

The following is a compilation of best practices gathered primarily from spas in 2009. imassage, Inc. gathered this information through phone interviews, online surveys and during face to face meetings.

Incentive Programs for Morale and Retention

Our hotel management lets us know we are appreciated by words and actions. Current example: each spa in our system has a goal to sell a certain number of Spa Trail discount cards. If we reach our goal, each member of our spa will get a free night's stay with a meal ---we are already making plans to celebrate together! *Therapist from a Resort and Spa*

All of the people that work for me are employees. I made this decision because I knew it would be easier to create a team atmosphere. For employees working over 32 hours each week, they have the ability to use the spa during designated times, receive financial assistance with CE training and they are allowed to do trades for product cost. I feel this has helped with retaining staff. *Day Spa*

We have a resort wide "Gem" Program. Spa employees have the ability to earn "Gem" points when they go "above and beyond" their job scope and if they are personally mentioned on guest surveys. Each point has a \$5 value and they can redeem when they have a minimum of \$25. Points can be redeemed for days off, gift certificates or towards spa services. *Resort Spa*

At the end of the season, we have a service match up. I draw names and match employees together to do service swaps. Employees love this. *Resort Spa*

Our Massage Therapists are paid on a scale percentage of treatment cost. The scale is determined by several factors, including guest comments (which are meticulously tracked), adherence to company standards and expectations, and team participation. Longevity with the company is also factor. *Day Resort*

We have *friends and family* days five times yearly offering a fifty percent discount. It is widely used and talked about. *Spa and Resort*

Hiring the Best Therapists:

We live in an area that is appealing to many people. To keep our massage team diverse, we stay in touch with many schools across the United States. We create printed collateral that is easy for them to post or display in their student areas. *Inn and Spa*

Most states have a massage therapist list for sale. When hiring, we send direct mail to all the therapists in the areas near us. You can find your state's list on the state board's website. *Massage Franchise*

AMTA Tools for Hiring

For networking purposes, the AMTA has a list of massage schools at <http://www.amtamassage.org/becometherapist/schoolprofiles.html>.

Check into your state chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA). They often have conferences, newsletters and ways to disburse recruitment information. It is a great way to stay connected to the massage community and keep your spa's name out as a prospective employer.

The AMTA website has a job bank for spas to post job openings. If you are a supporting member, you receive a discounted rate.

Training

We host annual staff retreats that include an educational element. These allow us to focus the team on our mission, current changes and it keeps them growing with new training. This is one reason why our staff has been with us for 10 plus years. *Massage School*

We spend about \$2,500 to \$3,000 annually on massage continuing education for our therapists. There is the obvious benefit of improved skills, but also it is a time for our massage team to bond. Many of our therapists have been with us for years. *Golf Resort and Spa*

To offset the cost of bringing in a trainer for my therapists, I opened the Continuing Education training to other massage therapists in the area. We put together fliers, postcards and other marketing pieces to advertise the class. We were able to train all our therapists and help cover the cost with the tuition fees from the community therapists. I have also found new therapists this way. *Resort Spa*

Part of our training includes what we call surprise and delights. Our staff is trained to listen and respond to casual guest comments. For example if a guest mentions they like a certain scented product, we provide them a sample when they leave. Our people are empowered to respond to these comments within reason. We have received positive feedback from guests who were not expecting these surprises. *Luxury Resort*

We are striving to raise the level of service provided at our spa. We are moving towards National Certification for all of our massage therapists. Our hiring standards now require that all candidates have a current NCBTMB certification. In the near future, we plan to conduct recruiting sessions with massage schools that have an established reputation for the quality of their education and experience. *Day Resort*

We hold each department accountable for guest satisfaction. The department managers meet weekly and each is responsible for sharing with the group their successes and opportunities based on guest feedback forms. It keeps all departments updated, while at the same time keeping satisfaction a priority. *Destination Spa*

Service Length

We have found that shorter services (22 Min) have become very popular whether they are scheduled as a lone service or very typically added on to another service. At this time of economic stress, shorter services are less expensive and give everyone an option. *Golf Resort and Spa*

We only use shorter service times as a way to get people into the spa. For example, there is a fitness facility next door to us and we have the personal trainers pass out promotional cards to their clients. It is usually easy to upgrade them to an hour once they come in. We rarely have any one call to request a short service. *Day Spa*

Transition Time

We have spa assistants that help transition the rooms so our therapists can have more time communicating with guests. *Hot Springs Spa*

