

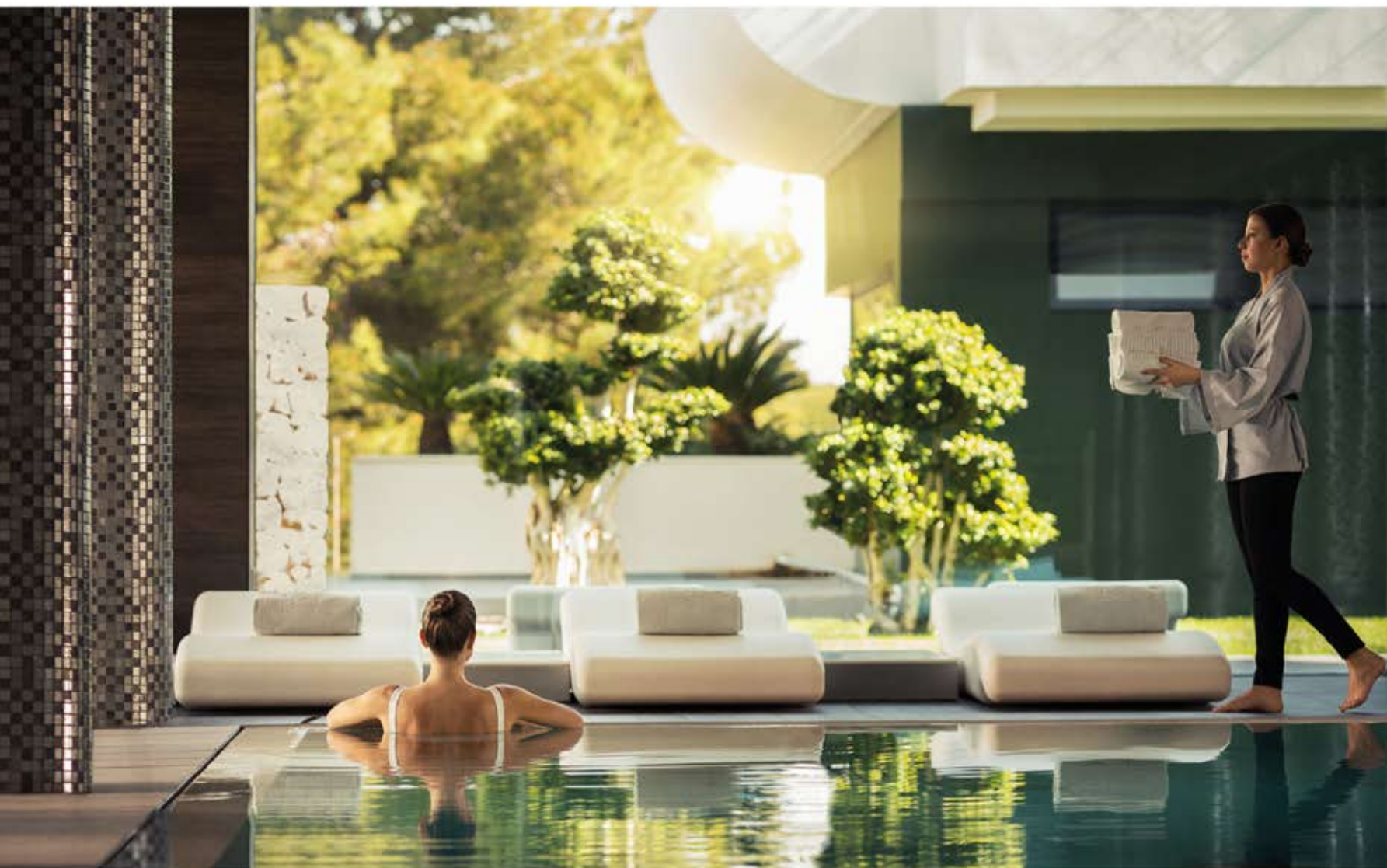
# europaean Spa

THE NO.1 MAGAZINE

FOR SPA AND WELLNESS



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## BRIGHT & BEAUTIFUL

Health is the new wealth at  
SHA Wellness Clinic, Spain

## THERMAL EXPERTISE

Our guide to maximising your  
hydro-thermal spa space

## FROM MOTHER EARTH

The birth of the Gaia spa brand  
at Boringdon Hall, UK

## AUSTRIA'S EVOLUTION

A holistic history of the Global  
Wellness Summit's host nation





# The art of engagement

An effective PR and marketing strategy can attract new customers to your spa, help you engage with existing guests and ultimately create a loyal following. European Spa talks to leading industry experts about how to maximise the power of communication

EDITED BY HELLENA BARNES

**Y**our investment in PR and marketing represents a cornerstone for business success. It calls for integrated thinking, compelling communications and creative concepts that will govern your brand identity, shape your business model and set your company apart.

While there are fundamental differences between marketing and PR, both must co-exist to enable the consistent promotion of your business, its people and products – with each medium taking a different approach to boost demand, add impact and increase awareness.

Broadly speaking, marketing will focus on defining your brand offering, promotional planning, target audiences, researching the market and establishing business strategies. PR then centres on media relations, reputation management, public profiles and attaining high-value editorial content in the press. Add to this mix the multi-channel communication

of social media, and a strong collaboration between PR and marketing, which will work to make your media both effective and connective.

## The bigger picture

Whether it's working towards a new spa opening, generating new business generation, engaging with guests or creating industry awareness, the use of multi-media and digital tools in marketing and PR campaigns can establish a consistent on-brand communication for your business.

Another key factor integral to the campaign strategy is retail, and creating a distinct and exclusive shopping experience within a spa environment has enormous lifestyle appeal. Engaging activities such as shows and presentations, impactful merchandising material, exclusive promotions and bespoke product packages will all extend the spa spend and encourage guests to continue the journey at home until their next visit.

Equally, internal PR and marketing focus should also encompass dedicated team training and investment. In order to help deliver excellence and maximise sales, spa teams require knowledge, education and confidence to learn the art of engagement with each client at every level.

You may have the best spa offering, award-winning therapies, industry experts or high-performance products, but if your target market is not aware of it and your teams are not empowered by it, then all efforts may well be short-lived.

We spoke to six experts in the field to find out how marketing and PR can best boost your spa's prospects. ▷



## How to find your core market and create brand loyalty

When opening a new spa always invest in a great press launch. You will build relationships that stand strong for years to come and the coverage generated should be well worth the return on your investment. This also applies to great photography – ensure you secure iconic images so that all journalists will want to use them to accompany their features and stories.

Before the spa is open ensure you can capture data – people who enquire and sign up at this stage are your ‘early adopters’ and they are most likely to visit first, so encourage them with a great opening discount. They will certainly be the ones to share their experience and could become great ambassadors.

Creating loyalty to a new brand is in many ways easier than attracting people to an established brand, as there are no preconceptions or ‘bad influencers’ to contend with. The key is to have the right mechanism in place that is easy to use, and in today’s market this should be digital; something that gives the guest a choice of rewards with a tool to push offers through and encourage further spend.

One of the most important elements of your marketing mix is to create your ‘secret sauce’ – that thing that makes you different; something your guests want, can talk about and visualise. My role at Y Spa has allowed me to push the boundaries in an exciting privately owned brand, and we have paired our spa with great dining experiences and indulgent food. Our USP is that we are unashamedly honest about combining moments of sensory delight on a spa break, targeting pleasure seekers and foodies alike.

[www.yspa.co.uk](http://www.yspa.co.uk)



### Meet the expert



Director of marketing for Y Spa (pictured above), **Louisa Watson** is a senior marketer with extensive knowledge of branding, marketing and consumer activation. She has worked with luxury brands, destination markets and evolving companies across hotel, conferencing and spa venues.

## Upwardly mobile: Accessibility in the palm of your hand



Without question, digital technology is a source of tremendous innovation within our industry. We believe every spa or wellness business, from sole providers to companies with multiple locations, must be aware of digital marketing trends and opportunities.

Not too long ago, digital marketing was focused on the internet, but today it has expanded to include mobile phones and a wide range of platforms and activities. According to analysts at comScore, 79% of adults and 93% of 18- to 34-year-olds use smartphones in the US – and the statistics are similar in Europe. This means your clients are using mobile phones to shop, find locations and make payments.

Even small businesses must consider how website and marketing communications look and function on mobile phones. Before you send a

client email or update your website, look at these communications on a smartphone and see them from your customer’s viewpoint. How does it look? Is it easy to find what you want? Does it work as well on a phone as a desktop computer?

Our new Wellness App for mobile users, which allows people to find, book, review and pay for spa and wellness services at any of our 25,000-plus partners, was designed to help spas of all sizes benefit from the latest digital technology.

Public relations and customer engagement has also gone digital with social media and other digital platforms offering huge opportunities. You can engage existing clients and acquire new ones with simple email newsletters and posts on Facebook and Twitter – plus you can increase brand exposure by connecting with journalists on these platforms.

[www.spafinder.com](http://www.spafinder.com)

### Meet the expert



As chief operating officer of Spafinder Wellness, **John Bevan** is responsible for global sales, digital marketing, advanced technology products and operations. He also leads strategic planning and growth of the Spafinder Wellness 365 Network, which has 30,000 spa, fitness and wellness providers.





## ▷ Global campaigns and strategies

We have a very hands-on approach with our industry clients. As well as educating our end-consumer globally through PR, social media and digital content, we are listeners and we never stand still. It is absolutely critical that you can react quickly to change, as well as be visionary in future-proofing business and ensuring longevity and long-term relationships to build on.

We have always approached global strategy, PR and marketing campaigns as ‘omni-channel’. Our extensive annual promotion usually includes more than ten product launches, four or five key promotions and award-winning gifting that is then rolled out for every sales channel to adapt to their specific strategy.

Tools are created for events, online banners, e-blasts, sampling, visual merchandising and point-of-sale – all these elements are uploaded onto a Global Information Centre for our spa partners to utilise, helping them generate their business.

The power of PR is unprecedented; from communication strategies to press launch tool kits, it drives a consistent and positive conversation between customers, celebrities and industry leaders with recommendations and reviews.

Your online reputation is vital and our digital and social media team deliver a 24/7 flow of lifestyle-focused dialogue together with a regular e-communications strategy that allows spa owners to play an active role.

Retailing is ‘king’ in my book and spa businesses still really lag behind in this area, with little focus on merchandising, selling and creating a shopable retail experience within the spa environment. Remember, great customer care and great results will create great customer loyalty and a successful business.

[www.elemis.com](http://www.elemis.com)

### Meet the expert



The co-founder and chief marketing officer at Elemis, **Orielle Frank** has been communicating the brand’s benefits since 1993. She plays a key role in developing concepts from product to formulation, packaging to marketing, and brand design to retail stores and visual merchandising.

## How to best blog your business

It’s a fact that stories about people, particularly leaders, are remembered for much longer than stories about new products and services. This makes people one of your greatest tools when it comes to making your business stand out.

Personal takes on leadership and excellence help define a business and can give it a competitive advantage. For your customers and clients, decision-making is highly based on emotions, so showing the human side of your business with a clear direction gives it a much stronger position in the market and enhances its level of attraction.

The press and bloggers are also drawn to companies with strong figureheads. Just think of some of the charismatic characters who capture the headlines, such as Richard Branson, Bill Gates and Karren Brady. All have worked on their self-image so that people are more naturally drawn to them. In our industry VOYA founders Mark and Kira Walton (pictured above) are good examples of leaders who are closely identified with their brand.

In fact, blogs are now seen as a key source of trustworthy information, up there with advice you might get from a friend. With bloggers active across social platforms, working with them can provide instant brand awareness as well as long-term promotion, but make sure their readership has the right demographic for you. Also, remember that mid-level influencers often have a more loyal, engaged audience than top tier bloggers.

Building your own list of bloggers is very time intensive so it might be worth using one of the blogger tools such as Cision or Buzzstream. Remember that some bloggers are brutally honest, so make sure you’re happy to receive their honest feedback.

[www.thespaprcompany.com](http://www.thespaprcompany.com)

### Meet the expert



**Tracey Stapleton** is managing director of The Spa PR Company, a specialist PR and content agency that serves companies in the spa industry. Established in 2004, Spa PR’s client base includes a selection of leading spas, hotels, suppliers and wellness brands.



## Delivering your digital message with a human touch

An effective marketing strategy is not a cost to the business but a positive contribution to the bottom line. Deciding which new customers to reach and how you will engage them, while also keeping existing customers loyal, are all key considerations.

Persuasion is the main purpose of marketing, essentially to increase revenues. PR is more about increasing brand awareness, building thought-leadership and establishing credibility. These goals support lead generation and sales, and can accelerate the buying process.

The key task for any spa is to ensure that its team has very defined, individual and focused KPIs that are a breakdown of the strategic marketing plan. Therapist engagement is hugely important here, not only in terms of genuine guest-connection but also enabling them to buy into the spa product ethos and inviting clients to reconnect with the experience at home.

To assist in retail, the concept of 'pop-up' shops is a fantastic way to allow product houses to test the market in the spa for a month, with no commitment on either side. It's also a great way to gauge reaction from your guests before embracing a new line.

Think about how familiar your target audience is with your brand and increase awareness with effective content on social media – client testimonials and other industry influencers are another a good way to build credibility. Create engaging content and ignite a conversation. Don't count your 'likes' – focus on your engagement stats as these are a true reflection of your strategy.  
[www.bhslconcepts.com](http://www.bhslconcepts.com)



### Meet the expert



With an extensive business background and highly-regarded in the luxury leisure and spa market, **Brian Hunter**, director of Made for Life by Spiezia Organics and consultant for BHSL Concepts, provides expertise on design, branding, marketing and financial solutions to the industry.

## Get smart and let your software do the hard work



The key to any marketing campaign is targeting. Spas that invest in software to help enhance the client journey can save money on off-target marketing collateral, as well as increasing awareness. Proactively mapping your client journey enables you to tailor offers to reflect an individual's spending pattern, and a well-timed marketing campaign will not only fill vacant treatment rooms but also engender brand loyalty.

How we interact with clients is changing. Many prefer to book

online and receive offers via text or email – spas with good client data that can develop bespoke campaigns to reflect a client's preference will always be one step ahead of their competitors.

Our enhanced marketing functionality within CORE by Premier is an automated system. This means that spa managers no longer have to manually set up a marketing campaign; it can all be created in advance. By pulling client preferences and spending habits from their records, the automated marketing function makes client contact easy. You never have to miss key milestones such as birthdays and can also create thank-you offers, discounts and advertise new treatments months in advance.

Used as a multi-site solution, the software also enables large hotel chains with multiple spas to roll out the same marketing offer across all sites at the touch of a button.

[www.premiersoftware.co.uk](http://www.premiersoftware.co.uk)



### Meet the expert



**Leonie Wileman** is chief operations officer at Premier Software, which specialises in developing digital solutions for the leisure, spa and wellness industry. With 20 years' experience, she is responsible for leading IT software solution CORE by Premier, which has been adopted by many leading spas.