

Special Advertising Feature

Take Your Best Shot

A white golf ball is positioned on a wooden tee in the foreground of a lush green golf course. The background is a clear blue sky with some blurred trees. The text 'Take Your Best Shot' is overlaid on the image in large, bold, yellow and white fonts.

If you want to invigorate the troops consider sending them to a golf and spa resort.



Once upon a time in America, meeting someone for coffee meant a casual, relaxed conversation. But something happened to the coffee on the way to something happening in America. Your typical morning meeting is now built more on the lines of, "Let's boil our adrenal glands in high-powered java and see how close we can get to atrial fibrillation by 9:30."

Too many meetings like that, and pretty soon productivity is challenged. Hence, the confab—preferably at a cool place where Type-A strivers can think in peace. This trend explains the sudden new popularity of the spa as a meeting destination. When combined with a classy golf package, a new nirvana is being achieved at the best resorts.

Within an organization like Meeting Professionals International, for instance, where the experts are constantly working on how to better strategize meetings to drive company goals, it is admitted that sometimes a spa trip can be instrumental in accomplishing key objectives. "It could be something as simple," says MPI's Director of Communications Kelly Schulz, "as an incentive trip awarded to someone who has achieved high goals."

Or it could be the novel concept that a spa might bring out a person's best side. The purpose of a meeting is focus. And this is something that comes easier to the person who feels like a complete human being.

Only a decade ago, many golf



To reach meeting nirvana, you need to find a cool place where Type-A strivers can think in peace.

resorts began offering spa packages as something that might keep the ladies involved while the men hit the links. But that's all changed now. Almost every high-end golf resort in the country has not only added significant golf packages for female golfers, they have also reworked the courses to make them fun and challenging for all the shorter hitters, male and female alike.

The spas have also evolved over the years. It's not all about peach-and-oatmeal pedicures anymore, Bunkie. Now it's about the experience, and men are being targeted, too. So maybe guys don't care for the loofah scrub, but they might swing into gear for a spa package called a "golf performance treatment," now being offered at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess—now you're talking a

man's job. The Greenbrier in West Virginia, built on famed sulphur springs, now offers men treatments like the "Athlete's Cocoon," a full-body wrap designed to soothe the weekend warrior. With other packages, hackers can get their lumps buffed out and their joints comforted with warming gels made of black pepper. Even your most resolute, rock-ribbed tough guy might be open to a deep shiatsu foot massage—especially if he's just walked seven hard miles in spiked shoes.

According to a study by the International Spa Association, "The primary driver for men to enter the spa experience tends to be the notion of 'work.'" Getting the body unblocked after a grinding life of plane trips and stress will only enhance all-around performance (and not just on the golf course). The key factor, the IPA study noted, was what they called "the reawakening of male grooming." Which is to say: Looking good just makes plain ol' business sense, buddy.

In Las Vegas, the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino spa not only has

All the pieces of a productive meeting in one place.

900 guest rooms • 125,000 square feet of flexible meeting space
wireless Internet • 36 holes of distinctive golf
THE CHOCOLATE SPASM • casual and formal dining options
staff of experienced meeting professionals



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a fitness center, it also has a boxing program, with trainers to maximize your workout. Maybe you like to swim? At the Grove Park Inn in Asheville, N.C., take a dip in a stone grotto that could have been designed by Hugh Hefner. Looking for a sweet retreat? At the Hotel Hershey in Pennsylvania you can forget the seaweed wrap of yesterday, and opt for a chocolate fondue wrap instead.

Given the extreme variety of spa resorts available, it is easy to find the one that fits your company's style. "Wherever the location, utilize the local CVB when planning your meetings," says Michael D. Gehrisch, president and CEO of Destination Marketing Association International. The CVB can help you put together a package of hotel offerings, convention sites, and area attractions, including information about spa and golf activities.

Then get ready—and not just for the good times that automatically accompany a business meeting conducted amid lush golf courses and plush spas. Get set to do business with people whose energy is percolating. ■

For more information on planning a meeting and specifics regarding meeting sites, please visit meetingscafe.com. To advertise in our Meetings sections, please contact Linda Lydon, FORTUNE / Money Group Custom Projects, at 617-954-9420.