Changing the Conventional Way of Home Maintenance

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It was the morning of Sunday 25th March, where a group of friends were sitting on a roadside café discussing about their life and future endeavors. While some of them wished to join service sector as the norm suggested, Qazi Umer (Founder of Sukoon) expressed his desires of being an entrepreneur. Having a vague description of what he wanted to do, he sounded like a baseless dreamer allowing his entire friends circle to take a dig at him. While others laughed, Shoaib Iqbal (Co-founder) seconded his friend's dream and offered his participation in the future. The conversation took a hysterical turn and the boys started laughing on old university jokes and incidents. Suddenly the pacifying ambience changed, when the owner of the café started yelling at the electrician because of his poor work performance and lethargic attitude. He also mentioned the chances of short circuit due to worker's carelessness. This was a light bulb moment for Qazi, he realized that the problem is right in front of him and he should better do something about it.

"The idea of Sukoon got initiated by observation, when we saw an incident of inefficiency in a nearby coffee shop that lead to fire. We already knew it's a serious business"

Qazi Umer; Co-Founder Sukoon

Two young individuals, one great idea! Yet they needed strong support. PASHA Pakistan's leading Software House Association for IT and ITES provided the young lads with support and much needed assistance through their NEST I/O young Incubator program. In a statement, Jehan Ara, President of P@SHA and the Big Bird at The Nest I/O said:

"One rarely comes across young founders as committed to their cause as Shoaib and Qazi were. During their incubation at The Nest I/O we saw strong qualities of maturity, passion, a deep understanding of their domain and complete focus on their business goals. These are the qualities that will help them to achieve their true potential."

Dedication, passion, technology and Innovative idea led the foundation of Sukoon, onestop solution for hiring highly skilled and background verified workers. Sukoon however, did not emerge from an innovative concept; it was derived through excessive research.

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MEASURING THE DEPTH OF THE MARKET POOL

Shoaib and Qazi launched Sukoon on May 1, 2015 but the idea got initiated a year back. All this time, they spent on researching the Pakistani market, industry, and service sector along with the consumer preferences. Qazi believed in his favorite quote "Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought", he mentioned the importance of research and how it helped them to derive the business model of Sukoon. Qazi and Shoaib spent 8 months testing the business model of online maintenance they intended to make. Home maintenance was not a new concept, but providing them through a branded online portal was, therefore an extensive primary and secondary research was conducted.

Qazi and shoaib looked at the existing industry serving home improvement needs. They saw that people had two choices: they could hire contractors, or they could hire a worker from nearby hardware store. The key to Sukoon's original insight emerged from the basic understanding of why buyers would choose one substitute over another. Why people hire a contractor realising that they do not value having a stranger in their house, who will charge them excessively, neither they enjoy taking time off from work and wait for the contractor to show up. In fact, professional contractors have only one decisive advantage: specialized skills that the home owner lacks.

To understand the rest of the target market in the industry, Sukoon studied the flip side of the market (See Exhibit 6): Why do people choose hardware stores and local shops over professional contractors? The most common answer would be to save money. Local workers charge way less than professionals; they are easily available and usually bring required parts with them. Sukoon looked upon the existing competitors, studied their value chains and USP's. The research incorporated the viability of service sectors, scope of home repair and maintenance industry, problems with current system, competitive framework of the existing market and incorporated it in their strategy.

OVERVIEW OF THE SERVICE INDUSTRY

Pakistan is the sixth most populated country in the world with a total population of 191.71 million and is expected to increase to 300 million by 2050 (UN Projection). The Service sector accounts for 60% of global GDP and 30% of global employment (World Development Indicators). However in Pakistan, service sector accounts for 53.3% of GDP in FY 2010-11 (Economic Survey of Pakistan). From 2005 the Service sector was expected to observe the growth rate of 6.2% though, the actual compounded growth rate was 7.9%, the main contribution for which came from the development of sub sectors in Service industry including Communications, Trade, Information Technology, Housing and Construction etc. (Ayaz Ahmed, 2011).

HOME REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE INDUSTRY

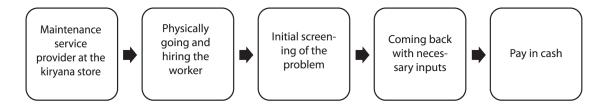
Although the Home repair and maintenance industry is trivial but is a highly lucrative segment of the service sector. As per Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2013 urban class spends a major chunk of it's income in housing (See Exhibit 1), highlighting a potential scope for maintenance in the emerging market. In 2013, Pakistan sustained its historical lead as

the second-most urbanized nation in South Asia with city dwellers making up 36% of its population. Rapid urbanization contributed to the growth of home repair and maintenance markets with people investing heavily in housing to upgrade their living standard. According to the Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP), 25% of expenditure is done on repair and maintenance every year (See Exhibit 2) monthly consumption expenditure classification).

"If you look at the number of households and offices that struggle with quality repair and maintenance services, which can benefit, you can see there is a huge upside" Investor – Sukoon

CONVENTIONAL SYSTEM

The conventional home maintenance requires physical availability and personal effort. Despite the increasing demand of Home repair and maintenance industry its structure did not



evolve over the years. The following diagram depicts the framework of the industry norm:

Home maintenance services were hired through a very conventional way, where service providers open a small "kiryana" store through which they functioned. People who require to maintenance services had to hire unqualified employees from theses shops, who may or may not know the work, leading to hazardous incidents and unsatisfied customers.

CHANGING TRENDS

Pakistan being a developing nation has been increasingly moving towards adopting E-commerce trends. Pakistan's e-commerce market has been expected to reach over US\$600 million by 2017. The internet reach is expected to be around 30 million users, which might increase to 56 million users by 2019 (Junaid Ahmad, 2015). As time has elapsed the Pakistani population too has evolved with time. Initially people use to do all small and big repair work themselves but now the job market is getting tougher. Research identified the busy life of a service provider. How giving time to household is getting difficult and for some, it's was becoming impossible.

Traditionally any need for household maintenance services was being fulfilled by nearby repair stores that offered plumber, masons, electricians etc. as per need. Some go for nearby shops while others opt for word of mouth (friends & family suggestion), past experience etc.

The problem with this conventional way portrayed lack of assurance, reliability and most importantly security. When a customer gets a service from nearby retailer shop, little he knows

about the qualification of the employee he is hiring. Some of the electricians hired were so incompetent that it resulted in life risking. Since, they were not properly certified in their fields, it was getting difficult to judge the skills and competence of the employees and the work. Another problem encountered was security; every now and then people reported complains regarding fake maintenance workers robbing the house. This conventional system had many loopholes that caused dissatisfaction among the customers.

EXISTING PLAYERS OF THE MARKET

The concept of online home maintenance was relatively new but not untapped. Sukoon had 2 competitors that offered maintenance services. Firstly, Forifix is an Integrated Pest Management venture, launched on September 5, Defense Day as a shield against the domestic terrorists (Pests and their pollutants) in and around the facilities. It addresses a significant gap between a serious pain point of every household and the horrid solutions available that one could ever risk. Forifix offers Pest Prevention with Safer, Odorless, and environment friendly products approved by WHO/EPA and FDA. In addition to this, they provide Heat Proofing and Water Tank cleaning and Home Improvement with allied repair and maintenance services.

Secondly, there was the handyman which was incorporated on 21st November 2014, The Handyman was the first Professional Handyman Service provider in Pakistan having similar operations as sukoon.pk. A 'Handyman' is a term used to describe technicians such as Electricians, Plumbers, AC Mechanics, Carpenters, and Wall Painters etc. Starting initially in Islamabad, they have a team of qualified handymen available to help households and businesses with cleaning, electrical, plumbing, painting, and other jobs that require urgent attention. They also provide cleaning & janitorial services, repair works as well as tasks related to construction management (building or constructing a house, office, or a commercial plaza, or remodeling your property).

FOR THE CUSTOMER, BY THE CUSTOMER CENTRIC APPROACH

Qazi and shoaib explored and gathered feedback from the end users. They conducted a research in malls, super stores i.e. Naheed, Chase Up and Universities. This helped them to identify, what actually consumer value, and what's being neglected by the market offering. The core pain points that Sukoon summarized after the feedback from the stakeholders were Security, Inconvenience, price and ability to negotiate. It was apparent that people are habitual for negotiation such services; they want to dictate terms that Sukoon did not plan. Research indicated that this might create a hindrance in adopting Sukoon as a priority medium. One major factor that was analyzed was the portfolio of service. Sukoon thought people would opt for wide range of service, but they identified that they need only few more service to be added into the portfolio other then what they initially planned.

EMERGENCE OF SUKOON - A RELIEF FROM MISHAPS

Since the inception of Sakoon.pk on May 1, 2015 it mainly seeks to connect individuals who were looking for household services with top-quality, pre-screened independent workers. Sukoon.pk is an online, one-stop solution for hiring highly skilled and background verified

Professionals. It instantly provided the best, safe and affordable professionals at the touch of a fingertip. With a seamless booking process, simple payment method, and a 100% customer satisfaction guarantee, Sukoon has become the smartest way to book home services just like any other service.

Sukoon offers a compelling and much needed innovative solution for a need in the home and office space i.e. individuals and corporations looking to contract handymen. While doing so, it also acts as a catalyst in the social impact improving the material wellbeing of bluecollar workers. The portal not only aims to provide services to the people but paves a way for consistent source of income for labors whilst making them aware of online opportunities and financial banking. This startup was awarded as the best startup of 2015 (Tribune, 2015).

"We are unwaveringly confident to change the way home repairs are being done in Pakistan and other similar countries. From the initial days we have received an overwhelming response from the consumers who were longing for such services to be launched in our country. We are very focused on the service delivery and would use the investment in the areas that would improve customer satisfaction and lives of our workforce."

Qazi Umer; Founder Sukoon

RESEARCH INTO STRATEGY

Research helps when put into action, so Sukoon incorporated all the findings and redefined it's strategy. Sukoon changed the dynamics of conventional functionality by removing the hardware stores from the chain. It created an online web portal that provides job opportunities for blue-collar workers in Pakistan, while at the same time providing the masses a convenient opportunity to find the necessary workers online. It has completely changed the way people used to hire the carpenters/workers initially. Unlike its competitors, Sukoon did not target constructions companies rather individuals who needed the services. Sukoon did not eliminate the negotiating factors but being associated with the brand it decreased the negotiation power of consumer to an extent. Sukoon also focused on giving limited but quality services and therefore, confined itself to offer 6 services only.

Sukoon raised the security and quality at every levels of its services. Customers may avail the service again if they are not satisfied in the first time. Moreover parts that are costly are being bought by Sukoon itself, thereby insuring quality products being used in the process of maintenance and repair. It raised convenience for customers and ensured timely allocation of workers.

Sukoon created a user friendly interactive website. The booking procedure entails a basic description of the customer's request accompanied with a picture upload feature to provide additional review of the work at hand. The company then sends the relevant worker to the address based on a timing slot, a maximum 24-hour window. There is even an option to book an emergency visit, based on the nature of the issue.

They also have created a feedback mechanism. They established a rating system after the

delivery of services that ensures that the work being done is up to standard as there are no regulatory body that provides certification. With this rating system, a worker will get two

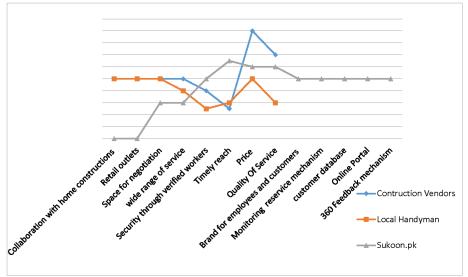


Figure 1: Strategy Canvas of Sukoon.pk

warnings based on customer feedback in relation to work and the mannerism in which it was done. Based on those warnings, they retain and fire employees. Sukoon has also started a monitoring mechanism which entails customer profile, past feedback and use of service. The organization sends an automatic notification if regular services are due. The above Strategy Canvas depicts the ERRC model factors and their significance in comparison to its competitor and gives an overview of the industry as a whole. The factors were ranked according to the importance given by consumer preferences after market research done by Sukoon.pk;

SUKOON - A GAME CHANGER

Sukoon reformed the conventional methods of Repair and Maintenance segment by transforming the industry in all the fives aspects . Traditionally the customers were bound to choose among the options provided by the service provider i.e. they had to manage as per the availability of technician, moreover the technician do not have any creative skills, they provide the services in same context in which they use to. The individual had to supervise the whole activity by his own as the reliability issues existed.

For any maintenance activity to be carried out, the traditional notion directs the presence of male family member as mandatory to guide the technician the format of job to be done. But with Sukoon the technician is allocated time as per the convenience of Customer. All the technicians are certified after passing the aptitude test, hence ensuring the reliability and quality of Work. The work can be done in presence of any family member as the technician is an employee of Sukoon.com.pk and is only inducted after having all the security checks. Earlier focus was to provide basic services, for every technician different vendor needs to be approached while with Sukoon there is availability of all technicians at unified platform, a customer can ask for predefined technicians from Sukoon.com.pk at even a short notice of tomorrow. In conventional way the elder male of the family was seen as the customer as they are responsible for any maintenance work at premises. With Sukoon the customer base is different from the traditional approach as now with the instant access, the females' and young individuals of Family may also hire the technician since the risk of security and reliability is eliminated.

The context of the Assets and capabilities is bit different to define as mostly the Vendors that provide maintenance services hire the technician before any subjective and reliability test since majority of the technicians get on-the Job training, which sometimes causes inconvenience. While Sukoon.com.pk hires the technician after the proper induction process, most of the technicians at Sukoon are diploma holders. Traditionally the services were provided with respect to the mutual understanding between customer and vendor, customized approach was not followed. With Sukoon, the timely services are given at convenience of customers; the worker is well taught about the problem and takes full responsibility to educate the customer.

UNIQUE SET OF ACTIVITIES

To do things differently, Sukoon adopted a unique chain of services to deliver the intended value to the customer (See Exhibit 8). Sukoon's value chain consists of array of activities that created a strategic fit to deliver convenient and professional service at the market rate. Sukoon gauged its focus on some specific services, though it is addressing the needs of customers falling under the wide bracket, Sukoon offered technicians for six specific areas as the intention was to provide the quality work within committed time.

Technicians can even be hired within short notice of one day; moreover, the confirmation call is also made to customer within 60 minutes of requisition submitted through online portal. In conventional system, the flow traveled in reverse direction where it was the consumer who himself has to monitor the quality of service delivery and make follow ups with the technician. Sukoon strengthened not only its on the job services but also the post service mechanism. It created a feedback and monitoring process to ensure customer satisfaction with timely feedback.

SIX PATHWAY FRAMEWORK

Sukoon.pk is trying to revolutionize the untapped market in the Home and Maintenance Industry by adopting new and innovative methods to create a market space. Sukoon.pk has created this through it's products and services being offered and between two substitutes industries that were identified through market research.

LOOKING ACROSS SUBSTITUTE INDUSTRIES

Sukoon's extensive research had led it to innovate by merging two substitute industries. Essentially, Sukoon offered the expertise of professional home contractors at a comparatively local price. Furthermore, delivering the decisive advantages of both substitute industries and eliminating or reducing everything else. Sukoon transformed enormous latent demand for home improvement into real demand. The customer who can't manage to hire services from traditional construction and maintenance service providers usually opt to hire the individuals from road side market, as in Pakistan we have huge workforce who works on their own and provide their services independently by searching for the customers.

Sukoon.com.pk aligned these two on common platform by keeping the negotiation part open. It revolutionized the industry in many ways for both technicians and consumers. This was done by assuring security and quality of service, above all giving the much required convenience that was not present in both the substitutes and on cheaper rate than certified vendors but a little higher than local shops.

Sukoon redefined the buyers' group of the industry. The customer definition for Sukoon.pk is different from that of a conventional store, as now the whole family could be the customer and more importantly it is in approach of core influencer i.e. females.

Initially Sukoon targeted women but later redefine women involvement in categories of carpeting and painting and understood male involvement in masons and plumbing.

Looking Across Complementary Products and Services Offerings

Sukoon has also added complementary services to give a complete solution to the customer. It goes beyond the competition by keeping an entire track record of customer service. They have not added up any complementary product but they give complementary check. For e.g., if the Air Conditioner last services was done 2 months before, Sukoon will remind its customers that it's due for the month. Sukoon adopted a unique set of strategies and put its strategies into action by clearly communicating its objective to make people's life "Pur sukoon". It's tagline reinforce the same customer devotion i.e., "Ghar bhar ki gar bar ka Sukoon". Sukoon exist to make people's life easy and communicate it extensively on digital platform.

Factors	Conventional Logic	Sukoon.com.pk
Industry Assumptions	The customers were indepen-	The technician is allocated time as per
	dent on the options provided by	the convenience of Customer. All the
	the service provider i.e. different	technicians are Certified after passing
	semi-skilled personnel which led	the aptitude test, hence ensuring the
	customers to supervise the activities	reliability and quality of Work.
	themselves in the process as reli-	The work can be done in presence of
	ability was questioned.	any family member as the technician
		is an employee of Sukoon.com.pk and
		it's only inducted after having all the
		security checks.
Strategic Focus	The focus is to provide basic ser-	The availability of all technicians at
	vices, for every technician different	unified platform i.e. the availability of
	vendors needs to be approached	the handyman at any hour.

Customers	From the traditional perspective, the elder male of the family is seen as the customer as they are counted as responsible for any maintenance work at premises	The customer base includes females and young individuals of family who also hire the technician as the risk of security and reliability is eliminated
Assets and Capabilities	Assets and capabilities of the work- er relied mostly on their expertise or their ability to learn the skills on the job given.	Hiring the technician after proper in- duction process, most of the technicians at Sukoon.com.pk are diploma holders.
Product and Service	The services are provided with re- spect to the mutual understanding between customer and vendor.	The timely services with the convenience of customer is the trait that Sukoon. com.pk has intended with customiza- tion.

Figure 2: Five Dimensions of Value Innovation

CHANGING THE ANTIQUATED STYLE

Sukoon.pk has also revamped the dynamics of the home and maintenance industry on five dimension of the value innovation logic. It has innovated on 5 factors of Industry Assumptions, the strategic Focus, the customers, Assets & Capabilities and lastly the Product and service offerings. The above table highlights how Sukoon.pk has made innovation by emerging in the Pakistani market with its services.

THE NEXT STEP FORWARD

Sukoon.pk has been an evolving mechanism for those consumers who want a hassle free maintenance service at their door step. Since this need was identified and catered by Qazi and Shoaib through Sukoon.pk, they realized that something more was needed to make the services offered more resourceful in the minds of the consumers. While considering many elements that would play in effect, expansion of their services was the first option on the mind of the CEO.

The alternative to expand their services geographically is viable as it may establish their operation base in other metropolitan cities like Lahore and Islamabad. This would help Sukoon. pk to further tap the market potential across the region for future growth and sustainability in the industry. Another alternative for Sukoon.pk is to consider their services line expansion into other domestic household needs such as: chefs, chauffeurs and full time household maids and services such as Janitorial etc. Sukoon.pk faces the threat of new competitors entering the market due to low barriers to entry, therefore Umer and Shoaib need constant innovative strategies to survive in the industry. What are the alternatives that Sukoon.pk can consider other than those mentioned? If it would be feasible to shift into technological paradigm with effect to external factors? What really is the way forward?

ANNEXURES

Exhibit 1: Household Economic Survey

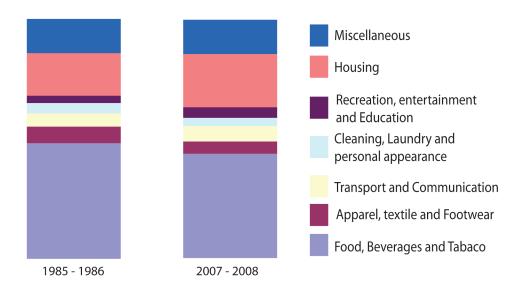


Exhibit 2

TABLE 2.7(A) PERCENTAGE OF MONTHLY CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE BY COMMODITY GROUPS

		2010-11		2011-12		
COMMODITY GROUP	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Food, drinks & tobacco	41.08	54.71	48.91	38.15	50.58	45.01
Food & Nonalcoholic Beverages	38.98	52.44	46.71	35.71	48.21	42.62
Alcoholic beverages &Tobacco	0.79	1.26	1.06	0.81	1.32	1.09
Restaurant & Hotels	1.32	1.01	1.14	1.61	1.05	1.30
Clothing& Footwear	4.66	5.45	5.11	5.11	6.19	5.71
Housing (rent & other costs)	28.10	16.68	21.54	26.52	16.65	21.09
Housing	21.04	8.67	13.98	19.63	7.91	13.18
Water, Electricity ,Gas& other fuels	7.06	8.01	7.60	6.89	8.74	7.91
Furnishing & Household equipment Maintenance	7.03	7.48	7.29	8.35	8.95	8.82
Transport& communication	8.87	7.13	7.87	9.30	8.01	8.58
Transport	6.69	5.51	6.01	6.97	6.16	6.52
Communication	2.18	1.62	1.86	2.33	1.85	2.06
Recreation & Culture	0.83	0.23	0.48	0.88	0.27	0.54
Education	4.82	2.51	3.49	6.58	3.36	4.80
Miscellaneous Goods & Services	2.44	2.65	2.56	2.50	2.44	2.47
Health	2.18	3.19	2.76	2.54	3.55	3.10

Exhibit 3: Pain points of Consumers

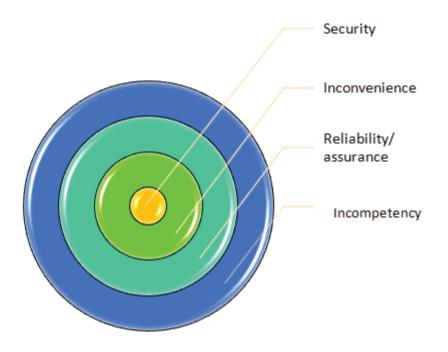


Exhibit 4: Existing Players – Forifix Services



Exhibit 5: Handyman services



HANDYMAN SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Gutter Cleaning
- Drain & Gully Cleaning
- Plumbing Jobs
- Electrical Jobs
- Emergency Repairs
- Roofing Services
- Painting & Decorating
- Carpentry & Joinery
- Install & Assembly Service
- Odd Jobs

Exhibit 6: ERRC Model

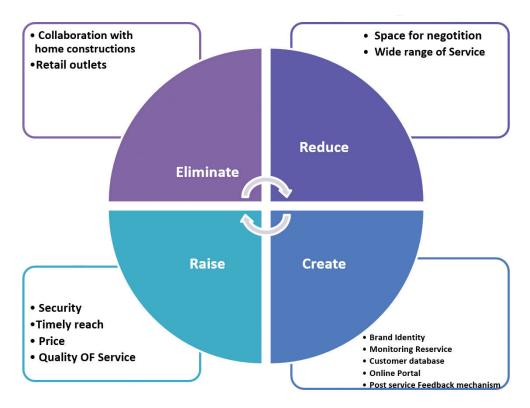


Exhibit 7: Services offered by Sukoon



Exhibit 8: The Activity Sheet

Activity	Process	Description
On boarding Technicians	At Sukoon.com.pk the technicians are treated as the core Assets and each one requires to pass the pre-test before being enrolled here	At Sukoon.com.pk most of the tech- nicians are diploma holders with supportive past experiences.
Diversified Workforce	The portal entertains customers from all kind of technicians to the handy man required for the job	Sukoon.com.pk is not focusing on any one specific Workforce, it provides technicians for five core jobs i.e.
Hiring the Services	It is quite convenient to hire the Ser- vices at Sukoon.com.pk, It requires an online application to be filled	The Online application is process with- in the 60 minutes of the submission. The confirmation call is made to the customer for acknowledging the same.

Prior Services Estimation	The customer may also request for the cost estimation before the Service visit, they may request it through there ac- quisition form available on the portal	The visit of technicians can be requested a day before the day of services to be provided, the technician may also use the supplies provided by the customer if they can as to make reduce the cost for materials to be used. Though quality of material is assessed by the technician to avoid any future inconvenience
Claim for any Damage	At Sukoon.com.pk the technicians are hired after having quite many pre- tests, though any damage may incur in case of any uncertain incidents, though those damages may also be resolved through the predefined process	Sukoon.com.pk takes ownership of any damage that may incur due to the uncertain incident though the claim is processed on some certain criteria that customer has to show a proof that the asset damaged was in well off condi- tion earlier.
Feedback	Sukoon.com.pk requests feedback from the customers randomly through call to assess the services provided, moreover at the time of services provided the technician is advised to request custom- er for sending feedback along with the booking number	The Customers may share their feedback on the Customer Service email ID and the number provided on their web.
Billing and Payments	The Payment method is simple, the ser- vice charges are paid after the Services provided	The service charges are not fixed at Sukoon.com.pk they are negotiable as per the nature of job to be provided

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