

HOW TO BUILD A CLIENT BASE AS A HAIR STYLIST

BY CATHERINE LOVERING



Being a hairstylist isn't as simple as showing up to cut hair. You're trained, you've rented a chair in a salon, but you still need clients. You'll discover marketing yourself and your services is as important as giving customers a great look. Keeping clients happy and encouraging them to get the word out are a few key aspects to building a client base. With diligent attention, you can make sure your appointments are fully booked.

1. Look the part. As a hair stylist, you're selling beautiful hair. Part of marketing yourself as a stylist is to demonstrate you care about your own look. Always arrive at work with a fashionable cut that suits you. Since hair is part of an overall aesthetic, wear flattering clothes that make clients take notice.

2. Act professionally. Showing up on time for appointments is important to keep your clients coming back. If you're consistently late, you might lose clients to stylists they feel they can depend on -- even if you do great hair.

Treat your client with respect and remember her name; don't forget who she is a few minutes into a color treatment.

3. Rebook your clients. During the cut, give recommendations about how frequently your client should come back for maintenance. If the client is getting a particularly short cut that will grow out quickly or a hair color that will fade or show roots within a few weeks, give the client a time frame; that will encourage clients to return.

4. Give every client your card. As the cut is finishing, let each client know what days you normally work and give them the salon's card, with your name on it, and encourage them to call back. Tell the client to ask for you by name when they rebook.

5. Promote your special skills to existing clients. If you are trained in a particular treatment, such as hair straightening or color, tell your clients. You can either recommend the treatment to the client or ask them to refer you to others they know who might be interested in what is unique about your practice.

6. Ask the salon's receptionist to promote you. In particular if the front desk staff has had a good experience with your hair-styling skills, ask them to recommend you to new salon clients looking to choose a hairdresser.

7. Promote your expertise in the salon's advertising. Ask the salon's management if you can put a sign in the front area of the shop to promote your special skills; if the salon is agreeable, you can also ask to be featured in the salon's print and online advertising. You might justify this request by saying your specific skills will bring more business to the salon overall.

8. Establish an email list and keep in touch. Ask existing clients if you can add them to your email list, and encourage them to pass on your information to others. Send out periodic news of salon specials and discounts. If the salon is agreeable, offer a percentage off promotion to anyone who brings in a copy of your email newsletter so you can keep them signed up--and coming back.