



# MENTOR

## The future **is bright**

The pilot year of the Global Mentorship Program (GMP) has been hailed a phenomenal success. We find out how the initiative will continue to raise the bar in 2016

**T**he mentorship programme is the first international initiative of its kind in the spa and wellness industry and allows spa managers interested in elevating their experience to be paired with a more senior spa director mentor.

The GMP, which launched in January 2015, will recommence in January 2016 with the first of two six-month long sessions.

Mentee spa managers, who must have at least two years' experience, are matched with a spa director with

a minimum of five years' experience. Mentees are in touch with their mentor, who can be based anywhere in the world, for insight and advice at least twice a month.

The inaugural 2015 edition of the programme saw 34 mentees in 22 countries paired with 17 mentors, and programme organisers are aiming for 100 mentees and 50 mentors in 2016.

We spoke to co-chair Jean-Guy de Gabriac and Shahida Siddique, GMPP's regional supervisor for the Middle East to learn more.

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**How do you feel the programme has been received so far? What feedback have you had, both from mentors and from mentees?**

JG: Since January 2015, the first Global Mentorship Program for spa managers and spa directors has received a lot of support from international spa associations and from major trade publications. In order to track the perceived benefits and the achieved results we submitted pre- and post-programme questionnaires to all mentors and mentees to ask about their expectations and observations and gleaned the following information:

- 100 per cent of mentors and mentees believe the GMPP benefits the spa industry
- 98 per cent of mentors and mentees believe the GMPP was "Very Successful" or "Successful"
- 97 per cent of mentees believe their participation in GMPP helped them be a more effective spa manager
- 61 per cent of mentors and mentees said the quality of their experience was "Excellent"; with 29 per cent saying "Very Good" (together they total 90 per cent)

All the other results will be released at the Global Wellness Summit in Mexico City on November 13-15, 2015.

**You are aiming for up to 50 mentors and 100 mentees in 2016. Is there anything else in particular that you are hoping for from the programme next year - that will grow it from this year's programme?**

JG: 2015 was a "pilot programme" to test the concept and fine-tune the operations (especially the administrative coordination). In 2016, not only do we wish to scale up the number of mentees, but also to maximise the ripple-effect of the take-aways of the programme in spa management and spa leadership, through a publication to be released at the GWS and sent to all international spa associations.

In 2016, we will continue to grow the visibility of the programme and will explore innovative mentoring formats. As of now, we offer "formal mentoring" where mentors and mentees are matched based on the skills described in ISPA's Body of Knowledge. We also wish to look into "peer mentoring", where spa professionals in similar positions would provide support, empathy, and advice to each other.

**What would you say are the key benefits of participating, both for mentees and for mentors?**

The main benefit perceived by all is the phenomenal level of positive and constructive energy that mentees feel from being able to explore new ways of interacting with their team. In this sense, 86 per cent of mentees "Absolutely" felt more motivated at work due to being mentored.

Benefiting from their mentor's experience, they gain insights on how to better cope with time-management, priority sorting and how to empower their staff. As a result, 97 per cent of mentees believe they are better leaders due to the Global Mentorship Program; 69 per cent of mentees perceived that they had "Great Improvement" of their leadership and management skills and 79 per cent "Absolutely" felt more productive at work after being mentored.

**What has been the initial response to the GMPP in the GCC region?**

SS: The initial response to the programme in the GCC was good. Since it was a pilot programme, we had only four mentors in the region and conducted the programme twice. However, starting in January we will officially launch the GMPP and expect many more mentors and mentees to join this free programme and share experiences for the larger interest of the spa industry.

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**What are your plans for the GCC in the next phase of GMP?**

SS: The aim is to enhance the standard of business practice in the spa industry all around the world. The GCC is a relatively young spa market but with a huge number of spas due to its growing hospitality industry. Spa managers are often so involved in making the machinery of their spa work that they remain oblivious to the industry's best practice. Our region requires a large number of spa professionals. I am hoping that through this programme we can create an ongoing mentoring and trusting relationship between the spa managers and the established spa directors of the region so that best practice is established across the board and the spa industry grows in totality.

**The first six-month session will run from January to June; with the second taking place from July to December. The Global Mentorship Programme will also present a publication at this year's Global Wellness Summit in Mexico on November 13-15.**

Shahida Siddique is GMPP's regional supervisor for the Middle East and chief executive officer of Spadunya Middle East Distribution



Jean-Guy de Gabriac is the co-chair of the Global Mentorship Program and CEO of Tip Touch International

