



Talking towel tactics

BC Softwear's Managing Director **Barbara Cooke** explains how the company's luxury textiles can enhance guests' experiences and simplify the running of spas

BC Softwear has built an enviable reputation as a supplier of luxurious towelling to the UK's most exclusive hotels and spas, such as Chewton Glen and Ockenden Manor.

The company's in-depth understanding of the spa market has led to a number of innovative touches in its customisable products, all of which are designed to withstand rigorous, extensive use and high turnover washing. Managing Director Barbara Cooke offers her top 10 textile-related tips for the spa industry.

1 Maximise your partnership opportunities

It strikes me that, as one of many experienced product vendors and equipment suppliers working in the spa industry, BC Softwear has a wealth of experience that you may be able to draw upon. A greater collaboration and sharing of ideas may give you some excellent quick wins for your business.

2 Reduce laundering times

In tough economic times and with costs under constant scrutiny, many spas are looking for ways to improve their eco footprint. A reduction in laundering times is a key part of this, so it is wise to use towels

and robes which are lighter in weight, thus offering the fastest drying times. It's also a good idea to research the latest innovations, such as waffle towels, which absorb less treatment oils, leading to fewer stains, less smells and a reduced need for replacement.

3 Provide a sensory experience

It is vital to be thinking about all the senses when considering the spa environment. A customer will judge a spa on how it feels as well as how it looks. Your towels and robes are the first thing a guest will experience – before the hands of a therapist or the selected products – so make sure your towels send the right message about your spa.

4 Consider health and safety

Concern for health and safety within spas makes anti-slip spa slippers a very wise investment. All our slippers are now supplied with an anti-slip sole as standard. These can be personalised with the spa name or logo and create an excellent form of subliminal branding. We also supply personalised flip-flops, which we've found to be a popular item for membership incentives.

Above from left: Only three towels need be used per treatment and these can be colour-matched to the room; generously proportioned robes give the guest a sense of opulence and help them relax; Barbara Cooke (and far right) believes spas are judged on how they feel as well as how they look
Bottom right: A greater range of colours are now available for spas to choose from

BC SOFTWARE

BC Softwear, headed up by Managing Director Barbara Cooke, has over 10 years' experience as a leading supplier of quality textiles to the luxury spa and hospitality markets.

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5 Be mindful of numbers
How many towels and robes should a new spa order? When will you need to replenish? You'll need to think about other wet areas within your facility – changing rooms, pool and gym – as well as how many people will use your spa. Treatment rooms are often not the biggest user of towels, other areas in your facility may take the biggest share. A multi-use facility with multiple treatment rooms may need a budget from £5,000 to £25,000, dependent on its size, guest throughput and the level of luxury to be offered.

6 Dress for success
Dressing the massage beds can often improve a room's feel and it doesn't need to involve numerous towels. Less is often more! Typically, if you use standard bath towels, as many as five can be required per treatment. However, BC Softwear's range requires just three to be washed after each treatment – the XL jumbo sheet that the guest lies on, the covering bath sheet and the hand towel that is used for modesty and to cover the head hole on the couch. You can also reduce usage by restricting the number of towels and robes the guest has access to, but this of course depends on the level luxury you want to portray.

7 Remember, size matters!
Contrary to popular belief, size is everything! Guests will be instantly comforted by a generously proportioned bathrobe – it makes them feel opulent

and generous, and, above all, ensures they relax more quickly. Our standard size robe is an XL, which is perfect for larger guests and pregnant women, but we are one of the few companies in the UK to offer sizes up to 4XL. A new spa should buy a mix of sizes with the majority of robes in a minimum of XL.

8 Refresh for spring
A new colour of towel in a treatment room can instantly give it a new lease of life. Traditionally the selection of towel colours and the impact of colour fading have limited the palette of choices available to spas. However, we now offer luxury towels that are manufactured with a reactive dye and a superior colourfast dyeing process, meaning you can be more adventurous with colour. Perhaps consider colour-matching your wallpaper or your paint colour.

9 Ask the experts
The best spas increasingly perform to their strengths and know when to seek professional advice – for example, from spa consultancies – to help them take their business forward.

10 Enhance the experience
The robes in a spa are your guest's second skin so make them feel loved before their experience even begins. Only an expert in designing bathrobes specifically for spas will be able to achieve a successful balance of luxury and budget. ●●●●●

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Barbara Cooke, Managing Director, BC Softwear

