



Staff Recruitment!

~ Your Mission For The New Millenium ~

By: Larry H. Oskin, President, Marketing Solutions, Inc.

We remain in a staff recruitment crisis today here in North America! You must become more aggressive with your recruitment tactics. Recruitment and retention of your staff has become a highly strategized marketing plan for many progressive salon owners who want to dramatically grow their salon businesses in the future. This will become one of your most critical future business development needs, if it hasn't already become your most important top priority.

There are a few common methods of salon recruitment including: **1.) Classified Ads, 2.) Word-Of-Mouth Networking, 3.) Buy State Board Lists, 4.) Cosmetology School Recruitment Presentations and 5.) Put a "Help Wanted!" sign in the window.** Some of these methods still work well, some don't. You should always have staff recruitment and retention on your mind every day and in your actions. You must be willing to invest some time 'out of your salon'. Some salons work at recruitment so well, that they have a waiting list of new staff professionals.

RECRUITMENT NETWORK MARKETING: Tell everyone that you want to expand your business and are looking for more help! Ask your current staff, friends, hairstylists, former employees, sales representatives, manufacturers, beauty supply distributors and your old school instructors. Don't forget to ask your clients to refer cosmetologists! Ask everyone to recommend someone they know. Beauty supply store networking is important. The sales consultants know who's hot and who's not. Leave a 'Help Wanted' or a 'Recruitment Message' on their bulletin boards, with both your home and work numbers identified. Those licensed professionals searching for new positions usually want their search to be very confidential, so they'll never want to call you at work. Networking works!

STAFF NETWORKING - RECRUITMENT BONUS PLANS: Incentivize your staff to help you!!! Offer a 'Recruitment Bonus' of \$100. or more for each new salon professional they personally introduce for you to interview, hire and maintain with a solid staff position for a minimum of 90 days. The Bonus comes at the end of the 3 months. You can add additional bonus financial incentives if they come with a larger clientele. Set specific bonus plan goals and standards so everyone wins. Tell all new recruits that it will be part of their job to attract other salon professionals.

STATE BOARD COSMETOLOGY LISTS: Many salon owners create direct mail, email and telemarketing campaigns, by purchasing State Board Of Cosmetology Lists. Most every State Board will sell you their lists of licensed salon professionals, just as they will for their licensed cosmetologists. These lists can be usually bought inexpensively, which is often less than a classified advertisement. These State Board lists can be bought in various formats. They can be supplied in alphabetical order, by licensing date or by zip code. Ask for available email addresses, if they are available. Your postcards or fliers can be printed on a ledger or on peel-off mailing labels. Send out colorful postcards to those salon professionals within a few zip codes of your salon. Include a personalized note like "Please call me! ...Kim." Have visually exciting professional recruitment postcards printed at a quick printer with your logo, salon address and phone number.

RECLASSIFY YOUR CLASSIFIEDS: Turning to your newspaper's Classified Advertising Section, used to be the most effective way to recruit and hire new staff members, but NOT any more. It is now one of the least effective, yet commonly used recruitment tactics. There are several distinct disadvantages to just using classified advertising. The biggest reason is that the best, happiest and most qualified salon professionals just are not regularly reading the classifieds to look for your open position. There are often more openings than there are salon professionals.

NEW RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES! Salon owners do not take sufficient time to personally interview every salon professional that responds to your networking, signs and classified advertisements. Due to this lack of time, many salon owners will just do telephone pre-interviews for the first dozen calls, if you are lucky enough to get that many calls, before interviewing a few candidates in person. By shortcutting without proper interviewing, you will potentially settle for less than adequate people. Setting aside special interview time is an important investment that will pay off for you, just as much as devoting the extra staff development time to retain your current staff will. There is no excuse for having "No Time!" Invest in your future. "Make Time!"

NEW HIRES WITH EXISTING CLIENTELE? Be careful! You will always want to hire an available salon professional merely because they have a great existing clientele. Remember, you are hiring someone to work for you and with your existing business. Find out if there are some unusual reasons why they want to move into your salon with their large salon clientele. Their experience, personal motivations, technical skills, and customer service abilities must fit into your total staff team effort and your needs. Second interviews for experienced candidates are a necessity. If the new hire doesn't work out, their fabulous client following that first attracted you, may be out the door with this same salon professional, as quickly as they arrived. This game will leave you back to the interviewing process again.

PARTNER WITH AREA COSMETOLOGY SCHOOLS - FOR RECRUITMENT: There are only so many experienced professionals out there. Most salon owners are reluctant to hire directly from a Cosmetology School. There is the lack of experience, little confidence, no established track record and no client base. There are also many positive opportunities to balance these risk factors. The best advantage to student recruitment is that you can hire someone with terrific potential and train them to be the professional salon teammate you want them to be!

Volunteer to be on the local Cosmetology School's Advisory Board. Volunteer to teach some advanced classes and to help at graduation. Volunteer to work on School Career Day and fundraising promotions. Help students practice interviews with you, 3 months before graduation. Guess who will get the best graduates -- YOU WILL! Students are magnetized to salon owners they already feel comfortable with.

SALON SCHOLARSHIPS: You can sponsor a cosmetology student, much like major corporations offer fellowships to students in order to have a guaranteed employee after they graduate. Create your own Cosmetology Sponsorship & Scholarship Programs. Look for at least two to five new cosmetology students per year, that you can partially fund. Work with your local cosmetology school to create the marketing plan and the legal documents. Some schools may even offer you a discounted program, if you begin to regularly bring them new students.

You can offer cosmetology students a part-time position in your salon while they are in school, while you also pay a set percentage of their school tuition - whether \$50. or \$75. per student per month. Then offer to do the same after they graduate, as long as they stay employed with you. You will be surprised at how well this works! Progressive salons and salon chains have already been doing this for the past ten years.

NACCAS JOB BANK: Visit the new NACCAS Cosmetology Job Bank. This is a FREE SERVICE! You can post jobs, look for new recruits, sell salons and network all on one web site. Check out their website at www.NACCAS.org or call Cliff Culbreath at 703-527-7600 for more information.

CREATE QUALITY IMAGE, PR & MARKETING PROGRAMS: Make sure your salon is clean, attractive and that your staff presents a very professional appearance - every day. First impressions count! If you were a potential new employee checking out the salon -- would you be impressed on your first few steps into the salon. Is it friendly and motivating with lots of positive energy from the entire staff team?

Create an exciting Salon Marketing and Media Relations Calendar to keep your salon name in the news all year long. This is important for attracting new staff. To build recognizable namebrand awareness with the most effective credibility, you must create a consistent image in your logo, newspaper advertisements, gift certificates, Yellow Page advertisements, brochures – and every marketing element that you create.

You should consistently invest in more marketing, advertising and PR programs that will always strive to increase your walk-in traffic throughout the year.

RECRUITMENT BROCHURES: Create a small, yet very attractive brochure with your employment benefits, service menu, appointment cards, recruitment postcards, business cards and all of your other professional salon marketing materials.

BE PROFESSIONAL: Keep your networking and recruitment tactics professional. Visiting another salon to have your hair, skin or nails done with the hidden agenda of searching out the competition's salon team is not networking. Even though many practice this recruitment technique today, it is still unprofessional. Do unto others, as you would want them to do for you.

MAKE RECRUITMENT FUN! Enhance your cosmetology school relationships by offering all students and faculty to come visit your salon for a special field trip. Involve your staff and create Recruitment Contests. The future of your salon is in the hands of your creative recruitment abilities. Have a game plan, goals and develop a recruitment marketing plan that works for you all year long. Good help is out there, yet there is currently a quickly shrinking supply of future salon pros. Just invest some extra time and energy to go after them before the competition does. The busier your salon becomes, the more folks will want to work for you.

New staff help won't hurt your income - from walk-ins, especially if you invest in a Marketing Plan to attract new walk-in clients for the newbie staff members. Many salon owners are afraid to hire, because it will affect the potential business

opportunities for themselves and their existing staff. Contrary to this unfortunate common belief, hiring more staff will create a sense of excitement and new clients will come in.

MAKE STAFF RECRUITMENT – YOUR PLAN FOR FUTURE SUCCESS! Your recruitment of staff and clients will be mutually rewarding as your business grows. The more fun you have at it... the more folks will want to work for you and with you. If you work at it creatively, soon they will magically find you. Recruitment and Retention Programs are a sound investment in your future success!

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