

# Ask the **experts**

Our experts answer an array of questions about every aspect of running a successful salon or spa business

## I want to expand my business. How can I make sure it's a success?

**W**hen looking to expand you need to consider what it is you actually need - is it better to remodel your current salon or invest in a second site? Whatever it is, planning is key. Write a list of your goals, evaluate how long each will take and determine how much you can afford.

If you're just looking to expand your current site then you need to factor in the cost of building work, the disruption caused by it and the potential expense of losing clients while it goes on. You may also need to close temporarily, so make a plan of how you will retain clients or hook them back in from elsewhere when you reopen. Keep a database of client emails so you can send them regular updates during the work as well as offering them money off their first treatment when the salon reopens. You will also need to add staff salaries to your costs while the salon is closed, so make sure to budget for that.

However, if you're looking to expand into to a second site then the biggest decision you'll make is location. Choose a high-street site to ensure footfall is continuous and take the time to monitor passing trade at different times of the day so you have an awareness of what your

peak times will be. It's also worth researching and visiting any salons nearby - a bit of competition is healthy but it isn't financially viable to open a second site in an area that's already over saturated.

The other big decision you'll need to make is who you employ. Advertise locally to build up excitement in the area. Remember, good therapists don't come cheap but they do form great client relationships, which is good for your business. Figure out what exactly you need before advertising. Do you have a reliable, skilled therapist who can supervise new staff, keep up morale and mentor in your absence? If not, you may need to employ someone more senior or give existing staff additional training.

When you open your second site, invite local businesses to the launch party and offer journalists and bloggers free trials of your treatments to help spread the word.

**Yvonne Sullivan** is the owner of Yvonne Sullivan Beauty salon in Harrow, London. She runs her own training school, Beauty Training Harrow, which offers beauty NVQs Level 2 to 4



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## How can I improve my website's search rankings on Google?

Many salons suffer from the same problem - their websites look great but potential customers struggle to find them. However, getting onto the first page of Google isn't as difficult as it seems. There are three things you can do to get your salon ranked higher on the search engine's local search.

Firstly, do some research into the keywords your customers type in when looking for a beauty salon in the area; for example, location and the type of treatment they want. Then, update all your website's page titles and meta descriptions to include these keywords so Google will be able to find you quicker and rank you higher. A salon I worked with jumped from page four to one on Google just by making this change, which has led to an average of three new phone calls a day.

Create a Google My Business page. This will put your information on search, maps and Google+ so customers can find you. You should also open an account on Google+, the search engine's own social network. These tools are intrinsically linked and critical if you want to be found by potential clients who live locally. Registering your salon on both and including a full list of the treatments will help you come up top on Google's map feature if you're the closet salon to where the customer is.

Ask clients to give feedback about your salon on your Google business page because the search engine rewards those with rave reviews by listing them higher. Therefore, the more positive reviews you have the more likely you'll appear on the search before your competitors.



**Carina Gerrelli** is a web designer at digital agency Bible Studio. She helps beauty businesses attract customers by making sure their websites can be found by Google.



## How should I choose the right eye make-up colours for my client?

Clients regularly ask me to show them how they can make their eyes stand out using make-up techniques that are simple and easy to replicate. Using eyeshadow shades that complement and accentuate their eye colour is the most effective method. It's a simple technique that customers can replicate, using your top tips, and a great opportunity for you to retail these "personalised" products for them to try at home.

If your client has blue eyes then tones of gold, bronze, chocolate and brown will make them look brighter, while shades of purple will make green eyes appear more piercing. Cool blues and silver tones add depth and warmth to brown eyes, while mossy greens and coppery pinks enhance multi-tonal, hazel eyes.

You can even take this educational tool to the next level. Ask your clients if they want to try wearing their complementary shade with a bolder colour, giving a modern twist on the smoky eye. Apply the base shade all over your client's lid before defining the socket and lash line with the bolder shade, creating a bespoke sultry eye. Complete the look with a neutral lip so the make-up is balanced.

This service brings a more personalised approach to client make-up education, where customers not only welcome new products but are given tailored and informative tips that they can use every day. It helps bring that professional finish home.



**Kelly Colman** is the founder of British make-up brand New CID Cosmetics, which supplies salons, spas and retail stores.

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## How can I refresh the interior of my salon on a budget?

Your salon's appearance is the first thing a customer sees and it can be the deciding factor as to whether someone comes in for a treatment or not. There's no chance for a second impression, so you need to make sure your business stands out first-time around.

Making some simple but cost-effective changes will give your salon a new lease of life without breaking the bank. For example, don't go over the top with your interior design. Paint all your walls in a neutral colour except for one, which will be your feature wall. Paint this wall in a bright colour that ties in with the rest of the colouring of your salon. The neutral walls can be left the same all year round while the feature wall can be easily updated for seasonal refreshes.

Before you even start your salon refresh make sure you're not losing money by closing during peak trading times. Take a look at customer levels from the past year and plan your work to happen during a period when footfall is low, so you avoid losing profits. Salon equipment can also be one of the biggest costs, so consider choosing own brand over more expensive ranges when updating furniture.

Don't ruin your redesign by allowing clutter to build up because this will give your customers the impression that it's a disorganised environment. Build storage into your plans from the start and consider up-cycling units with a lick of paint or new drawers to save cash.



**Ian Rarity** is an equipment and design specialist at Salon Services UK & Ireland. He works with salons and professionals to advise them on interiors and equipment.



## How can I introduce skincare into treatment programmes in my aesthetic clinic?

I'm often asked how to create a clinic with multiple streams of income and the secret is to not ignore the add-on services that are synergistic to what you do. The number-one thing practitioners ignore is the importance of skincare.

There's a perception that if you concentrate too much on skincare then it may decrease the impact of your core aesthetic treatments, but the opposite is true. If you synergistically increase skincare in what you do, then you can improve your patients' satisfaction as well as the results.

Maintenance will always be centred with decent, prescribed skincare. It's about balancing what we do in-clinic with what the client is going to do at home. With certain clients we induce skin compromise, maybe with a dermaroller, microneedling or skin peel, but you can, for example, suggest a product for homecare use with these procedures to improve barrier function.

The idea is to keep it simple for the client. Tell them it's like a sandwich – at one end you're going to have cleanser and at the other you're going to have sun protection.

What you choose as the "filling" is really down to what you see in front of you, and then you can add in other ingredients – i.e. the products – as you see fit. **PB**

**Dr Tapan Patel** is the owner and director of PHI Clinic in Harley Street, London. He has been a medical doctor for 17 years and practising cosmetic dermatology for the last 14 years.



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