



Susie's Spa Blog

Highlights from the Shanghai Spa Conference

The Turning Point Conference which I attended here in Shanghai is over. Two days of conference and a third day of workshops has come to an end. I always feel so inspired after spending time exchanging ideas with spa professionals from all over the world. The size of an event really makes a difference - the Turning Point's intimate size allows for strong connections. This year, Don Siegel, who runs the conference, also provided a real treat with a Kungfu performance by monks from the Shanghai Shaolin Temple at one evening's dinner gala.

Here is my "reader's digest summary" of what I got out of the various presentations.

Bob Henry, Architect, **International Spa Design Trends** - Seems that designing spas is more than just the physical space assigned to a spa these days. Lots of nuances and subtleties which contribute to people's health are now included. His Canyon Ranch Living project in Chicago has taken some bold steps.

Richard Dusseau, Spa Strategy Inc., **Defining the Brand Experience** - His new Nector spa brand is carefully thought out to be a product for 4 star properties, which is advertising (not PR) driven, and makes money. Bingo.

Bija Bennet, YogaAway, **The Yoga Experience. Right here. Right now.** - She made a great point that when people are stressed because of sitting all day at computers, what they may need more than a massage is movement.

Carroll Dunham, Wild Earth Nepal, **Spas and Social Responsibility** - The spa industry misses out on a real treasure if they do not involve local people with their concepts and development. Some real global good can be done by connecting with local people.

Jamie Waring, Six Senses Resorts & Spas, **A Holistic Approach to Enhancing the Bottom Line** - The story of Sonu and Eva, founders of the rapidly expanding brands behind Six Senses, is an inspiring story of what can happen when you act on your deepest passions.

Clodagh, Clodagh Design International, **Living the Spa Experience in a Changing World** - Nature is probably the greatest source of inspiration contributing to people's relaxation and health. And sometimes an exceptional photo of some spa related objects say more about a place than a photo showing all of its facilities.

Professor Marc Cohen, *RMIT University*, **Applying the Principles of TCM to Business Wellness** - With a medical degree, and two PhD's, it is no wonder he mesmerizes everyone with his ideas and vision. Particularly fascinating is how he sees the spa industry making a major contribution to raising consciousness and challenging the global spa industry to take up a global cause - such as water. How fitting.

Heather Stuart, Spa Consultants International, **Creating Day Spa Success** - With experience in opening spas for the Saudi royal family, managing the Four Seasons in Tokyo as well as consulting in Russia, she emphasizes exceeding expectations. And wisely suggests that if you can't be #1 in your category, redefine the category.

Mark Wuttke, Wuttke Group, **What Spas Can do to Capture Maximum Retail Income** - His message is important in that successful retailing in our spas might very well be the most important factor in determining whether a spa will be profitable or not. And shouldn't we carry over our successful relationship with the client in our treatment rooms to the retail sales process?

And finally, my topic, **Strategies for Internet Promotion** - I think the major points that resonated with the audience were

1. the importance of professional photography
2. the need for all spa professionals to no longer delegate their Internet strategies but jump in with both feet
3. online treatment booking is the next big thing.
4. it is smart to learn from the "big boys". Look at what companies like Starwood, St. Regis, Hyatt, Ritz Carlton, Four Seasons (all who spend millions on web research) are doing and learn from them. Thus their investment dollars are benefiting you.

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