



Sherif Zaki Salon & The Oasis Spa Skin Deep Magazine Interview By Erica Ademski

1. How do you differentiate a fad from a trend?

A: Fads come and go, while trends seem to last longer. We differentiate by being educated. We ask ourselves, "What is going on in the professional skincare and day spa industry? Is this new service or product too good to be true, is it just a fly by the moment thing or is it something that is going to last? Will it truly benefit the client?" A good example is anti-aging. That started out as what was considered a trend, yet it is definitely a permanent service category of the spa industry that isn't going anywhere. On the other hand, a hot new lip gloss is simply a fad that will potentially be forgotten about.

2. What were some spa fads that didn't last and why do you think that is?

A: The Oxygen Bar was a service that was being promoted in spas as a relaxing aromatherapy treatment. In a bigger metropolitan area where people deal with hustle and bustle, it might be more successful. In a small areas however, that fad won't last long.

3. Can you list 3 trends in the spa industry that should be paid attention to? Why are these trends important?

A: Memberships and packages, Spa Sample Menus and The Online Spa. All of these things should be paid attention to.

Memberships and packages mean your clients are purchasing their spa services in bulk. The real benefit for the client is the discount. It is also important to remember that purchasing packages also creates a feeling of getting something for free. No cash is exchanged at every single service, only the first one. This creates more appreciation for the service. The client also comes in more often when they have pre-paid services.

Spa Sample Menus create a great way for spa goers or new clients to treat themselves without breaking the bank. We tend to use these to attract new clientele or clients that want to experience services for the first time but were hesitant to spend the money. This way, clients spend less money but are just as happy with the results of the services. They are more likely to come back for a regular service at a regular price if you offer them a sample to start with.

Online Spa Services are a big area to get into or to stay in if you already are. I say this because of the ability to offer online gift certificates and online appointment booking. It is also a great way to promote spa specials. Online Spas provide ease for the clients. Certain software programs such as SpaFinder.com allow spas to put their schedules and specials on their websites. You can create last minute booking discounts to fill your books quickly. This also allows for price variation.

4. Is social marketing going to take over direct-mail marketing and even advertising ... why or why not?

A: Social marketing definitely helps the spa learn what people want or need. Rather than pushing products or services we feel are beneficial, we are now able to hear what the clients really want or need from us. Creating an open conversation via Facebook or Twitter allows us to build a relationship with our clients, enabling us to learn more about them.

While social network marketing is a very persuasive way to market, I feel traditional advertising and direct-mail marketing could still be around to stay. People still like to have something in their hand instead of just reading it on screen and chatting about it. It also helps clients remember the monthly promotions or discounts if they have them in their purse or on their table.

5. Do you feel the organic movement is going to become the mainstay trend for the spa environment and products? Why or why not?

A: Green is here to stay! Everyone is trying to go green. I think people are very aware and concerned of what is going on in the world. Being green is the first step in making a change. It might even be the future of our world. We definitely receive phone calls asking about organic products. In fact, one of the biggest skincare lines out there is organic and widely popular. While having organic products is not yet a necessity, some clients do strictly request and use organic and natural products. Our spa continuously researches organic products to discover exactly what we need and should offer.

6. Several trend forecasts have listed “sleep therapy” as a new emerging trend at spas, but is this really happening?

A: It has not yet been seen in small areas. Metropolitan areas are definitely doing it. Clients will pay \$19 to \$30 just to sleep. Maybe in a fast paced world, this could be successful and stick around. I don't think we'll see it happening in small areas, however. Is it happening? Yes. Is it here to stay? I don't think so.

7. Has the spa client changed in the last couple of years since the economy weakened? How?

A: Yes, definitely. People are becoming more aware of their needs versus their wants. Every 4 weeks, they use to come in, now it is 6 to 8 weeks. Clients are also now asking themselves, “Do I need every service at every visit or should I just alternate services with visits?” People are still going to spas; they are just a little more money conscious about it. Rather than visiting every four weeks, they are keeping up on homecare more than they did before. This increases spa retail sales and has encouraged estheticians to make stronger recommendations. Because of this change, education has become increasingly important to spa staff and clients. Keep in mind that the children of baby boomers are growing up seeing that going to the spa is normal and a part of life, so I don't think this will be a permanent change in clients' behavior.

8. How have spas responded to the changing economy?

A: You will see us offering more discounted services, more incentives and more series packages. Clients will pre-book appointments and purchase bulk packages just to receive the discounts. Given that, we have focused more of our attention on those aspects when marketing our spa.

It is also important to let clients know that you understand and are thinking of them during this tough time. Recommending great home skincare has become vitally important. Clients will trust our estheticians more if we understand that they no longer can afford to come to the spa as often. To ensure results for our clients, we must make sure our clients maintain their skincare regimens between visits. Because of this, education has become important in maintaining our clientele. We are now going to more conferences and taking free training classes.

9. What's the overriding trend in cosmetics/skin care?

A: Medical cosmetics and skincare are becoming extremely popular. Clients can experience more result-oriented skin repair services. When you work with a doctor's office or in the medical field, you are allowed to do more with that doctor on hand. The results are more intense.

10. What's the overriding trend in business operations at the spa?

A: Right now, offering new, different and intriguing services is the trend to follow. Whether these services are on your menu at all times or not, it is always good to offer something new. If it turns out to be fantastic, offer it all the time. You always have to be looking for the next big thing and be one of the first to offer it.

11. Are estheticians still merging with medical professionals within medical practices or medispa environments?

A: They are. You can go anywhere from a dermatologist to a doctor to a dentist and be able to see an esthetician. The atmosphere might not be as relaxing as a spa, but the results are probably still the same.

12. What do you think are the strongest influencing forces in the skin/spa care industry and why?

A: There are so many, yet phenomenal customer service has become so important. Your clients are so aware of everything they do and how much they spend at your spa. Their expectations are always for you to be the best at what you do. You have to make sure, at all times, that you are giving them that. Getting client feedback and reacting to it is what is going to improve the industry as a whole.

Another strong influence is education; it can't be stressed enough how important it is. It is important to learn as much as you can about new products, new systems and new skincare regimens. Staying up-to-date is pivotal to your success. Your estheticians and spa professionals need to always know what is going in the industry and also in other related industries.

13. What's the fastest growing category of skincare within the spa and why?

A: Definitely anti-aging. I say this because men and women alike are very aware of the aging process and simply do not want to show their age. Both genders are now coming in for spa services. Everyone wants to look and feel good physically and mentally. On our client consultation forms anti-aging goals are listed on almost every one.

14. What's the weakest category of therapy within the spa and why?

A: Each spa is unique in their own way so this answer will be different for every owner. The Sherif Zaki Salon & Oasis Spa caters to our client. We have done our research and know what they want. We don't offer services and programs that aren't of interest to them. So we, in turn, have no weakest category.

15. What type of spa is having the most success in revenues right now: hotel spas, stand-alone day spas, medical spas, mobile spas, hair salon/spa, solo esthys, destination spas or adventure spas? Why do you think that is?

A: I believe that the combined salon and day spa is the most successful. Day spa salons are not a one-time visit just to relax and escape. Our clients are here for a reason and want a proven program. They want to trust their esthetician and benefit from the treatment. Our clients also want to learn about the products and services that will benefit them the most. Having their own esthetician that has studied them and their skin or body is much more of a comfort to those that truly desire long term benefits.

16. What's your best advice about fads and trends in the skin care/spa industry?

A: Always know what is going on. Whether you are a follower or leader, education is key. Continuing education classes are a must and extremely important. You should always attend workshops at esthetic shows. A lot of manufacturer classes are free at these shows. Remember to always accept information from manufacturers about new products. New and exciting things are always coming out – pay attention to them! There are also a ton of magazines and websites specifically dedicated to spas and skincare, so take advantage of them.

17. How do you want your name/position to appear in the magazine?

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Editorial Notes: The Sherif Zaki Salons & Oasis Spas are located in Greenville and Rehoboth Beach, DE near Wilmington. Owned by Sherif and Emon Zaki. For more information, call 302-652-4902 or visit www.SherifZaki.com.

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