

EVENTS/CAUSES

Mandarin Oriental offers Boston Marathon runners a therapeutic edge

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Mandarin Oriental Spa

By JOE MCCARTHY

Mandarin Oriental Boston is aligning itself with the Boston Marathon April 20 to aid runners pre- and post-race.

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The Boston Marathon has surged following the bombing attack two years ago and still draws runners from around the world. Since marathon runners are highly attuned to their bodily health, a visit to the spa will likely be a popular choice.

"The marathon itself is a major draw to the city, for runners and spectators alike," said Taylor Rains managing partner of [Flugel Consulting](#), Charleston, SC. "Aligning with such a prominent event is bound to benefit a brand."

"Even though Mandarin Oriental's promotion caters specifically to runners, the brand's demonstration of support of such an iconic event for the city will likely resonate with all travelers descending on Boston for the marathon," he said.

"Technically speaking, structuring a Boston Marathon package also serves to benefit a brand's online visibility as potential guests are likely to use the marathon as part of their search for accommodations."

Mr. Rains is not affiliated with Mandarin Oriental, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Mandarin Oriental was unable to comment by press deadline.

Get ready

The Boston Marathon drew close to 36,000 runners in 2014, with nearly 20,000 men and 16,000 women participating.

The majority of runners fell within the 18-39 age range. There is no reason not to anticipate similar numbers this year.

Many runners travel with friends and family, so Boston will see an immense influx of tourists on the days surrounding the run.

For travelers that make an extended trip out of the marathon, Mandarin Oriental can lure guests by promoting the salubrious effects of its spa.



Mandarin Oriental Boston spa

For those visiting just for the day, Mandarin Oriental can still present its spa as a good place to unwind and heal. Besides equipment, the only advantage runners can muster for a marathon include natural ability and training – there is no "elite" option for a head-start or reduced distances. Mandarin Oriental will likely pitch itself as a way to gain an edge, since luxury spa treatments are exclusive.

The property is emphasizing many treatments that appeal to runners such as massages. The hotel's signature spa treatment costs \$270-\$295 and includes "a hands-on body massage ritual that combines the powerful effects of Oriental meridian massage with the therapeutic benefits of custom-blended essential oils."

Guests can also order massages that target feet and legs and other areas that may be strained after a long run.

The property is also promoting the general relaxed atmosphere.

The Mandarin Oriental Boston is also situated along the marathon route, allowing guests to watch from a prime spot.



Mandarin Oriental Boston

In addition to attracting guests, the property will be adding its voice to the race's social media buzz.



Mandarin Oriental Boston Twitter page

Keeping pace

Mandarin Oriental helps runners perform their best in other areas of the world as well.

For instance, the brand's Jakarta property invited runners to a marathon weekend designed to prepare and rejuvenate guests who participated in the first Jakarta Marathon last October.

The property preceded and followed the marathon with amenities such as energizing meals and a restorative spa treatment. Wrapping the marathon with offers meant to smooth transitions into and out of the race demonstrated that the brand understands that running is not an isolated activity ([see story](#)).

Other luxury hotel brands are keenly aware that health-oriented packages attract guests.

For example, The Peninsula Hotels is combining Western and Eastern health philosophies to relaunch its wellness programs across all properties.

Redirecting attention to the program will open a wellness center, focus on sleep patterns of stressed guests, create a spa experience focused on natural products, offer massage opportunities and provide healthy dining options. The surge of healthy lifestyle options across Peninsula properties will reflect upon the brand's dedication to guests and their lifestyle choices ([see story](#)).

The Boston Marathon is unique due to the devastation visited upon it two years ago and any supporting brand has to recognize the cities trauma and resilience.

"Charitable support is almost always a good move for a brand," Mr. Rains said. "When done properly, it demonstrates a commitment to the community and further 'localizes' the property.

"Supporting the marathon in some way is extremely important for Boston hotels," he said. "The attack on the race two years ago is still strongly associated with the marathon, but - more importantly - the communities response following the attack has become a defining characteristic of the city.

"Supporting the marathon places a brand as part of the Boston Strong movement and helps to entrench a property as part of the city."

Final Take

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