

On the Job

Chapter Outline

Why Study What It Is Like on the Job?

Moving from School to Work

Out in the Real World

Managing Your Money

Discover the Selling You

Keeping Current Clients and Expanding Your Client Base

On Your Way



Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- ✓ **LO1** Describe what is expected of a new employee and what this means in terms of your everyday behavior.
- ✓ **LO2** List the habits of a good salon team player.
- ✓ **LO3** Describe three different ways in which salon professionals are compensated.
- ✓ **LO4** Explain the principles of selling products and services in the salon.
- ✓ **LO5** List the most effective ways to build a client base.

Key Terms

Page number indicates where in the chapter the term is used.

client base
pg. 996

job description
pg. 989

retailing
pg. 996

**ticket upgrading
(upselling services)**
pg. 996

commission
pg. 991



▲ **Figure 31-1**
Getting off to a good start.

Congratulations! You have worked hard in cosmetology school, passed your state's licensing exam, and been offered your first job in the field. Now, more than ever, you need to prioritize your goals and commit to personal rules of conduct and behavior. These goals and rules should guide you throughout your career. If you let them do so, you can expect to always have work, and to enjoy all the freedom that your chosen profession can offer (**Figure 31-1**).

WHY STUDY WHAT IT IS LIKE ON THE JOB?

Cosmetologists should study and have a thorough understanding of what it is like on the job because:

- Working in a salon requires each staff member to belong to and work as a team member of the salon. Learning to do so is an important aspect of being successful in the salon environment.
- There are a variety of ways that a salon may compensate employees. Being familiar with each way and knowing how they work will help you to determine if the compensation system at a particular salon can work for you and what to expect from it.
- Once you are working as a salon professional, you will have financial obligations and responsibilities, so learning the basics of financial management while you are building your clientele and business is invaluable.
- As you build your clientele and settle into your professional life, there will be opportunities for you to use a variety of techniques for increasing your income, such as retailing and upselling services. Knowing and using these techniques will help you to promote yourself, build a loyal client base, and create a sound financial future for yourself.

Moving from School to Work

Making the transition from school to work can be difficult. While you may be thrilled to have a job, working for a paycheck brings with it a number of duties and responsibilities that you may not have considered.

Cosmetology school is a forgiving environment. You are given the chance to do a certain procedure over and over again until you get it right. Making and fixing mistakes is an accepted part of the process, and your instructors and mentors are there to help you. Schedules can be adjusted if necessary, and you are given some leeway in the matter of juggling your personal life with the demands of your schooling.

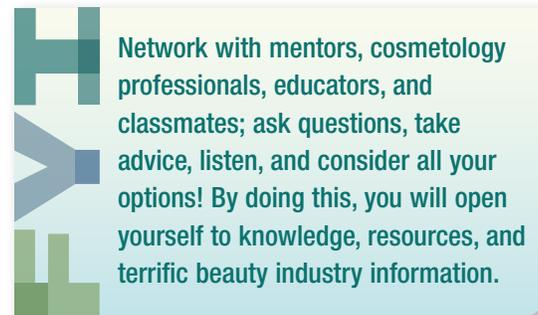
When you become a salon employee, however, you will be expected to put the needs of the salon and its clients ahead of your own.

This means that you must be on time for every scheduled shift and be prepared to perform whatever services or functions are required of you, regardless of what is happening in your personal life. For example, if someone comes to you with tickets for a concert on a day when you are scheduled to work, you cannot just take the day off. To do so would definitely inconvenience your clients, who might even decide not to return to the salon. It could also burden your coworkers, who might feel resentful if they are asked to take on your appointments.  **LO1**

Out in the Real World

Many cosmetology graduates believe they should be rewarded with a high-paying job, performing only the kinds of services they wish to do, as soon as they graduate from school. It does not work out that way for most people. In a job, you may be asked to do work or perform services that are not your first choice. The good news is that when you are really working in the trenches, you are learning every moment, and there is no substitute for that kind of experience.

What is important is to determine which type of position is right for you by being honest with yourself as you evaluate your skills. If you need help and direction in sorting out the issues around the various workplaces you are considering, ask your instructor for advice. If you chose a salon carefully, based on its culture and the type of salon and benefits you prefer (as discussed in Chapter 30, Seeking Employment), you'll be off to a great start.



Thriving in a Service Profession

The first reality to remember when you are in a service business is that your career revolves around serving your clients. There will always be some people who do not treat others with respect; however, the majority of people you encounter will truly appreciate the work you do for them. They will look forward to seeing you, and they will show their appreciation for your hard work with their loyalty.

Here are some points that will help guide you as you meet your clients' needs.

- **Put others first.** You will have to quickly get used to putting your own feelings or desires aside, and putting the needs of the salon and the client first. This means doing what is expected of you, unless you are physically unable to do so.
- **Be true to your word.** Choose your words carefully and honestly. Be someone who can be counted on to tell the truth and to do what you say you will do.

- **Be punctual.** Scheduling is central to the salon business. Getting to work on time shows respect not only for your clients, but also for your coworkers who will have to handle your clients if you are late.
- **Be a problem solver.** No job or situation comes without its share of problems. Be someone who recognizes problems promptly and finds ways to resolve them constructively.
- **Be a lifelong learner.** Valued employees continue to learn throughout their careers. Thinking that you are done learning once you are out of school is immature and limiting. Your career might go in all kinds of interesting directions, depending on what new things you learn. This applies to every aspect of your life. Besides learning new technical skills, you should continue gaining more insight into your own behavior and better ways to deal with people, problems, and issues.

Salon Teamwork

Working in a salon requires that you practice and perfect your people skills. A salon is very much a team environment. To become a good team player, you should do your best to practice the following workplace principles.

- **Strive to help.** Be concerned not only with your own success, but also with the success of others. Be willing to help a teammate by staying a little later or coming in a little earlier.
- **Pitch in.** Be willing to help with whatever needs to be done in the salon—from folding towels to making appointments—when you are not busy servicing clients (**Figure 31–2**).
- **Share your knowledge.** Be willing to share what you know. This will make you a respected member of any team. At the same time, be willing to learn from your coworkers by listening to their perspectives and techniques.
- **Remain positive.** Resist the temptation to give in to maliciousness and gossip.
- **Become a relationship builder.** Just as there are different kinds of people in the world, there are different types of relationships within the salon world. You do not have to be someone's best friend in order to build a good working relationship with that person.
- **Be willing to resolve conflicts.** The most difficult part of being in a relationship is when conflict arises. A real teammate is someone who knows that conflict and tension are bad for the people who are in it, those who are around it, and the salon as a whole. Nevertheless, conflict is a natural part of life. If you can work constructively toward resolving conflict, you will always be a valued member of the team. If you do have a conflict, discuss it with the individual, not with others in the salon.
- **Be willing to be subordinate.** No one starts at the top. Keep in mind that beginners almost always start out lower down in the pecking order.



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▲ **Figure 31–2**
Pitch in wherever you're needed.

- **Be sincerely loyal.** Loyalty is vital to the workings of a salon. Salon professionals need to be loyal to the salon and its management. Management needs to be loyal to the staff and clients. Ideally, clients will be loyal to the employee and the salon. As you work on all the team-building characteristics, you will start to feel a strong sense of loyalty to your salon (Figure 31–3). **LO2**



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▲ **Figure 31–3**
Staff meetings are essential for building a loyal team.

The Job Description

When you take a job, you will be expected to behave appropriately, perform services asked of you, and conduct your business professionally. In order to do this to the best of your abilities, you should be given a **job description**, a document that outlines all the duties and responsibilities of a particular position in a salon or spa. Many salons have a preprinted job description available. If you find yourself at a salon that does not use job descriptions, you may want to write one for yourself. You can then present this to your salon manager for review, to ensure that you both have a good understanding of what is expected of you.

Once you have your job description, be sure you understand it. While reading it over, make notes and jot down questions you want to ask your manager. When you assume your new position, you are agreeing to do everything as it is written down in the job description. If you are unclear about something or need more information, it is your responsibility to ask.

Remember, you will be expected to fulfill all of the functions listed in the job description. How well you fulfill these duties will influence your future at the salon, as well as your financial rewards.

In crafting a job description, the best salons cover all the bases. They outline not only the employee's duties and responsibilities, but also the attitudes that they expect their employees to have and the opportunities that are available to them. **Figure 31–4**, on page 990, shows some highlights from a well-written job description. This is just one example. Like the salons that generate them, job descriptions come in all sizes and shapes, and they feature a variety of requirements, benefits, and incentives.

Compensation Plans

When you assess a job offer, your first concern will probably be the compensation, or what you will actually get paid for your work. Compensation varies from one salon to another. There are, however, three common methods of compensation that you are most likely to encounter: salary, commission, and salary plus commission.

FOCUS ON

BEING A GOOD TEAMMATE

While each individual may be concerned with getting ahead and being successful, a good teammate knows that no one can be successful alone. You will be truly successful if your entire salon is successful!

Job Description: Assistant

Every assistant must have a cosmetology license, as well as the determination to learn and grow on the job. As an assistant you must be willing to cooperate with coworkers in a team environment, which is most conducive to learning and having a good morale among all employees. You must display a friendly yet professional attitude toward coworkers and clients alike.

Excellent time management is essential to the operation of a successful salon. An assistant should be aware of clients who are early and late or stylists who are running ahead or behind in their schedule. You should be prepared to assist in these situations, and to change your routine if necessary. Keep the receptionist and stylists informed about clients who have entered the salon. Be prepared to stay up to an hour late when necessary. Always keep in mind that everyone needs to work together to get the job done.

The responsibilities of an assistant include:

1. Greeting clients by offering them a beverage, hanging up coats, and informing the receptionist and stylist that they have arrived.
2. Shampooing and conditioning clients.
3. Assisting stylists on the styling floor.
4. Assisting stylists in services that require extra help, such as dimensional coloring.
5. Cleaning stations and mirrors, including handheld mirrors.
6. Keeping the styling stations and back bars well stocked with appropriate products.
7. Notifying the salon manager about items and supplies that need to be reordered.
8. Making sure the shampoo sink and drain are always clean and free of hair.
9. Keeping the makeup display neat and clean.
10. Keeping the retail area neat and well stocked.
11. Keeping the bathroom and dressing room neat, clean, and stocked.
12. Performing housekeeping duties such as: emptying trash receptacles, cleaning haircolor from the floor, keeping the lunch room and dispensary neat and clean, helping with laundry, dusting shelves, and maintaining sanitary bathrooms.
13. Making fresh coffee when necessary.
14. Training new assistants.

Continuing Education

Your position as assistant is the first step toward becoming a successful stylist. In the beginning, your training will focus on the duties of an assistant. Once you have mastered those, your training will focus on the skills you will need as a stylist. As part of your continuing education in the salon, you will be required to:

- Attend all salon classes.
- Attend our special Sunday Seminars.
- Acquire all professional tools necessary for training at six weeks (shears, brushes, combs, clips, etc.).

Advancement

Upon successful completion of all required classes and seminars, and your demonstration of the necessary skills and attitudes, you will have the opportunity to advance to the position of Junior Stylist. This advancement will always depend upon your performance as an assistant, as well as the approval of management. Remember: how quickly you achieve your goals in this salon is up to you!

▲ **Figure 31–4**
An example of a job description.

Salary

Being paid an hourly rate is usually the best way for a new salon professional to start out because new professionals rarely have an established clientele. An hourly rate is generally offered to a new cosmetologist, and it is usually based on the minimum wage. Some salons offer an hourly wage that is slightly higher than the minimum wage to encourage new cosmetologists to take the job and stick with it. In this situation, if you earn \$10 per hour and you work forty hours, you will be paid \$400 that week. If you work more hours, you will get more pay. If you work fewer hours, you will get less pay. Regular taxes will be taken out of your earnings.

Remember, if you are offered a set salary in lieu of an hourly rate, that salary must be at least equal to the minimum wage for the number of hours you work. You are entitled to overtime pay if you work more than forty hours per week. The only exception would be if you were in an official salon management position.

Commission

A **commission** is a percentage of the revenue that the salon takes in from services performed by a particular cosmetologist. Commission is usually offered once an employee has built up a loyal clientele. A commission payment structure is very different from an hourly wage, because any money you are paid is a direct result of the total amount of service dollars you generate for the salon. Commissions are paid based on percentages of your total service dollars, and can range anywhere from 25 to 60 percent, depending on your length of time at the salon, your performance level, and the benefits that are part of your employment package.

Suppose, for example, that at the end of the week when you add up all the services you have performed, your total is \$1,000. If you are at the 50 percent commission level, then you would be paid \$500 (before taxes). Keep in mind that until you have at least two years of servicing clients under your belt, you may not be able to make a living on straight commission compensation. Additionally, many states do not allow straight commission payments unless they average out to at least minimum wage.

Salary Plus Commission

A salary-plus-commission structure is another common way to be compensated in the salon business. It basically means that you receive both a salary and a commission. This kind of structure is often used to motivate employees to perform more services, thereby increasing their productivity. For example, imagine that you earn an hourly wage that is equal to \$300 per week, and you perform about \$600 worth of services every week. Your salon manager may offer you an additional 25 percent commission on any services you perform over your usual \$600 per week. Or perhaps you receive a straight hourly wage, but

WEB RESOURCES

Most salons require you to take a certain amount of continuing education, even after you've been on the job for years. That's a good thing! The more you learn, the more you'll earn, and salon compensation studies prove it.

Online continuing education is not only travel free and affordable, it also opens up a universe of global ideas and can be taken on your own time. These Web sites will get you started:

- <http://www.milady.cengage.com>
Online courses in salon management, personal and professional development, infection control, and much more.
- <http://www.hairdesignertv.com>
Video lessons from Vivienne Mackinder.
- <http://www.prohairstylist.com.au>
Education and trends from Australia.
- <http://www.myhairdressers.com>
Advanced cutting videos from the UK.
- <http://www.modernsalon.com>
Advanced education and business information.
- <http://www.howtocuthair.com>
Barbering videos.



▲ **Figure 31-5**
Commissions on retail sales boost income.

you can receive as much as a 15 percent commission on all the retail products you sell. Sometimes, salons call this structure salary plus bonus. With this structure, your salary is actually based on an average of what you would have made if you were paid commission, but you also get a bonus on anything over and above. You can see how this kind of structure quickly leads to significantly increased compensation (**Figure 31-5**). **LO3**

Tips

When you receive satisfactory service at a hotel or restaurant, you are likely to leave your server a tip. It has become customary for salon clients to acknowledge beauty professionals in this way, too. Some salons have a tipping policy; others have a no-tipping policy. This is determined by what the salon feels is appropriate for its clientele.

The usual amount to tip is 15 percent of the total service ticket. For example, if a customer spends \$50, then the tip might be 15 percent of that, or \$7.50. Tips are income in addition to your regular compensation and must be tracked and reported on your income tax return. Reporting tips will be beneficial to you if you wish to take out a mortgage or another type of loan and want your income to appear as strong as it really is.

As you can see, there are a number of ways to structure compensation for a salon professional. You will probably have the opportunity to try each of these methods at different points in your career. When deciding whether a certain compensation method is right for you, it is important to be aware of what your monthly expenses are and to have a personal financial budget in place. Budget issues are addressed later in this chapter.

Employee Evaluation

The best way to keep tabs on your progress is to ask for feedback from your salon manager and key coworkers. Most likely, your salon will have a structure in place for evaluation purposes. Commonly, evaluations are scheduled ninety days after hiring, and then once a year after that. But you should feel free to ask for help and feedback any time you need it. This feedback can help you improve your technical abilities, as well as your customer-service skills.

Ask a senior stylist to sit in on one of your client consultations and to make note of areas where you can improve. Ask your manager to observe your technical skills and to point out ways you can perform your work more quickly and more efficiently. Have a trusted coworker watch and evaluate your skills when it comes to selling retail products. All of these evaluations will benefit your learning process enormously.

Here's a Tip

Accepting a commission-paying position in a salon can have its positives and negatives for new cosmetologists. If you think you have enough clients to work on commission and can make enough of a paycheck to pay your expenses, then go ahead and give it a try—it could be a great way to work into better commission scales or even booth renting. (Only Pennsylvania forbids booth renting by law, but other states may regulate licensing differently; always check.)

If you don't think you can make enough money being paid solely on a commission basis, then take a job in a salon that is willing to pay you an hourly wage until you build your client base. After you have honed your technical skills and built a solid client base, you can consider working on commission.

Find a Role Model

One of the best ways to improve your performance is to model your behavior after someone who is having the kind of success that you wish to have. Watch other stylists in your salon. You will easily be able to identify who is really good and who is just coasting along. Focus on the skills of the ones who are really good. What do they do? How do they treat their clients? How do they treat the salon staff and manager? How do they book their appointments? How do they handle their continuing education? What process do they use when formulating color or selecting a product? What is their attitude toward their work? How do they handle a crisis or conflict?

Go to these professionals for advice. Ask for a few minutes of their time, but be willing to wait for it, because it may not be easy to find time to talk during a busy salon workday. If you are having a problem, explain your situation, and ask if the mentor can help you see things differently. Be prepared to listen and not argue your points. Remember that you asked for help, even when what your coworker is saying is not what you want to hear. Thank him for his help, and reflect on the advice you have been given.

A little help and direction from skilled, experienced coworkers will go a long way toward helping you achieve your goals.

Managing Your Money

Although a career in the beauty industry is very artistic and creative, it is also a career that requires financial understanding and planning. Too many cosmetology professionals live for the moment and do not plan for the future. They may end up feeling cheated out of the benefits that their friends and family in other careers are enjoying.

In a corporate structure, the human resources department of the corporation handles a great deal of the employees' financial planning for them. For example, health and dental insurance, retirement accounts, savings accounts, and many other items may be automatically deducted and paid out of the employees' salary. Most beauty professionals, however, must research and plan for all of those expenses on their own. This may seem difficult, but in fact it is a small price to pay for the kind of freedom, financial reward, and job satisfaction that a career in cosmetology can offer. And the good news is that managing money is something everyone can learn to do.

Meeting Financial Responsibilities

In addition to making money, responsible adults are also concerned with paying back their debts. Throughout your life and your career, you will undoubtedly incur debt in the form of car loans, home mortgages, or

did you know?

Beauty pros can increase their chances of building a solid and loyal clientele more quickly if they:

- Live in a large city or choose areas within their cities that have a large number of potential clients.
- Select a location where the competition for clients is less saturated.
- Have advanced training, skills, and certifications.
- Have and use their artistic abilities.
- Employ marketing and publicity strategies.
- Concentrate on an unusual niche within the beauty business (teens, for example).



SALON TECHNOLOGY

Various surveys show the salon industry is slow to adapt to computerization and new technologies. Nearly one in three or about 33 percent of salons are computerized and have Internet access. However, larger and more upscale salons are far more likely to be computerized and to have Internet and e-mail access. About 22 percent of owners and managers have ordered products online.

The increasing number of computerized salons could be advantageous for technology savvy students. You may be able to master salon software programs more easily than other stylists. These programs now handle cash flow management, inventory tracking, payroll automation, client appointment books, performance evaluation tracking, and more. Just remember, these client records are usually considered the salon's property. Additionally, cost-effective, online continuing education is increasingly popular.

If you are accustomed to working with technology, you may be able to help a salon set up e-mail access, a Web site, social networking pages, and more. With many clients enjoying the freedom of online booking and text-message appointment reminders and with salons benefiting from e-mail or even electronic marketing programs, the more you understand technology, the better. Today, hair care manufacturers even have special educational programs you can access on your mobile phone and social networking pages, where you can swap haircolor formulas or ask for instant help.

student loans. While it is easy for some people to merely ignore their responsibility in repaying these loans, it is extremely irresponsible and immature to accept a loan and then shrug off the debt. Not paying back your loans is called defaulting, and it can have serious consequences regarding your personal and professional credit. The best way to meet all of your financial responsibilities is to know precisely what you owe and what you earn so that you can make informed decisions about where your money goes.

Personal Budget

It is amazing how many people work hard and earn very good salaries but never take the time to create a personal budget. Many people are afraid of the word *budget*, because they think that it will be too restrictive on their spending or that they will have to be mathematical geniuses in order to work with a budget. Thankfully, neither of these fears is rooted in reality.

Personal budgets range from being extremely simple to extremely complex. The right one for you depends on your needs. At the beginning of your career, a simple budget should be sufficient. To get started, take a look at the worksheet in **Figure 31–6** on page 995. It lists the standard monthly expenses that most people have to budget. It also includes school loan repayment, savings, and payments into an individual retirement account (IRA).

Keeping track of where your money goes is one step toward making sure that you always have enough. It also helps you to plan ahead and save for bigger expenses such as a vacation, your own home, or even your own business. All in all, sticking to a budget is a good practice to follow faithfully for the rest of your life.

Giving Yourself a Raise

Once you have taken some time to create, use, and work with your personal budget, you may want to look at ways in which you can have more money left over after paying bills. You might automatically jump to the most obvious sources, such as asking your employer for a raise, or asking for a higher percentage of commission. While these tactics are certainly valid, you will also want to think about other ways to increase your income. Here are a few tips:

- **Spending less money.** Although it may be difficult to reduce your spending, it is certainly one way to increase the amount of money that is left over at the end of the month. These dollars can be used to invest or save or pay down debt.
- **Working more hours.** If possible, choose times when the salon is busiest, which are the most convenient for clients. Come early and stay late to accommodate clients' booking needs. Saturday is a peak workday in most salons.

Personal Budget Worksheet

A. Expenses

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. My monthly rent (or share of the rent) is | \$ _____ |
| 2. My monthly car payment is | _____ |
| 3. My monthly car insurance payment is | _____ |
| 4. My monthly auto fuel/upkeep expenses are | _____ |
| 5. My monthly electric bill is | _____ |
| 6. My monthly gas bill is | _____ |
| 7. My monthly health insurance payment is | _____ |
| 8. My monthly entertainment expense is | _____ |
| 9. My monthly bank fees are | _____ |
| 10. My monthly grocery expense is | _____ |
| 11. My monthly dry cleaning expense is | _____ |
| 12. My monthly personal grooming expense is | _____ |
| 13. My monthly prescription/medical expense is | _____ |
| 14. My monthly telephone bill is | _____ |
| 15. My monthly student loan payment is | _____ |
| 16. My IRA payment is | _____ |
| 17. My savings account deposit is | _____ |
| 18. Other expenses: | _____ |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$ _____ |

B. Income

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. My monthly take-home pay is | _____ |
| 2. My monthly income from tips is | _____ |
| 3. Other income: | _____ |
| TOTAL INCOME | \$ _____ |

C. Balance

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Total Income (B) | _____ |
| Minus Total Expenses (A) | _____ |
| BALANCE | \$ _____ |

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▲ **Figure 31-6**
A budget worksheet.

- **Increasing service prices.** It will probably take some time before you are in a position to increase your service prices. For one thing, to do so, you need a loyal **client base**, customers who are loyal to a particular cosmetologist, which in this instance is you. Also, you must have fully mastered all the services that you are performing. But if you have a loyal client base and service mastery, there is nothing wrong with increasing your prices every year or two, as long as you do so by a reasonable amount. Do a little research to determine what your competitors are charging for similar services, and increase your fees accordingly.
- **Retailing more.** Most salons pay a commission on every product you recommend and sell to your clients. If you sell more products, you make more money!

Seek Professional Advice

Just as you will want your clients to seek out your advice and services for their hair care needs, sometimes it is important for you to seek out the advice of experts, especially when it comes to your finances. You can research and interview financial planners who will be able to give you advice on reducing your credit card debt, on how to invest your money, and on retirement options. You can speak to the officers at your local bank, who may be able to suggest bank accounts that offer you greater returns or flexibility with your money, depending on what you need.

When seeking out advice from other professionals, be sure not to take anyone's advice without carefully considering whether the advice makes sense for your particular situation and needs. Before you buy into anything, be an informed consumer about other people's goods and services.

- How do your expenses compare to your income?
- What is your balance after all your expenses are paid?
- Were there any surprises for you in this exercise?
- Do you think that keeping a budget is a good way to manage money?
- Do you know of any other methods people use to manage money?



Discover the Selling You

Another area that touches on the issue of you and money is selling. As a salon professional, you will have enormous opportunities to sell retail products and upgrade service tickets. **Ticket upgrading**, also known as **upselling services**, is the practice of recommending and selling additional services to your clients. These services may be performed by you or other professionals licensed in a different field (**Figure 31–7**). **Retailing** is the act of recommending and selling products to your clients for at-home use. These two activities can make all the difference

ACTivity

Go through the budget worksheet and fill in the amounts that apply to your current living and financial situation. If you are unsure of the amount of an expense, put in the amount you have averaged over the past three months, or give it your best guess. You may need to have three or four months of employment history in order to complete the income item, but fill in what you can. If the balance is a minus number, start listing ways you can decrease expenses or increase income.

in your economic picture. The following dialogue is an example of ticket upgrading. In this scene, Judy, the stylist, suggests an additional service to Ms. King, her client, who has just had her hair styled for a wedding she will be attending that evening.

Read the script yourself and change the words to make them fit your personality. Then try it the next time you feel that an additional service could help one of your clients.

Judy: I'm really glad you like your new hairstyle. It will be perfect with the dress you described. Don't you just love formal weddings?

Ms. King: I don't know. To tell you the truth, I don't get dressed up all that often, and putting the look together was harder than I thought it would be.

Judy: Yes, I know what you mean. Are you all set with your makeup for tonight, Ms. King? It would be a shame to have a beautiful new dress and gorgeous hair, and then have to worry about your makeup.

Ms. King: Well, actually, I was sort of wondering about that. I'm wearing this long blue dress and I'm not really sure what the best look is for the occasion. Got any ideas?

Judy: Well, as you know, my specialty is hair care, but we have an excellent makeup artist right here on staff, and she is available for a consultation. You might want to make an appointment with her, and she can do your makeup for you. I don't know if you've ever had a professional do it before, but it's a real treat, and it only costs \$25. Plus they throw in a small lipstick to take with you. Shall I get her for you?

Ms. King: Definitely. That sounds terrific!

Judy: You know, since this is such an important occasion, you may want to consider having Marie, one of our nail techs, manicure your nails as well. That will ensure that your total look is the best it can be.

Ms. King: I think that's a great idea. Thanks for the suggestion!



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▲ **Figure 31-7**
This client may wish for a makeup service as well as hairstyling.

Principles of Selling

Some salon professionals shy away from sales. They think that it is being pushy. A close look at how selling works can set your mind at ease. Not only can you become very good at selling once you understand the principles behind it, but you can also feel good about providing your clients with a valuable service.

▼ Figure 31–8

When you have multiple retail displays, everyone who comes into the salon has the potential to be a retail client.



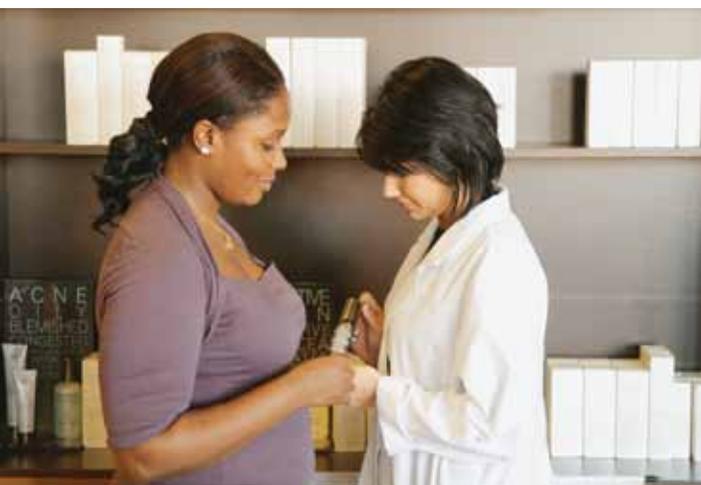
Photography by Michael Watson for Salvatore Minardi Salon, Madison, NJ.

To be successful in sales, you need ambition, determination, and a pleasing personality. The first step in selling is to sell yourself. Clients must like and trust you before they will purchase beauty services, cosmetics, skin or nail care items, shampoos and conditioners, or other merchandise.

Remember, every client who enters the salon is a potential purchaser of additional services or merchandise. Recognizing the client's needs and preferences lays the foundation for successful selling (Figure 31–8).

To become a proficient salesperson, you must be able to apply the following principles of selling salon products and services:

- Be familiar with the features and benefits of the various services and products that you are trying to sell, and recommend only those that the client really needs. You should try and test all the products in the salon yourself.
- Adapt your approach and technique to meet the needs and personality of each client. Some clients may prefer a soft sell that involves informing them about the product, without stressing that they purchase it. Others are comfortable with a hard-sell approach that focuses emphatically on why a client should buy the product.



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▲ Figure 31–9

Demonstrate a product's benefits.

- Be self-confident when recommending products for sale. You become confident by knowing about the products you are selling and by believing that they are as good as you say.
- Generate interest and desire in the customer by asking questions that determine a need.
- Never misrepresent your services or products. Making unrealistic claims will only lead to your client's disappointment, making it unlikely that you will ever again make a sale to that client.
- Do not underestimate the client's intelligence or her knowledge of her own beauty regimen or particular needs.
- To sell a product or service, deliver your sales talk in a relaxed, friendly manner. If possible, demonstrate use of the product (Figure 31–9).

FOCUS ON

OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS

Making sales won't always be easy. Sometimes, a client is stuck on a haircolor that isn't flattering. Other times, she may not feel convinced a product is any better than a drugstore brand or she may have a genuine price objection.

To overcome an objection, reword the objection in a way that addresses the client's need. For instance, let's say you recommend a shampoo based on the fact that your client has dry hair and she just had it colored. In response, she says she already has a shampoo for color-treated hair.

First, acknowledge what she said. Then reword her objection that she already has the right shampoo in a different way, which gets her thinking. For example:

"Yes, it's good to use a shampoo for color-treated hair. I did notice that your hair is still dry, even before I colored it. This shampoo not only protects your color from fading, it will definitely moisturize it more, which is what adds the shine you told me you wanted. I can leave it at the front desk, so you can think about it."

If the objection is a price objection, base your reaction on the client's. For strong objections, acknowledge the price and offer a free sample, if you can. If the objection is moderate, acknowledge it and reiterate the product's benefits.

"It is a little more expensive, but if you really want your color to last and your hair to be silky and shiny, this is the best product I've ever found. We used it on you at the back bar today. See what you think, and let me know."

Always state things in terms of the client's benefit, based on the information you gathered during the consultation.

- Recognize the right psychological moment to close any sale. Once the client has offered to buy, quit selling. Do not oversell; simply praise the client for making the purchase and assure her that she will be happy with it.  **LO4**

The Psychology of Selling

Most people have reasons for doing what they do, and when you are selling something, it is your job to figure out the reasons that will motivate a person to buy. When dealing with salon clients, you will find that their motives for buying salon products vary widely. Some may be concerned with issues of vanity. (They want to look better.) Some are seeking personal satisfaction. (They want to feel better about themselves.) Others need to solve a problem that is bothersome. (They want to spend less time maintaining their hair.)

Sometimes, a client may inquire about a product or service but still be undecided or doubtful. In this type of situation, you can help the client by offering honest and sincere advice. When you explain a salon service to a client, address the results and benefits of that

service. Always keep in mind that the best interests of the client should be your first consideration. You will need to know exactly what your client's needs are, and you need to have a clear idea as to how those needs can be fulfilled. Refer to the sample dialogues in this section—one involves ticket upgrading, and the other involves retailing, both of which demonstrate effective selling techniques.

Here are a few tips on how to get the conversation started on retailing products:

- Ask all your clients what products they are using for home maintenance of their hair, skin, and nails.
- Discuss the products you are using, as you use them. For instance, tell the client why you are using the particular mousse or spray gel and what it will do for her. Also explain how she should use the product at home.
- Place the product in the client's hands whenever possible or have the product in view (**Figure 31–10**).
- Advise the client about how the recommended service will provide personal benefit (more manageable hairstyling or longer-lasting haircolor, for instance).
- Keep retail areas clean, well lit, and appealing.
- Inform clients of any promotions and sales that are going on in the salon.
- Be informed about the merits of using a professional product, as opposed to generic store brands.
- If you have time, offer a quick styling lesson. If your client has difficulty home styling, she'll appreciate your guidance. After demonstrating, watch as the client mimics the recommended styling technique, so you can guide her.

While you realize that retailing products is a service to your clients, you may not be sure how to go about it. Imagine the following scenes and see how Lisa highlights the benefits and features of a product to her client, Ms. Steiner. Notice that price is not necessarily the most important factor.

Scenario 1: Meet a Need

Ms. Steiner: I just love my new haircolor. When should I have it redone? I hope it stays this red.

Lisa: You should come back in six weeks for a retouch. By then, you'll have had time to think about those highlights I suggested. I'm also going to suggest you use this shampoo and conditioner to keep your color vibrant between now and your next visit.



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▲ Figure 31–10
Place the product in the client's hands.

ACTivity

Pick a partner from class and role-play the dynamics of a sales situation. Take turns being the customer and the stylist. Evaluate each other on how you did, with suggestions about where you can improve. Then try this exercise with someone else because no two customers are the same.

Ms. Steiner: Is that what you used on me today? It smelled great.

Lisa: I love that scent, too. Also, the shampoo is a really great moisturizing shampoo that will keep your hair from drying out, in addition to protecting the color. The conditioner adds shine and seals the cuticle. The next time I see you, your hair should be almost as vibrant as it is now.

Ms. Steiner: Great!

Keeping Current Clients and Expanding Your Client Base

Once you have mastered the basics of good service, take a look at some marketing techniques that will expand your client base, the customers that keep coming back to you for services.

The following are only a few suggestions; there are many others that may work for you. The best way to decide which techniques are most effective is to try several!

- **Birthday cards.** Ask clients for their birthday information (just the month and day, not the year) on the client consultation card, and then use it as a tool to get them into the salon again. About one month prior to the client's birthday, send a card with a special offer. Make it valid only for the month of their birthday.
- **Provide consistently good service.** It seems basic enough, but it is amazing how many professionals work hard to get clients, and lose them because they rush through a service, leaving clients feeling dissatisfied. Providing good-quality service must always be your first concern.
- **Be reliable.** Always be courteous, thoughtful, and professional. Be at the salon when you say you will be there, and do not keep clients waiting. (See Chapter 4, Communicating for Success, for tips on how to handle the unavoidable times when you are running late.) Give your clients the hair length and style they ask for, not something else. Recommend a retail product only when you have tried it yourself and know what it can and cannot do.

- **Be respectful.** When you treat others with respect, you become worthy of respect yourself. Being respectful means that you do not gossip or make fun of anyone or anything related to the salon. Negative energy brings everyone down, especially you.
- **Be positive.** Become one of those people who always sees the glass as half full. Look for the positive in every situation. No one enjoys being around a person who is always unhappy.

▼ **Figure 31–11**
Referral cards help build your client base.



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- **Be professional.** Sometimes, a client may try to make your relationship more personal than it ought to be. It is in your best interest, and your client's best interest, not to cross that line. Remember that your job is to be the client's beauty advisor, not a psychiatrist, a marriage counselor, or a buddy.
- **Business card referrals.** Make up a special business card with your information on it, but leave room for a client to put her name on it as well. If your client is clearly pleased with your work, give her several cards. Ask her to put her name on them and to refer her friends and associates to you. For every card you receive from a new customer with her name on it, give her 10 percent off her next salon service, or a complimentary added service to her next appointment. This gives the client lots of motivation to recommend you to others, which in turn helps build up your clientele (**Figure 31–11**).

- **Local business referrals.** Another terrific way to build business is to work with local businesses to get referrals. Look for clothing stores, florists, gift shops, and other small businesses near your salon. Offer to have a card swap and commit to referring your clients to them when they are in the market for goods or services that your neighbors can provide, if they will do the same for you. This is a great way to build a feeling of community among local vendors and to reach new clients you may not be able to otherwise.
- **Public speaking.** Make yourself available for public speaking at local women's groups, the PTA, organizations for young men and women, and anywhere else that will put you in front of people in your community who are all potential clients. Put together a short program (twenty to thirty minutes) in which, for example, you might discuss professional appearance with emphasis in your chosen field and other grooming tips for people looking for jobs or who are already employed. **LO5**

FOCUS ON

RETAILING

For quick reference, keep these five points in mind when selling:

1. Establish rapport with the client.
2. Determine the client's needs.
3. Recommend products/services based on these needs.
4. Emphasize benefits.
5. Close the sale.

Rebooking Clients

The best time to think about getting your client back into the salon is while they are still in your salon. It may seem a little difficult to assure your client that you are concerned with their satisfaction on this visit while you are talking about their next visit, but the two go together. The best way to encourage your client to book another appointment before she leaves is to simply talk with her, ask questions, and listen carefully to her answers.

During the time that you are working on a client's hair, for instance, talk about the condition of their hair, their hairstyling habits at home, and the benefits of regular or special salon maintenance. You might raise these issues in a number of ways.

Scenario 2: Color Client

"Mrs. Rivera, when I cut your hair today, I noticed that you need a color retouch. Shall I book a retouch for your next visit?"

Scenario 3: Haircutting Client

"Your son is getting married next month? How wonderful. Have you thought about having a clear glazing so your hair will be bright and shiny and will look as beautiful as the rest of you in that new dress you told me about? I can set up an appointment for the day before the wedding."

Again, you will want to listen carefully to what your clients tell you during their visit, because they will often give the careful listener many good clues as to what is happening in their lives. That will open the door to a discussion about their next appointment.

FOCUS ON

THE GOAL

Always remember that success does not just come to you; you make it happen. How? By being a team player, having a positive attitude, and keeping a real sense of commitment to your work foremost in your mind.

FOCUS ON

BUILDING YOUR EFFICIENCY

Some professionals believe that the more time they spend with their clients performing services, the better the service will be. Not so! Your client should be in the salon only as long as is necessary for you to adequately complete a service.

Be aware of how much time it takes you to perform your various services and then schedule accordingly. As you become more and more experienced, you should see a reduction in the amount of time it takes you to perform these services. That means clients wait less, and you can increase the number of services you perform each day. The increase in services naturally increases your income.

Here's a Tip

There are plenty of books and Web articles that give great strategies for building a client base and keeping those clients coming back to you. Look into these and make a list of the suggestions that seem like a good fit for you, your client base, and your salon. Then, choose one strategy to try every two to three months, and see how well it worked for you. If it helped you to accomplish your goal of getting and keeping new clients, then put a star next to it and save the idea to use again when the time is right!

On Your Way

Your first job in the beauty industry will most likely be the most difficult. Getting started in this business means spending some time on a steep learning curve. Be patient with yourself as you transition from the “school you” to the “professional you.” Always remember that in your work life, as in everything else you do, practice makes perfect. You will not know everything you need to know right at the start, but be confident in the fact that you are graduating from cosmetology school with a solid knowledge base. Make use of the many generous and experienced professionals you will encounter, and let them teach you the tricks of the trade. Make the commitment to perfecting your technical and customer service skills.

Above all, always be willing to learn. If you let the concepts that you have learned in this book be your guide, you will enjoy your life and reap the amazing benefits of a career in cosmetology (**Figure 31–12**).

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▲ **Figure 31–12**
Make career satisfaction your goal.

Review Questions

1. What is expected of a new salon employee and what are two things you must do every day?
2. What are six habits of a good team player?
3. What are the three most common methods of salon compensation you are likely to encounter?
4. What are five principles of selling salon products and services? (Explain them.)
5. What are six ways you can work to expand your client base?

Chapter Glossary

client base	Customers who are loyal to a particular cosmetologist.
commission	A percentage of the revenue that the salon takes in from services performed by a particular cosmetologist, usually offered to that cosmetologist once the individual has built up a loyal clientele.
job description	Document that outlines all the duties and responsibilities of a particular position in a salon or spa.
retailing	The act of recommending and selling products to your clients for at-home use.
ticket upgrading	Also known as <i>upselling services</i> ; the practice of recommending and selling additional services to your clients.