

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BAPS Auto Paints & Supply is a value-driven business whose focus is on building relationships, integrity, teamwork, profitability, innovation, and service. BAPS already has some valuable activities in place to support its value proposition but is in need of some focus when it comes to visibility online and in new markets.

The outlook for the automotive refinish industry is promising, but in order for BAPS to excel, it must continue to hone in on marketing activities that will reinforce the presence of BAPS, its core values, and the services it provides to its customers. This can be done by improving on website visibility, social media presence, and implementation of publicity processes.

At the same time, BAPS must continue to provide the services that have differentiated it from the competitor, which involves providing educational opportunities, helping improve the body shop's bottom line, and continuing to develop and strengthen long-term relationships.

## SITUATION ANALYSIS

BAPS Auto Paints & Supply offers body shop products with a focus on PPG Refinish and 3M Collision Products. Headquartered in York, Pennsylvania, BAPS operates seven store locations in the following areas: York, Lemoyne, and Chambersburg, Pennsylvania; Frederick, Maryland; Worcester and Springfield, Massachusetts; and Herndon, Virginia.

BAPS seeks to set itself apart from the competition by focusing on the customer. BAPS aims to improve its customers' profitability by streamlining the shops' processes and increasing their efficiencies. Additionally, BAPS operates with a dedication to core values, which include integrity, teamwork, profitability, innovation, and service to others. All of BAPS activities operate within these core values.

### A. THE MARKETING ENVIRONMENT

#### a. *Competitive Forces*

- i. *Pennsylvania and Maryland* – BAPS' competitors in Central Pennsylvania and Maryland include but are not limited to LKQ/Keystone, National Coatings & Supplies, Kunkel, Finishmaster, Sherwin-Williams, Mid County, Cashers, Zimmermans, Unikote, Snavelly & Dosch, Carquest, Kemperle, and Colours. Among these competitors, Unikote, Zimmermans, Cashers, and Mid County are those that most closely resemble BAPS.
- ii. *Massachusetts* – BAPS' major competitors in Massachusetts include Kemperle, Absap, West Springfield Auto Parts, LKQ/Keystone, Paul Frances, Finishmaster, Perry's, and Levine.
- iii. *Virginia* – BAPS' major competitors in the Virginia market include Finishmaster, National Coatings & Supplies, Blue Ridge Color, and LKQ/Keystone

#### b. *Economic Forces*

According to a report by Allied Market Research, "World Automotive Refinish Coatings Market – Opportunities and Forecast, 2014-2020," the global market for

automotive refinish coatings will be worth \$11.3 billion by 2021 and will grow at a CAGR of 6.3 percent during 2015-2021. Although "totals" rates have increased, and accident avoidance technology continues to expand, commercial refinish has continued to grow.

c. *Political Forces, Legal, and Regulatory*

Occasionally, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, or the state will pass regulations that affect the refinish industry. Currently there are no pressing regulatory, political, or legal forces that may impact the way BAPS does business.

d. *Technological Forces*

From time to time, there are developments in technology that lesson accident rates or increase shop efficiency, which may decrease sales. On the other hand, there are times that improvements in technology allow BAPS to offer new and better services to customers. Despite improvements to accident avoidance technology (the technology that has most impacted the industry), the refinish industry has grown and is expected to continue growing over the next few years.

e. *Sociocultural Forces*

Today, body shops favor partners that help them meet their needs for quick, professional work by providing high quality paint with efficient application processes accompanied by process consultancy. Body shops are also struggling with a lack of skilled technicians, which impacts their ability to achieve their goals.

## B. TARGET MARKET(S)

Current BAPS customers include body shops and collision repair centers of all sizes, although the company excels at engaging large shops. Targeted areas include central Pennsylvania, central Maryland, central Massachusetts, northern Virginia, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and parts of West Virginia.

## C. PAST AND CURRENT MARKETING PERFORMANCE

a. *Services to Body Shops*

BAPS is a leader in innovative programs that improve customers' bottom lines and has been for quite some time. Through partnership with PPG, BAPS' Account Managers provide educational opportunities for shop owners and technicians on new technologies and techniques. BAPS Account Managers and other key personnel create new methods of tracking data to measure and improve shop efficiency. PPG also provides BAPS with assistance in creating aligned strategies for shop owners and simplifying business processes.

Effective April 2017, Account Managers are required to submit data for five struggling clients to Bryan Elicker each month. Bryan will evaluate the accounts and help Account Managers understand why the accounts are declining. By doing so, Account Managers can find ways to offer value to these customers to

improve their businesses, thus increasing their expenditures with BAPS as well as the value BAPS provides to them.

b. *Relationship Building*

The sales team obtains new business by approaching shops directly, developing long-term relationships with shop owners. Doing so allows Account Managers to build trust with shop owners so that BAPS is the first one the shop approaches when their current distributor lets them down. BAPS has found that this approach of direct, persistent interaction is the most effective way of discovering which shops meet target market criteria.

c. *Product Reliability*

PPG and 3M products have a proven track record that have provided BAPS with the opportunity to continue providing clients with highly functional products.

PPG products continue to improve as sustainability requirements and customer needs change. Attention to consumer needs and the continual evolution of paint and auto body supplies allows BAPS to remain confident that it is providing high-quality products to its customers.

d. *Community Involvement*

BAPS has always been involved in the surrounding community and strives to serve in various aspects, whether through volunteer or monetary contributions.

e. *Customer Appreciation*

BAPS values its customers and strives to show them its appreciation. Prior to 2016, one Customer Appreciation Golf Tournament was held annually in York, Pennsylvania. As of 2017, three Customer Appreciation Golf Tournaments will be held to serve this purpose: one in York, one in Virginia, and one in Massachusetts.

f. *Specials*

BAPS offers frequent specials to encourage purchases.

g. *Advertising and Sponsorships*

BAPS has sponsored some events and advertised in the past, although upon evaluation it was determined that the return on investment was low for these programs. BAPS currently advertises through Brent Marks and the Susquehanna Speedway as a sponsor. Occasionally, BAPS will sponsor an ad program for a car show if it appears the company will obtain business from the sponsorship.

h. *Website*

As of March 2017, BAPS owned a website that was slow to load, had limited functionality on both ends, and did not contain any search engine optimization. Information was out of date, and graphics were low quality as well as outdated. No security certificate was assigned to the website, but it was mobile accessible.

Upon first evaluation, the BAPS website ranked a 74 on the HubSpot Website Grader, and no analytics were reported.

BAPS currently owns a website that appears in Google's search results. Information and graphics have been improved and optimized. The website is somewhat fast and is mobile accessible. Search engine optimization has been implemented, and it is easy to navigate on both ends. A security certificate has been assigned. During the month of April, the website had 5,548 pageviews, averaging 3.46 pages per session. Visitors stayed on the BAPS website for about 2:26 minutes. As of May 9, 2017, the BAPS website earned a 94 on the HubSpot Website Grader.

i. *Social Media:*

As of March 2017, there was no posting schedule in place. Laura posted new job openings occasionally.

- i. Twitter: As of March 2017, BAPS had two Twitter accounts, one of which had not been operated since 2016. The other had only one follower and two likes. One Twitter account was selected to use as the official BAPS profile. That Twitter account currently has 113 followers. During the month of April, 261 individuals visited the BAPS profile and 8 people mentioned BAPS.
- ii. A LinkedIn page was created in March 2017. The BAPS LinkedIn page currently has 4 followers but is still a new account.
- iii. No Facebook Insights were recorded prior to March 2017. Facebook Insights between March and April, 2017, reveal that 74 individuals viewed BAPS' page (an increase of 7%) out of 898 people to whom the post was shown (an increase of 72%). 2,199 individuals interacted with our page, which is an increase of 159% from March.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

### A. STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES

- a. Long-term relationships and persistence with prospects have proven to serve BAPS in the long run. New clients are converted through the trust that Account Managers have built.
- b. BAPS' partnership with PPG and 3M provides opportunities for education and shop analysis in order for BAPS to help shops grow their bottom line.
- c. Both PPG and 3M provide reliable products that allow BAPS to provide value to clients.
- d. BAPS' active involvement in the community provides the company with both visibility and reinforcement of its core values.
- e. Frequent specials encourage customers to purchase items on sale, whether through the account manager or through the store. These are publicized on BAPS' social media channels.

- f. Sponsorship of Brent Marks as well as the Susquehanna Speedway provides visibility through advertising, social media, and backlinks to our website.
- g. The BAPS website is mobile accessible and is quick to load. The site can be located on Google.
- h. Twitter traffic continues to grow.
- i. Facebook engagement has increased in 2017.

## **B. WEAKNESSES & THREATS**

- a. BAPS is not a low price, low service operation. Some shops can't see the reason for value in their distributor because BAPS' competition has lowered the bar. This can sometimes be a detriment to BAPS, but it is one of the qualities that makes the company unique.
- b. Apple's acquisition of York Collision threatens to impact BAPS' sales for 2017.
- c. The BAPS LinkedIn is having difficulty getting off the ground.
- d. BAPS is not consistent in publicizing news and events.
- e. E-Mail marketing is non-existent.
- f. The company does not currently own a blog.

## **MARKETING GOALS**

In 2017, BAPS aims to increase the Atlas Collision Products brand and increase name recognition in the Northern Virginia market.

BAPS seeks to improve its customers' profitability by streamlining the shops' processes and increasing their efficiencies. Additionally, BAPS intends to continue to operate with a dedication to core values, which include integrity, teamwork, profitability, innovation, and service to others. All of BAPS activities operate within these core values.

## **MARKETING STRATEGIES**

### **A. TARGET MARKET(S)**

BAPS aims to continue working with shops that understand the process and the importance of having a true partner in business in these areas. BAPS aims to grow through acquisition from Maine to South Carolina and into Ohio in the coming years.

### **B. ACTIVITIES, RESPONSIBILITY, AND TIMETABLES FOR COMPLETION**

All implementation activities are to begin at the start of the third quarter: September 1, 2017. Unless specified, all activities are the responsibility of Sales and Marketing Coordinator, Whitney Wagner.

- a. *Ongoing Activities*
  - BAPS should continue to provide educational opportunities and resources to shops in order to increase their bottom line.

- Account Managers should continue to evaluate declining accounts and work with Bryan Elicker to improve.
- Continue to work directly with shop owners to build relationships.
- BAPS should continue its involvement in the surrounding communities.
- BAPS should continue its customer appreciation activities in order to help customers feel valued.
- Flyers should continue to be created and publicized to make BAPS customers aware of upcoming specials. These flyers should be created using the BAPS template and publicized on social media channels.
- Advertising should continue to operate as it has in the past.
- Sponsorships should be evaluated to determine whether or not spending funds on sponsorships will result in new business.
- Website must remain up-to-date. This should be evaluated every 6 months to ensure that content is current.
- Social media channels must be updated on a regular basis. The current schedule (posts on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) should continue. Across all social media outlets, BAPS should share the following content: industry news, promotions, new hires, trade shows and other events, community involvement, employment opportunities, and office goings-on. Sharing this type of content will keep both customers and the community informed about the business while providing a feeling of transparency to both.

b. *New Activities*

- BAPS needs to better understand what is important to their customers and provide that value to them. This can be accomplished by sending a survey to current customers to find out what is working well for them and where they need help. Doing so will allow BAPS to better tailor their services to clients' needs. Initial survey should be created and sent by September 1, 2017.
- Creating a customer portal will help enhance the offerings BAPS provides to its customers. Customer portal should be completed by March 1, 2018. Portal will include customer news, resources, and calculators.
- SOPs provide additional value to customers. SOPs should be completed and posted on client portal by March 1, 2018.
- Integrating an employment section on the website will improve BAPS visibility in the community and boost search engine optimization. Employment section should be completed by September 1, 2017.
- By September 1, 2017, BAPS should create an Instagram account to help improve web presence and community engagement.

- All new job opening should be posted to LinkedIn account. This should begin by September 1, 2017.
- A new publicity process should be created and implemented by September 1, 2017. An improved public relations program will also help to increase BAPS' visibility to customers and the community. BAPS should submit the following content to local news outlets: promotions, new hires, certifications, and community involvement. Restrictions:
  - BAPS may not sell PPG products online but may advertise the products online.
  - BAPS may not sell or advertise paint other than PPG.
  - BAPS may promote only 3M products unless another vendor offers a product for which 3M does not have an offering.
- E-Mail marketing is now an important part of communicating with customers and community members about what BAPS offers and how it is incorporating the core values into daily business activities.
  - Account Managers should review and update email lists by December 1, 2017.
  - BAPS should set up a MailChimp Account by December 1, 2017.
  - Integration of MailChimp with the website by including sign-up forms on sidebar, a popup, and at the end of each blog post should be completed by March 1, 2018.
  - Email schedule and first email campaigns should be completed by March 1, 2018.
- Blogging also helps to increase visibility on the web through social sharing and search engine optimization. A blog should be set up within the site. Blog should be created by September 1, 2017.
  - A schedule should be created, and content should be posted on a consistent basis. This content should include industry news, community involvement, promotions, new hires, certifications, trade shows, events, etc. Schedule and initial content should be created by March 1, 2018.