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Catering to the Mind, Body and Soul

From healthy F&B options to wellness activations (think meditation and yoga) to expert speakers, Caesars Entertainment's new Wellness Menu will make life easier for meeting planners.

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Featured Wellness



According to the American Psychological Association's "2023 Work in America Survey," 92% of workers believe it is very or somewhat important to work for an organization that values emotional and psychological well-being.

And there's some good news: 77% said they are very or somewhat satisfied with the level of support for mental health and well-being received from their employers. But improvement is clearly needed, with 55% saying their employer believes their workplace environment is much healthier, mentally, than it is and

43% worrying about a negative workplace impact if they report a mental health condition.

A focus on wellness is woven into the fabric of Caesars Entertainment. And now was the right time to debut the new Wellness Menu for meeting planners bringing groups to Caesars Entertainment properties.

"Wellness is taking on a much bigger role in society," says Kelly Gleeson Smith, vice president of sales for Caesars Entertainment. "Over the last couple of years, especially after COVID, everybody's become so much more aware of their physical and mental health."

Don Ross, vice president of meeting operations, Las Vegas for Caesars Entertainment, agrees that wellness is a hot topic that everyone is talking about.

"We are seeing more and more programs incorporate wellness; adding healthy menu items is quite common these days," says Ross, who oversees the catering, conference services, banquets and meeting services teams for all Las Vegas properties. "Planners will be happy to see that the healthy options will also appeal to those who are not necessarily looking for this. The menus are creative and beautiful. As far as the activations, we are offering tai chi, meditation, yoga, paint therapy, Chakra healing, wellness speakers, you name it."

Wellness to the forefront

Gleeson Smith says the fact that more meeting planners are asking Caesars Entertainment about incorporating wellness into their events is in part due to their own organizations focusing more on the importance of physical and mental health.

"I'm seeing emails about wellness on a weekly basis from within our organization. It was obvious with our company's commitment to wellness to bring this to our clients, and to make it easy for them to incorporate into their programs," Gleeson Smith says. "There are so many aspects to planning a program, and sometimes wellness becomes the last item on your list because of time, logistics, budget—it can be a variety of factors. So why not provide a Wellness Menu with great partners that we can put in front of clients right after they've committed to hosting their conference with us?"

hosting their conference with us?

Caesars Entertainment introduced the Wellness Menu to meeting industry media in October, just before the start of IMEX America in Las Vegas. Janice Cardinale, founder of a LinkedIn community focused on meeting industry mental health and wellness called Event Minds Matter and a speaker who partners with Caesars Entertainment as part of its Wellness Menu offerings, says the hospitality company's mindset aligns with what the next generation is searching for in terms of careers, culture, wellness and belonging.



"The Wellness Menu is full of healthy options and thoughtful ideas: vegan, dairy-free, nut-free, gluten-free and every other allergy under the sun," she says. "It caters to the mind, body and soul."

Cardinale points out that wellness goes well beyond fitness to practicing healthy habits to attain better physical and mental health outcomes.

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"If you are a client or thinking about growing your business with Caesars Entertainment, they want to make you look like a superstar by supporting you and your attendees during the process and incorporating wellness into the program," she says.

The Wellness Menu provides more than nutritious offerings, with activities ranging from pet therapy to paint therapy to goat yoga. And Cardinale is one of several speakers who have partnered with Caesars Entertainment as part of the Wellness Menu. Others include wellness author and speaker Pandit Dasa (see sidebar), speaker and author Nolan Nichols and body and brain expert Dami Kim (Page 52).

"Planners may bring in any speakers, but we hope that by including speakers in our Wellness Menu, we have made it easier for planners to add them," says Reina Herschdorfer, director of marketing, national meetings and events for Caesars Entertainment. "We're slowly gathering experts in this area and asking them to be involved with us."

The Wellness Menu has been rolled out at all nine Caesars Entertainment properties in Las Vegas, with the Atlantic City and Reno-Tahoe markets to follow.

An enterprise-wide focus

In terms of the latest F&B trends, Ross is seeing strong demand for plant-based meals as well as a growing interest in mocktails.

"We're seeing more dietary requests than ever—everything from gluten-free to no salt, no fat, no carbs, etc.," he says. "We do everything we can to accommodate these needs and have come up with healthy and balanced restaurant-quality menus."

Herschdorfer says focusing on wellness for team members across the enterprise has also been common practice at Caesars Entertainment for some time.

"We even offer yoga in the office on a weekly basis, as well as financial incentives to have an annual wellness check-up," she says, noting the company's

sponsorship or wellness articles in meeting industry publications and wellness challenges at industry events (such as those by MPI and ASAE).

One such activation is the Global Wellness Challenge Powered by Heka Health. The 2023 iteration of the challenge—which involves a walking and yoga challenge and allows participants to enter prize drawings as they accumulate steps—concluded on Global Wellness Day. The next one will conclude during a Global Wellness Summit for customers and press being planned by Caesars Entertainment for June 2024.

The biophilic conference space design of CAESARS FORUM—the company’s signature event space in Las Vegas—with lots of light and plants is another way the company helps to promote wellness, according to Herschdorfer. Beyond this welcoming environment, food and beverage efforts are wellness-focused, in part due to responsible sourcing.



Mindful practices to make your workplace comfortable

Pandit Dasa, a speaker, workplace culture and employee well-being expert who works with Caesars Entertainment via the company’s new Wellness Menu, offers some easy-to-incorporate suggestions.



MEDITATION is a form of mindfulness that involves focusing the mind and calming the body. It can be done sitting or lying down and can range from just a

few minutes to longer periods.



MINDFUL BREATHING involves paying attention to the sensation of breathing and can help to reduce stress and improve focus.



MINDFUL MOVEMENT involves being present and aware while performing simple physical tasks such as stretching or walking.



GRATITUDE PRACTICES involve focusing on the positive aspects of our lives and can improve our emotional well-being.



JOURNALING is a form of self-reflection that can help us process our thoughts and feelings and gain insights into our mental health.

There are many other mindfulness practices—such as visualization, self-compassion and guided imagery—that can be incorporated into the workplace to promote mental well-being.

By incorporating these mindfulness practices into our workday, we can help improve our mental health and reduce stress in the workplace. Give them a try and see how they can benefit you!

Learn more at panditdasa.com. Dasa's new book, "Mindfulness for the Wandering Mind" (available on [Amazon.com](https://amazon.com)), covers all these techniques and much more.



WELLNESS CHALLENGE

Click the **Scan-In** button in your Challenge App and scan the QR code to get your bonus points



Manual code: **ignite24#1**

Scan-In: On the Challenge app's main dashboard, press the Bonus Activities selector and tap the 'Scan-In' button. Align the app viewer with the QR Code. The code will automatically be detected and provide you with a confirmation notice. Alternatively, enter the manual code in at the bottom of the scan-in screen

Bonus Points: Scan-in during the Challenge and add 1,000 bonus points to your challenge total (limit of one bonus).

To find out more information on the Ignite Wellness Challenge, go to hekahealth.com/ignite24