

BUSINESS MEETINGS AT THE SPA - A POPULAR TREND



It may seem that visiting a spa is an indulgence and not something that is compatible with business meetings. However, more and more U.S. corporates and organizations are booking spas as a part of their team building and wellness education sessions.

Whereas some companies send their employees to hotel spas for meditation classes or to destination spas for tackling outdoor challenge courses, some others offer spa credits to their employees for sauna baths and private massage. An automotive group incorporated 25 minutes of spa services, such as massages, facials and manicures during breaks, as part of their business meeting at Palm Beach Marriott Singer Island Beach Resort, Florida.

According to Beth McGroarty, Research Director, Spafinder Wellness 365, **executive retreats and corporate meetings currently contribute to 4 percent of the day spa revenue.** For the hotel, resort and destination spas, business meetings account for 11 percent of the spa revenue.

Haven Spa and Eve Salon in Manhattan have organized “manicure meetings”. Recently, they held one for the staff members of Jenee Naquin, branding consultant and handbag designer. Naquin says that working moms would appreciate this because they don’t have to make any arrangements for taking care of their children when they want to get their nails done.

Sara Daly, owner of the wellness company a’chromatherapy, has taken her eight women employees many times for spa sessions. According to her, shared experiences in spa sessions - moments of quietness and tranquility and brainstorming sessions - helped to bolster the creativity and problem solving capability of the employees.

Miraval Resort and Spa in Arizona has organized sessions for a wide range of groups, including an outdoor clothing company and insurance company. Eighty percent of the leisure guests that come to Miraval are women, but corporate guests consist of an even mix of women and men. The cost of a three-day stay for a group at the resort would be as much as \$400/person/day or go up to \$700/person/day, depending on the season. Typically, corporate bookings include \$150 credit per person for involving in free-time activities or enjoying spa services. Corporate clients also come to Miraval for guided hikes, meditation sessions, lectures on how to improve communication and fitness classes.

Dena Roche, wellness speaker and TheTravelDiet.com editor, who participated in a program at Miraval says it is not right to consider spas as a place for pampering sessions and that it is more about relieving stress and promoting wellness.

There are as many as 50 spas in Las Vegas for instance that offer options such as rock climbing at Canyon Ranch and candlelight yoga at Mandarin Oriental. Pamela Haack, owner of the company Off the Beaten Strada, often organizes customized tours for small groups in Italy. Recently, she designed a tour for a women's organization by name Femprofessionals. **The tour included a significant amount of time at one of the thermal spas in Tuscany.** According to her, the spa visit was designed to blend with the main goal of the retreat which included focusing on creativity,

collaboration and inspiration.

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