

# Spas here to revamp their image

BY JOSEPHINE PRICE

**S**PAS here are on their way to getting an image makeover and regaining **consumer trust**, said Mr Seah Seng Choon, executive director of the Consumers Association of Singapore.

This will be achieved through recently announced insurance schemes that guarantee pre-payments and an accreditation system that is being put in place.

"Due to the recent **closures** of some spas, consumers are concerned about the retailers. Currently, the industry is not properly regulated but we are working with retailers to (achieve) an improvement in the near future," said Mr Seah.

These moves come in the wake of a recent international survey on consumer trust in retailers, in which spas and beauty stores here fared poorly.

The study, the Global Trust Research 2011, was conducted by home-grown branding consultancy A. S. Louken. In the survey, Singapore ranked below average internationally in terms of the trust custo-

mers have in retailers.

## HELPDESK 我的字典

### Consumer trust

消费者的信任

xiāo fèi zhě de xìn rèn

### Closures: 倒闭 dǎo bì

### Fly-by-night:

无信用的 wú xìn yòng de

### Evaluated: 评估 píng gū

Singapore was ranked eighth out of 12 in terms of factors such as reliability, honesty and advertising credibility.

Under the Spa and Beauty stores category – which covers retailers that sell spa services and beauty products – Singapore scored 61.9 out of 100 for "trust value".

"Trust in the spa and beauty industry has been eroded due to the nagging issues of **fly-by-night** operators, poor quality and hard sell," said Mr Luke Lim, chief executive of A. S. Louken.

Recent reports of misleading advertising and high-profile spa closures have also diminished trust in the retailers.

Overall, Singapore retailers scored 65.2 out of 100 for "trust value", falling below the global average of 67. The United States and Brazil claimed the top two spots, with scores of 74.1 and 71.4 respectively.

However, in the beauty-stores category, covering businesses that sell only beauty products, retailers scored of 68.3 out of 100 when it came to trust, in line with the global average score under the category.

This year's survey **evaluated** 238 retailers across 21 categories and polled over 19,000 people.

It is the first time that Singapore participated in the research, with 1,000 respondents and 20 retailers in nine categories. The categories included those for food retailers, fashion and furniture.

The annual survey, now in its second year, was launched in 2009 to identify how retailers create or lose the trust of their shoppers, particularly in the post-2008 financial crisis period, when trust is harder to achieve, A. S. Louken said in a statement.

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