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London's new VIB services

As the home of the yummy mummy's London is naturally also a great source of inspirational upcoming professional services for the VIBs (The Very-Important-Baby-Families : see the new Zukunftsinstitut study). These are the services aimed at the higher income, highly educated women who don't have the time or the inclination to scout around for the latest in eco-friendly nappies, in off-road buggies or even to prepare a room for the baby. It is in fact estimated that the average woman in the UK spends between 150-250 hours preparing for the birth of her first child and motherhood. Furthermore if she's a high-income, professional woman, she will probably spend between 4.000€ - 6.000€ on pregnancy and baby-related equipment, products and wellness services.

One of the pioneering companies in the UK to tap into this market is Babyplanners (www.babyplanners.co.uk). They not only offer to help mothers-to-be preparing for the birth of their child, but also have after-birth services, massage, nutritional and nanny advice, baby room decoration and sourcing of equipment. Their packages range from Bespoke Babyplans (from 600€), to Bump Bundles or Baby Bundles (from 450€). Although they have been criticised for being merely for people who are "too posh to shop" the company responds to critics with the fact that they save many people time and therefore money. Rather than rashly investing in the latest "must-have" buggy, they will perhaps advise you to go for something more lasting and of longer term use. They also advise women on pregnancy clothing, make-up and fitness.

Seeing the potential here for the stressed up-market VIB customers, some fitness studios in London are even setting up specialised so-called "maternity spas". At Glow Urban Spa (www.glowurbanspa.com) in Knightsbridge, pregnant women can visit the "Baby Glow Maternity Spa" run by a specialist in pre- and post-natal wellbeing and baby care. Their most popular treatments include massage reflexology, and acupuncture. While most of these treatments are naturally not exclusive to this spa, (and many spas now offer special pregnancy massage), what is original and proving popular at Glow Urban, is the smart idea of setting the treatments in a spa within a spa – so the women feel comfortable surrounded by other women in the same situation, and that it is an environment exclusive to them.

Other innovative marketing ideas to tap into the growing and rich VIB market in London are such things as Baby Moon, at the Lanesborough Hotel. Aimed at expectant parents, the baby moon programme is a weekend package that includes non-alcoholic cocktails, chocolates served by a personal butler, and massage – all aimed to be reminiscent of a honeymoon. The hotel also provides a list of the best maternity baby stores in town for their guests to visit.

Given that many of the VIPs are older women, the chance is that some of these will have conceived with or are undergoing IVF. Not a place to miss out on business opportunities, London now has a so-called Womb Room. This is a luxury space for women undergoing this treatment, aimed at helping them relax before and after in order to increase the chances of success. Run by a fertility and pregnancy expert, techniques such as acupuncture and other stress-reducing treatments are offered.

Once baby is there, there are naturally a number of agencies to help you find a babysitter, nanny or au-pair. One agency has however seen a new gap in this huge and competitive market and offers so-called “nanny profiling”, a detailed analysis of your needs and expectations. Rather as with a dating service, they match this with their child carers to find an optimal solution for both parties. Nanny Success (www.nannysuccess.com) also helps ensure that you find optimal childcare, and coaches families to deal with them via a “Manage Well” package.

Having children it seems was never easier, never more stress-free, and never more expensive.

www.Glowurbanspa.com

www.babyplanners.co.uk

www.nannysuccess.com

Lanesborough Hotel, 0044 20 7259 5599

The Womb Room, 0044 20 7224 0017