

THE WINGATE SALON & SPA

TIPS

- Pick a Segment

Salons may decide to appeal to a very young demographic--girls in their early teens, for instance--and design services and communication specifically to appeal to this group. Men may be another potential target market. Salons that develop the reputation for serving men, and only men, may draw those who are hesitant to get services in a mixed-sex environment.

- Build Relationships

Social media advertising offers hair salons the opportunity to build relationships with people who may be existing or potential clients and to stay in front of them. Offering specials online through contests can be a way to draw people to a social media site, as can be frequent updates with tips on hair care or the latest information on new styles.

- Target Existing Clientele

Businesses know that their existing customers are their best customers. Hair salons should not overlook opportunities to advertise to existing clients--through e-newsletters, for example. By staying in close contact with this group and offering them specials, early information about new products and personalized tips for hair care and new styles, salons can cement relationships and encourage not only repeat sales, but referrals as well.

- Consider Social Media

Social media options like Facebook, Pinterest and Twitter offer simple and cost effective--the only cost is your time--options for generating awareness, building followers and maintaining relationships with clients and prospective clients. Use these tools to keep your target audience up to date about new happenings at your salon, new services and products or special events. Consider the use of contests to increase followers and generate business for your salon--a percentage off coupon for a makeover, for instance, is likely to generate interest and buzz about your services.

- Attend a Trade Show

Attend a salon or spa industry trade show. Trade shows are great opportunity to check out the competition and pick up tips and tricks you can share with your staff and clients.

- Don't Overlook Traditional Advertising

Even though social media and Internet advertising seem to be all the rage these days, traditional advertising tools still have relevance. For hair salons, in particular, local advertising through the local paper, radio stations or even cable television

programming can target local audiences that are likely to be interested in your services. A mix of advertising represents the best opportunity to generate awareness and preferences for what you have to offer.

- Text Reminders

If a customer comes in for a fantastic hair color, and absolutely loves how it turns out, how thrilled will she be when she receives a text reminder six weeks later that she could use a refresh at the roots? She knows it's true because she sees it every day in the mirror. But actually picking up the phone, making an appointment, and following through on it keeps getting put off. But when your reminder pops up on her phone, with a link to make an appointment immediately and 10% discount for doing so today, she's in.

- Make Ties With Bridal Boutiques

You may also tie-up with the bridal boutiques located in your area. There are many bridal shops that are keen on working with local hair salons that are trustworthy. You may discuss about the partnership with the owner of the bridal boutique to find out if your hair salon could work with them exclusively. This is indeed an imperative means of income for your salon as you can earn a lot by helping their clients with a hairdo. All that you need is a good bridal boutique that is willing to provide you with a chance.

- Your Community

Look to community events, local newspaper ads, and car wraps as other options as marketing for hair salons. Community events are great because you can reach new potential clients face to face.

- Get Personal

When you book an event call clients personally to invite them. This is so important. Don't just rely on invitations and mailers. A personal interaction goes a long way.

- Specials

Specials are always a customer's treat to have them coming back. Specials are a great way to make that traffic come to you and to change who they are currently going with - even if just once. You can prove yourself to them then and keep them returning. Try group discounts. Offer a percentage off for a minimum of appointments. Have a Salon party with some drinks and appetizers for them. You'll get a ton of clients because women love to have a girls day out at the salon. Other ideas you could try are: free hairstyling with perm or coloring or haircut punch cards and free hair styling products after a certain amount of visits.

- QR Codes

Use QR codes in print advertisements with links to promotional service offers or product specials and freebies.

- Knowing Your Competition

Knowing Your Enemy is key and could help traffic into your salon. Business is war so follow this Hair Salon Marketing Tip with laser focus. Knowing your competition is as important as anything else you will ever do in business. You need to learn who their customers are, how they work as a shop, number of employees they have on hand, what their range of services and products are and where and how they advertise. This way you will be able to know how to better serve your clients and run your business. I know this seems like dirty pool or underhanded but there is no sense in trying to reinvent the wheel now, is there?

MARKETING IDEAS

- Hair Salon/Spa Marketing Idea #1: Partner with local photographers

Photographers are always in need of makeup artists and stylists for their shoots. In addition to often being paid for their on-site services, stylists get credit along with the photographer for any published photographs.

- Hair Salon/Spa Marketing Idea #2: Take client photos consistently

Keep a digital camera handy and take photos of your cuts and styles regularly. Since most people have a boost of self-confidence after a haircut or style, many will be happy to pose for a few shots.

- Hair Salon/Spa Marketing Idea #3: Post photos online frequently

Choose your best and most diverse photos and make sure to post them on your website. Even more importantly, post them on your Twitter and Facebook Wall. People may not visit your website frequently, but they monitor their Twitter and Facebook feeds on a daily and hourly basis.

- Hair Salon/Spa Marketing Idea #4: Start a blog

Nothing works better in online marketing than becoming a resource of targeted information. As a hair stylist, you can probably easily think of products you can review, or tough braids that you can write tutorials on. They don't need to be New Yorker length feature articles – 500 words will do just fine. These articles can boost your visibility in search engines and give you a whole lot more to share and talk about on social media.

- Hair Salon/Spa Marketing Idea #5: Throw contests

A good haircut only costs your time, and can bring in new customers. Throwing contests that ask people to follow you on social media, or even better, submit public testimonials as a way of entering, can be invaluable to your business.

Example: Challenge your social networking fans and followers to submit pictures and stories telling you why they should win a free makeover at your salon. Announce your winner online and feature before and after pictures to gain even more interest and fans.

- Hair Salon/Spa Marketing Idea #6: Keep up with the hottest trends

For example, right now feather hair extensions and tinsel extensions are all the rage. Any hair salon that starts offering feather hair extensions today, is going to have a tough time competing with other hair salons who have been offering them for over a month now and already have customer pictures to post on Facebook and Twitter.

- Hair Salon/Spa Marketing Idea #7: Try SMS marketing

Sending the occasional text message to your clients can have a big boost in bookings. Reminders for their 6-week follow up or for special promotions is only recommended for regular customer though, as very old clients may have already found a new hairdresser and may feel uncomfortable asking you to stop messaging them.

- Hair Salon/Spa Marketing Idea #8: Try email marketing and newsletters

If you've already started your blog, you won't have trouble filling up a monthly email newsletter to your clients. The newsletter may feature promotions, news and all the informative posts you've been adding to your website.

- Hair Salon/Spa Marketing Idea #9: Offer your own "daily or weekly deal"

On your website, Facebook and other social media accounts, offer one deal a day for one of your services. Local customers may very well subscribe to your feeds just to stay informed of when you have a deal that meets their need. This way, you get the customers and you don't have to give up all your profits to one of those other daily deal sites.

- Hair Salon/Spa Marketing Idea #10: Hold a Charitable Event

Everyone wants to be beautiful, and beautiful hair can do wonders for one's self-image. Contact your local domestic abuse shelter, homeless shelter, or teen intervention program and speak to the director about choosing a few individuals who are in the most need of a makeover. For example, there may be a homeless woman in search of a job. A makeover could greatly improve her appearance, and her interview success. Send out a press release to your local newspaper about your charitable makeover program. Invite reporters to come out to your salon and cover your event. Consider implementing a fundraiser into your makeover event. Cash donations can help local charities tremendously. Holding a charitable event is a win-win situation. Women and men in desperate need of a makeover will get one for free, and the hosting salon receives all the attention that comes along with doing good things for the community.

- Hair Salon/Spa Marketing Idea #11: Offer Free Services and Products

Hold a monthly free services and products raffle. Purchase raffle tickets from any supply store. Have customers write their name, email, and phone number on the back of ½ of the raffle ticket. Have customers write their friends and family members names too. The customers receive one half, and you keep the other ½ (containing the contact information) where it is placed into a raffle container. At the

end of the month draw out a ticket (or two, or three) and contact that person with their prize. Use the other raffle tickets to create a contact list. Follow up with your prospective clients with salon coupons and specials.

- Hair Salon/Spa Marketing Idea #12: E-mail Blasts

Use your email database to market hard-to-sell products or services. Review your appointments daily and weekly to determine the time periods that are hardest to book, and then send email blasts offering discounts for clients who book services during those times. Make offers for specific services, such as for a body scrub, instead of general percentage discounts. Use the same method that airlines use to discount seats: the closer it gets to "takeoff" without a sell, the larger the discount.

- Hair Salon/Spa Marketing Idea #13: Attend Bridal Shows

Make sure to have coupons and/or free/discounted consultations. According to Bride magazine, the average American wedding costs \$26,501. For a salon looking to increase wedding clientele, bridal shows are a way to find new customers in order to grow a business in a tight economy. At a bridal show, a customer interacts with service providers and decides which one to work with. An attractive booth and well-trained staff are essential marketing tools. But additional techniques, when used effectively, can attract new clientele and make your time at the bridal show a success.

- Hair Salon/Spa Marketing Idea #14: Conduct a Beauty Workshop Event

Conducting beauty workshops can help you promote your salon to potential clients. Your workshops can range from topics on the proper ways to wash, condition or roller set hair, selecting the best hair color for your skin tone, creating a five-minute makeup routine or teaching teens the proper way to care for the skin. Host these workshops at your salon, or at local community centers. Distribute business cards and have attendees provide you with their names, email addresses and phone numbers, if they're interested in booking free consultations with your salon.

- Hair Salon/Spa Marketing Idea #14: Bad Hair Day Event

Everybody has a bad hair day but nobody likes to admit it. Select a day to give heavily discounted services to anyone who comes in on "Bad Hair Day" to have their problems corrected. This gives you the opportunity to get dissatisfied customers from other hair salons and turn them into your customers.

- Hair Salon/Spa Marketing Idea #15: Happy Hour Announcement

Conducting a happy hour everyday for a limited period of time is a great way to attract customers. Many hair salons/spas conduct a happy hour when they lessen the prices on haircuts or other services so that they are more affordable to families with lower income. Happy hours would enable you to get new clients, as many people will flock to your salon to get a trendy haircut at a reasonable rate.

- Hair Salon/Spa Marketing Idea #16: Set-up Incentives or Referral Programs.
Tell your customers to bring their friends and they'll get a discount on their next service. That should be a good incentive!

- Hair Salon/Spa Marketing Idea #17: A Unique Solution for Cancellations
A full schedule of appointments is the lifeblood of any spa or salon. If you're looking at an empty chair or massage table, you're losing money. Unfortunately, even the most loyal of customers may run into a situation that causes them to cancel a scheduled appointment. And new customers are an even bigger risk. This used to mean a heavy sigh and a "grin-and-bear-it" attitude, but not anymore. Assuming your canceling client gave you at least a tiny bit of advanced notice, even 30 or 40 minutes, you can send out a text blast to your list of mobile customers offering a huge incentive to anyone who would like to take advantage of the new open spot in your schedule! You can even make an offer to your list beforehand for any who would like to keep their names on a special waiting list for last-minute cancellation-fillers at a reduced rate! Just segment your list to identify these folks and send notifications to them first. Goodbye cancellation blues, hello paying clients!

PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- **Promotion 1:** 25% Off Services for New Clients: It's not easy to take customers away from your competitors. Offer them a reason to give your salon a chance.
- **Promotion 2:** \$20 Same-as-Cash Coupon: Give your customers incentives to spend money for your services. They will be more likely to spend money if they know they already have a cash coupon to start.
- **Promotion 3:** 10% Pre-Book Discount: It's not enough to let your customers walk out of your salon with beautiful hair and a big smile. Make sure they return by giving them an incentive to pre-book their appointment.
- **Promotion 4:** \$10 Off Next Service: Every now and then, you need to make your clients feel special. There's no better way than passing on some savings to make sure they come back to you.
- **Promotion 5:** Free Haircut on the Fifth Visit: Reward your loyal customers. When someone returns to you for the fifth time, it means something: she/he is more than a repeat customer, that person is now a loyal patron. Let your clients know that you reward loyalty with a free hair-cut on the fifth booking.
- **Promotion 6:** Bring a Friend Promotion: Don't just ask for referrals; reward your client for bringing a new business through the door. Give them both a reason to come together. Encourage customers to spread the word through on their Facebook page or by email.

- **Promotion 8:** 25% Off on Your Birthday: Give your customers a gift they can appreciate. Your clients will want to treat themselves to your services, and with the discount, you'll be putting a smile on their face and money in your pocket. That's the kind of birthday present clients will tell their friends about.
- **Promotion 7:** Free \$20 gift certificate with the Purchase of a \$100 Gift Certificate: Your clients will love this idea. Not only are they buying something for friends or family, they're getting a gift for themselves.
- **Promotion 9:** \$10 Off on Product Purchase of \$100 or More: Your profit margin on beauty products is high enough that you can still make money when you offer discounts. It's also a great incentive to get your customers try out your salon products, and if they like it, they will return for more.
- **Promotion 10:** 10% Off for a Positive Online Review: Many of your first time customers will look up reviews on your salon before they go there. Tell your loyal customers to go on directory sites and leave a positive remark about your business.
- **Promotion 11:** Free Haircut with Color Service on First Visit: A haircut is fast and easy so why not give it away with the purchase of a more expensive beauty service.
- **Promotion 12:** 20% off an Additional Service: This is a great way to up-sell your clients. If they're already there, why not give them an excuse to indulge more.

NOTES

- Encourage clients to write a Yelp review if they had a positive experience. I noticed the overall average rating of the salon was only 3 stars. In addition, you can build loyalty through follow-up surveys asking how their experience was and what you can do to make it better. By asking for your clients' feedback, they'll automatically feel like they're important to you.
- More colorful, relevant graphics that grab a person's attention.
Example: Under your Teen/Pre-teen Spa Party Services page the girls look like they're wearing outfits from the early 2000's. To attract young people, it's important to look relevant and cool.
- Obviously these marketing ideas are geared towards a salon, but they can easily be interchangeable with your spa services as well!