

using Facebook to promote your salon

Liz McKeon examines the benefits of social networking

Social media is a category of online media where people are talking, participating, sharing, networking and bookmarking online. There is a wide variety of social media, ranging from sharing sites such as You Tube and Flickr through to social networks such as LinkedIn and Facebook.

Social media has shot to the forefront of people's attention because it's fun. Thanks to social media, it's easy to share your ideas, photos, videos and messages with the world at large. You can find clients, business contacts, friends and become part of a community or a range of different communities. Social media gives you a chance to be engaged and to engage with others.

Because of this, social media is of particular interest to beauty businesses keen to experiment with social media marketing. There are so many different methods for branding your salon on the internet and Facebook is just one of them. If you are looking for a new, cost effective method of increasing exposure for yourself and your salon, Facebook is a great option.

how do you do this?

Facebook offers you many tools, to be successful in marketing your salon, you must have an understanding of these tools:

Be Yourself - social networking is about individuals connecting with each other, so don't appear to be a large anonymous corporation. Let potential clients get to know you, your aim is to become a part

of this social community and give your target market what they are looking for in the most personalised manner. Request your 'Friends' the right way: when you send out friend requests from your business account be professional. Explain how you came to discover them on Facebook and why you'd like to get to know them better. This will give them a clear idea that your intentions are correct and that you're just looking to make a professional connection.

Be Professional - a highly professional profile is an absolute necessity for any salon. The business page should be used solely for business goals and not for personal pictures. The main priority here is to give clients an idea of what your salon provides. Every update you make to your profile needs to be related to your market niche. A client can lose respect for your salon if they see something on your profile that they consider offensive. Make sure you keep your private and professional Facebook accounts separate. This is the best way to use social media networks to promote and expand your salon.

do you need a Facebook page or a Facebook group?

You can use Facebook pages to create and give your salon their own profile on Facebook. These pages give your salon an identity which strengthens your brand. Current and potential clients can become fans of your page and by doing so, this allows them to follow you and receive

any updates that you post to your page. Every time someone becomes a fan of your page all of their friends see that they have become a 'fan', attracting a following and creating a buzz regarding your salon. Any activity on your page is then broadcast into the mini-feeds of your followers.

Facebook groups are built around a group of people rather than your salon or brand. You can use your group to create awareness, but they don't have features allowing users to become fans, they only become members. The downfall of this is it will now share as much information with friend of 'group' members as they interact with the group.

Deciding whether a page or a group is right for your salon depends on the goal you want to achieve with marketing on Facebook. You will gain more exposure from a Facebook page, because it can be seen by unregistered users, but a group page can only be seen by registered Facebook users. You must also consider that when you send a message to Facebook page members, they will only receive an update notification, but if you are sending a message to your Facebook group, they will receive the message via their Facebook inbox. It really is a personal choice for your salon.

Facebook has become one of the top ways to market a salon because you can so easily reach large numbers of prospects. It gives you the potential to brand your salon with your customised pages, while also building a growing number of targeted prospects in your niche... and it's free.

Liz McKeon is a successful Business Coach and Trainer, specialising in the beauty industry. For further information on Consultancy Services, upcoming Business Workshops and Online Seminars, check out www.lizmckeon.com or call 00353 1 892 8007/00353 86 386 1243

