

DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH PRODUCTS FOR SALE?



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In the early 1990's, Sam began to study the Chinese art of Feng Shui that plays an important role in his approach to design and architectural conception. Sam is involved in the SPA market since 1996. He has been invited as a keynote speaker in Spa shows in the USA and Canada, and is recognized as one of the leading experts in SPA conception and design.

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Design & Marketing

By **Sam Margulies**

One of the challenges for every spa is to generate enough retail sales. It is a challenge because on one end, the spa owners don't always have enough products for sale, neither the right space for it and sometime they have too many product lines to chose from and look like Wal-Mart. In the other end, a lot of therapists working in the spas have a hard time with the idea of "Selling" products to clients. The bottom lime is that a spa, and a day spa in particular, need to generate a minimum of 28 to 30% of their income through retail sales, or will face a real cash flow problem. Incorporating marketing tools within the design of the spa can be the key that turns the client into a buyer, as well as helping the staff not feeling guilty about "selling" products.

Let's remember that a spa is about creating an experience for the clients. What is this experience? Here is my definition of the "client's experience":

"The clients' experience is how one feels when spending time at your spa. It is not an intellectual state of mind that we talk about. It is a body feeling, a heart enjoyment. If it was to be in your head only, it would not be your thoughts. It would be the

tingling "thing" that you can feel finding its path all the way up, toward the back of your head, that makes you feel relaxed, contended and fulfilled. It is what you give to your guests, which make them love themselves again. The clients' experience is what they come for that makes them come back again and again to your spa.... And this is a healthy addiction!"

One essential element in the creation of this experience is the conception of a special environment. And it is within this environment that you want to create a strong but non aggressive support for the retail sales, in a way that the client will not feel that the whole place is about selling retail products, but that she will feel a strong desire to acquire the products for her own home.

In order to achieve this, you have to define three principles:

1. The Essence
2. The Supports
3. The Spaces

The Essence of spa products sales is the "triple V". It stands for Visibility, Voice-ability, and Verify-ability. Visibility means that you have to make the products

DO YOU HAVE THE RIGHT SPACE FOR IT?

visible. Not the products only, but any sign, in any form color and shape that will suggest the image of the products and of the company that makes the product line. For example, you can incorporate in the paint on the wall the colors of the logo of the product line. You could also design the frames of every door to resemble to the forms of the product bottle. If this is too much, you could simply use the font style of the product line name to write the name of the rooms on each door. And these are just a few examples. I remember once, I was designing a spa that had decide to work with a product line, which have a very distinctive bottle form as well as colors. So I asked the painter to incorporate in the faux-painting of the walls in all corridors a stylized form referring to the shape of the product bottle, and playing with the colors of the bottle. Not just that the result was beautiful, but the impact on the retail sales was obvious and dramatic.

Voice-ability means that everybody that works in the spa must be knowledgeable about the products, and talk about them. When a guest is getting a facial, the therapist should be speaking about the products, about their effectiveness on the particular skin type of the guest, explaining that homecare is the natural complement to the spa treatment, etc...

Verify-ability means that whatever you will show to your clients and whatever you will tell to your clients, your treatments and products must deliver the quality and the effects that the client is expecting! So if you are working with a product line that is not of the best quality, the client might not be

able to verify the effectiveness of the product, and will not buy it... Worst, she won't come back to your spa!

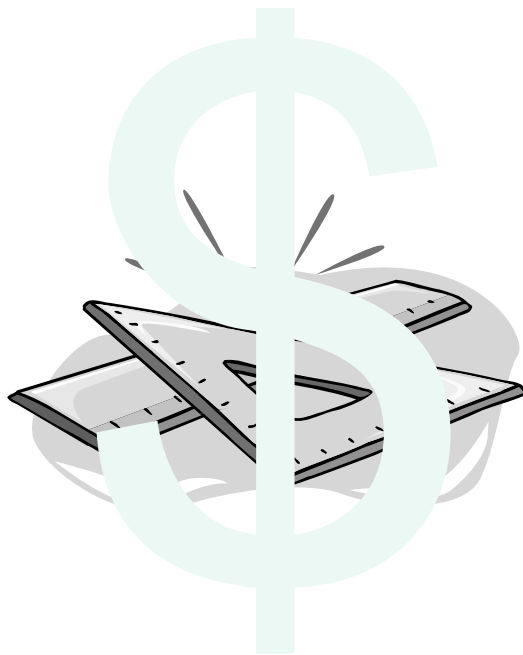
After the "Essence", the second element is the "Supports". These are the products themselves, as well as the companies that manufacture them. As sales support, think of the products through their packaging, their colors, smell, feeling, effects, think of all the possible signs related to your specific product lines that could be used as marketing

support for the retail. The companies selling to spas the product lines are also supplying some supports as posters, logos, samples, testers, etc... All these are to be thought of as possible sales supports.

Together with the "Essence" and the "Supports", the third element is the "Spaces". In a Spa, you have different type of spaces. The retail, reception, corridors, locker-rooms, relaxation

area, treatment rooms, etc... You can be pretty aggressive in your sales techniques in the retail area, but you wouldn't want to be as aggressive in the relaxation area, neither in the treatment rooms. This means that you have to define different marketing zones within your spa, where certain spaces will accept more obvious marketing tools, while other spaces will use only indirect or hidden sales supports.

To define inside a Spa the level of "marketability" in each space, you must coordinate with each type of space the type of supports elements you can use, with the "5 senses". The 5 senses are the sight, the



MANY SPA RETAIL AREAS LOOK LIKE WAL-MART

smell, the touch, the hearing and the taste. Relating those senses to spa product lines, you can divide them in two different categories: the sight, smell and touch are what we can call directly involved in the process of products appreciation, while the hearing and taste are only indirectly related to the products.

You cannot really listen to a face cream, or taste a seaweed mask (you can taste it, but you might not like it!) So think of the first three senses as direct support elements for product retail, and think of the two others as supporting the Spa image more than the products that you sale.

The space where the market-ability is the strongest is of course the retail area. This is where you will use every support possible. This is where you can be the most obviously aggressive

in marketing. If your reception is separated from the retail, you have to decide how "sales pro-active" you want to be, but this space is potentially as powerful as the retail space itself. In these areas, the five senses are to be stimulated for both the retail sales as well as for the marketing of the image of the spa.

The next strongest sales spaces are the treatment rooms. It is in the treatment rooms that most of the sales should be made. It is when the therapist performs a treatment that the client is the most open to accept the idea of buying. During the treatment, the client is totally relying on the professionalism of the therapist, and can make a decision about buying products on the advice of the professional as if it was a doctor's prescription. The sales in the treatment rooms are to be supported by the sight (products, posters, logos), as well as by the smell of the products, the texture of the products,

the colors, the professionalism of the therapist and an unforgettable spa experience.

The corridor, by definition, is a bridge that takes you from one destination to the next. It is not a space where you spend time. Whatever marketing supports you will use must be part of the overall atmosphere or be recordable by the brain in a split second without requiring focus.

The locker rooms should be used for marketing purposes too. For example, if you sell products of a certain line that proposes also soaps, shower-gel, shampoo, etc, you may want to use them in the locker rooms and make sure that the clients are aware of what it is. If you use other brands for the clients amenities, maybe for cost

reasons, you might be just undercutting your retail sales in a bigger way that you could even imagine.

For the relaxation area, it should be a sanctuary where no client will ever feel pressured to buy. It doesn't mean that you should not do anything there, but it has to be so saddle that the guest doesn't see it. For example, do not hang there any product posters, but if the space smells like some products, or if the wall painting reminds of something of the products, or if the fonts on the doors are like the logo, as long as it's not an obvious sales trick, it will be acceptable. Think always from the client's experience perspective.

There is a last element without which none of the above advices will be fully effective: Make sure that each and every member of your staff will be well trained in your marketing and sales policies. It would be like trying to brush your teeth with your arms not connected to your brain. ■

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