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Customer Driven Segmentation

BY MELINDA MINTON

So...your target market is a 30-50 year old set of affluent humans...? That's it?! Where do they live? What do they do for fun? Who are these people? Most of all, what are they looking for in a spa? Try to take this larger market segment and further define the market by customer needs, primary traits and desired benefits. While one group might want to steal away from the kids for a day another group might want to come in after work for a massage or facial before going out for a dinner meeting. While these market segments may be similar in age, income and living demographics, they are vastly different in terms of lifestyle management, daily routine and ultimate spa goals. Once various segments of the target population are identified it is important to prioritize the segments and cater to each accordingly.

Finding out who is paramount in your various market segments is crucial. This can be done via focus groups, post-spa interviews or questionnaires, surveys, mystery shopping and in house surveys. Make it a part of the family and invite your best customers to a soiree or dinner to explore what your spa is doing well and/or not so well. Ask questions, solicit responses but be sure not to sway or taint the opinion pool. Your organization needs to hear the truth about customer service, technical ability of your staff, friendliness, overall experience and suggested methods of improvement. Integrating your top clients with your best staff who can mentor appropriate behaviors to the team is paramount in creating a win win for every segment of your spa-going population.

Establish a "value" for each type of spa-goer within your target market and treat that client accordingly. For instance, a business person who is short on time will enjoy a grouping of services provided in tandem or in rapid fire succession. They are also more likely to make a snap decision

on homecare when it is professionally demonstrated to them throughout the service and then bundled for an easy exit purchase. To the contrary, a home maker who is enjoying a few hours away might consider this type of quick-turn-around hasty and rude. A spa-goer who would like to enjoy the full experience of being at a spa including water amenities, the relaxation room, steam and shower would prefer a more leisurely approach to treatments and a more thorough approach to the educational process that is expected with consultative selling.

Accordingly, your product and service mix may need some fine tuning. Take a fresh look at the retail selection that you currently offer at your spa. How much of it sells on a regular basis? Furthermore, who is buying what? Does it make more sense to pair quick systems for skin and body care to the busy professionals leaving the more complicated systems to your target segment of retirees? Are busy moms who attend your spa not apt to take time for a hot bath or a bi-weekly masquing? Which groups in your target set partake in gift giving? Which groups of clients are most apt to throw a spa party or host a spa luncheon? By narrowing down the selection of items offered in your retail selection clients are less confused, more inclined to explore and more apt to purchase. Likewise your staff is more prone to mastering the various items within a more focused selection as opposed to a sea of selection.

No matter your approach to your clientele be certain to not lump them into a singular category. Clients are as unique as snowflakes and must be grouped to form cohesive snow balls that amount in service and homecare sales. Most of all, don't forget that your most important resource is your client. Ask them what they want and then deliver more than expected. ■