



WELLNESS

DEUTSCHER  
WELLNESS VERBAND

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**ASSOCIATION FOCUS: ONE TO WATCH**

## German Wellness Association

In German, it's called the Deutscher Wellness Verband (DWV). Director of Communications & Consulting Katarina Banach gives ESM the key facts...

**Q Who founded the German Wellness Association, and when?**

The German Wellness Association (DWV) was the first European wellness organisation, founded in 1990 by its current chief Lutz Hertel, a wellness expert with a professional background in health psychology and worksite health promotion. It was initially inspired by the original concept of 'wellness' as developed and represented by American doctors Halbert Dunn, Don Ardell, John Travis and Bill Hettler and later influenced by the work of Aaron Antonovsky, Dean Ornish and Jon Kabat-Zinn.

**Q What are its aims and philosophy?**

DWV's purpose is to maintain and improve public health and wellbeing in the original sense of wellness. Wellness describes an active and self-responsible strategy towards complete health and quality of life, one that enables the subject to live healthily and productively as a result of scientifically proven actions, methods and techniques. These can keep individuals widely immune against chronic illness and disease, as well as living in the pursuit of happiness.

DWV is a non-profit membership organisation divided into 10 professional sections: healthy living, the only private members section; sports and fitness; diet and nutrition; body care and beauty; treatment and counselling; education and professional training; consulting and communication services; health and wellness tourism; spa resorts and hot springs; and medical wellness

In co-operation with German Wellness Inc, DWV develops quality standards for the wellness market based on the original concept and purpose of wellness. Wellness providers that fulfil these

**The DWV  
management board,  
L-R: Lutz Hertel,  
Katarina Banach and  
Günther Fesselmann**



quality standards are awarded with a seal of approval that helps consumers to find and select certified quality. The quality seal is well established in Germany and around Europe.

In addition, DWV promotes consciousness for wellness by organising and supporting conferences, exhibitions and seminars as well as continuous collaboration with the mass media clarifying the concept of wellness for both public and professional audiences. It also promotes physical and psycho-social health by finding schools, colleges and academies for professional education and training in health and wellness topics, and by providing professional assistance and consultation in the development and realisation of projects promoting real wellness. DWV also promotes scientific research into wellness, and generally combats the abuse and exploitation of the original wellness concept.

**Q How many members are there, and how do people qualify for membership?**

First of all, we do not regard ourselves as a big member association but rather as an adviser for laymen and professionals in any kind of wellness matters. We are known as a circle of experts – or a think tank – and as an institution for quality assurance. At the moment we serve about 200 members.

These members have to fulfil certain standards of quality when joining our association. Quality

criteria depend on the relevant professional section, as outlined above. Accordingly, being a member of DWV is already a declaration of quality.

**Q Why should people join?**

DWV is recognised for its independence from commercial interests, for its competence, and for its neutrality. Members certainly profit by association with us in the wellness market. They can make use of our public relations and communication services and get special member conditions such as individual consultation, reduced fees, free magazines and so on.

Furthermore, DWV serves those seeking wellness as well as those providing services and products. We act in the role of a mediator between the market and the consumer. For instance, we launched a comprehensive market research programme this year collecting and analysing data on consumer behaviour relating to spa and wellness services. And, last but not least, all our members become part of a networking family with all the known benefits for professional progress.

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erschienen in der Ausgabe / published in August/September 2009