



## CASE STUDY

# Building a Better Guest Experience

with Operational Excellence  
Behind the Scenes



### Arabelle Rosario

Spa & Wellness Director Dominican Republic at Meliá Hotels International

The need for luxury spa services has never been greater. People from every walk of life crave relaxation, human connection, and respite from their day-to-day lives, and they seek solace in our therapeutic and wellness services. For an hour, a day, or even a week, our guests are pampered so they can go back to the world refreshed, recharged, and full of energy.

I'm in charge of spa operations for **Meliá Hotels** International's Dominican Republic resorts. We operate four hotels, including the Meliá Punta Cana Beach, Meliá Caribe Beach, Paradisus Palma Real, and the Paradisus Grand Cana. Each of our properties is like several hotels in one, with separate facilities that cater to different groups, including families, couples, and singles. Our Yhi Spa brand offers wellness services that target a diverse clientele, and every location has a unique, welcoming theme to delight our guests.

I'm incredibly proud of how Yhi Spas work to bolster local economies and protect fragile ecosystems. We source earth-friendly products from within 100 kilometres of each of our locations. It's a way to add authenticity to the spa experience while helping surrounding communities.





**RUNNING YOUR SPA ON  
EXCEL SPREADSHEETS  
CAN ONLY TAKE YOU  
SO FAR.**

## COMMITTED TO OUR GUESTS' ENJOYMENT

Our founder and CEO Gabriel Escarrer likes to say that Meliá is as deeply committed to our guests' enjoyment as we are to our excellence in business. There are many moving parts in creating the ultimate wellness experience, which is why I'm shocked to see so many established spas and big hotels using outdated management tools like Excel. You can crunch some numbers using spreadsheets, but you can't track activities, make reservations, book services, or establish trends unless you're creative with macros. And even then, there's only so much you can do.

I've worked in the spa industry for 18 years. In that time, I've moved from spreadsheets to dedicated spa management software, but even purpose-built

platforms can have their limitations. Yhi Spa's first spa management suite wasn't mobile. I had to log into my office computer or the desktop in our reception area. If a client wanted to book an appointment, our wellness team couldn't do it for them. Instead, they had to ask our receptionist. If I was talking to a guest on the beach, and they asked to change a booking, I had to walk back to our front desk.

There was no self-service option, and visitors couldn't book a spa treatment at their convenience. If that weren't enough, the software kept crashing and could only generate two or three reports. The system was only marginally better than Excel and hampered our ability to improve the guest experience.

# FINDING A BETTER SPA MANAGEMENT PLATFORM

About three years ago, we started looking for a replacement spa management platform. We wanted a mobile-ready system that simplified bookings, offered robust reporting features, and provided hotel guests with the ability to make appointments wherever and whenever they wanted. We narrowed it down to a few other candidates and ultimately decided on **Book4Time**.

Book4Time offers online and mobile booking, 200 sales and financial reports, revenue and inventory management, along with guest experience and marketing tools. It's a powerful solution that integrates with various hotel systems, including the Meliá Hotels International's primary platform.

We ran a six-month pilot here in the Dominican Republic and, after putting Book4Time through its paces, rolled it out to all our spas in Mexico and Jamaica. We'll soon be rolling it out in other Meliá properties. Book4Time is so powerful that I am still learning about new features and capabilities three years later.



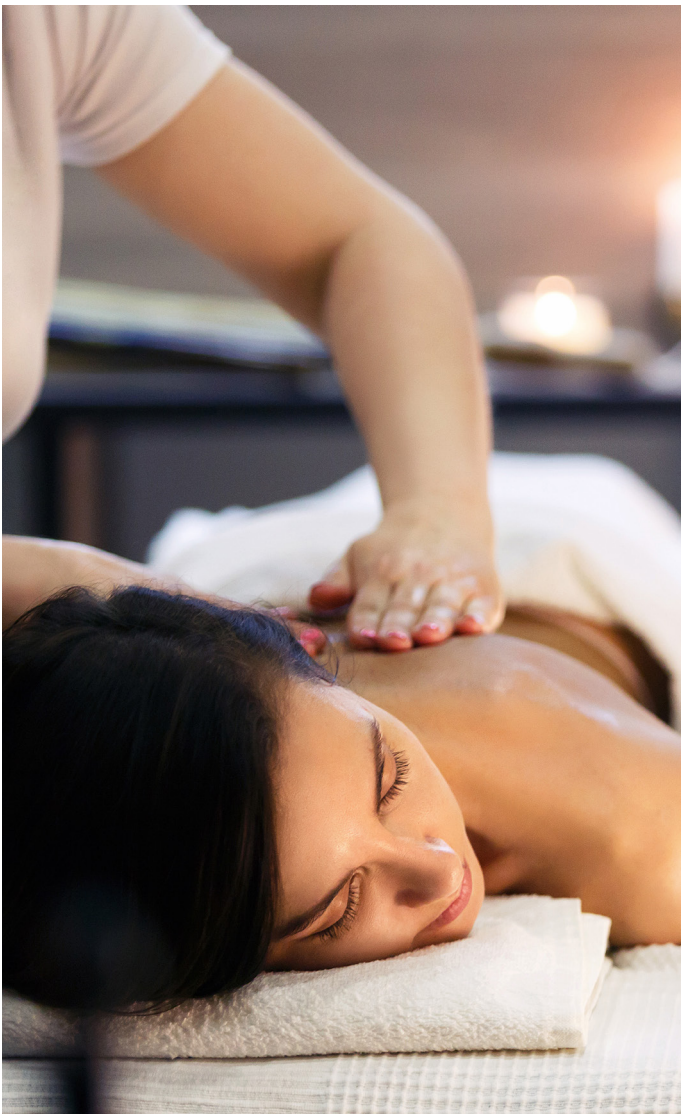
# REAL-TIME UPDATES AND INSIGHTS

**PROPER REPORTING  
INTO YOUR SPA  
BUSINESS IS LIKE  
HAVING X-RAY VISION.**

Book4Time works in real time. The second we make or change a reservation, the information is instantly available to every user and every Book4Time module, including the reporting module. It's like having X-ray vision. I can track every aspect of the business at all our Dominican Republic locations from my office, and I can make changes to our operations on the fly.

I review our business with my Spa Managers on a daily and weekly basis. I can measure our performance and take action every single day. For example, I can look at tomorrow morning's bookings before I go home, and if there are too many open slots, I might want to offer a promotional price or give guests who have already booked services an extra 10 or 15 minutes of treatment as a thank you. I recommend that every spa manager do this type of analysis at least on a weekly basis. We can always improve our operations, but only if we're actively looking for opportunities.

With my weekly reviews, I can see what's selling and what isn't, including items like chocolate and aromatherapy oils in our spa shops. I can discount products that aren't moving and order more of the ones that are. I can look at short-term and long-term trends in our wellness treatment bookings and adjust pricing and scheduling to meet demand.



# A POWERFUL TOOL FOR EVERYTHING

Spa managers should think of their spas like a mini hotel, except we book by the hour—not the day—and every empty slot is a missed opportunity. Book4Time’s analytics give me the insights I need to have conversations with our guests, my managers, and our wellness team on improving services and bookings. My favorite reports include treatment booking per type of guest and product sales by SKU. The executive summary feature is incredibly useful because it gives me an overview of specific elements of our operations at a glance.

I can now actively monitor operations at all our Dominican Republic spas in a single window. But Book4Time’s primary users are our receptionists, who use it to book 40 to 100 treatments per spa every day. Usually, your receptionists are the customers’ first interaction. They can help gauge the type of experience a customer is expecting and provide a welcoming environment. Book4Time allows us to make their job more seamless and stress-free. I highly recommend that spa managers equip their receptionists with the right tools and training to help keep operations running smoothly and efficiently.



# BUILDING A BETTER GUEST EXPERIENCE WITH BOOK4TIME

When I said I'm still learning about all of the features three years later, I meant it. There's still a great deal for me to implement to help improve guest experience and operate more effectively.

I plan to start using Book4Time's membership and marketing tools by the end of 2021. Repeat customers present a golden opportunity in the spa industry—in any industry, for that matter. For that reason, I want to add a membership component to our services. It's a way to build loyalty and allow our guests to embark on a long-term wellness journey by seeking out treatments on an ongoing basis. I also want to use Book4Time's marketing tools to track our social media mentions, author customer surveys, and run incentive, gift card, and spa package programs. These are all ways of building a better guest experience using a single platform.

With Book4Time, I can manage every aspect of our operations and craft unique experiences tailored to families, couples, singles, and guests from every walk of life. I can tweak our products and services to create a welcoming spa environment. Mielá Hotels International built the Yhi Spa brand on guest enjoyment, but incredible guest experiences only happen with a well-run business behind the scenes. Now, we have the complete package.



To learn more about how Book4Time can help your spa & hospitality business thrive visit [www.book4time.com](http://www.book4time.com) and book a demo today!