

StyleSpeakTM

The salon & spa journal



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A lowdown of the latest
hair, make-up and nail
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PREPPING for the Party

StyleSpeak gives you the lowdown on how to deal with the rush, increased demand and cancellations in your salon this party season

Words | Bindu Gopal Rao



Shahnaz Hussain Signature Salon

It's December – the official month to party courtesy weddings and social events. While customers are making a beeline to salons to look their best, the latter are gearing up to meet the rush, increased demand and cancellations too. Managing a salon at this time of the year has its own challenges. So how do you overcome them?

PLANNING RIGHT

Handling large volumes of clients is not an easy task as things can go awry. There is pressure to maintain quality standards and keep customers happy too. That's where planning ahead comes in handy. Beauty expert Shahnaz Husain opines, "We announce our special packages and start taking bookings well in advance. Preference is given to regular clients, who may be using our loyalty cards. Our

front desk staff is well trained to deal with bookings and cancellations, if any. Even when the appointment is given well in advance, the bookings are confirmed again about a week in advance. They may call again to confirm, the day before the appointment."

"However, I am not in favour of any strict cancellation policy. All clients are valued and if there is a valid reason, one has to usually overlook it. Our staff may also be working overtime during the busy season," she adds.

Celebrity Hair Expert Niell Talwar, Star Salon, says, "We train our team months before the wedding season in latest make-up and hair styling trends. Selective recruitment of talent also adds to the creative team strength. During the wedding/



Niell Talwar

party season, all appointments are booked accepting a booking advance. Hence clients are discouraged to cancel their bookings. But, still if there are cancellations, we try to fill those spots with other bookings."

ORGANIZATION MATTERS

Giving clients an uncompromised experience even during peak seasons is of paramount importance. Floor managers and resource managers play a vital role in ensuring optimization of time, effort and staff. The ideal scenario is to be ready for the appointment client and to be able to accommodate the walk-ins during delays in appointments or cancelled slots.

"Our approach to heightened demand is multi-fold, where technology, processes and training come together. Our fail-safe system of appointment scheduling by our salon managers and front-desk allows us to stay a step ahead in terms of estimating demand. Our staff is trained with an SOP (standard operating procedure) that is meticulously detailed by industry experts such that every service is conducted and completed efficiently. Our point of sale is built such that there is swift billing and no delays for the customer. Our salons are equipped with facilities which give us the capacity to seamlessly accommodate peak season requests," opines Deepak Praveen – COO, Green Trends Unisex Hair and Style Salon.



Shahnaz Salon

Manjul Gupta, Founder of Bodycraft Salon & Spa adds, "We have a 'never say no' policy for appointments. We ensure



Bodycraft Salon & Spa



Bodycraft Salon & Spa

the same with a few internal SOP's in place. We always ensure the staff strength is not compromised and reconfirm with clients if they are going to be on time for their service appointment. We also have a resource allocation team which constantly monitors client 'no-shows' or delays, so we can attend to the walk-ins and the other clients who want an appointment."

OPTIMIZING RESOURCES

This is also the time for salons to optimize time, effort and staff so that they can manage the clients and give them a good experience. "I believe in placing more importance on the quality of treatments we offer to our clientele, rather than a quick turnover of clients to increase revenue. That is why we take on the number of clients that can be managed qualitatively in a given day. I also lay a great deal of emphasis on the selection and training of our beauty therapists and instil in them the qualities of optimum effort and dedication to our values and principles. Time has to be allocated to each treatment properly. In other words, time management is important and over the last many years, we have perfected that," says Shahnaz.

"To optimize time, effort and staff, each salon has its dedicated artists in all make-up and hair categories. Any time

that we don't have client bookings, is planned for training and education of the team. Hence, we are constantly growing and improving professionally. Staff optimization is done by training them in more than one department. So, each make-up artist knows how to style hair as well," adds Niell.

OVERCOMING HURDLES

Party season is during winter and most people face challenges in terms of dry and dull skin and hair. Naturally salons will need to address this as well. Also, the salon industry is growing every day. Salons adopt competitive pricing and unreasonable discounts in an attempt to attract maximum clients. The other challenge is poaching of staff by other salons which can cause a sudden dip in available manpower. Hygiene, hospitality and quality of service are vital elements of the customer experience in totality and require personal and dedicated attention of the non-service staff as well. Hence training all staff to ensure the customer has the best possible experience at the salon is key.

Bringing to light the challenges, Dr. Megha Shah, Cosmetologist, Beauty & Curves Clinic says, "The biggest challenge is to complete our work before the client gets engaged into the final wedding preparations and pre-wedding rituals. Moreover, managing the coordination with every family member and their needs is also a great challenge. The challenge is to have working equipments at all times. This challenge is met with unique backup and service agreements which keep our machines in working condition." **SS**



Trends Salon