

Salon owner's guide to success

Building and growing a thriving business





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Promoting your business

Here we look at some options on how to market your salon business and raise awareness of your services.

Is your business online?

If not, it's worth considering doing just that as most of us spend a huge amount of time on our devices, so it makes sense for your salon to have an online presence.

Make booking easier

Salons using an online booking system earn up to 80% more than those offering bookings via phone, email or walk-ins.¹ If you rely on bookings face-to-face, over the phone or by email, you can only respond to clients when you are working. Adopting an online approach can reduce admin for you, potentially save on staff costs and make your services client-friendly and accessible.

Share information

As well as enabling clients to book online, check salon opening times and address details, even if you're not planning to sell products through your site, you can highlight new styles and trends and share product information or special offers.

*Building a successful
business website*

*Top tips for making your
website mobile*

¹ <https://www.getslick.com/blog/2022-trends>

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

You'll want your salon to be easy to find when searching on Google. A visually stunning website will fail to meet your salon's marketing objectives if it's not well optimised.

SEO is how your business is found within search engine result listings. Here are some tips to get Google to recognise your site:

- Register your salon with Google Business.²
- Make sure you have relevant content that includes the salon keyword phrases that people use when looking for a salon like yours in your area.
- Ask other relevant and trusted websites to link to your website.
- Ensure details about your salon are cited consistently and correctly on listing websites.
- Check that your website is mobile-friendly.

How to get your business seen on Google.

Engagement through social media

Social media isn't just for connecting with friends and family; it can be a powerful business tool to engage with clients. Salons operate in a visual industry, making Instagram the perfect platform to showcase your work, inspire followers and for clients to shout about their styles to their friends. You can have lots of fun with filters, tagging clients (with their permission, of course) and Instagram's most recent addition 'reels'. Build your reputation as an 'expert' in your field, create videos, and share weekly tips and product knowledge for specific hair types or problems.

With Facebook for business, you can set up a business page in minutes. Two out of three Facebook users visit a local business page at least once a week. And just like a website, you can also add business details, contact information and much more.

If you have a special promotion or offer, you may decide to advertise to targeted audiences on social media.³

Find out how to use social media to showcase your business.



² https://www.google.com/intl/en_uk/business/

³ <https://www.facebook.com/business/news/insights/how-mobile-first-connections-drive-local-business>

Retaining clients

You're probably familiar with the business saying, **"It's cheaper to retain an existing client than gain a new one."** This has never been more relevant to the hair and beauty industry. As well as focusing on improving your clients' experience, why not develop a loyalty programme to retain your clients?

You could offer a discount to clients who book and pay for a course of treatment in advance—this might take the form of a money-off discount, or you might offer them free treatments. You could also provide your customers with free samples of products to try out at home.

Although this can encourage sales, remember you will have to buy the samples from your suppliers in many cases. Some salons sell gift vouchers, and some have a loyalty card scheme—these give customers points every time they have a treatment that can be used in exchange for future discounts.

To help keep your clients returning, make them feel valued and respected when they come to your salon. Always give a personal consultation before every appointment and take note of their comments during previous visits.



Salon experts share their experiences

Salon business owners discuss their challenges and tips for success.

Simple it may sound, but Michael's motto falls neatly in line with the business ethos outlined by many other successful independent high street business owners. His focus is on delivering more than a barbering service. He wants every customer to have an outstanding experience delivered by professionals who are just as committed to the cause as he is himself.

"I love what I do and I love my business. I'm passionate about it. I've been cutting hair now for over ten years, and I've done it in all kinds of businesses, from hairdressers to the old school, £5 a cut barber shops. So I know what works and what doesn't – and what works is giving every customer a personal experience and the attention they deserve."

Day-to-day, that translates to limiting each of his 16 barbers to 15 appointments per day, not the 30 or so quick cuts a barber might carry out in an old fashioned, 'walk-in' shop.

"I am a strong believer in quality," he explains. "We limit ourselves to 15 haircuts per day so we can take our time. It's not just a haircut, it's a service too. When you come here you can have a drink, a game of pool. We build relationships with our customers, 99% of whom are regulars."



Hearing from the real high street experts



Ellen Cortes, owner of Hairworks, explains how she turned a hair salon in decline into a luxury experience and thriving business

"You can never stand still in this business," she said. "That is why I'm so committed to training and development. It keeps things fresh for everyone and gives our customers a reason to trust our expertise and keep coming back - we can offer services and techniques customers can't find anywhere else in the area, not just colour but higher-end services like extensions and permanent straightening too."

Building your salon business and managing risks

Promoting your business, building your online presence and delivering fantastic customer service are all vital to help grow your business. But to do this, you need a sound operational base. Whether you're just starting out or looking to expand, here are some critical things to consider.

How to start a salon business

You've dreamt of starting your own beauty business and becoming your own boss, but it takes a lot of hard work, time and financial investment. For your business to succeed, you must be prepared. You'll need to create a business plan, consider various legal and financial issues,⁴ and much more.

Find out more about setting up a business to help get you started.



⁴ <https://www.lawdonut.co.uk/business/sector-specific-law/beauty-salon-legal-issues>



Calculate what
employee turnover is
really costing you

Funding your business

With the average UK start-up spending more than £22,000 in their first year, understanding how best to manage the costs associated with launching your own company is crucial.⁵ Some councils offer small business grants, for instance, while enterprise investment schemes can also provide a vital funding source. It's also worth exploring tax relief options, such as Employment Allowance. From a banking standpoint, it can pay to look at challenger banks – many of which offer excellent lending options and rates to SMEs.

Building your team

Growing your business may mean expanding your team. Whether it's your first recruitment or looking to build on an established team, there's a lot to think about—particularly in today's relatively uncertain market.

The advantages are significant—whether responding better to the ebb and flow of business or taking time off knowing your business is in safe hands. But there are concerns too, of course – having to pay regular salaries, increased administration, and the need to understand appropriate employment laws and insurance requirements fully.

*Find out more about
expanding your team*

⁵ <https://www.fide.co/blog/business-tips/how-much-does-it-cost-to-start-a-business/>

Minimise cancellation losses

While the UK hair and beauty industry is reportedly worth £4 billion, no-shows account for at least £1.2 billion in lost income annually.⁶ Taking a deposit, or even full treatment payment up front, to tackle the no-show problem is becoming more commonplace, but you can also take some simple steps to reduce last-minute cancellations and the impact on your profit.



Send reminders

Software is available that issues automated messages. But you can also use a simple text or WhatsApp message to remind your client of their appointment a couple of days in advance.

Client relationships

Loyal clients will be less inclined to let you down at the last minute. Cancellations happen, but encouraging your clients to give as much notice as possible will give you time to fill unwanted appointments.



Cancellation policies

Ensure you have a clear cancellation policy and that your clients know your cancellation fees. You can include the details on your appointment cards, reminder emails/messages and price lists.

⁶ <https://www.hji.co.uk/business/the-shocking-amount-hair-salons-lose-every-year-because-of-no-shows/>

Protecting yourself online

We've highlighted the benefits of taking your business online, but this presence brings risks too. The threat of cyber-attacks is significant. Ransomware attacks are widespread. In these attacks, hackers encrypt the files and data on your computers and systems. They then demand payment for restoring access to the data. These can not only block your computers but take down your website too. Your clients' personal data can be stolen—which could put you in breach of data protection regulations. Phishing attacks are becoming increasingly more common and are equally damaging to your business. The good news is that there are simple steps you can take to protect yourself.

Taking advantage of your local community

If you're looking to raise awareness of your salon locally, getting involved with your community can be hugely beneficial. As well as engaging with fellow business owners who can share their lessons and experiences, your local network can also be a great place to cross-promote your services.

Local community groups on Facebook can help spread the word to a broader audience while referring customers to complementary businesses in your network or promoting them in your salon can help build a stronger high street.

Your local Chamber of Commerce can be a great place to start your community networking.⁷



⁷ <https://www.britishchambers.org.uk/page/join-a-chamber>

Understanding business insurance

Unforeseen events can create huge disruption to your business operations—and cost you money. A cyber-attack that leaks client data, a fire that destroys your salon and your stock or other incidents that could threaten your ability to operate effectively. To manage these risks, it's critical to have the right business insurance in place. Plus, it's essential to remember that some insurances are mandatory—such as public liability and employers liability insurance if you employ people on a full or part-time basis. It sounds complex, but it doesn't have to be.

Expanding and diversifying

It might not be something to think about immediately, but the business you set up today doesn't have to be the culmination of your entrepreneurial efforts. It's a cliché, but it's also true mighty oaks can grow from tiny acorns, and keeping one eye on the future can help ensure you're well placed to develop new opportunities.

It might be new salons in different locations or franchising opportunities. It could be diversifying into new cosmetic or aesthetics services, new products, or entirely new ways of doing business – look at how the restaurant industry embraced home deliveries when the pandemic began and, for many, will continue to be part of their service going forward. The key is to ensure your business plan has enough flexibility to embrace future possibilities.



⁷ <https://www.britishchambers.org.uk/page/join-a-chamber>

About the author – Smei business insurance

As an award-winning* insurance broker, smei has been helping customers like you protect their small and medium-sized businesses since 2002. We aim to arrange the right business insurance for the UK's high street shops and small businesses at a competitive price, simply and without fuss.

Unlike comparison sites and direct insurers that expect you to do the hard work, we believe in providing a personal service on which you can rely. Why? Because we know you're busy running your salon, you don't have time to research what insurance you need or pore over the finer detail of the cover. That's our job. We offer free specialist advice and get the right cover you need.

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* [Feefo Award](#)

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