

## An Outstanding Receptionist

Did you know a great receptionist is worth their weight in gold, yet many salons and spas won't even throw a piece of copper toward hiring one? It makes me shake my head in disbelief almost as much as my beautician shakes her head at me for squeezing zits (oh come on, like you've never done it!).

I know many of you will raise your eyebrows at this (unless you had a botox shot for lunch), but every salon needs a receptionist - from the biggest beauty parlour to the littlest day spa – and if you don't hire one, you're losing money.

Many owners I speak with *think* they are saving a buck by not hiring a receptionist and I can understand that logic. After all, from an owner's point of view, team wages are often their largest financial outlay.

The fact is a great receptionist will make three times their wage for the salon.

"Rubbish!", "How is that possible?", "She's been sniffing the printing ink again!" I hear you say. Well, imaginary time traveling voices of my readers, I'm glad you challenged me (or this article would be way too short). I'll tell you how it is possible.

Picture this: It's a busy Saturday and all your therapists are in the treatment rooms, massaging, doing facials, applying eyelash extensions and so on, when someone, lets call her Sally, walks into the spa. Sally has been searching for a salon which stocks her favourite products, and has happily stumbled upon your spa with a lovely display of brand X beckoning her to come in and buy it. In fact, she might even book in for a facial while she's there. Sally waits, and waits, then...

- a) ...no-one attends to her, so she leaves. The spa loses one client.
- b) ...a therapist has to leave her client in the treatment room to attend to Sally who takes forever to make up her mind which moisturiser she wants. Meanwhile the client on the table thinks, 'Jeez I'm paying for this?! I won't be coming back here again'. The therapist is keenly aware of her naked client shivering under a towel, waiting for her massage to continue, and Sally can tell she's interrupting something and not really welcome here. Of course the therapist misses the

opportunity to book Sally in for a facial because she is trying to rush Sally out of the spa. The spa loses 2 clients.

- c) Sally picks up her favourite moisturiser from the product display. She waits some more. Sally looks around and can hear soft voices in the treatment rooms but can't see anyone down the hall. She looks about for a security camera, and then shoves the product in her bag and leaves. The spa loses a client and product.

None of these scenarios are as far fetched as you may think. If you're operating without a receptionist I can guarantee at least one of them has happened in your salon and you probably don't even know it. Why would you know? You're probably too busy to notice and definitely too busy to hire a receptionist. Yet if you're too busy, a receptionist is precisely what you need.

Look at it this way – your receptionist need not be a qualified therapist. In fact it's better if they are not. A receptionist wage is a lower rate of pay than a qualified therapist. Why would you want to pay therapists to do a receptionists job? You're ripping yourself off by leaving reception duties up to the therapists. Why not just let them concentrate on what they excel at – providing quality beauty services?

Still not with me? Okay how about this? When you don't have a receptionist and all your therapists are busy:

Who answers the phone enquiries and has the time to convert every one into a booking?

Who attends to clients who are arriving?

Who attends to walk ins?

Who ensures no one enters the salon and steals product or money from reception?

Who processes all transactions through the till and rebooks the clientele?

The role of Receptionist is vital to the smooth operation of any salon. Your receptionist should act like a maitre d' in a restaurant; chatting with clients, providing positive feedback on what they have had done and always being totally customer service

focused. They are responsible for greeting and thanking all clients who visit the salon, ensuring all clients are delighted with their experience.

No team members who have been working on a client should process that particular client's transaction through the till. This cuts down on team members sneakily discounting for friends, and means only one person is in charge of making sure the till balances at the end of the day.

Your receptionist is the master of how to book client appointments by massaging the appointment schedule. The day to day running of the front desk, controlling client flow and understanding each team member's technical ability and timing is an important component of the position. Processing client transactions, opening and end of day procedures and data entry of client details are also a vital component of the position and must be maintained to an extremely high standard.

The receptionist's main base of operations is at the front desk where they convert enquiries, field telephone calls, analyse business reports and maintain a watch over client waiting times. If you want your salon or spa to truly succeed, you must always have someone on front desk; it is never to be left unattended.

Things to look for when hiring a receptionist...

**Must have** - Excellent attitude, excitement and enthusiasm, excellent computer ability, good numerical skills, outstanding customer service qualities, good time management skills, salon experience, good communication skills, well presented image, organizational abilities, good leadership skills

**Could have** - Management experience, training experience, visual merchandising and stock control experience

**Bonuses** - Owned their own business, budgeting and forecasting, marketing, used salon software before, worked in a call centre or dental or doctors' surgery

When recruiting, never bend on the must haves – they are essential!

With a great receptionist in your salon, you will see an increase in turnover, enquiry conversions, product sales and rebooking, which is great for your bottom line and peace of mind.

If you're looking for a receptionist or any other salon team members, check out [www.salonscout.com.au](http://www.salonscout.com.au). You can search CVs and list jobs vacant with the click of a mouse. For more information on hiring the right person or training new team members, check out our Team management Pack under Business Tools.