

# business | listening skills

by Rob and Carol Trow

**E**ach time a client walks through your doors, you get an opportunity to shine. The key here is to engage the client by gaining his/her trust, especially during the first visit, by performing a thorough analysis of the client's needs. We often talk too much and listen too little. Sometimes the best salesperson is the best listener. Ask your clients questions rather than tell them what you can do for them. If you learn what their needs are, you can better customize your services and products to meet their expectations.

## Listen up, guys!

By word and by example, teach your staff to listen. In order for a client to take your staff's advice, they need to demonstrate to the client that they are listening. Estheticians ought to stay away from offering possible treatment methods without knowing what the client wants. They need to ask clients, new and old alike, what they would like to achieve and what type of skin care or other improvements they would like to accomplish.

Train spa personnel to fully explain to the client at the close of each session the relevance of home care products and ingredients, and how their use will help the client maintain the desired results in between visits. From this appointment forward, skin care and spa practitioners should continually monitor their client's progress to recommend future treatments. In so doing, the client will comply with your staff's recommendation when a home

care product or service upgrade is suggested. Remember, it is all about the customer, not you and your staff.

## Monitor the path of success

To keep your staff on track it is beneficial to assess their progress, in part by listening to them. Everyone likes to know how he or she is doing, to learn where their productivity and retention rates stand. It motivates them and

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provides a track record of their success. Staff like to be congratulated and welcome a pat on the back when they are doing well, and they are open to receiving assistance and taking suggestions if they need some help.

We recommend that you carry out monthly meetings with each individual staff member to discuss his/her progress and possible training opportunities. If conducted properly, these meetings will produce a boost in productivity, both in services and home care sales. Provide positive reinforcement to your staff on an ongoing basis.

Oftentimes spa owners and directors do not believe they have enough time to train, encourage and monitor staff. If you believe your time is limited, or that your staff is too large to manage, get an assistant. You need to place



someone in charge of your staff or you may be looking at poor client retention, weak sales and low product/service upgrade rates. Your employees are well worth the time you invest in them and the salary you pay them if your spa's revenues remain strong. ■

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