

Coaching your staff to maximise sales

10 ways to improve beauty therapy clinic performance.

By Gerald Delany

1. Make sure you have the right staff! No, really – you’d be surprised how many clinic owners hire people who aren’t very interested in the business side of beauty – they just like doing the job and want to collect their weekly pay packet without having to think, or be challenged by the role. So, make sure you use a proper recruitment, interview and selection process that will give you a therapist with a bit of fire in their belly.
2. Even when you do have the right staff – they don’t particularly want to sell! There’s a simple reason for this: the image of “sales” as the shiny-suited, foot in the door, pressure-selling hype-merchant. None of use wants to be seen as that, and will switch off as soon as the word “sales” is mentioned. Get past this by emphasising the “knowledge holder” role of the therapist – your job is advising and helping clients to achieve their maximum potential, and these are the products that will help them. Make sure your staff believe in your products, it’s not easy to sell something you privately think is rubbish. Hold product awareness sessions, give samples to staff, and get knowledgeable company reps in to demonstrate and answer questions.
3. Make sure that all staff understand the sales process – train them thoroughly! Get your business advisor to coach you through how this works in your clinic – every business is subtly different. There are key stages that must be recognised, rehearsed and practised – practise role plays that will give the solid confidence needed to consistently improve performance. Make sure that your clinic’s style is clearly defined – what are the rules on client greetings? Name use? Farewells? What is the personality of the clinic? What are its themes? What “little extras” do the staff add to each client’s experience?
4. It’s your job as the business owner to set prices at a profitable level, but you will be challenged on pricing by both customers and staff. How do you respond? Many people offer discounts when challenged. Train your staff in all the alternatives:
 - a. “Soft dollars” – pre-selected product with a good enough margin to add real value to the client, but doesn’t cost you a great deal. This could be a monthly “special” or a buy this and get something else free or 50% off.
 - b. Bundle products into “kits” to make an attractive package – “Pamper Pack,” Summer, Winter, Bridal, etc.
 - c. Pre-sell future services in a “maintenance programme” for fixed package prices – these can be featured in the clinic as gifts.
 - d. Role play with staff the ways to respond when clients say, “That’s nice but its sooo expensive.”
 - e. Identify the benefits of a product or service – not its features.
5. Make sure all staff know how to ask questions that lead to sales. Discussing the weather may sound an unlikely sales lead-in, but it can provide the starting point of a discussion on UV protection, early aging, windburn, chapped lips, dry hair, dry skin, etc. Talking about kids leads to their ages, then on to the aging process in the client, time for the rewards of parenthood, and so on. The key point is you are not asking your staff to become hard-sell fanatics, just to have “conversations with a purpose”, not just “purposeless conversations”. Remember to ask open questions!
6. Ensure all staff follow the rules on future appointment making and reminders – many clinics throw away between 25 percent and 40 percent of their potential annual turnover by not handling future bookings and reminders in a positive and assertive manner. Set up a checking process to make sure this is done properly. Text and email messages are great for this.
7. Your staff need to understand the way the physical environment of your clinic influences customer behavior. This includes actual layout and “flow” of activity around the shop; the colours, noise levels and distractions; the movement and interaction of staff, and the movement and interaction of customers. Your staff won’t make sales if the environment irritates or “turns off” the customer in any way.
8. The environment from a sales perspective starts from outside the premises – parking, approach lines, window displays, lighting, doorway and entrance invitations. And remember, the sales environment doesn’t finish when the customer leaves the premises – never mind the exit route – what about that follow-up phone call? Do your staff call your regulars to see how they are going? Did their special event go off well? Did they get that job? Again, emails and texts are cheap and easy and go the extra mile in helping to make people feel special.
9. What sort of sales incentive scheme do you have? Group or individual? There are many systems out there – not all equal. A combination of smaller individual incentives and larger group incentives can work well in the personal services industries. You need co-operation, team work and a friendly environment in this industry – the customers can always tell!
10. Look in the mirror – are YOU committed to making your business more profitable? If you aren’t 100 percent committed your staff will sense it and will not go beyond your performance. Unfortunately, many business owners have come “off the tools” themselves and haven’t changed their mindset in the meantime. In some magical way, owners then expect their staff to somehow behave differently and be more focussed on sales than the owner themselves.



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