

“Redefining Wellness” 2010 NYSPA Symposium

Ellie Whalen: Founder, Sprayology



Hello - I am Ellie Whalen and I am one of the founders and owners of Sprayology. I am excited to be here and for the opportunity to discuss redefining wellness in the spa market.

First, for those of you who are unfamiliar with Sprayology, we are all about feeling better and we believe we can redefine the business of daily self care to help people feel better. We offer 21 homeopathic and 3 vitamin oral spray products for treatment, retail and resort amenities. Homeopathy uses ingredients from nature to trigger the body to heal. Homeopathy is the only branch of natural medicine regulated by the FDA and the safest of all medicines offering no side effects or contraindications.

Ok, onto wellness- to look ahead and direct the course of wellness in the spa industry we also need to look back and we need to look globally.

Over ten years ago I left my job at Christian Dior to become an entrepreneur to change the business of natural medicine. Let's say I was a little early, but times have definitely changed.

Ten years ago, TV commercials were not required to tell all of the side effects of the medicines, beauty was skin deep and most of the population had never stepped into a Wholefoods. In addition Organic products were not available in the grocery store, very few Americans could say homeopathy correctly and it was not widely accepted that Stress affects your health.

Today Globally, Homeopathy is the second most widely used medicine worldwide and Western or allopathic at 4. Wholefoods if a favorite grocer, stress is commonly accepted as a health risk, the TV warns us of scary side effects from prescription drugs and, thankfully today, better health is beautiful!

Ten years ago many spas were viewed only as pampering, a treat and pure indulgency. Today more people go to spa seeking to feel better. But they are also looking elsewhere. They look to Oprah and Doctor OZ has become wildly popular because he is sharing rational and honest information about living a more healthy and vibrant life. How do we encourage the consumer to come to spa for this?

My back round lacked any spa experience but I still choose to launch in spa because I truly believe spa can be the future of wellness. Many spas heal, but we need the consumer to relate spa to feeling better for long-term success. And we need her to adopt new behaviors to live that belief. Beauty, luxury and pampering will always draw women to spa but let's layer on more. Lets become a consistent and reliable source for wellness.

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Today’s woman is beat, burning the candle on both ends and her stress has become physical. The baby boomer feels old; she is looking for a clear and effective and ways to feel better every day.

I have participated in many wellness events and time and time again she shares with me how bad she feels and often she shares about her dissatisfaction with were doctor/patient relationship. She is seeking a plan that she can do that will help her feel better everyday ad lessen her need for traditional doctors.

The US woman is on a treadmill and she wants to get off, she just doesn’t know how. Again, let’s look globally. Currently, more than 500 million people in the world have received or are seeking homeopathic treatment for their illnesses. Homeopathy is widespread in Europe, particularly in Germany, France and Britain. Britain has a national health care system that includes homeopathic hospitals and clinics. India too, has long advocated homeopathy; the country has more than 25,000 homeopaths.

In France over 90% of the population uses homeopathy. Many cultures use homeopathy for daily and chronic health and western medicine is used only for trauma and emergency medicine. Worldwide homeopathy is used in conjunction with massage, clean eating, meditation, vitamins, yoga and often acupuncture to achieve daily wellness. In Russia the most affluent spas include an organic café, a natural pharmacist, counseling and a luxury retail area offering only health giving products. Here in the US I believe we are only addressing part of the wellness solution.

Nationally we are moving towards integrative medicine. There are more doctors supporting natural options and acknowledging massages and Acupuncture as a way to heal. In some situations acupuncture is now covered by insurance. And recently, the World Health Organization recommended that homeopathy be integrated into conventional medical practices so that health care demands worldwide will be met by the early twenty-first century.

So yes - I firmly believe in homeopathy and that homeopathy should be a healing part of Spa, weather the homeopathy is Sprayology or not, I believe it absolutely belongs and can be a critical part of spa and wellness experience as well as offer additional non-competing sources for revenue.

How do we help the US woman who is at a full-out run feel better and commit to a healthier lifestyle? Should that be our goal? Can it be our goal? Can spa heal and be a source for preventative health. Can spa be where the population goes to feel better naturally? What can we all together envision?

I helped to found Sprayology because I was very much your typical spa client. I worked too hard, partied a lot and got sick. I was on 2 asthma inhalers for over 20 years; I had

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allergies, was on antibiotics seasonally, was aging fast and never really felt good. Now I am healthier, happier and on no allopathic medicine. I will be 46 this year, I have been married for over 20 years, I have 3 kids, travel regularly, and I am doing more then ever and I feel great

But to be completely honest, still to this day I have many of the same behaviors I had before. I rarely exercise work too much and I look forward to happy hour! I think balance can be found and I think the spa can offer it. Homeopathy, meditation and prayer and a greater understanding of my body and the effects of stress and nutrition on it, is how I regained my health. Spa can address mind, body and spirit. We need to look at each are and them each part of that area. For example Body needs to include inside and outside. The mind can include stress management but also education.

In addressing these areas we also have to present them in a way that entices the consumer to take notice, buy and use.

Although Sprayology is an FDA regulated medicine, it does not look like one. We have even been mistaken for a luxury perfume on many occasions. **This was our goal, sneaking in wellness by making it beautiful, cool and fashionable to do so.** I would like to introduce Jean Zimmerman. Jean is an icon of the beauty business and she was a key part of Chanel for over 27 years. I am honored to share that she has joined me at Sprayology as our chairmen to bridge the gap between health and beauty. To help spread the message that better health is beautiful. Jean has intimate and proven experience of what today’s women wants, what she buys and how to gain her long-term loyalty.

I think this is key for the spa. Women like nice things and we like to shop. I believe the spa retail area needs to be a place where she wants to come even when she does not have an appointment. It needs to offer insight and information. But it is important that spa be more then a gift retailer. It needs to add an extra by having the knowledge and integrity to offer only quality products with quality ingredients that improve our bodies. That makes us different.

In addition to great retail space, and for the purpose of this discussion I am assuming quality services what else can the spa do to bring her there more often. WE need to listen to her and we need to talk to her. Again, all the parts of mind, body and spirit.

For all the spas I visit I do not treat myself enough to the services, but at times when I have I am left feeling like I wanted more. I want a partner to sit with me and review my goals. Maybe it is just to relax for the day but maybe it is to get control over stress. Could I be taught a brief breathing lesson or be shown a basic yoga pose, leave with a book on TM or be giving Sprayology’s stress relief spray. I believe a combination is great.

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I will end with that I believe: we are either too polite or too unaware. We are not noticing her needs and we are not asking her about them. We are leaving her to figure it out. She is searching and we need to address it. If not, she will find it elsewhere.

We have some time left so I thought I would open up the floor.

Can spa be where she comes to feel better?

What services and resources could we offer to redefine wellness in spa?

Could we (the spa industry) engage someone like Dr Oz to support the wellness mission and promote it?