

PULSE

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Still

How Slowing Down is Gaining Momentum

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The Benefits of Stress

The fact that people are so stressed out these days may actually have a beneficial effect on the spa business. Faye Tamba,

owner of Faye Spa in London, Ontario, noted that while he is hesitant to say that the current economic crisis has actually increased business, he thinks that there has been a boost in business because of people's increased need to de-stress. "We have three registered massage therapists, and they are busy all the time," he said. "In truth, if we had three more massage therapists they would also be booked out all the time." Faye explained that because many extended medical plans in Canada cover massage, many people who may not otherwise visit a spa for stress relief do so for that reason alone. The only thing stopping Tamba from hiring another three therapists is the fact that there is a shortage of trained therapists – the demand is just so high that he simply cannot get the staff.

Having genuine, personable staff is key to helping guests feel valued and relaxed, said Tamba. "It's all about having the right staff that make clients want to come back to us. Our staff build relationships. They are good at recognizing the issues that our guests have. When the client walks in, she feels respected and we follow her every step of the way through our stay with us to ensure that she is well cared for." That's sure to make any lifestyle woe easier to handle. ■

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The Why of Stress

According to the April 2009 ISPA Snapshot Survey, 89 percent of spas that responded said that either overall wellness or stress reduction should be the primary focus of a spa's marketing message. Only 9 percent cited luxury or pampering. But to really get folks in the door, take it a step further and try to find out exactly why people are stressed and where that stress comes from, and then tailor your treatments to address specific issues. Look for local governing bodies or educational resources in your area (such as an acupuncture board or yoga school) that could provide you with some resources, and work with local healthcare providers to create custom programs and get referrals. Some examples:

- Therapists working with eating disorder patients
- Doctors who offer smoking cessation programs
- Sleep clinics
- Infertility specialists
- Cancer treatments centers
- Grief counselors

Each lifestyle issue creates stress; you can help alleviate it.

BOOKING TIME

Some clients may not even know exactly why they're feeling stressed, or what the proper treatment may be. Consider booking extra time with these clients to delve into what's bothering them, and then make recommendations to the client.