

StraightTALKING

Do you know the cost of latecomers and no shows? If you actually calculate the costs incurred to your business by persistent latecomers and no shows, you would probably be horrified at how much they cost your business on an annual basis.

Every salon and Spa has clients who think it is OK to waltz in 20 minutes late, as if that's acceptable. Worse again, what about the 'no shows' who don't even have the common courtesy to call when they decide not to bother keeping an appointment. Too often, the salon manager is reluctant to do anything to change their behaviour because they are scared of losing the business.

Once you know what these clients are costing you, you stop worrying about losing their business. In fact you would probably prefer that they take their business down the road to your opposition, and allow you to focus on looking after the clients that are courteous and arrive for every appointment on time.

You are in business to make money, and your responses to problems that cost you money unnecessarily need to be both serious and swift. You cannot afford to ignore the behaviour of clients that has a negative impact on your bank balance.

Remember, 'the customer may not always be right, but the customer is always the customer!' Most clients are reasonable and when it is explained to them courteously, they will realise the impact their behaviour is having - then they either improve their behaviour or go elsewhere.

The cost of no-shows

Liz McKeon asks, how are your clients behaving?

It is unlikely that you will totally eliminate these sorts of problems, but it is possible to drastically reduce the rate they occur:

On your brochure

- Include a statement explaining to the client that if they are late, the appointment will be either shortened or cancelled, and that the full cost of the appointment may be charged, as time and staff were allocated for that treatment;
- Explain your salon/Spa policy about changing or cancelling appointments - for example, 24 hours notice required;
- New clients or clients with an appointment of 60 minutes or longer may be asked to provide a credit card deposit.

Confirm every appointment by phone, email or text, then latecomers and no shows have to accept responsibility and adhere to salon regulations.

Most clients will accept your house rule if it is explained to them in a professional manner, so staff need to be trained to ask for

deposits or take full payment from latecomers, where appropriate.

Use your computer to flag the offending clients - know the clients who are inclined to be late and schedule their appointments in off peak times.

Have a back-up plan

Use a cancellation list to your benefit. Simply have a list of clients that want an appointment today and call them if a cancellation occurs. Have a second list - a list of clients to contact at very short notice and they can avail of cheaper prices on the day. This means that even if you have to give discounted prices, there are no gaps in your appointment book.

Most of your clients will only cancel an appointment if it is an emergency and you would never need to ask them for a deposit. But for the persistent latecomers and no shows, introduce and implement your house rules, making sure that every client has a positive impact on your bank balance!

Liz McKeon is a Business Coach and trainer, specialising in the beauty industry. For further information on consultancy and training services telephone (86) 386 1243 or visit www.lizmckeon.com

