

# MALAYSIAN SPA INDUSTRY LACKING QUALITY STAFF



Malaysian spa industry experiences a shortage of skilled labor. According to Association of Malaysian Spas the spa industry currently operates at 50% of the optimal manpower level. This pushes the spas to recruit from abroad, but this process is subjected to restrictions with visas and licenses for the workers. Some spas have a bad reputation and this also discourages professionals from working there.

The managing director of Energy Day Spa in the Klang Valley Ramona says that spas should be registered with an association.

The spa industry is important for the Malaysian economy and so the government takes various measures to improve it e.g. the Higher Education Ministry is said to be planning a common syllabus in schools for spa therapy to improve the skills of their students.

The spa industry is still growing but it is difficult to gauge the growth since there are many new entrants. The future is seen in diversity and creation of various niche spas, which cater for different clientele. According to a new survey conducted by Intelligent Spas, number of spas in Malaysia has grown over 200% since 2002. There are 151 spas currently operating and another 25 spas under development. According to Mandara Spa managing director Trent Munday, a small spa currently earns an average of RM1,000 per day in sales to health and conference guests.

However, it is not only the spa industry that earns money. The health tourism is also important. According to the Health Ministry, Malaysia can offer dental treatment, breast, nose and eyelid enhancement surgery as well as heart surgery. As the Health Minister said, in 2005, a total of 230,000 foreigners came to Malaysia for treatment, generating revenue of RM105mil. This was an improvement over 2004, when 175,000 patients sought treatment here and spent up to RM104mil

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