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Nail salon and spa okc

August 30th, 2005 15 + min read Opinions expressed by entrepreneurial collaborators are yours. Editor's note: This article was extracted from our Salon or Day Spa startup guide, available from entrepreneur bookshop. Since the start of the new millennium, the stock market has been in freefall and the economy has been in the doldrums. But it was a good time to start a hairdresser and a day spa and it still is today. According to Modern Salon/Vance Publishing, total revenue from the show's industry is projected to be \$3.4 billion in 2005, up 11.8 percent since 2002. How is it possible for a service sector such as the beauty industry to continue to grow given the state of the economy? No doubt because many of the services offered by salons simply cannot be duplicated at home - or at least not doubling well. Also, in an era when people freely shell out \$59.95 a month for unlimited cell service or hundreds of dollars to lease the latest SUV model with more bells and whistles, the price of a haircut probably doesn't seem very high considering the elevator that can give your spirits. In addition, baby boomers, who now make up the largest population segment in America, are more than willing and financially able to spend money on any personal care service they perceive will make them look younger and more attractive. What all this prosperity means to you is that the prospects for people who own personal care businesses are brilliant. The 2003 Employment Demand Survey, distributed by the National Commission on Accreditation of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences, indicated that total average earnings (including tips) for salon owners were \$53,150 in 2002, although it is possible to earn much more based on where and how you do business. (And just like a side note: When we say lounge throughout this article, we refer to the lounge and day spa, as indicated by the title of the start-up kit. Since the tools needed to open both are basically the same, it seemed redundant to say lounge/spa over and over again.) Opportunities there are three ways to make your mark in the hair industry. You can open a franchise hairdresser, where you pay money upfront for the privilege of opening this salon using someone else's established name (which gives you an instant reputation) and its resources (such as ad campaigns). You can buy an established salon from someone who is retiring from the business, has grown tired of the business, or damaged the business and forced it into bankruptcy (all three happen every day). A third option is to set up your own salon with your own money, your own wit and your own optimism that hard work and talent will win. There's one more option you've been mentioning here because it's so prevalent in the beauty business. The cabin rental rooms are of a person (or people) who is basically the landlord of a group of hairdressers and other service providers working under their roof. As a landlord, the owner/operator of the show collects a flat monthly fee service providers, for whom they are privileged to use lounge space and non-mobile equipment such as a style station and chair. Tenants, in turn, are considered independent contractors who must provide their own supplies (from dryers to perm rods), set their own hours, book their own appointments and have their own key in the building. Operations To get started, you must carefully take into account your operating hours so that you can accommodate the maximum number of customers during the business day. You certainly already know that the beauty business is not a 9 to 5 type of industry. The lounges are open seven days a week and at some of the traditional parties, and their hours can be extended around dance time or during the peak wedding season. What has driven this demand has been the proliferation of two-income couples who manage the demands of raising a family while juggling and managing their own personal business. So while it wasn't so long ago that people wouldn't even consider getting a haircut on Sunday, salon hours on Sunday are now a must (even if on an abbreviated schedule). Even day spas are open on Sundays, as this may be the only time during the week that a busy career mom can escape for some personal pampering. Typically, hairdressers in metropolitan areas are open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. six days a week, unless the owners are enlightened and add the Sunday hours mentioned above, and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in smaller communities. By design, Sundays and vacation hours are often the same as those of local retailers like malls and department stores, and usually run from noon to 5 p.m. Lunch schedule and the early hours of the night are usually the busiest times for lounges. You may also need to have special hours to accommodate special needs. For example, if you do a lot of wedding work, you'll probably need to be open before Saturday mornings, for example, at 8 a.m., for brides who have to come to church for a 10 a.m. Prices Service Another important part of their salon development plan is the right price for their services. Set prices too high, and you will limit the number of people who can afford them, put them too low, and will limit their profit potential and possibly put the business at risk. Of course, the price the market will have depends a lot on the demographics of your service area. If you are in a luxury area with larger homes occupied by people with higher disposable income, you can price your services accordingly and even offer high-end spa services. But if the surrounding community is for young working families, you will have to give up spa services (or offer nothing but the bare minimum) and concentrate instead on basic haircut and color services that are affordable. When setting prices, you must take into account the three factors that will influence your prices: labor and supplies, overseas expenses and benefits. The labour expenses of the shows include wage and benefit costs for both styling/spa staff and administrative persons (including your manager, receptionist and other support staff). Your own salary is included as part of that cost. This cost is generally expressed as an hourly price and may vary depending on the amount of time it takes your employees to cut their hair or perform other services. Then you have to take into account your general costs, which consist of all the costs necessary to operate the business other than the work. This includes the payment of mortgages or leases, public services, and so on. It is reasonable to estimate that your overhead will be 40 to 50 percent of your work and the cost of materials. (This figure can be adjusted later as you accumulate financial data.) So let's say when you count all your labor costs and materials for the year, you reach a figure of \$100,000. Estimated overcharging (at 45 percent) would be \$45,000. This would give you a top-up rate of 45 percent. The last part of the pricing equation is profit. Salon owners can generally expect to have a net profit of 11 to 15 percent (although you can certainly make that profit figure higher or lower as you see fit). To reach the net profit you want, you must add a percentage markup factor to your services so that you reach the approximate gross amount you will earn. One way to simplify the price-fixing process in the extreme is to figure out how much the show should do for the year and do the math to get there. For example, let's say you want the salon to make \$52,000 per year. Here are the calculations you would use to find out your prices: \$52,000/52 weeks = \$1,000 per week \$1,000/100 hours the salon is open every week = \$10/h Add a 10 percent profit margin = \$11/h Type of salon services next to the hairdresser, the most sought after service is, of course, haircut and style. This includes everything from styles created with a bump dryer, curling iron or hand rubbing to proven and true roller/dryer sets for mature clientele. Popular color services include highlighting, low lighting, glass, corrective coloring, dimensional special effects, and hair and scalp treatments. Texture services include permanent waves, partial or one-off perms, spiral perms and anti-curling treatments. Braiding, who has made a strong comeback in many parts of the country, falls into a category of his own. Finally, hairdresser special occasion, for events such as dances and weddings, complete the typical menu of hair services. Although technically an aesthetic service, nail and foot care is often offered in hairdressers. Nail services include: Manicures (Traditional and French Manicures) Nail Polish Nail Polish Nail Application Application of sculpted nails Paraffin treatments skin exfoliation treatments and hand/foot massage are often part of manicure and pedicure processes. Whether you offer nail services depends entirely on the size of your salon and whether you can afford both equipment and salary one by one technical staff from the outset. Today's nail-biting customer is accustomed to visiting stores dedicated only to nail services, so you won't be surprised if you don't offer manicures, acrylic nails and tips. But you may be able to get her to leave her regular manicurist if she sees that you are offering the same service in her cool new salon. At a minimum, you should offer haircuts and style, basic perms, straightening and highlighting treatments. Types of spa services As mentioned earlier, spa services are a rapidly growing segment of the personal care industry. The range of services is truly dazzling, but basically, the aesthetic services offered in a day spa fall into three categories: skin and body care, hair removal and makeup. (Technically, there is a fourth category -nail services- but as we have just mentioned, nail services have crossed into the beauty mainstream and are no longer considered just a spa service. However, when offered in a spa setting, nail services tend to be priced higher than in a lounge.) Spa services of skin and body care include: Facials and body exfoliation (which may involve the use of salt glare, body polish, enzyme peels and body masks such as mud or paraffin) Massage (full body massage, facial and/or hand/foot massage) Wraps and packages (used to fight cellulite and reduce water retention) Hydrotherapy treatments (hot tubs, Scottish hose - a type of massage that uses a hand dial water currents to the customer to improve circulation--and hot tub treatments) Body tanning (self-tanning and tanning beds) Hair removal services include: Electrolysis Waxing (face, Legs, arms, bikini, back and brass) Eyebrow arch makeup services include: Cosmetic application Color analysis Designing the eyebrow dyeing ear piercing When determining which of these spa services to offer, it is important to weigh factors such as the cost of the equipment against potential profitability. For example, you may want to offer hydrotherapy at the new day spa. But hydrotherapy services require the greatest cash payout for the development of equipment and facilities. So it might be a better idea to limit your spa services initially to massage (which doesn't require as much equipment) and/or facials. Another important factor to consider when deciding what spa services it will offer is that many of them require a wet room. This includes the hydrotherapy mentioned above, as well as any body mask, exfoliation treatments and other body treatments that should be rinsed after application. Even if you choose not to offer hydro services when it first opens, you should at least plan to include a wet room in your initial plans or you will always be limited to dry services - unless, of course, you move to further excavations or expand your existing location. Because the concept of a day spa involves a day of pampering similar to what you can enjoy on a spa holiday or cruise, it is common for spa owners to offer service packages. Generally speaking, packages must consist of three complementary services, or in the case of hydrotherapy treatments, a hydrotherapy service and up to four dry services. Spa industry interns recommend offering half-day packages running around three hours and full-day five-hour packages that include 30 minutes to an hour for a light lunch. One day in the life Although not two days tend to be the same for salon owners because the needs of their customers (not to mention their employees) vary so widely, there are certain tasks that can be expected to be accomplished on a regular basis. For starters, you'll probably spend a lot of time on your phone every day, helping to book appointments, ordering supplies, talking to vendors, organizing for in-store training or off-site, and so on. You'll also need to compensate for work schedules (then juggle employees' scheduled free time and personal needs), track collections, monitor costs, dream of new advertising and marketing strategies, and possibly create daily or weekly deals that can be emailed to their regular customers to lure them for additional services. On the staff side, you will hire new employees, visit beauty schools to troll for hot prospects, conduct performance reviews, mentor young stylists and/or aesthetic technicians with minimal experience, consult with stylists or colorists s because efforts go wrong, and mediate when temperaments erupt among staff members. And of course, if you are also a licensed practicing cosmetologist, you will be hair style, applying color and rolling perms. Sounds a lot for a person to do, doesn't it? Well, that's why many salon owners (even those s are quite small) often hire a salon manager to take over some of the administrative duties. This is a particularly good idea if you intend to keep working behind the chair, as hairdressing tasks can only take a lot of your time every day. And while it's possible to slip into some administrative jobs while you wait for someone's perm or a late client to arrive, it can be difficult to switch gears and give administrative tasks like balancing the books all the concentration they need. Marketing The most important thing that will influence business in your salon will be the economy. After all, when the economy is riding high, people are willing and able to spend money on more expensive lounge services, services that can be easily done at home, and luxury spa services such as full body massage and body wraps. But when the economy is collapsing, these services can be considered a luxury rather than a necessity. As a result, guests can reduce the frequency of their visits to the show, or only opt for the basic services provided by one of the national budget-conscious chains. One way to avoid getting caught in a stream without a shovel is to carefully investigate the economic basis of your target market. If you have done your market research well so far, you already have an idea of average income levels in your neighborhood. Now you to see data such as the percentage of people working full-time and the types of jobs they have. If the local market is driven by a lot of blue collar, heavy industry jobs, a fall in the economy could make tight cash and affect its ability to keep customers. Fortunately, most people still use salon services, even if it's only for a basic cut, when times are tough, but they can go longer between services. So make a phone call to your city's economic development office now to get a handle on the health of the local industry. Your salon's website just as you will access other companies' websites to learn about their products and services, you will want potential and repeated customers to be able to find them in cyberspace. Your website will be crucial to your marketing efforts and can be used for everything from posting your hours and driving directions to selling salon services. Spas go out particularly well on a cyber tour. Well-decorated private treatment rooms can communicate a sense of soothing relaxation even on screen, while suggesting that a complex style oasis of serene tranquility is nothing more than a phone call away. Because your website is a virtual advertising that is available on demand 24 hours a day, it's important to spend a good amount of time considering what you have to say. (Let's say your site will be an online brochure with multiple pages instead of an electronic business card.) The best way to determine the content is by thinking like a customer and answering the questions you think you would have in search of a new salon or spa. These are examples of the kind of questions a future salon/spa customer can have: Salon Do provide initial consultations? Is there a charge? Can you give me the same hairstyle as (celebrity name)? What's the last look? Do your stylists have experience? Where did they study/train? What are the cost of your services? Do you sell gift certificates? What lines of hair care products do you bring? What credit/debit cards do you accept? Where is he? What are your hours? How can I get to you? Spa Are your spa employees licensed? Are your masseistas men or women? Are hiro treatments better than massage? How do you heal your team? How long will it take for my treatment? What do you charge? Can I take a tour of your facilities? Location Choosing a location for your salon is one of the most important decisions you will make in the early stages of establishing your new business. Obviously, you will want to locate it in an area with easy access by road or road, with a lot of traffic (both on foot and in the variety of four wheels) and The surrounding area should be attractive, well lit and safe. There should also be other retail businesses nearby (unlike commercial areas such as industrial estates or a regional airport) because they can generate business for you even when they attract customers through their own doors. Typically, the shows operate on three of establishments: free standing buildings, showcase properties and shopping centers such as strip shopping centers. Occasionally, lounges are located in malls, but it's actually more common for them to operate out of a separate building located on the perimeter or an outlot of mall property because the rent is so high inside the mall. They are also sometimes on the ground floor of office buildings in large metropolitan areas where there is a significant amount of traffic on foot during the business day. However, these locations may not be optimal if you're in an urban area that doesn't have much traffic at night or on weekends. There is another type of property that deserves serious consideration when you are looking for a place to set up shop. An installation that once served as a beauty salon can be a good choice for your new location. The good news is that a large part of the infrastructure you will need, including additional plumbing, special electrical sockets, and perhaps even accessories such as lounge stations and reception, may already be on site and available for purchase with the building. The bad news is that there could be a very good reason why the show closed, as there is too much competition in the area, the location is crummy, or the previous owner had a bad reputation among customers and in the community. The same goes for a salon that is currently in business but is for sale. The size of their store location typically range from 1,200 to 2,000 square feet, though small spaces can be considerably smaller (less than 1,000 square feet). You will need four separate areas in your hairdresser: reception and retail, shampoo, cut/service, and storage. The biggest of these, of course, should be your lounge services area, which should assume about 50 percent of the floor space. About 20 percent of the space should be allocated for retail/reception, 10 percent for shampoo area, and the remaining 20 percent for storage and an employee rest/dining area. The employee/client's bathroom and office must also be located in this area. If space permits, you may want to provide a dressing room for a person for customers who are having treatments such as color or perms. Otherwise, the bathroom can serve as a dressing room. Be sure to put a large basket in the dressing room/bathroom for collecting dirty robes. The retail products you sell must be displayed in the reception area and placed near the cash register to facilitate access. The shampoo area is usually located towards the back of the living room and is equipped with shampoo sinks (either independent or attached to the wall) and chairs. Each station must also have a back bar, or wardrobe, to store products in the living room, such as shampoos, conditioners and deep conditioning treatments. Naturally, these should be the same products you sell in the commercial area, and your stylists should be trained to discuss each product used with the customer as a way to stimulate sales. Provision If you choose to include spa services part of your salon, then the overall design of your salon should be created by a professional designer or an architect. This is because, unlike a hairdresser, which tends to be a large open area with few partitions or walls, a spa has to be a bit compartmentalized. However, if you've worked or visited enough spas over the course of your career, or have good viewing skills, you might already have a good idea of how you want your spa to look. In this case, it may be possible to work with a cartoonist to draw up plans for the spa, and then hire someone to build the space for you. Spas are usually divided into a number of rooms that are used as change and shower facilities, treatment rooms, consultation rooms (to discuss treatment options and after-treatment care), and so on. The consultation room can also be used as an office when not used by an aesthetic and a client, although we will assume that it will have its main office in the lounge area. There must also be a retail area that is separate from the hairdressing shopping area (so guests are not confused or distracted by products that do not relate to spa items). The spa and lounge can share a reception area, however, as long as it is centrally located and easily accessible on both sides of the business. Ideally, the reception area will be in the center, with the lounge and spa radiating on each side. If possible, incorporate a supply room into your spa area. If this is not possible, spa products can share storage space with salon products, but strive to keep them separate and organized to facilitate accessibility. Independent treatment rooms are needed for wet and dry services. Although good aerial lighting is needed in treatment rooms both before and after the provision of services, it should be gently disseminated. During procedures such as massage and hydrotherapy, the general lights must be turned off and an alternative and softer light source must be turned on to create an atmosphere of relaxation and peace. Proper ventilation is also a necessity, as well as hot and cold running water so that aestheticians can mix dry products or cushion towels during treatment without leaving the room. Finally, the treatment room must have its own sound system, in which relaxing music or sounds of nature must be played. No rap or heavy metal! Staff One of the most difficult aspects of owning a show will be the hiring and retention of good employees. This may seem like a daunting task, not only because these two responsibilities can be time-long, but also because there is so much riding on employee skills. After all, your employees will be frontline representatives business that has lovingly and carefully stoned little more than some loans, a little wit and a lot of sheer determination. Their ability and talent, as well as their attitudes and work ethic, will influence every aspect of the business, from the customer retention rate to the end result. Here's a spa and lounge employees are likely to need to operate the day-to-day running of their new business. Owner/Operator. You're an employee too, so you're first on the list. Your daily responsibilities will include overseeing operations, ensuring that customer service is a priority, making financial decisions, checking the show product and inventory of retail products, managing personnel matters, hiring new staff and evaluating employee performance. All this is added to the provision of salon services if you are a licensed cosmetologist, practicing. Salon manager. While it may be tempting to try to undertake all the management tasks of the new salon instead of hiring a salon manager, try to resist the need. Unless your salon is extremely small, the price you will pay for a manager's salary is worth it. The manager can handle a myriad of tasks such as paperwork, registration, employee scheduling and purchasing. He will also oversee the maintenance of the show and handle facility management problems. This person must have the authority to act on their behalf in their absence of long-term success. Stylist/cosmetologist. His stylists are at the heart of his salon staff. Each state requires stylists to be licensed cosmetologists, so you'll want to check their credentials when applying for a job. A cosmetology license usually allows the holder to cut and color the hair and give manicures and facials. In general, additional licenses are necessary for services such as massage therapy, but it is possible that your cosmetologist will be allowed to give hand and foot massages without additional licenses. Check with your state's cosmetology board to see what the requirements are. Shampoo/lounge assistant. This is the person who shampoos customers' hair, while the stylist is terminating another client. He or she can also fold towels, sweep hair clippings and provide other general assistance around the store. Often these assistants are newly minted cosmetology graduates seeking industry experience, or licensed assistants who have not yet completed enough hours to become a fully licensed stylist. Receptionist. In addition to greeting guests as they arrive, the receptionist answers the phone, books appointments, gives directions, cash to customers and performs various other customer service duties such as making coffee or even hanging up coats for customers. The manicurist. As mentioned above, the manicurist may be part of the hairdresser or spa staff. This professional provides services such as manicures, pedicures and application of acrylic nails and tips and must be a licensed cosmetologist. Aesthetic. This is one of the most qualified people in its staff Spa. Aesthetics have a special state licence so they can provide services such as facials, hair removal, massages and other specialist body care services such as Scottish hose therapy. Very often this person also makes makeup and application queries, especially if there is no room in the hire a dedicated makeup artist. Massage therapist. Although an aesthetic can provide many massage services, a massage therapist has a higher level of training and additional experience. Most states require these professionals to have an Electrologist massage therapist license. This person provides waxing services and needs an electrologist's license in many states. Independent contractors. The independent contractor is a person who is not on your paycheck but provides certain services in your salon, including hairdressing and manicure. This type of trade agreement occurs most commonly when a cosmetologist rents space from you (known as cabin rentals), but is responsible for everything from purchasing your own tools and supplies to paying tax on earned income. Resources for an industry that offers such specialized services, it's amazing how much information there is in print and in cyberspace about hairdressing and spa industries of the day. The Internet is a particularly rich source of background information, business tips and marketing know-how, much of which is posted by people who are themselves in the industry. Here we have presented some useful resources, but the list is not exhaustive. Also, note that all contact information was current and accurate at the time of publication. 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