



Successful Seasonal & Annual Marketing Resolution Strategies!

By: Larry H. Oskin, President, Marketing Solutions

Create Your Annual Marketing Calendar: It may be busy now with the holiday season, yet you really must now quickly lock in your plans for successfully marketing your salon in the New Year. It's time to create your annual resolutions that will really help your business grow through a strategic investment into seasonal and annual advertising, promotions and PR programs. Take some time to get out a few blank sheets of papers. Sit down with your staff and with your professional beauty supply distributors, so you can effectively map out your plans for the next year.

Set Strategic Marketing Objectives & Goals: First, list your top 5 to 10 'Business Objectives' and then an equal number of financially based 'Goals' for the upcoming year. Set a series of specific qualitative and quantitative goals. Here are a few examples:

- To create an annual marketing calendar with both bi-monthly, holiday and seasonal promotions
- To increase new texture, perm, curl and wave services by 25% over the previous year
- To increase haircolor sales by 50%
- To increase gift certificate sales by at least 50%
- To increase hair extension sales by 100%
- To increase hair removal service sales by 100%
- To recruit and retain at least 200 new salon clients per month
- To create a strategic plan to increase and attain salon sales of at least one million dollars per year
- To increase our staff by 3 new salon and spa professionals
- To become known as 'The Haircolor Experts' ... 'Hair Extension' or 'Hair Removal Experts' as 'The Best Salon In Town!'

Bi-Monthly Marketing Campaigns: Purchase an annual calendar or on one of your white sheets of paper, create 6 columns across the top for January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October and November/December. Then across the left hand margin write down the main service categories you feature, with Hair, Skin/Spa, Nails and Retail. From there you can write sub-categories. This chart will soon become a way for you to create at least one to two promotions for each of your strongest and weakest service categories per year.

It's best to think in terms of 'bi-monthly' promotions for numerous reasons. Today, most of your clients only come into the salon about every 8 weeks these days. Secondly, most professional beautycare manufacturers and distributors plan their seasonal specials, promotions and educational offerings on a bi-monthly basis. Besides saving money from trying to create something new every week or month, this truly is the most effective way to successfully market your salon with seasonal promotions. Start to chart a course of marketing, advertising, PR and promotional actions for the next 12 months. If haircolor, hair extensions or any special service is critically important to you, then plan to promote it at least twice or three times per year.

Your annual calendar chart will also require you to create a secondary set of notes, that will include your assigned marketing budgets for each bi-monthly promotion as well as to note if you will be doing any special advertisements, special events, printed materials and point-of-purchase merchandising.

Promotional Strategies: You can certainly promote salon services, products and special beautycare trends at full price. Promoting any salon or spa service does not mean that you need to offer dramatic discounts. You really just need to first determine what services you and your team will focus your energies on. You can certainly offer special incentives, discounts, packages, retail gifts with services and purchase with purchase options to your clients. Your entire staff needs to be educated that if you do offer discounts to increase sales volume, to introduce new services or to promote your business, it is their responsibility to share in the financial responsibilities. If needed, they should experience each service before the promotions, so they can all talk about them with first-hand knowledge. Together, you will be investing in marketing, advertising and printing to help build your full salon and day spa business as well as their individual business potential.

Holiday & Seasonal Salon Services: There is a time to promote everything! Timing is very important. You really must begin plan at least 3 to 6 months in advance of each promotion. If you want to sell more gift certificates, then plan to start promoting them at least 6 weeks prior to Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day and the year-end holidays. Makeovers, hair extensions and haircolor are great to promote any time of year, although January, spring and fall are always the best! Hair removal is perfect to promote before and during the warmest seasons each year. If you want to promote 'Prom Service Packages' in the spring with upstyles, manicures, pedicures and makeup applications – you must start to run advertisements and put up your in-salon merchandising materials 4 to 8 weeks prior to the local proms.

Seasonal Salon Retail Product Promotions: Be sure to work with you beautycare manufacturers and distributors to promote bi-monthly, holiday and seasonal retail product offerings. They will often offer special promotionally themed posters, counter cards, merchandising materials, samples and incentive contests that you and your staff should be ready to work with.

Annual & Seasonal Marketing Budgets: Carefully set an annual marketing, advertising and PR 'Budget' for your salon. This should be at least 5 to 8% of your projected total annual service and retail sales volume – for an average marketing program. If you are a new salon or plan to take an aggressive strategy, plan to set aside 8% to 10% or more. In other words, for every \$100,000 in total sales you plan to create, set aside at least \$5000 to \$8000 in your advertising, marketing and PR fund or if you want to be more aggressive, set aside at least \$8000 to \$10,000 for every \$100,000 you plan to attain. You will need to responsibly set challenging, yet realistic goals. .

Seasonal Advertising & Marketing Media Strategies: Set aside this projected advertising budget, so you can creatively 'invest' in building your brand and while promoting each targeted service category through paid magazine, direct mail, email blasts, Internet and TV advertising. Today, I rally do not recommend Yellow Pages, regular newspaper advertisements, radio or TV unless you are in a small city or already have multiple large volume salon locations. Some of your seasonal marketing campaigns can be promoted with direct mail postcards, regional magazines, telephone calls, email blasts, media relations campaigns or special event marketing.

Contact each of your targeted media resources. Ask them for their annual editorial and promotional calendars, to see how you can integrate your annual plans with theirs. Create a special budget for each bi-monthly and seasonal sales period. You may want to purchase three full color regional magazine advertisements and four direct mail magazine campaigns per year, while cutting back on Yellow Pages and newspaper advertising programs.

Seasonal Media & PR Campaigns: Make sure that you carefully review your local media's annual editorial calendars. Plan to time some of your holiday promotions and seasonal promotions to match what they will feature in the local newspapers and magazines. Plan to create press releases, photographs and cover pitch letters that can inspire the local media to work with you each season, as you promote new haircolor trends, gifts of beauty, new hair removal alternatives, hair extensions or anything you want to promote. Just remember that you must present your seasonal PR campaigns in a non-commercial manner while attempting to educate the local community on salon services and products. You must also do so at least 3 to 4 months ion advance, since most major media works that far in advance.

Seasonal Marketing Calendars: Start to again explore your new 'Annual Marketing Calendar' where you can effectively promote what you want to each season, rather than just opening your salon doors for business each day. Since most clients now tend to visit salons every 8 weeks these days, you really only need 6 marketing campaigns per year. Here are some examples of what to seasonally market on a bi-monthly basis.

- **January / February:**
 - New Year ~ New You Makeovers
 - Hair Extension Makeovers – For Length, Volume & Texture
 - Creative New Haircolor & Highlights
 - Gifts Of Beauty: Valentine's Day Gift Certificates
 - Hair & Skin Conditioning Treatments
 - Staff Recruitment Promotions: Lecture Demonstrations at local Cosmetology Schools
 - Body Bronzing
 - Now Open Sundays! -- All Year Long!!!
- **March / April:**
 - Spring Haircolor & Highlights
 - Pretty For Prom! -- Special Packages
 - Eyebrow Arching, Manicures, Pedicures, Upstyles & Makeup
 - Mother's Day Gift Certificates
 - Hair Removal Services: New Wax, Sugar & Threading Alternatives
 - New Spa, Massage & Body Therapy Treatments
- **May / June:**
 - Bare It All -- With Professional Hair Removal
 - Bridal Party Packages -- Upstyles, Nails & Makeup
 - Spa Manicures & Pedicures

- Celebrate National Blondes Day – June 4th
- Special Men's Service Packages
- Father's Day Gift Certificates
- **July / August:**
 - Smooth As Silk – Summer Hair Removal Rituals
 - Summer Haircolor & Highlights
 - Teen Makeovers & Teen Nights
 - Children's Salon Service Promotions
 - Back To Cool Haircare Product Sale! Buy Any 3 Products – Get 1 FREE!
 - Spa Series Service Package Sale! Buy Any 5 Salon or Spa Services – Get 1 FREE!
- **September / October:**
 - Fall Into Fashionable Haircolor
 - Fall Into Total Makeovers: Hair, Skin & Nails
 - Celebrate Fall With New Textures, Curls & Waves
 - Experience New Spa, Massage & Body Therapy Treatments
 - Staff Recruitment Promotions: Lecture Demonstrations at local Cosmetology Schools
 - Lady's Spa Nights Out – Every Fall Tuesday & Thursday
- **November / December:**
 - Party Haircolor & Highlights
 - Holiday Gift Certificates
 - Year Of Beauty Programs
 - Corporate Salon & Spa Gifting Programs
 - Makeup Applications & Lessons
 - Annual 5 to 8% Price Increases

Plan Your Work ... & Work Your Plan: You cannot wait for the magical client bus to land at the front door of your salon each day, week and season any more. With a salon on virtually every street corner and in most shopping centers, you must aggressively determine to set yourself ahead of the competition with a comprehensive marketing strategy. Any one single strategic move may not exponentially increase your business, yet at the end of the year – you really will make a big difference by doing each of 1000 things at least 1% to 10% better each year. Be realistic. There's no need to try to do one thing 1000% better. It's time to show your staff and your clients the complete array of your service specialties. Don't just open the door each morning waiting for sales to improve. Create a plan of action and work your plan. To achieve success with record-breaking results, you need to be prepared for the coming year. It's time to make your 'Annual Marketing Resolutions' work!

People Care! Through it all, remember that no one really cares how much you know and how much you advertise or even how much you spend. It is your team's priority to first show people how what you really offer, what you specialize in and how much you sincerely care about them. Start to show your staff teammates and your clients the path to success, by creating an annual marketing strategy, rather than by working one day at a time. You will soon start to earn new respect, credibility, namebrand awareness and success that everyone will enjoy!

###

Editorial Notes: Larry H. Oskin is president of Marketing Solutions, Inc., a full-service marketing, advertising, graphic design, photography and PR agency specializing in the professional beauty industry. Clients include salons, spas, medical spas, medical clinics, associations, distributors and manufacturers. Marketing Solutions is located at 10875 Main Street, Suite 205 in Fairfax, VA 22030. For more information call 703-359-6000 EXT: 22, Email LOskin@MktgSols.com or visit www.MktgSols.com.