
Evaluating Expectations And Pre-consumption Experience In Varda Spa

According to Olive (1981b, p. 33), the customer expectations is as an assessment standard to evaluate what will be happening in the imminent transaction. It is clear that customer expectation is their feeling of expectancy about a service or product, which is one of the most important things that companies should concern. Specifically, before having massage experience, expectation is created by connecting customers' pre-experiences and knowledge with their expectation in their mind. Besides, it is necessary to get customers' first impressions before their experiences to get their satisfaction. The competition of spa tourism is more and more increasing because of the rise of spas (Erfurt-Cooper & Cooper, 2009; Mintel, 2011). That is the reason why spa managers plan for the best strategies to have loyal customers as well as new customers. Therefore, to achieve customers' requires, pre-consumption experience and expectations should be paid attention to so that companies can evaluate the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of their customers.

To get individual experience in spa tourism, our team had experience in Varda spa located in Bondi Road, Bondi, New South Wealth. Our team has five members and we all experienced in Varda spa as well as had different expectations before going to Varda, such as design, relaxing atmosphere, modern facilities, professional massage skills, customer service, unique massage therapy, etc. As Lin (2013) mentions, spa is one of the best destinations for needs of health tourism, aiming to reach the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health and wellbeing of customers. We also wished to experience unique massage therapy, which could help us feel relaxing, as well as refreshing. Besides, before doing massage, we also had pre-consumption experiences, which are our first impressions about Varda spa, including searching information, reviews on social networks, booking, communicating with the receptionist, using tea, and relaxing before the massage process. In general, most of the things are good except for the receptionist's unfriendly attitude, making customers feel unwelcome and undervalued. In addition, lacking marketing channels to popular their spa reputation, and there was not much information and advertising for their program and massage packages when we arrived in the spa. (Do u think we should mention it?) Overall, our team still satisfied with our experience at the spa, but it did not exceed our expectations.

The competition or low prices for product service is no longer the most important in the hospitality industry to achieve success (Ryu et al., 2012). Nowadays, Ali and Amin (2014) indicated that customers have been looking for a relaxing experience and high expectations instead of just sacrifice atmosphere or poor services. Therefore, to satisfy the needs of customers, an outstanding service quality throughout an attractive physical environment, communication with staff need to be built. According to Lee and Jeong (2012), overall layout, design, decoration, and aesthetics are elements to decide the physical environment of a company. Take Varda spa as an example; we were all impressed with the beautifully-decorated design there. With the theme of elegance dwell, they use white as a main theme, conveying minimalist aesthetic and modern quality, which is highly suitable for the physical spa environment. We all felt pleasant and attracted to the spa's decoration, which exceeded our expectations. Besides, in the hospitality term, emotion characteristics are considered as an essential element to achieve superior customer experience (Lin & Liang, 2011). Customer

emotions could be divided into two types: positive (pleased, relaxed) and negative (nervous, annoyed) feelings. At Varda spa, before doing massage, we had a fantastic time to enjoy herbal foot bath and drink tea for relaxing, it is an excellent experience to get customers' satisfaction. Besides, human interactions element is also one of the most important thing impacted on customer experience.

The way the receptionist communicated with our team made us feel unsatisfied and undervalued. In contrast, massage staff were very caring and informative. They provided us with advice on how to control and improve soft tissue conditions. They were cautious with the conditions such as neck and back pain, tendonitis, or postural strains that we would like to focus on. They were also professional in their massage skills, which made us feel really relax and comfortable.

Reference list

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