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Retail therapy

Extracts from an article by Carol and Rob Trow

Sell through education

In the salon, selling must be based upon education. The more you and your therapists know, the better you can impart knowledge on to clients. That, in turn, will yield better treatment results and increased retail sales. Just to emphasize, it is about educating—not selling.

The skin care professional must create an **“at home skin care protocol”** that will extend and complement the results of whatever professional treatment or service a client has had at the salon.

Top training

Show-and-tell presentations by staff to each other at a weekly meeting can be invaluable. If you want to know if you know something, teach it. Choose a skin type and then ask one of your staff to present a home care range will all the effects and benefits of each product. If this is done on a regular basis, everyone will be well practiced and should know their products well.

Establish job expectations

Hire for success. By making sure everyone on your staff—from front desk personnel to skin care professionals—understand that selling retail products is part of their job, you can easily grow the power of your retail business.

Teach your staff to create a short dialogue with clients, relating to the services a client is receiving, with your home care products. In effect, your staff should become treatment tour guides. They should be mindful that less is more. Conversations should be short and to the point, and any conversation with a client needs to focus on what the client want to improve upon, not what the skin care professional initially thinks is wrong with an individuals skin. Ask questions, don't tell. Find ways to suggest how a client can obtain their skin care goals.

Commission Options

Essentially, an incentive program should be **purpose driven**. Pick an area you want to see improvement in, such as the number of items sold, the average sales per team member, or promotion of a specific item or line, then be clear how the success will be measured and state the reward specifically.

To also give retail sales an inventive flair, make it a game for your salons staff. **Incentive programs** that have been highly successful include:

Tic Tac Toe—Make a board with squares, which does not have to be limited to nine. When an item is sold, have the seller put their initials in a square. The first person to make a line, or the one with the most boxes at the end of the contest, wins.

Up, Up and Away—Fill balloons with coupons for prizes and money. Then, when a target or goal is hit, have the staffer break a balloon and win the subsequent prize.

Got the Fever—Draw a simple thermometer on a large piece of paper with a goal number at the top and colour in the sales volume or time total along the way. The first team member to the top wins. This can also be use done as entire staff reward.

Off to the Races—Set up a race track on a board with goal numbers on it, and assign each staff member a horse. The first one around the track wins.

Poker—For each retail sales item or target hit, provide the team member with a card from a special deck. At the end of the contest period, the staffer who can make the best poker hand wins.

Pass the Buck—The person with the highest single sale of the week, or other measured retail sales goal gets R50 or R100. Obviously the first seller of the contest period is in the lead, so she gets to hold the money. As each subsequent sale is larger and larger, the person holding the R50 has to pass it to the new leader. The person holding the money at the end of the period gets to keep it.

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