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THE DOUBLE YOUR NEW CLIENT FRAMEWORK

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If you want more new clients read on and discover The Double Your New Clients Framework.

As a salon owner or manager the chances are VERY HIGH that you would like more new clients. In a survey we found 97% of salon owners said they would like to increase the number of new clients.



Attract more clients who visit more often and spend more.

In a recent study we found that on average a salon owner with a team of 5 generated almost half of all service sales. We tracked team productivity (excluding the owner) and found their productivity was just over 50%. So for each 5 days scheduled the team generated sales for less than three days. That is more than two days doing nothing for nothing.

Unsurprisingly this causes you frustration, you probably think “Why can’t they do more work?” It’s also frustrating for the team member who is thinking “Why don’t they get me more clients?”

If it costs 10 times more to gain a new client than keep an existing one, (many of us accept this folklore as fact). How much more must it cost to recruit a new team member? By the time you have trained and onboarded them, invested the time for them to establish a clientele? Surely there is a powerful argument for investing some time and effort into your existing team as opposed to waiting until they become so disillusioned they look for opportunities elsewhere and start all over again.

Remember how it feels when you hire a new team member? Optimism and hope? “Maybe this one will make the difference.” What happens from when they start full of promise to when they leave dejected and demotivated only to become your competitors next opportunity?

A successful team member enjoys more status, they receive more referrals and have higher client retention. They generate more revenue and even though they cost more they are better value. You are delighted and your employee enjoys a higher standard of living and more self worth.

Where do your new clients come from now? Most salon owners say word of mouth. For you, the owner this may be true but for the most part new clients just walk in. If you exclude weekends a huge percentage of walk-in clients arrive at lunchtime and at the end of the day. Often when your team member is just about to sit down to lunch or getting ready to leave for the day. Are those clients always receiving the best your team has to offer?

To bump up these numbers and accelerate the speed at which your team can become established, get more satisfaction, earn a better living and become more profitable for you use The Double Your New Clients Framework

DOUBLE YOUR NEW CLIENTS FRAMEWORK

A Simple 5 step strategy to increase your new client rate by atleast 100%



GOOGLE BUSINESS
PROFILE



5 STAR REVIEWS



REFERRALS



PAID ADS



COLD CLIENTS

There are 5 Elements to the framework.
Your Google Business Profile,
Client Reviews, Referrals, Paid Ads
and Cold Clients.

GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE

I start here because your Google Business Profile is one of your most valuable pieces of online real estate and it's free. It's valuable because when someone searches for "salon near me" or something similar Google Business Profiles are prioritised by Google and rank well. Also "Near Me" type searches have increased by more than 200%. For example a prospective client is likely to search "hairdressers near me", or "best salon in Edinburgh" or "Balayage Expert Brighton" and Google will optimise Google Business Profiles in these results.



A good proportion of people discovering you online will come via your Google Business Profile, so it makes sense to get it in order. Imagine If you are getting ready to sell your home? You would probably run the Hoover around before the estate agent arrived.

So let's get your Google Business Profile cleaned up and ready for business.

Getting people to your profile is actually quite simple. But getting them to engage with it can be hard. How often do you land on a website only to immediately decide it's not for you and navigate away? Many of these sites would have had teams of experts working tirelessly (and at great expense) for you to do the opposite!

The brilliant thing about your Google Business Profile is, it's built by world leading software engineers who make it easy for you to optimise it. No coding or technical skills required, just a little time. Also, because Google has big plans for GBP they want you to use it. Ensure yours is well populated and regularly updated in order to rank well.

This is not the same thing as SEO (search engine optimisation) and your website will probably not go position one on Google nationally. But, you will locally, which is where your potential clients live and work. It's like you're a big fish in a small pond and that's exactly what you need.



HERE IS WHERE TO START:

Name: When people search for you Google likes continuity, so ensure your GBP name is identical to your salon signage and other listings. In other words your online name should be identical to your real world name and have no variations or abbreviations. Avoid using keywords as Google does not like this and will penalise these tactics. For example you should not name your business “The Best Salon In Edinburgh” in your profile unless this is your actual business name.

Address: Ensure your address is listed identically across all of your web and social media listings. Prospective clients can use this to navigate to your salon via Google Maps.

Hours: Update your standard working hours and ensure these are updated during public holidays. It's important that when a prospective client sees you should be open and calls, that you are actually open and answer. These prospective clients have no relationship with you at this stage so will just go to the next salon on the list.

Service Areas: This is the radius that would be realistic for a client to visit you from. Keep this relevant. If you are in an urban location keep the radius realistic, people tend to travel less distance in cities and expand it a bit if your salon is more rural. Avoid edge cases. Just because you have a client from Edinburgh who visits your salon in Birmingham does not mean this is normal. Niche is better.

Categories: Select the relevant categories for your business. This will optimise your search results and it helps to use multiple categories. For example if your salon does ladies and gents hairdressing, nails and beauty you could add a category for each. This increases the chances of you ranking when someone searches Hairdresser near me or Barber in Bath etc.

Phone: Your phone number should include the area code so your clients can click and dial from mobile devices.

Web Address: A large proportion of websites get visited for the first time via Google Business Profile. It is very common for your profile to outrank your website so prospective clients often see this first. Adding your website URL will increase traffic.

Appointment Links: If you have an online booking page on your website add the page URL. If you run online booking but don't have a site or designated page add that here so your clients can book easily. Clients can book directly from here 24/7 without needing to contact you. Remember over 40% of online bookings happen out of hours.

Products: Most of us use Google as our initial point of reference. If you were looking for KMS shampoo and you were in Crawley you might well search for "KMS Shampoo Crawley" If you have KMS shampoos in your product section and your salon is in Crawley hey presto! Up you pop.

Add your products to the product section. Use customer friendly descriptions and include the manufacturer names as well as any unique or relevant information. For example If a product is vegan or anti cruelty include this. If you are pushed for time, start by adding your most popular products as opposed to the whole range. It's easy to revisit this later and better to have something than nothing.

Services: Just as people search for specific products they also search for services. Add your most popular services to your profile including pricing. If you have a broad price range add the to and from and avoid anything misleading. If a new client books for a service displayed at from £25 on your profile and then books with a director and gets a bill for £60 it can cause avoidable confusion.

Use descriptions that clients use. For example: clients will probably use the term highlights as opposed to foils. Searches like "where can I get highlights in Oxford" will produce results.

Attributes: Google will provide you with a list of attributes based on your selected categories. This could be things like wheelchair accessibility, parking or LGBTQ+ Friendly. The devil is in the details. Take a few minutes to complete this section. Your benefit will come from niche searches like "hairdressers with wheelchair access near me"

(Your salon name) is an award winning hairdressing and beauty salon in the heart of Brighton. We specialise in Colour Transformations and love to see you leave looking and feeling amazing. We have highly qualified cutting experts and all of our Aveda products are organic & cruelty free.

Our team of 7 professionals benefit from ongoing technical training to ensure you receive the highest standard in contemporary hairdressing, and they enjoy the satisfaction of knowing they are at the forefront of our industry. Enjoy our luxury air conditioned salon, we serve locally sourced artisan coffee, organic teas and a selection of cold drinks including some fizz if you fancy a treat!

Parking is available nearby in the NCP car park on North Street

Pictures and Videos: There are subsections including Interior, exterior, at work and team. Add pictures regularly. Google rewards regular activity so while you are uploading an image to Instagram add the same to your GBP. It's nice for clients visiting for the first time to have an idea who you are so Include team images as well as examples of your work.

Posts: Whenever you post to Facebook or Instagram get into the habit of also posting on your Google profile. You will not get the same engagement you associate with social media but your profile will remain active and that will optimise your ranking. Google will repay your commitment to detail. Your secret weapon is that most salons don't bother with this much detail. Pretty much everyone has a profile but the majority add a bit of information when they set it up and then forget all about it. While I wrote this I tested many searches. I live in Brighton on the south coast and there are hundreds of salons in the area. One search was "Balayage expert Brighton". No salons in Brighton ranked but one based in Crawley over 25 miles away did. This salon has added just one service to their list and it was Balayage. I wonder how many salons in Brighton offer this service? There are no doubt plenty of opportunities to be taken advantage of with just a small amount of time and effort.

When you have lots of information in your profile the desktop view will take up all of the screen leaving no room for competitors.

GOOGLE REVIEWS

Once your profile is in shape it is time to pack it full of 5* reviews.

95% of salon owners said they would feel fantastic if their team received more 5 Star reviews.

People who work in salons like making people happy. You may sometimes find it challenging to inspire or motivate your team to change behaviour but you absolutely know they want to be thought of as good at their job.



You also know how great it feels when someone takes the time to write a 5 star review about you or your business. Just imagine how positive the atmosphere would be in your salon if this happened every day?

Having a great atmosphere in your salon may be reason enough to seek client reviews but this is an article about **doubling** the number of new clients by at least 100%!

We ran tests in two salon groups. Both groups had Google Business Profiles. The first did not seek client reviews.

The second group sent a text after a client's booking thanking them for visiting and asking them to click the link and rate their experience.

We were looking to discover if there is any tangible benefit to collecting reviews in addition to the wonderful dopamine hit we enjoy when we receive them.

We ran the test for three months and counted new client percentages and new client retention.

The first group averaged 7% new clients. So that's like a salon with 5 staff averaging 125 clients a week getting about nine new clients a week, which is approximately 450 new clients in a year.

We tracked the retention and found that 15% of clients returned for a second visit and 50% of them came back for a third visit. That's equivalent to losing 93% of all new clients by visit 3!

Of the potential 450 extra new clients the salons in group 1 finished up the year averaging 27 additional clients.

The analysis on group 2 was quite different. Over the 3 months we saw new client rates increase to an average of 17%. The equivalent of 54 new clients a week, equal to more than 1100 new clients a year.

Their retention rate showed that 49% of clients returned for a second visit and more than 75% of them came back a third time. That's the equivalent of keeping 38% of all new clients beyond visit 3.

Of the potential 1100 extra new clients the salons in group 2 finished up averaging 454 additional clients.

Why would simply taking control of your reviews strategy and tidying up your Google Business Profile have such an impact?

Group 1 did not have control of their reviews process so only got them from two types of people. The ones who loved them and the ones who absolutely didn't!

Group 2 leveraged the majority of clients who think they are great. They are happy with what you do and if you make it simple enough are prepared to support you. In fact 30% of clients messaged left a review.

When potential clients searched, their very tidy and informative Google Business Profiles ranked well. Visitors see the information they need to make a decision about your business and its reinforced with loads of 5* reviews.

With regard to the retention the formula is less quantifiable. What I would suggest though is that if I knew every client I interacted with was encouraged to rate my performance and my colleagues, clients and whoever else who looks on Google was going to see it, I would probably put my best foot forward.



HOW TO GET REVIEWS:

Ask: Many of us fear rejection which is why asking clients to leave a review can be daunting. We have all received emails and texts from companies asking for reviews and have probably not bothered. Often because the person we dealt with (if any) seems far removed from the process. Not just another corporation trying to boost their ratings.

Even large salon businesses are small businesses. Clients visiting are being looked after by individuals who they build relationships with. Think of some of the conversations you have had with clients, a million miles away from a detached corporate chat for sure! Use some of the conversation you have with your client to explain you are working to build a larger clientele. Explain that positive client reviews are a proven strategy to attract more clients and tell your client how grateful you would be if they could help. It will feel a little uncomfortable initially but keep practising. Your clients will leave you glowing reviews and that will be far from uncomfortable!

Automate: Send a text or email containing your reviews link. By making it easier you will receive more reviews. If you do this, ensure you personalise your message by including your clients name at the very least. Remember we are leveraging relationships so need to demonstrate we have one. It also helps to mention to your client that they will receive a message so they are looking out for it.

Be Timely: Strike while the iron is hot! Send your messages very soon after your client leaves. This way you, and their new hair style or treatment are very much on their mind.

Always reply: Regardless of the rating, always reply to reviews. People love to be recognised and Google considers this best practice. Replies are public so even if a client is unreasonable or downright wrong, respond in a way you would be happy for people who don't know you yet to see.

The Salon App Leaderboard: Leaderboard is a feature that takes care of your reviews process automatically. Clients are texted after their visit with a message containing your reviews link.

The benefits are:

Profile Gatekeeper: Only clients rating 5 stars are redirected to your Google profile and asked to leave their message publicly. This means that poor reviews (or reviews made in error) are held within Salon App kept away from your public profile enabling you to handle them the way you see fit. Your replies can be customised based on the rating.

Team Ratings: Your Google Business profile is for your company. Reviews can contain names for example "Sarah was professional and extremely patient" but the reviews are all pooled together. With Leaderboard we track which team member received the review and store it in your leaderboard dashboard and client profile so your team can see their own (and their colleagues) ratings.

REFERRALS

There are many referral strategies but in this article we focus on the reviews process.

Receiving referrals is lovely. A client who is recommended to you will be looking forward to their initial appointment with you. They will already trust you and therefore rapport can be relatively instant. Converting a referral into a long term regular client is easier than somebody booking on spec.

A client who has taken the time to leave a 5* review is more engaged with you at that time and it's a great opportunity to get a referral.



HOW TO LEVERAGE REVIEWS TO GET REFERRALS:

When your client leaves a glowing review contact them personally to thank them. You can do this over the phone or send a message, email or even a card.

Tell them how grateful you are for their review. Tell them it made you feel great and your boss (if you have one) is thrilled. Then ask them if they know anyone else who may enjoy visiting the salon. Keep this authentic and polite. The goal here is to optimise the goodwill without taking advantage so don't be pushy.

For Salon App clients this is easy. Create a campaign so that when a client gives a 5 star rating trigger a message using a personalised script.

Adding to your clientele is done with marginal gains. A consistent measured approach will see client numbers increase, and over time this will have a positive impact on your sales and commissions.

Think of it like this? A busy team member will average between 25 and 30 clients a week. If you constantly increase your clientele by 12 each month (or 3 a week) you will add the equivalent of a busy team member every 6 months.



PAID ADS: THE LOOKALIKE AUDIENCE

Lookalike audiences are created by Facebook to attract an audience just like your existing clients. Facebook (and Instagram), hold enormous amounts of data on its users. A lookalike audience is a bit like a sophisticated marketing matchmaker.

Export a client list from your salon software and upload their names, email and mobile numbers to the facebook ads platform. The platform will then match any of those clients with a Facebook profile (nearly all of them) and find people just like them. You can then create ads that are only displayed to people who match your criteria and live within your area. Because you are promoting to a smaller, more niche audience it costs less.

There are six Facebook (and Instagram) ads formats and four are suited well to salon ads.

Awareness: The purpose of awareness ads is to extend reach (the number of people who see your ads), Brand awareness and video views. These will typically be the least expensive ads because they are geared towards the longer term benefit. You would probably run an awareness ad on an ongoing basis so that people meeting your criteria become familiar with your ads. Create artwork that reflects how you would like others to see your salon. For example a salon specialising in Balayage would have several stylish photographs and a simple message along the lines of “Your Salon Name, the only option for Beautiful Balayage in Town Name”. Whenever a prospective client sees your ad they will start to associate you with being the Balayage expert in your area.

If you specialise in several areas create different ad campaigns for each as opposed to creating one ad for more than one thing. Less is more when you are creating social media ads.

Traffic: Traffic ads are designed to send people to a destination and clicks will cost a little more than an awareness ad. This includes link clicks, landing page views and can be used for messenger, Whats app and calls. People are more likely to engage with your traffic ad if they are aware of your salon first. They may be considering a Balayage treatment, see your traffic ad and go to your Balayage landing page, or download your 5 things you must know about Balayage report. Once someone has landed on your page, always use a call to action. Things like email collection or book consultation work well. If you opt for messenger or Whatsapp engagement ensure someone is available to respond. These interactions can be fleeting and you may only get one chance.

Engagement: This is where the rubber starts to hit the road. Now we want people to engage directly with us. Engagement will include likes and comments as well as calls and booking online. Facebook wants us to see this as a progression taking your future clients on a journey. They first become aware, they have a look at our site or reviews and then they contact us and book. At each stage the clicks get a little more expensive but because you have started with awareness, then traffic and engagement the volume is reducing with each time keeping your costs under control.

Leads: Lead ads are the jewel in the Facebook ads crown. These are the types of ads where clients will enter contact information and you can contact them. Be aware that a lead ad will be significantly more expensive than any other facebook ad type.

The challenge with all marketing is that as small business owners we are impatient. If you are anything like me you will expect to post an ad and get clients immediately. We, the public however, are more savvy than that now. We are used to being marketed to so need to be wooed a bit before committing to something.

When we started our social media marketing I read advice similar to what I am including here but thought I would skip a few steps out and go straight to the lead ads. Despite listening to a marketing expert tell me it was a bit like **asking someone to marry you on the first date** I thought I would have a go anyway.

The lead ad worked, (Facebook knows their stuff!) and people completed the form in our ad. We got loads of leads so increased the budget and got loads more! I was feeling pretty clever by now and couldn't see what all that awareness, traffic and engagement business was about.

The problem when we started connecting with our new haul of leads was they didn't really know who we were or what we did. So despite having lots of leads most were not ready to engage, let alone buy and we ended up spending a load of cash.

The moral of the story is, follow the plan. The process is built this way and neither you nor I will change it.



COLD CLIENTS

I have a friend who has been a client of mine for years. He bought version one of my first product and is still one of my most valued clients today so we go back nearly twenty years. The conversations we have are honest and frank and we are able to bypass any of those customer supplier obstacles. We both want the other to thrive so it's pretty healthy.

A while back my friend had the opportunity to hire a talented stylist with bags of experience and did not want to miss out so made the hire even though the capacity wasn't really there for someone at that time. The stylist was relocating from the north west of England to the south east and therefore (justifiably) had no clients.

We regularly help clients run a kickstart campaign. It's a straightforward process as a rule. Contact clients who are overdue or may have recently stopped coming and make them an irresistible offer. I am making light of it but that just about sums it up. The problem here is my friend runs a brilliant hairdressing business and routinely markets to his clients on a weekly basis and there is no low hanging fruit. He has already done it.

I made a suggestion that if he were to get some traction from the get go he would need to come up with something good. We discussed it and I told him how earlier in the year I had been at an event where Gary Hooker and Michael Young of the multi award winning Hooker and Young had shared that when any team member leaves (even if they emigrate and there is no chance of them poaching clients) they comp the team leavers clients with anything they want for their next appointment with a team member of equal standing. This blew me away, I have spent years advising people to be "generous" if they want clients to respond but this took it to another level.

My friend, like most mature businesses, has a database full of cold clients. People who have not visited for ages. They are not coming back. I suggested we take a small section of these clients, send them an invitation to retry the salon for free as a test. Come in and have any transformation they want and we will "comp" the bill at the end. This could be an amazing opportunity for this talented stylist to "strut his stuff" and showcase the best of his skills with none of the usual financial obstacles.

Anyway I got my friend whooped up about this until he tried to convince the new stylist it was a good idea. The stylist was immediately nervous about the concept. What would people think? Does it look needy or desperate? Would people think of him as an amateur? There were so many reservations that it didn't happen.

The team member has stayed and is good at his job. He takes reasonable figures, has a high service per booking ratio and retails well. All of that is ok till we look at the overall business performance and see that the overall sales have increased less than his salary and the new clients have just been diluted further between the less established team.

Soon after I watched a fly on the wall series on The Savoy Hotel in London. In one episode a housekeeper completed her probation period. The Savoy's policy is that when newstarter pass their probationary period they get to visit the hotel as a guest. They want all of their staff to feel the "guest experience". The Housekeeper and her husband were put up in a suite, they visited the spa for treatments, the bar for cocktails and the restaurant for dinner and the next day had breakfast. A night that would have cost a fortune. They had a ball and were so enthusiastic and it struck me.

Your cold client does not get a discount, they get your 5 Star guest Experience and see the very best your salon has to offer. I wonder if they would leave a positive review? Rebook for next time, possibly buy some retail or leave a generous tip? Or maybe a combination of them all.

Either way your team members will be using some of that unsold time that you are paying for and quite possibly winning some long term valuable clients.

I dare you to try it go on! And if you do tell me how you get on....



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