.

Most complications are preventable



THE LURE OF ALL THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS HAVE OUTSHONE THE REALITY OF THE RISKS AND LIABILITIES

with adequate training. Unfortunately, laser companies usually provide only a brief training on how to use the laser but much more in-depth training is required. A thorough knowledge of laser physics and skin physiology, typing, and reactions are crucial to prevent complications. For example, too often there is a misconception that an IPL machine can be used at low settings with all skin types and is not as dangerous as a laser. In general, this is not true, especially with darker skinned or tanned clients.

Purchasing appropriate lasers and ensuring regular servicing and maintenance of the laser is also very important in preventing laser problems. Lasers and IPL machines can vary tremendously in their safety and efficacy.

Negligence, ignorance and substandard technologies are therefore common contributing factors leading to laser burns and resultant lawsuits.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS INVOLVED WITH LASERS?

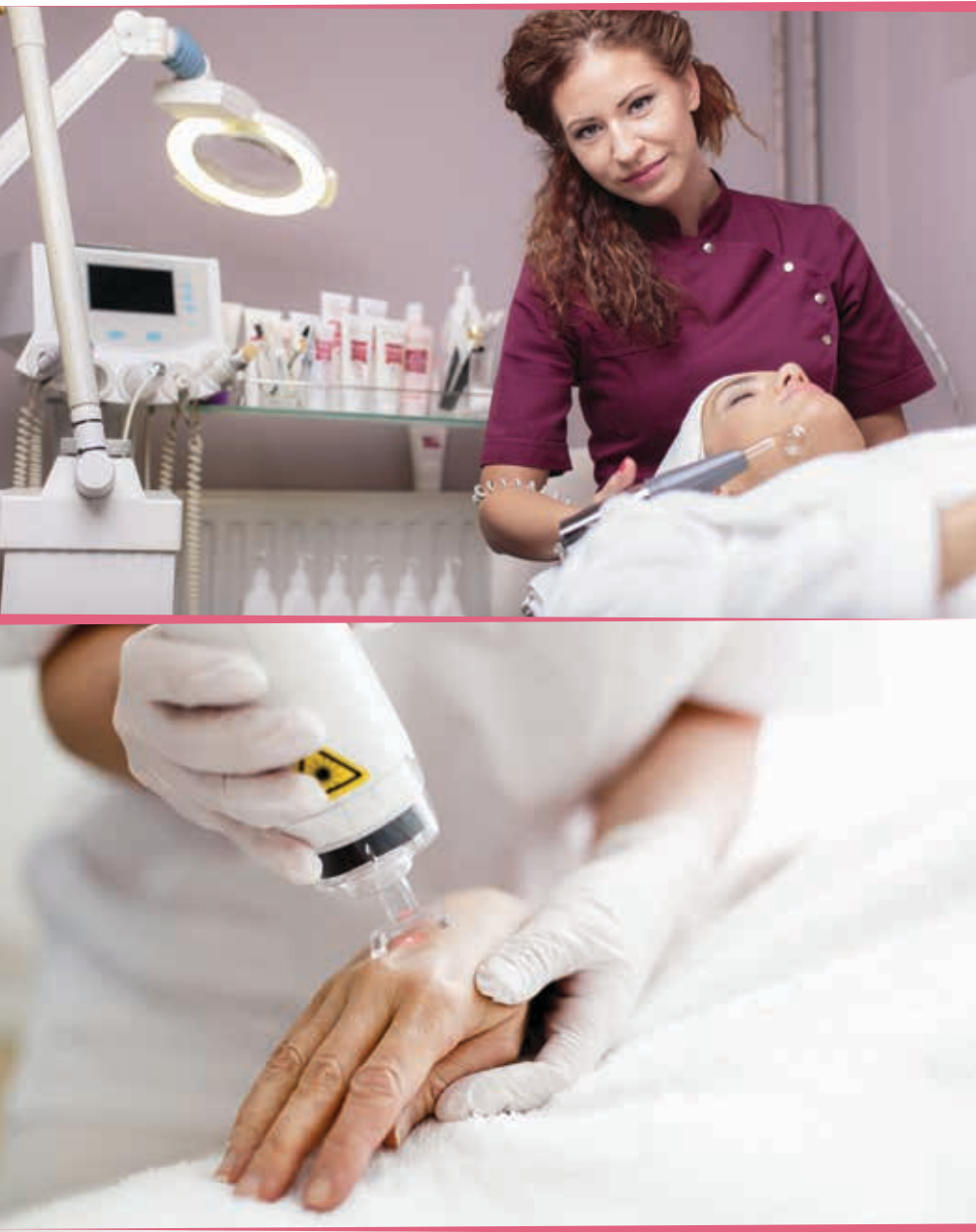
Lasers are not only expensive to purchase, they are also expensive to maintain. A good IPL or laser can cost approximately \$50,000 to \$150,000 each. There are cheaper lasers available but often the quality and safety features are not optimal. There are often consumable costs as well. Warranty cost is around \$5,000 to \$15,000 per laser, per year. Keep in mind that usually several pieces of equipment are required. Don't be fooled into thinking one laser can do it all.

A high volume of laser treatments is required to off-set the high costs involved. You may therefore need to add advertising or promotional costs to the overall price tag. Also add in extra insurance coverage, staff wages, air-cooling system and/or extra ventilation, and space allocation.

WHAT ARE THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF LASER TREATMENTS?

In Canada, it seems that anyone can own and/or operate a laser. Lasers are in many malls, spas, and salons throughout the country. Many people have already been harmed by laser injury. It is predictable that further damage will ensue since many unqualified individuals are now buying and operating lasers.

STRATEGIES



centres. Can spas not specialized in medical treatments compete with the many medical clinics available which are run and operated by the top cosmetic physicians in the city? These medical clinics typically have the highest quality staff and equipment as well as a wide diversity of treatments.

Also consider, if you bring in lasers into your existing spa, will you be hiring new staff to conduct these treatments or will your existing aestheticians be operating these high-tech machines? Who will be training them and how will they be trained? Who will be supervising them? What happens if complications occur? If you do not have the best laser technicians or lasers, you will not be providing the best service to your clients. Note too that although your original spa services may maintain their top quality, the reputation of your spa may suffer if your new services do not meet or exceed industry standards.

In summary, risk, liability, cost, and long-term implications should be assessed prior to incorporating medical aesthetic treatments into a spa. Consider that a good alternate may be to set up a referral system with a local physician with whom you trust. Or develop a good working relationship with someone with laser expertise so that you may ask for guidance if needed. Educating yourself is the best starting point in any new endeavour. **S**

indiscriminately. It seems past time that rules and regulations on laser use should be implemented.

WHAT ABOUT LIABILITY OF LASER TREATMENTS?

Liability is a huge issue and one that a spa should consider before getting involved with medical treatments. It can take only one lawsuit to find out the financial implications of conducting high-risk laser treatments. Training and competence of the technician, following

established policies and procedures set out by the spa or clinic director, along with safety and appropriateness of the equipment are paramount factors in liability claims. Check with your insurance provider to make sure you have adequate coverage before you incorporate any medical treatments.

WHAT ARE OTHER CONSIDERATIONS?

Competition in the medical spa industry is now huge, especially in large urban



NEXT ISSUE

Part 2:

Incorporating injectables such as botox and dermal filler treatments into your spa

Who knew something so powerful could be so gentle on sensitive skin?

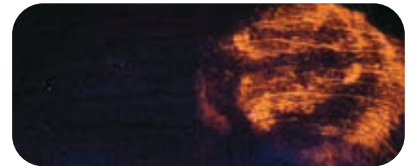
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BUILDING A FABRIC OF TRUST

*One tiny flaw can ruin your entire tapestry
– and send customers elsewhere*



BY VIVIENNE O'KEEFFE

Vivienne O'Keeffe, President and CEO of Spa Profits Consulting Inc., is an expert in designing successful spa concepts, specializing in working with owners to create profitable spas.

If you're like most spa owners, you've spent tens (or even hundreds) of thousands of dollars to create a facility that's both visually stunning and an efficiency expert's dream – and likely even more to marketing your business. As a result of this massive spending, you expect to receive a correspondingly impressive return on investment.

True?

But what about your staff? How much have you invested in training them in the most elementary aspects of human relations: trust, understanding, warmth, empathy, compassion, awareness, and anticipating their clients' basic needs?

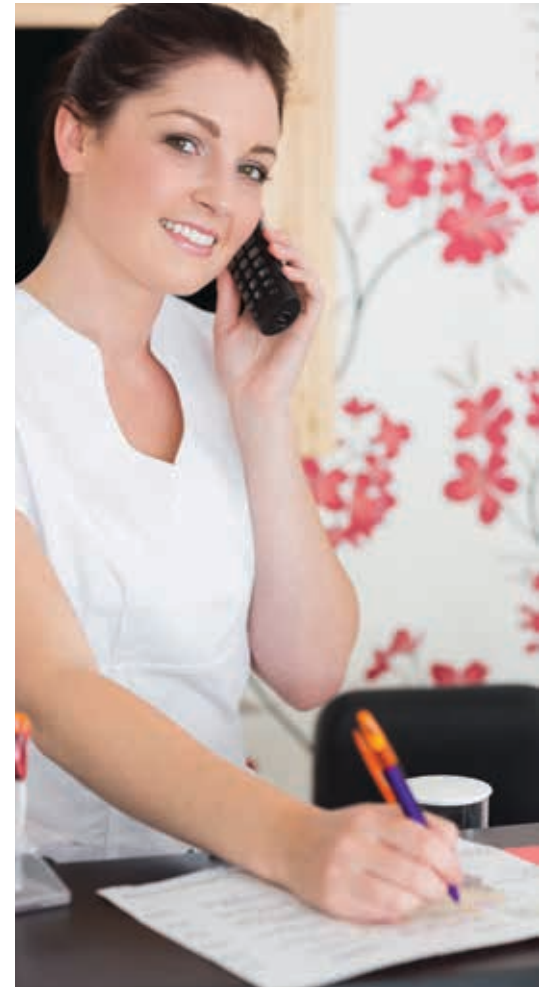
Armed with the knowledge that spas tend to attract clients who may be experiencing major life traumas including death, loss, illness, or emptiness, how well can your staff empathize with first-time visitors? Do they know that while they are rattling off instructions to guests, the new arrivals are probably familiarizing themselves with their new surroundings, wondering if they can trust this facility, and forming unconscious decisions about whether they'll ever come back?

Think of each member of your spa team as a thread in a rich tapestry making up the total spa experience. To ensure that every visit provides guests with the restorative effect you are striving to deliver, each must combine in an interlocking commitment to the quality, consistency and detail. Just one flaw in the tapestry of minutiae that makes up a memorable spa experience for your clients, and those many dollars and long hours devoted to achieving your standards of service and turning a tidy profit are all for naught.

SUCCESS IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

The spa business is based upon a carefully orchestrated series of processes designed to de-stress the recipient and allow the body's innate restorative abilities to be revitalized. The weave of a total spa experience is the compounded effect of several minute and not-so-minute details. In the complex tapestry of operational issues and treatment deliveries, threads can unravel.

You can bet that clients notice – and condemn – these frayed edges.



Loyal clients will complain; the rest will go elsewhere. More difficult to quantify are the would-be clients who switch spas because of a disappointing (which usually means underwhelming) first contact with your business.

Many spa owners and operators are unaware of the number of opportunities missed every day. You can have a beautiful website or brochure, but if the potential client calls and receives a cool, stand-offish reception at the front desk or on the phone, or is simply not greeted with

THE SPA BUSINESS IS BASED UPON A CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED SERIES OF PROCESSES DESIGNED TO DE-STRESS THE RECIPIENT AND ALLOW THE BODY'S INNATE RESTORATIVE ABILITIES TO BE REVITALIZED.

enough warmth and kindness on a busy day, the opportunity is lost. In a high-touch, personal industry such as ours, it doesn't take much for the client to feel he or she is not welcome.

Are your staff uncertain or confused (when asked) about what a treatment consists of, or what it costs? Has a guest ever received incorrect information leading to embarrassment later? Do your staff understand confidentiality?

Any number of incidents like these could cause a client (real or potential) to question the level of skill at your spa and wonder 'Would I trust my well-being to this operation?'

In an environment where every need and want should be anticipated, something as seemingly innocuous as a washroom lacking tissue can be enough to fatally wrinkle your carefully woven cloth.

Put yourself in the guest's position and you'll realize that stepping into a high-end spa for the first time can be a daunting experience. Imagine a 50-something woman asking the beautiful young lady behind the counter about anti-wrinkle treatments, or an anti-aging product. Believe it or not, I've heard young frontline staff respond by saying they don't know about this type of treatment because they've never experienced it! And I've heard it more than once.

Yikes!

WHAT IS THE RIGHT ANSWER? WILL YOUR STAFF COME UP WITH ONE?

Anxiety – the very thing a spa should overcome – is amplified by a receptionist or concierge who's hurried, cool, or

snobby, or does not display the elementary aspects of human relations I mentioned at the beginning of this article.

The irony is, the most uncomfortable visitors are usually the ones who stand to benefit the most from their experiences. But first they need to be made to feel comfortable with the reception and processes involved from the moment they enter.

As you read this, you could be recalling many instances in your spa, all of which appeared harmless in your team's busy day and seemingly had no negative client response. But each in its own way detracted from the spa experience you so painstakingly planned.

Teach your staff how to identify the subtle, telltale signs of embarrassment, shyness, fear, and uncertainty, such as a short 'yes' answer to the question, 'Did you enjoy your spa experience?' This will not only provide your team with the ability to serve your guests and clients more effectively, but also provide them with a vital life skill which can enrich every aspect of their lives.

The frontline team can be particularly busy dealing with multiple telephone calls, greeting and checking clients in and out of the spa, or assisting an embarrassed husband to select a gift certificate for his spouse, but they need always – and I mean always – to be calm, efficient, warm, and attentive. As leaders, it is our role and responsibility to lead by example and to teach our teams how to handle such situations with calmness and certainty.

If training is not your forte, hire an expert. The additional benefit of bringing in an outsider is that someone less

Our growing industry will continue to provide an antidote to the stresses and strains assailing today's time-pressured men and women. It will grow stronger if every spa owner and operator commits to teaching all their team members the importance of:

- Trust
- Understanding
- Warmth (but not familiarity)
- Empathy
- Compassion
- Awareness
- The ability to anticipate basic needs

www.spaprofits.com

familiar with your spa will notice little things you and your team may have been overlooking because you see them every day.

Above all, emphasize attention to detail. Neglect the little things, and there will certainly be a brighter, more carefully woven tapestry hanging just around the corner to attract the clients you had, or could have had.

If you don't personally have the time to obsess about the details, you may need to employ someone who does. And you should. It'll be worth it. **S**



STRATEGIES





Sanctuary

DAY SPA

A case study of the spa-supplier connection

BY LINDSAY GRUMMETT

Sanctuary Day Spas has been on the Ontario spa scene since 1999. The Sanctuary experience includes a full range of spa and aesthetic services. Over the years, the name has grown into one of the most trusted and recognized in the industry.

Allan Skok, president of Sanctuary, oversees six spa locations and works closely with his managers and suppliers who are fastidious about decisions that could impact the business. The following examines Sanctuary's approach to product and equipment purchases and their relationship with distributors.

PRODUCTS AND MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

"Every week I get at least two or three emails and phone calls saying, 'Hey, we've got the product that's going to change your life and change your business,'" says Skok.

The introduction of a new skincare line or technology can be advantageous to a spa's business strategy, however it's critical to research a variety of options and understand the needs of the business and its clients. At

Sanctuary, a medical committee meets once a month to review business and sales.

"We sit down, look at the trends, we look at our clients, we look at demand and make our decision based on that," says Skok. "We're paying attention to our internal customers, what they're looking for and what they are requesting."

Although the committee meets often, Skok says they don't introduce new medical equipment frequently because of the cost.

"The price tag for medical equipment can be anywhere from \$15,000 to \$150,000. For me, it's very scary," he adds.

Luckily, Sanctuary has a surgeon on the team who is able to offer a reputable opinion on how profitable or useful a particular piece of medical equipment might be. Skok says that even with an expert, Sanctuary sticks with distributors it can trust, like Euro Essentials Spa Products or Cosmecor, and will only branch out to companies with a strong reputation in the spa world. Even still, he says there's a certain "leap of faith" element to these big purchases.

"In one case, we bought a machine and

NEGOTIATING *the supply side*



Spa suggestions from president of Sanctuary Day Spas and Leading Spas of Canada, Allan Skok

- 1 Some suppliers offer free shipping and some don't. You should take that into consideration while shopping around and remember that it needs to be negotiated up front.
- 2 What are your terms after the initial order: 30, 60, or 90 days? Are you paying COD (cash on delivery) every single time? That's probably not the relationship you want.
- 3 When purchasing new equipment: buyer beware. If it's not coming from a well-known or reputable distributor, you probably shouldn't look at it.
- 4 You can't just go to a trade show and buy the first laser you see. You have to speak to people. Visit medi spas and ask questions because the technology is being used somewhere else.
- 5 At the end of the day, you're selling these services and products to your guests, so if you're not convinced, there's no way you'll convince your guests.



within two years the company was sold. They wouldn't service our product anymore unless we purchased new product," recalls Skok.

EXTRA SUPPORT AND SERVICES

Melissa Bennett, the general manager at Sanctuary's Vaughan and Newmarket locations, says Sanctuary has benefited from aligning with suppliers or distributors rather than a particular piece of medical equipment or skincare product.

"We get monthly feedback from a couple of our suppliers telling us how much we've bought and sold. Some suppliers give us rebates, cash back, and product incentives," says Bennett. "There are so many different products out there right now and a lot of them are fantastic, but the spa's bottom line is most important."

Sanctuary chooses suppliers and distributors that offer excellent customer support and engaging staff training. For example, if a cream is past its expiration date or a customer has a reaction to a product, Sanctuary staff will look to the supplier to take the product back or give them a credit. Allan says it's imperative to discuss these scenarios with

distributors before getting involved with a new company.

He explains, "It's a relationship. We have suppliers that we've been purchasing from for 15 years. Like any good business relationship, we receive very good payment terms and get really great training – that's the ideal scenario."

TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

When deciding on a distributor, Skok says the most important feature to consider for both skincare and medical equipment suppliers is the training they offer.

"A huge component is training and certification, especially when it comes to lasers because there's really no regulation in Ontario, or Canada, for that matter," he says.

Training not only adds a level of professionalism, it's also essential in providing quality service and preventing harm to guests. At Sanctuary, all laser technicians are trained, certified, and then recertified annually.

Skincare training is also important and Sanctuary has developed a strong relationship with its providers over the past 15 years.

"Many of our skincare lines have



monthly training. We call it our 'power hour.' They come in, answer all our questions and if there's a new product or a special, they'll talk about that too," says Bennett.

Sopar Canada is a Canadian distributor specializing in European skin and body care products. Skok regards Sopar as one of the best in the business in terms of training. The company has three training centres across Canada where aestheticians can improve their product knowledge.

New employees to the spa are often sent off-site to the distributors' training centres for extensive education.

"Normally, it's a couple of days: one day of product knowledge and one day of practical," says Bennett. "That way, our new employees have the full training and then we do upkeep at our monthly power hours."

This type of intense training is important to a spa's bottom line and will impact the aesthetician's ability to interact with the customer.

Susan Masse, national sales director at Sopar, describes a typically training session: "They need to practice and receive the treatment they're going to sell. We train and mentor them on how to

do a proper consultation, how to properly diagnose the skin and how to do a treatment plan."

SPA-SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIP

Sanctuary Day Spas has spent 15 years forging relationships with spa suppliers and product distributors. Bennett admits that the company's size and time in the industry accounts for some of the extras

and add-ons it receives, but also maintains that because the market is saturated with beauty businesses and suppliers are grasping at spas, there's an opportunity for smaller or newer companies to negotiate pricing and perks.

"As for what to purchase and how much money to spend," says Skok, "that comes down to the business model." **S**



STOCK UP FOR *warmer weather*

As the weather gets warmer, the needs of your spa guests will start to change. Ensuring your spa is stocked with the best products for the season will help improve client satisfaction as well as the sales per transaction.

BY LINDSAY GRUMMETT

SUMMER SPA TREATMENTS

Summer is the season for shorts and sandals and after a long winter, women across Canada are ready to pack up their parkas and pull out the poolside gear.

Pedicures, body treatments, and various hair removal options are some of the most popular spa treatments in the summer and Nicole Verzyden, managing director of Face Addiction Skin Care, suggests stocking up on retail items like foot and body butters as well as polishes that complement these treatments.

“People think of cuticle lotions and creams just for the fingernails but they can definitely use those on the toes as well for a little touch-up in between treatments,” says Verzyden.

She suggests offering a complimentary product with services to increase focus on your retail section. For example, a travel-sized foot cream would be the perfect extra for a pedicure and a mini exfoliant is a great add-on to any summer body treatments. This is an easy way to introduce clients to the spa’s retail items and encourage future purchases.

SKIN HEALTH

Krista Francescut, spa manager of Toronto’s Sweetgrass Spa by Verity says the one must-have ingredient for summer skin care is Vitamin C which is praised for its high levels of antioxidants.

“The antioxidants prevent free radicals from the sun’s rays from interfering with the skin cell,” says Francescut. Without such intervention, the free radicals will cause collagen depletion and advanced signs of aging.

“Women will make purchases based on an informed decision. If you can tell me why I need to have the Vitamin C serum to help control sun damage, then I’m going to be engaged,” adds spa director Monique Joustra.

Every client goes home with a prescription form that offers the clients information about the items that were used during their spa treatment as well as how to use any items purchased from the spa’s retail section. This is to ensure the client is using the products in the proper way.

“We find if there are too many products they don’t know what the order is,” says Joustra.

SUN PROTECTION

Spa clients are spending more time outdoors in the summer, which means they need a powerful SPF... or an aloe (if they forgot the first item mentioned). But for clients who are steering clear of the sun, there are alternative retail options that offer a great glow without the negative effects.

Sweetgrass Spa offers a treatment called Buff and Sun Kissed. This sunless tanning treatment starts with an exfoliation followed by a Swiss shower and the sunless tanning application. Guests can choose the full body option or just the legs for skirt season. The spa also sells the sunless tanning product to guests so they can continue that summer glow after they leave the spa.

“By offering sunless tanning treatments at the spa and the corresponding homecare, we can supplement our retail income at the spa and our treatment revenue,” says Verzyden. ■



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4 Trind Extra Moisturizing
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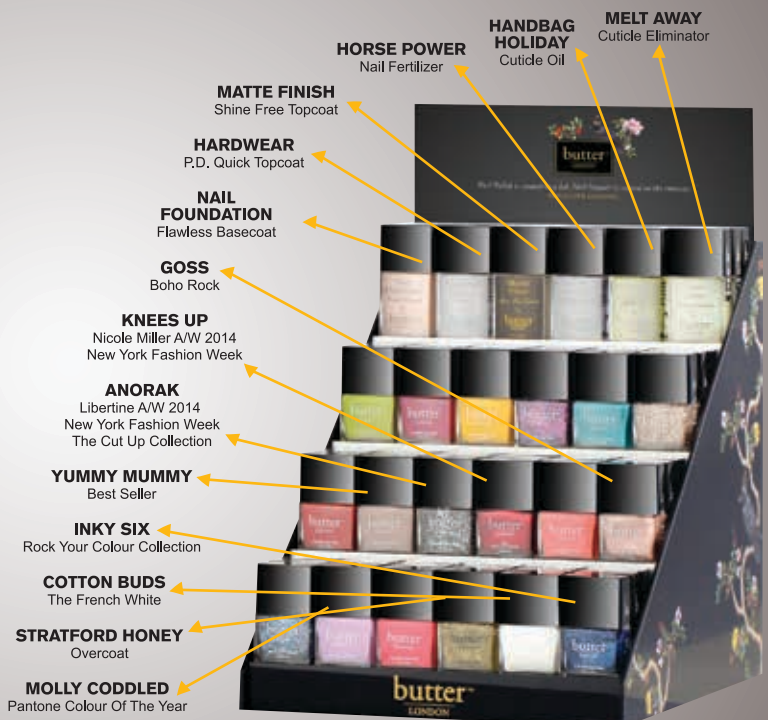
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DERMALOGICA Precleanse Wipes are a new, more convenient take on the company's original Precleanse formula. The wipes dissolve stubborn waterproof makeup with the help of ingredients like aloe and apricot kernel oil. Apple amino acids loosen surface debris, allowing the product to work more effectively. The cleansing wipes allow deep penetration for professional cleansing results. www.dermalogica.ca



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FOOTLOGIX Pedicure File is a salon-quality file that won't peel or tear nails like traditional metal files. Made with high-quality stainless steel and encased in a soft-touch frame and handle, this nail file is a perfect tool for at-home pedicures or as part of a daily foot care routine. The double-sided file is both coarse and fine.
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JAMES READ Sleep Mask Tan is an overnight self tanner that gives the skin a subtle glow by morning. The sleep mask is infused with ingredients like aloe vera, red algae and hyaluronic acid to soothe the skin and aid in moisture retention. The product can be applied one to two times a week, and the formula is so lightweight it can also be used in the morning for those looking to achieve a subtle tan later that day.
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www.sibubeaauty.com

MARY VAN PRAAG

BY THERESA ROGERS

In November, beauty giant Coty Inc. announced the appointment of Mary van Praag to general manager of OPI, one of its signature global brands. She stepped into the role on January 1 this year, and will lead OPI's growth and expansion. Van Praag successfully led Coty's mass channel sales organization in the U.S. for three years before serving as the general manager of Coty Canada.

At OPI, it's all about the colours – more than 200 creatively named shades – and van Praag says it will continue to be the lifeblood of the business. She plans to bring passion to her new position, with continued momentum and growth on the agenda for the next five years.

In addition to being an active mentor in the industry, van Praag is a cyclist, loves to travel, entertain, read, and always has perfectly manicured hands.

MY STYLE IS...

elegant but I love artisan pieces. Lida Baday is my favourite Canadian designer for work, and Rue Pigalle on Toronto's Queen West has great jewelry and accessories.

I FIND INSPIRATION IN...

the arts. I love ballet, theatre, and opera. I love to travel and explore new places (stimulated by the beauty of my surroundings).



IF I COULD INVITE ANYONE TO DINNER, IT WOULD BE...

Oprah because she has soul and changed a generation. My husband would be the one cooking!

I GOT INTO THIS BUSINESS BECAUSE...

I love product and influencing decisions.

WHAT I LOVE ABOUT THIS BUSINESS IS...

it's part left-brain, part right-brain; it's fast-paced and dynamic.

MY GO-TO OPI COLOUR IS...

GelColor in Bastille My Heart. I've been wearing OPI since I was out of college and could afford a professional service. **S**



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