

Trend Jumping: A series of questions posed to Leslie Lyon, Spas2b:

Question #1: With all of the trend announcements that go out in the first of the year, how do we know which, if any, are taking off?

Leslie Lyon, Spas2b responds:

I believe it's fair to say that we usually begin to see reports coming in and changes materializing within a few months or maybe even into year two of the trends announcement. You'll begin to see such things as spa menu changes, new marketing initiatives, new training programs, published articles and speaker platform topics covering these new directions, and even suppliers making adjustments to their product and service offerings.

Question #2: How do you jump on a trend and/or even pick which trend to try to implement?

Leslie:

Approach it with a critical mind and really 'listen' to the talk about the trend, including:

1. What are the current beliefs of those who are generating the buzz? Is there a strong pattern of interest or a positive perception of the trend?
2. Is this trend piquing the interest of your peers, business colleagues and those who are considered to be the trendsetters in the spa industry?
3. Is the spa media buying in and providing coverage?
4. Are there various other sources including those outside of the spa industry who are tweeting, blogging and/or toying with this new concept?
5. Are those who are directly impacted by you setting this trend (peers, media, staff, clients) well engaged and interested in seeing it latch on?
6. Do you see a common thread running among these multiple sources that convinces you there is enough interest to warrant you being one of the first to implement this trend?

Then ask yourself...

1. What are your barriers of entry?
2. Will the implementation of this trend align with your short and long term business goals?
3. What are the base requirements, resources and marketing tools required to build upon the idea, from concept through to sales?
4. Does it have the potential to open up 'gateway' opportunities?
5. Are you in a position to devote the time it will take to develop Standard Operating Procedures and Staff Training Programs that will ensure successful implementation and execution?
6. Are you willing to keep the process fluid and up to date with modifications and improvements as necessary?
7. What is your exit strategy?

Question #3: What are your risks and rewards in pandering this trend?

Leslie:

The risks are great for those businesses who do not normally practice innovation or change; or for those who have not done their due diligence, including demand and feasibility. New projects often fail when the core competencies are not understood.

Risks

- Misalignment with company culture
- Innovation required to succeed, is disproportionate to the abilities of your business
- Resistance from staff and/or clients
- Slow visible rewards resulting in a loss of team passion
- Underestimated resources
- Death by critics
- Competition

When your research reveals a shared pattern of interest AND you have a strong understanding of the core processes, success is within your grasp.

Rewards

- Boosted global image and awareness
- Sustained and gained business
- Financial rewards; you can help determine the price
- Media attention
- Peer respect
- Enhanced brand and reputation
- Colleagues copy you and turn it into a standard business practice.

Question #4: What objective measures should you apply?

Leslie:

A strategic plan should be prepared for the first 1-3 years. Depending on the kind of trend you are implementing, you will need to identify the list of metrics that will best monitor achievements and your expectations. It is a good idea however, to create short term targets so that you can succeed with early goals; then you can build on your early successes to form your long term objectives.

For example, if it is a trendsetting *service and treatment room* you are launching, you may want to know how some or all of the following key performance indicators are comparing to the original plan that you laid out, including:

1. Room Utilization
2. Staff Productivity
3. Retail to Service Percentage
4. Percent Success Rate from Inquiries
5. Client Conversion Rates
6. Customer Retention Rates
7. Sales per Square Foot
8. Hotel capture
9. Revenue per hotel guest, etc.

You'll also want to monitor results through numerous methods of feedback, including survey's, comment boxes, conversation, questioning and rating reviews.

Question #5: How do you insert new trends into a service and then train staff when there are no established protocols?

Leslie:

New trends do of course require new protocols. When inserting a new service trend into an existing menu of treatments, we understand that it probably means hours and days of research to develop the idea, so that you can design and deliver both tangible and intangible value and benefits, all in a flawlessly orchestrated, hands on experience, that pays in dividends... (pew).

Establishing protocols will be an important part of integrating the trend into your business, just as it is with any new service, operational process or business practice. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) formalize your systems of delivery, so that you can uphold your quality control measures. Staff should be trained to those established 'service ready' standards, as well as adhering to ongoing hands-on testing and re-training mandates. This is critical in maintaining your spa professional's confidence and therefore their peak performance, within both your open and closed door environments. How your staff handle this new change /innovation, is at least half the battle.

Question #6: At what point do they leave the trend category and become good business?

Leslie:

1. Customers are demanding it
2. It is being consumed and it is a profitable venture
3. It becomes mainstream in spas through adaptation, imitation and/or re-engineering
4. Trendsetters from major cities adopt the trend and it spreads to other cities and industries
5. Media love it
6. Hollywood loves it.

Spas2b believes strategic thinking goes hand in hand with trend spotting...

In our blog post '[5 Hard Skills Spa Management cannot Ignore](#)', we included Strategic Planning as one of the 6 most desired skills a Spa Manager should possess.

Strategic thinkers are people who spot trends and changes first so that they can plan scenarios that will minimize possible negative effects and optimize positive ones.

Find out if you are a Strategic Thinker

Take the Decision Strategies International (DSI) [Strategic Aptitude Assessment](#)

A static, strategic plan is not enough to drive or sustain success. Organizations need adaptable strategic plans that act as living breathing documents, rather than paperweights. DSI's *Strategic Aptitude Assessment™* unpacks *The 6 Key Elements of Strategic Thinking™* to help leaders identify and improve their strategic approach to succeed in more than one future.