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July 2011  
dayspamagazine.com \$5.00



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Industry Experts Reveal Future Trends!

By Robyn Emde

## Hustle & Flow

Take your day spa, add 1 part yoga + a dash of marketing know-how and you've got a one-stop wellness shop.



NOWADAYS, PEOPLE PLANT THEMSELVES UPON massage tables and yoga mats for similar reasons. "The spa lifestyle is about combating the insidious stress we all encounter in daily life," notes Dr. Marguerite Barnett, owner of the Mandala Med-Spa & Yoga Shala ([mandalamedspa.com](http://mandalamedspa.com)) in Sarasota, Florida. "It's all about being healthy. Yoga is too; it's just approached from a slightly different angle."

Incorporating yoga classes into your day spa environment gives you another way to elevate your clients to higher physical—and spiritual—planes by providing them with fitness, lifestyle improvement, rejuvenation and relaxation all in one location. But managing, marketing and promoting yoga requires a considered strategy. Yogis and spa junkies may share gray space on the Venn diagram, but they also represent two distinct marketing bodies.

"While the challenges of marketing yoga and spa aren't so different, you have to truly know each client type and what they both want," says Barry Walker, owner of The Raven Spa ([\[spa.com\]\(http://spa.com\)\) in Silver Lake, California.](http://theraven</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

DAYS SPA consulted with spa owners and directors who've successfully incorporated yoga into their services to find out what it takes to cross-promote yoga with spa and drive more traffic into treatment rooms and yoga studios.

### Set Your Space Apart

Whether you're in a small town, tourist hot spot or bustling metropolis, the first step in designing and marketing your new yoga studio is to research your competition—but be selective. "Don't try to go up against your local health club or YMCA, as these typically boast low prices, longer hours and even child care," says Karen Smith, owner of Nurture Day Spa and Yoga Studio ([nurturedayspa.com](http://nurturedayspa.com)) in Hot Springs, Arkansas. After four years of trying to compete with national chain yoga centers, Smith tailored her program to better suit the needs of her spa-goers, most of whom just wanted to give yoga a try or were simply looking to spend more time in her spa's



Terranea's oceanfront yoga studio hosts complimentary classes for spa-goers.

serene environment: a quiet, beautiful space in the historic district of town. She now offers series of four to six weeks for beginning and intermediate yoga students, special workshops and retreats (such as seasonally themed, afternoon-long "Set Your Intentions" courses), and an intimate, Thai-influenced course for

### Location, Location, Location

Another important detail to consider is your yoga studio's proximity to the rest of the spa. "My yoga studio and day spa share a tea garden, which is the single best marketing tool for each," Walker says. "From there, spa clients wander into the studio, and

**"My yoga studio and day spa share a tea garden, which is the single best marketing tool for each: Spa clients wander into the studio, and yogis meander into spa reception."**

couples. "My students are addicted to the feeling they get in our quiet studio," she says.

Mandala's Barnett customized her offerings from the get-go. "We serve a lot of elderly locals, so we offer a gentle class that's suitable for frail guests," she says. The spa's other successful niche offerings include yoga for golfers and a mother/daughter class.

yogis meander into spa reception." Walker also encourages guests to linger: "We always serve tea and fruit after services or classes to keep people around for a few more minutes, chatting and exploring, which leads to yoga students grabbing a service menu or visiting the spa's front desk. It all happens without any hard selling."

At Southern California's Terranea Resort & Spa ([terranea.com](http://terranea.com)) in



At Le Posh, guests can buy packages that include yoga classes upstairs and spa treatments downstairs.

Rancho Palos Verdes, the oceanfront yoga studio isn't exactly adjacent to the spa. "Getting the word out about our studio has been the biggest challenge," admits spa director Melinda Milner. To compensate, front desk employees inform all spa guests that the price of their treatment, or \$60 day pass, also includes admittance to any yoga class offered that day. "This draws in unsuspecting students, who are often surprised to find we have such great teachers and a beautiful studio," Milner says.

### Build a Community

A long-standing, loyal day spa clientele doesn't guarantee immediate success for your yoga program. "It's important to ensure your studio can be successful in its own right, rather than rely solely on spa-goers for business," says Jennifer Jaeger, director of operations at Le Posh Salon Spa Lounge and Le Posh Yoga ([salonleposh.com](http://salonleposh.com)) in Los Angeles. "Reach out to yogis, and there's a chance they'll bring new business to the spa."

At its heart, yoga's a community-oriented activity for which grassroots marketing works best. "Coffee shops and natural food stores are typical places where yoga enthusiasts are likely to notice ads," Walker says. And the instructors you hire are key. "Employing teachers who already have a dedicated following gives you a great jump on new business," Jaeger says.

Walker also advocates field research. "The yoga community is very loyal and you should become a part of it before you spend your nest egg to create the perfect space." Take classes to find out firsthand what appeals to yogis and build your network.

And if your budget allows, it's helpful to hire a dedicated yoga director (though s/he should stay in close contact with the spa manager). "To keep our spa's marketing budget from getting drained, we hired someone to handle yoga operations who also does her own PR," Barnett says.

When pooling your marketing efforts, go basic: Email blasts and

Mandala Med Spa & Yoga Shala sets itself apart with Indonesian imports and an dleight.



flyers—posted in targeted venues such as athletic apparel stores, gyms and smoothie shops—work well. Consider advertising in local health and fitness magazines. “But when creating ads that brand you as a combination spa/yoga studio, be sure not to crowd your ad with too much information, or it won’t be readable,” Barnett warns.

### Time to Get into Cross-Promotion Pose

Luckily, there’s already an overlap between the yoga and spa markets: Both groups are invested in their own well-being. “We show that we’re a one-stop wellness establishment by displaying information about the yoga studio in the spa and vice versa,” Jaeger says. “We also offer packages that combine spa services and yoga classes.” The Le Posh Prenatal Package (120 min./\$285), for instance, includes a private yoga class, 60-minute prenatal massage and signature pedicure.

The Elements of Therapy Wellness Center ([elementsoftherapy.com](http://elementsoftherapy.com)) in Jacksonville, Florida, markets its spa services with a \$54.99 monthly membership for unlimited yoga classes and discounted massages and facials. “Our Mind and Body Wellness Program allows clients to mix and match activities at our cen-

ter for a low monthly rate,” explains owner Ian Vakil.

At Mandala, yogis have to sign in and pay at the spa desk, which provides a window to other services. “We offer yoga discounts for spa-goers and vice versa, and we host open houses where we introduce new offerings for both,” Barnett says. “When we do community outreach, yoga instructors are invited to network alongside spa therapists. Most importantly, everyone attends weekly staff meetings so all employees can discuss what’s happening in their arena, and stay updated on other departments.”

Terranca’s Milner believes it’s crucial that employees speak knowledgeably about your facility’s entire offerings. “For a recent staff meeting, we asked all associates to wear comfortable clothes and simply told them they were in for a surprise,” she says. “At the meeting’s end, our head yoga instructor led a free class for everyone. Now every therapist and esthetician can better describe the feel and format of our yoga program to guests during services. Plus, our demonstrated enthusiasm for taking care of ourselves makes today’s health-conscious client feel better about coming to our spa.” ●

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