

20 Oct 2017

Australian workplace wellness course launched

BY JANE KITCHEN



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Entrepreneur Angela Derks has launched The Australasian Sustainable Wellness Academy (ASWA), with enrolments now open for the first-ever Australian course of its type.

ASWA – in partnership with registered training organisation Prestige Service Training – will deliver the Australian Accredited Diploma of Wellness, giving students national recognition within the booming US\$3.7 trillion (£2.81 trillion, €3.14 trillion) wellness industry.

The Diploma of Wellness is a leadership programme designed to equip students with the qualifications and personal wellness skills, including stress resilience, required to successfully lead wellness initiatives in any industry.

“More than 45 per cent of Australians are stressed about their work, with workplace stress costing the Australian economy AU\$15bn (US\$11.74m, £8.92m, €9.96m) every year, due to sickness and absenteeism,” said Derks.

“If these statistics continue to rise, wellness tourism growth rates will not be slowing down anytime soon.”

Derks has lead wellness programmes and initiatives within companies across the globe, including Six Senses Spas, Soneva Resorts, Ritz-Carlton, Madinat Jumeirah, Palazzo Versace, Kempinski, Westin, Qantas First Lounges, Christina O yacht, Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat and Aurora Spa.

Derks believes it is time for the hospitality and spa industry to lead the way in educating staff and clients to attain and sustain wellness in their lives and workplaces.

"The wellness boom has resulted in many managers today struggling to effectively upskill their team members with the wellness skills required to avoid burnout themselves, and the lifestyle support that customers are seeking," she said. "That's why I created the Academy.

"One of the biggest roadblocks I've witnessed within organisations, however, has been the ability and willingness to allocate resources to professional development. Hotels and spas significantly invest in physical design and facilities, however, the key to success is the people delivering the service.

"Ongoing education is key if we are to stay at the forefront of our industry. If you stop learning and growing you will be left behind."

Derks says the hospitality and spa industry accepts the importance of education when it comes to successful customer service and retailing programs as it is easy to see the return on investment.

"Managers and staff invest time into developing the knowledge of services and products combined with the employees experiencing the service and/or product, allowing them to share that knowledge to benefit their guest's needs. Wellness knowledge, although less tangible, is no different.

"Investing in your people, both financially and with time and effort, makes good business sense. People are the biggest asset an organisation has and unlocking the potential within them will surely boost the business's performance.

"Businesses that authentically value the wellness of their team members have a definite edge in recruiting and retaining top talent."

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Published: 20 Oct, 2017