

Views on the Regulations of Beauty Products and Services

Introduction

At the request of the Legislative Council Panel on Economic Services, the Beauty Care and Hairdressing Training Board of the Vocational Training Council discussed at its recent meeting held on 9th May 2002 the issue on the regulation of beauty products and services. The following summarizes the Training Board's views:

Views on the Regulation of Beauty Products

2. The Training Board is required, among other things, to determine the manpower and training needs of the beauty services industry and to assess whether the supply of manpower matches the demand. As such, matters pertaining to the regulation of beauty products are outside the terms of reference of the Training Board. However, because of its far-reaching implications and in order to safeguard the interest of the consumers, the Training Board supports in principle the introduction of a labelling system whereby the identity of the importer or local distributor of the goods, shelf life and production batch etc. should be made known to consumers at the time of purchase. However, the prime concern would be to minimize the additional operating cost incurred to cosmetic importers/distributors.

Views on the Regulation of Beauty Services

3. The Training Board fully appreciates the benefits and costs of the regulatory measures to the society. After careful consideration, the Training Board does not support the introduction of regulatory measures on beauty services. Statistics revealed by the Consumer Council reveals that the number of complaint cases (including beauty products and services) only accounts for 0.1% of the total number of complaint cases. This situation could not be regarded as serious. It is noted that complaints on beauty services were more related to trade practices and service standards. The Training Board is of the view that if there is a need to regulate trade practices and service standards, such regulatory measures should not be confined to a particular industry, instead, they should be applied to the retail and servicing industry as a whole. Failing which, it would not be fair to the beauty industry; moreover, it may also create a negative image of the beauty industry to the public.

Views on Regulation of Beauticians

4. In the long run, the Training Board agrees the introduction of a licensing system on Beauticians. The Training Board notes that regulatory measures or licensing systems on beauticians are already in existence in Europe, USA, South East Asia and China. The Training Board will study the regulatory systems adopted by more advanced countries and explore their practicality in Hong Kong. However, the Training Board considers that this licensing system or regulatory system should best be managed/ implemented by an independent Government or Semi-government body. To maintain its creditability and not to give the impression that it is monopolizing the market, the licensing body should not assume the dual role of a training provider at the same time.

5. In view of the present economic situation, the Training Board opines that this licensing system should not be implemented immediately. It would be more appropriate to first putting in place a voluntary trade testing system to set and assess the skill standards of practitioners and to evaluate the qualifications/certifications granted by various bodies (e.g. International Beauty Examination Boards/ Associations) with a view to establishing a recognized qualification framework. This will help the development of a regulatory or licensing system for the beauty care industry in the long run.

6. The Training Board is at present working on the voluntary trade testing system and the assessment of the certification bodies. The Training Board estimates that the pilot *trade* tests will be implemented in the next 12-18 months.

Beauty Care and Hairdressing Training Board

Vocational Training Council

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