

Beleza Natural Case Study

Beleza Natural was created by two courageous women who ended up revolutionizing the Brazilian beauty market. Zika Assis and Leila Velez grew frustrated by the fact that nearly all hairstyling products on the market catered to people with straight hair and there were no affordable alternatives to serve people with textured hair. Realizing that there might be a business opportunity given that half the population of Brazil is of African ancestry, Assis and Velez set out to find a solution that would bring out the beauty of textured hair. Since neither woman had formal training in developing hair-care products, they developed their formula by trial and error, studying the formulation of existing products and mixing various ingredients in the hope of creating a superior product. They realized that they were on the right track when women began stopping them on the streets to ask how they got their curls so well defined. Convinced that they had found a solution to an acute problem faced by many women, they used all of their savings, including the money from selling Assis's husband's cab, to launch their first hair salon in Rio de Janeiro, called Instituto Beleza Natural: the Institute for Natural Beauty. Over the next decades, Beleza Natural grew from a single store to a national chain of 33 institutes with over 4,000 employees serving 160,000 customers per month. The proprietary hair treatment formula was not the only ingredient in their success. Both Assis and Velez came from favelas, extremely poor neighborhoods in Rio, and they designed their salons to serve women from the lowest social class in Brazil, many of whom worked as maids for wealthy families. For many of Beleza's customers, the entire experience of being served by someone who came from the same background and could empathize with them was transformational, empowering them and giving them a sense of dignity and self-esteem. Beleza's deep understanding of the needs of its customers and the importance of providing them with experiences that transform not only how they look but also how they feel about themselves is a clear example of combining social purpose with business success at the bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid. Based on the advice Velez had received from some of the investors, she was contemplating several possible courses of action:

Question Offer Beleza Natural's proprietary maintenance products outside the institutes in retail stores. Beleza Natural's maintenance kits were designed to last one month, but clients often ran out of their maintenance products because they shared them with other female family members and friends who did not have the means to visit an institute. Offering Beleza Natural's products in a broad range of retail outlets could help attenuate this problem and bring in new revenue.

Answer Distributing maintenance product outside the salon in the local retail outlets could be a good business proposition which can address the pain points of customers. It is a good strategic growth opportunity for Beleza Natural. Those customers who run short of the monthly maintenance kits can find the products in the shelves of the nearest retail stores without visiting the salon as the customers may not have the time or it would not be financially viable for them to

visit the salon. This could lead to brand awareness about the salon and the salon may acquire new customers,