

Mya's Tan & Nails

Personal Care Services: Paper 2

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Introduction

The present paper will analyze a specific company in the personal and laundry services industry. Specifically, it will focus on Mya's Tan & Nails, a local company operating in a subdivision of the personal and laundry services industry: the hair, nail, and skin industry. The remainder of the paper will provide a survey of the industry, local company details, and an analysis of the company through the use of the gap analysis, servicescape, and blueprint techniques.

Industry Survey

Industry Information

The personal and laundry services industry includes various services that range from nail care to laundry care, and even death care services (*812 Personal*, 2011). In 2001, the industry was composed of over 201,000 service providers across the United States that were estimated to be responsible for \$69 billion on the United States' economy (*812 Personal*, 2011). The personal care service industry, a subdivision of the personal and laundry services industry, accounted for 21 billion dollars of the market in 2009 (*Table 10.1*, 2011). The U.S. Census Bureau reported that the personal care industry grew every year between 2001 and 2008, at which point the industry lost 390 million dollars due to the economic recession (*Table 10.1*, 2011). Locally, this affected the 1,215 personal care providers at the state level; the majority of these service providers depended on haircut services which accounted for 44% of their total revenue (*Economic Fact Sheet, 2011; Products Lines*, 2011).

Industry Value

In general, the industry targets customers with discretionary income who seek to maintain a specific outer appearance. The services help customers minimize daily personal grooming time by providing temporary grooming solutions. For instance, a professional eyebrow waxing will eliminate the need for eyebrow plucking for up to two weeks; similarly, a professional manicure can eliminate the need for nail care for up to three weeks. However, do-it-yourself personal care products are a major threat for the industry; fortunately for personal care providers, these products often contain confusing instructions or do not achieve the same results a professional provider could deliver. For these reasons, women across the world prefer to visit a salon rather than risk damaging their appearance. In general, customers value the industry because the services enhance natural looks or hide insecurities.

Company Details

The remainder of the paper will focus on Mya's Tan & Nails Salon. The company operates in the hair, nail, and skin industry and attempts to provide various services at its only location. The salon is located in Bayou La Batre, Alabama, and seeks to serve middle class customers. Currently, the small business staffs four full-time employees as well as a few part-time employees. Most employees are related and are able to work well together in a professional setting. Ricky Truong, the owner's son, was unable to grant access to business records, and thus the exact annual revenue for the store was unavailable; however, he estimates the annual store average to be around 80k plus employee tips. Employees are paid a commission based on the number of clients they see per day, and are allowed to keep tips provided by customers. This

payment system encourages employees to provide high quality services and also encourages them to develop relationships that will lead to loyal customers.

Mya's main competitive advantage over other companies is its number of services provided. This local company provides various services at its single location: haircut, waxing, trimming, dyeing, tanning, and nail care services; by targeting the entire hair, nail, and skin market segment, Mya's management hopes to appeal to most middle class customers. However, apart from convenience for customers who want various services performed at once, the company fails to provide a strong differentiation from its competitors. All of the services provided can be found in areas nearby, and the company's prices are average when compared to its competitors. In addition, the location is far from perfect and the appearance is not impeccable; but, these last two topics will be discussed further in the servicescape component of the company analysis segment.

Company Analysis

Gap Analysis

Knowledge Gap

Mya's Tan & Nails has a low customer turnover because the employees attempt to create relationships to develop a loyal clientele; employees do this by gathering information about the customers' expectations prior to beginning the service and then by chatting with them about various topics while providing high quality services. A knowledge gap is not often developed because most customers have a specific result in mind, and are asked to volunteer this information to ensure that they are satisfied after the service is performed. In addition, customers

are encouraged to bring pictures of the results they want as a way to provide employees with a more concrete visualization of the results desired. Mya's staff is aware that they must clearly understand customer expectations because the company depends on loyal customers in order to remain in business.

Standards Gap

Perhaps the major gap at Mya's Tan & Nails is the standards gap. Employees in the company are allowed to use their best judgment to engage customers in the best manner they see fit; frequent customers usually receive personal service while new customers tend to receive professional service. Personal service refers to conversation of neutral topics which tends to lead to funny anecdotes from employees and customers; this also leads to a casual atmosphere in which customers can freely relax while receiving a service. However, this may lead to a delivery gap and then a perception gap if the customer does not receive the same quality service other customers received. There are proper procedures and scripts that employees can follow to give identical service to all customers, but these are often ignored if the employee has developed a casual relationship with the customer. Mya's management believes that customers prefer personalized service over professional service and thus allow employees to deviate from the official procedures.

Delivery Gap

Customers at Mya's may also become dissatisfied if they do not receive the service they desired. The delivery gap may develop with some customers if they expect professional service but receive personal service instead. If the service provider is too comfortable with the customer, the provider may not feel required to perform the service with high quality or may behave in a

manner that makes the customer feel uncomfortable or ignored. At Mya's, pedicures can range from 20 minutes to an hour depending on the number of customers in the store and the customers' desire to soak their feet. Employees may walk away while customers soak their feet which can lead to confusion from the customers because they may not understand that they are being given extra time to relax in the pedicure recliners. Some customers expect quick, friendly service and do not want employees to walk away from them; to these customers, a lack of employee presence is considered to be neglectful and low quality customer service.

Perceptions Gap

As previously stated, the standards and delivery gaps at Mya's have the possibility of developing into perception gaps. Customers may see that other clients are receiving different treatment and may therefore consider the service they received inadequate. For instance, a loyal customer may feel that he is not receiving good service if the customer next to him receives quick, professional service while he is left alone in a recliner while strangers carry conversations around him; the loyal customer might consider his service lower in quality because he was left alone for too long and considered his relaxation time to be wasted time. If employees do not ask for a desired relaxation time, customers may be inclined not to return because they might consider their visit to the salon wasteful.

Service Gap

The four previous gaps add up to produce the service gap. One of Mya's management policies allows employees to deviate from the proper procedures and it may be the main reason for customer dissatisfaction. The policy is in place to allow employees to develop a loyal clientele but could have a negative impact on the overall business. Fortunately, the business

owner and staff members remind each other frequently that services can be personal and professional while maintaining a high quality level. Customers do not struggle to find the technician assisting them and tend to enjoy, rather than resent, long relaxation time.

In addition to the gaps already discussed, Mya's management also struggles to maintain wait times as low as possible. The local store has a small location and therefore cannot accommodate more employees in its area; the limited number of employees can lead to long wait times and customer dissatisfaction. To minimize frustration due to wait time, customers are encouraged to schedule appointments and arrive punctually. However, there are various distractions in the servicescape that will help customers take their minds off the time elapsed while they wait in line. The servicescape will be described in detail in the next segment.

Servicescape

Mya's Tan & Nails local company succeeds at some areas of the servicescape but fails at others. The location, appearance, and atmosphere will be discussed in the next few components. This segment will first analyze the positive servicescape points and then the negative points. Finally, it will provide a quick analysis of the proposed virtual servicescape.

Positive Servicescape Points

The servicescape does a fantastic job of opening the area for traffic flow from one area to the next; the middle of the room is empty and allows customers and employees to walk throughout the room without disturbing others. In addition, the waiting area provides various distractions for customers: there is a television that plays in the background, usually plays cartoons to entertain children; there are magazines that help customers stay up-to-date with the latest celebrity news; there are guides that help women find a photograph of the desired results

they seek; and there are snacks and drinks available for purchase. In addition, the seats are comfortable and there are usually other people willing to hold a conversation while they wait. Mya's does not give takeaways or premiums because the change in appearance serves as proof that a service was performed. For example, it would be wasteful for the company to provide the customer with proof that she received a design pedicure because the customer can look at her toes and see that there is a clear difference between clear toenails and *Strawberry Shortcake* design toenails. Next, the temperature is kept at a constant 70 degrees because some nail care services require that specific temperature to dry properly. Lastly, the servicescape succeeds with the lighting in the building; the lights are bright enough to allow employees to see what they are doing while performing nail care services, but not bright enough to bother the customers' eyes.

Negative Servicescape Points

There are various failure points in the servicescape. First, the environment does not provide enough information to accurately shape expectations: there are few signs and too many service stations causing the customer to feel overwhelmed. Even though traffic flow is a positive aspect, the use of the store's space is inefficient and does not provide clear points of interaction; upon entrance to the salon, the customer does not have an opportunity to walk up to a front desk and must find his/her way towards the waiting area which is composed of a few chairs along the wall. There are no signs leading to the unlabeled tanning room which means an employee must guide new customers into the room to avoid confusion.

Next, the smell and atmosphere of the building are not appealing to the customers. The nail polish smell is extremely strong if not used to it, and is capable of inducing headaches if exposed for long periods of time. Furthermore, the room lacks segmentation and does not allow

for the development of different atmospheres; there may be some customers attempting to relax during their feet soaking and pedicure, while other customers are having their hair loudly blow dried four feet away. It is hard to determine which overall atmosphere the management was attempting to create and therefore customers might be confused as to what to expect or how to behave.

Finally, the appearance and location of the building are having a negative impact on the company's revenue. Mya's is located in a small shopping plaza next to a *Food Tiger* grocery store; the plaza looks filthy and lacks maintenance throughout the parking lot. The salon has a small outside sign and is not clearly visible from the road; in addition, the salon is located inside a small glass hallway that faces the road—the glass serves as a barrier because there are a number of posters hanging on it making it difficult to see into the store. Furthermore, the outside of the salon is dirty and does not seem to be regularly cleaned, giving the impression that the inside of the salon will look the same—this impression is incorrect as the inside of the salon is spotless. However, the color scheme inside does not set any type of mood: the walls are tan, floors are red, and the furniture varies in color. There is a clear lack of feng shui in the store which results due to the number of stations tightly placed inside the salon.

Virtual Servicescape

Several months ago, one of the employees informed me that the store would be increasing its servicescape into the virtual world; there was a plan to build a website that would allow customers to schedule appointments online. Months prior to that decision, employees decided to test their virtual expansion by creating Facebook pages which would allow them to investigate the demand for an online page. However, the pages were soon forgotten after their

creation even though customers use the “Check-In” feature that allows them to share their location with their friends online. There is little information on the company’s Facebook pages and no pictures; even worse, a Google search provides customers with various results to different pages leaving the customer to wonder about the legitimacy of the information provided. Finally, the idea to expand online was temporarily dismissed by management, and future visits to the topic seem unlikely.

Blueprint

The present segment will feature a blueprint which will illustrate the steps and supporting processes that must take place in order for a customer to receive a tanning service. This particular service is high tech, and high touch; this means that the service will include lots of interaction between the customer, the staff, and the tanning bed.

Blueprint is located at the end of the paper.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Mya’s Tan & Nails is company located in Bayou La Batre, Alabama, and it attempts to provide high quality services at low prices. The company would benefit from renovations and changes to its management style as well as its appearance. The company has lost revenue due to the national economic recession and the owner is hesitant to invest in a failing business. However, Mya’s has many loyal customers and is able to effectively operate with its low yearly revenues. The company seems to be failing in its current state, but perhaps a change in location would improve its condition. The present paper provided information about the industry and the company, as well as a detailed company analysis based on gap analysis, servicescape, and blueprinting techniques.

References

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Salon Blueprint
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| | | Outside Salon | | In the Salon | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| Time Line | | Schedule Appointment | Park Vehicle | Walk Towards Salon | Check-In | Wait in Line | Walk Towards Tanning Room | | | |
| Activity | | | | | | | Receive Service (Tan) | | | |
| | | | | | | | Pay & Leave | | | |
| <i>Average Time Spent on Activity</i> | | 5 minutes | 2 minutes | 2 minutes | 3 Minutes | 5-30 minutes | 2 minutes | 15-60 minutes | 10 minutes | |
| <i>Service Standards & Scripts</i> | | Customers are greeted based on a script and then asked about the nature of their call (if over the phone). Appointment is then scheduled. | Proper parking lot flow is controlled by building manager. | Proper customer entry is essential to maintain customer satisfaction. | Customers are greeted based on a script and then asked to sit in waiting area. | Waiting period may be used by customers to decide which service they desire. Distractors are available to pass time. | Employees are friendly and use script to guide customer to the proper tanning bed. | Employees are professional and allow customers to get undressed, tan, and dressed in a timely manner. | Eyesight must adjust to different environment. Customer is guided towards register through the use of a script. | |
| <i>Physical Evidence</i> | | An employee is assigned to answer phone. Appointment book is seen near register. | Parking spots are clearly labeled. Bright lights are available at night. | Main entrance is well-lit and easy to open. | The nearest employee greets the customer and there are seats available in waiting area. | A large magazine & guide selection can help customers pick a service. TV are clearly visible. Snacks are sold. | An employee is assigned to guide customers to tanning beds based on script. | Employees leave to allow customers to feel comfortable tanning. Employees check on customers based on time elapsed. | Dim lights in tanning room help prepare customers for the lobby lights. | |
| Line of Interaction | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Visible Actions</i> | | Employee answers phone and writes information in appointment book (seen in person). | Lights come on at appropriate times. | Employees are easily seen upon entrance and building is well-lit. | Employee greets customers properly, looks professional, and can accurately predict wait times. | New magazines are available every week with new style tips. TV is always on. Snack are appealing. | Employees describe the tanning process and guide customer in a friendly manner towards tanning bed. | Employees knock before entering room and behave professionally at all times. | Employees use dim lights to prepare customer for the bright lobby lights. Customers are guided to register. Customers are thanked based on script. | |
| Line of Visibility | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Invisible Actions</i> | | Employee takes information (provided over the phone). | Outside lights are on a timer and turned on before it gets dark. | Glass doors are cleaned regularly to allow clear visibility. | Employees have a chart with wait times based on number of employees present and number of customers waiting. | Managers purchase new magazines every week. Snacks are stocked weekly. | Employees have access to the script which is located next to the register. Tanning beds are cleaned between clients. | Tanning beds are set on timers. Employees check on customers based on different timers. Bill is prepared while customer tans. | Employees use scripts next to register to guide customer. Dim lights are on a timer. | |
| Line of Internal Physical Interaction | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Support Processes</i> | | Manager checks appointment book for legibility and number of appointments at the end of the day. | Building manager is responsible for keeping lighting equipment functional. | Building manager ensures inside lights work properly and doors are easy to open. | Managers maintain wait time chart up-to-date based on improving employee speed. | Magazines are shipped through the mail weekly. Outside contractor works on snack machine. | Managers ensure tanning bed cleaning products are stocked and scripts are easy to read. | Accurate pricing information is kept next to register. Tanning bed timers are serviced by outside contractors. | Managers ensure script is easy to read. Timers are serviced by outside contractors. | |

| Key | |
|------------|-------------------------------|
| Color | Meaning |
| | Risk of Time Failure |
| | Major Customer Service Points |