

# The Business *Column*

## Community Cohesion: Bringing People Together!



by Lina  
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**H**ow do you market your business in your community? Having your own business/being an entrepreneur can be a very challenging job. You are required to sell yourself and your products, yet nobody really wants to be sold. So, how can you thrive with your business in your community? Here are some simple steps to help you reach your goals.

### Supporting Local Businesses

You do not get more specific as a local business than we do as a beauty business. Sure, we might have an out-of-town client from time to time, but generally we depend on our community to support our spa. If we desire to be supported locally, then it is only right and fair that we also support other businesses locally!

Here is one idea: Consider partnering your business up with another local business that enhances and compliments your spa and come up with some event ideas that showcase your products and services. Not only will this demonstrate good comradery in your community, but it will give more value to the consumers taking part of your event! Partnering options can be limitless for salons and spas because we match up to so many other businesses:

- fitness centers
- greenhouses/florists
- jewelry stores
- plastic surgeons
- dermatologists
- dieticians
- personal coaches
- local artists

Be creative and not afraid to step outside of what is often considered normal for our industry.

### Charities

Creating brand awareness in your local community while providing an array of exciting fundraising incentives to your current clients and their friends will absolutely help your business to establish that community connection for which you might be looking.

Consider having your spa partner with a local charity to hold a new fundraiser event. From a fun competition, to donating certain spa services, to helping the less fortunate to having a day at your spa, or the much-appreciated monetary donations, all these events can create local media attention and brand awareness through many different channels.

Also, be sure to plan ahead! Contact a local charity that has a special meaning for you. This way you can connect to the charity's cause and let your current clients know that you are supporting this local group. After establishing a date and time for the event, start the media mayhem within the community. Contact all of the local radio stations and newspapers. Just as important, make sure you utilize your social media outlets. Make some noise, raise the roof, and let the community know that you are making it a priority to take care of them one step at a time.

### Customer Appreciation Events

The basic things like customer appreciation and satisfaction, as well as brand awareness, are fundamentally required in your business to help pave the road to success... so got started with your very own clients!

When trying to obtain these positive outcomes, there is nothing stronger and more effective than word of mouth. Even after all the years of exciting trends and new tricks that have been invented to help with spreading knowledge about your business, word of mouth still remains the best form of advertisement.

One way to create positive chatter about your spa is to host a customer appreciation event that is directed at your current clients. Make it festive, buy some balloons, mail personal invitations, and do not forget electronic remind-

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ers too! Many clients these days seem to be tech-savvy and would like to receive a personalized invitation via e-mail or even with a text message. Try Facebook and Twitter, too. These social media platforms are great ways to capture a large audience who might already be following your spa. If you are not sure how to capitalize on these methods of instant communication (as it is an extended modern form of word of mouth) and you do not have someone on staff who is experienced, I strongly encourage you to seek out someone who can help you get started. There are lots of tech-savvy students who would love the opportunity to showcase their skills and make a little money. Understand that it is worth your investment!

In addition to great refreshments and finger foods, be sure to offer different incentives for your current clients to make purchases at the time of this appreciation event. The purpose of the event is to simply show your appreciation, to help spread the word of your establishment, and to have your clients try your professional products that they may not have otherwise considered during a regular spa visit.

The "try before you buy" option is a great way for your clients to see if they like a product, and, of course, if they do, you can bet they will purchase it and then go tell a friend or two. Offer discounts on packages of services that are bundled and ready to go. Enter a draw to win a prize table where they can leave their names, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses that you can use to update your database, if you have not done so regularly. I would also include a space to write the name of the person that accompanied them, so that any of your clients who brought friends or walk-ins are captured. You can personally thank them later.

Personalized customer service will always be appreciated! I was so tickled when I received a beautiful card personalized to me, thanking me for an enjoyable shopping session from a clothing store I visited in Southern California. Not only did the store address me personally, but the card also included a gift certificate in my name, as well as the owner's personal phone number and e-mail address, should I need to chat with her about any of my fashion needs for upcoming events. She went as far as to send me photographs of new items they received that she felt were perfect for me, all based on my previous purchase history. Well guess what? The next time I do need something special, she will be on the top of my list as to where to turn!

### Generation Days

There are several different types of generation day themes you can celebrate in your spa, including grandparents' day, mother/daughter or father/son days, and even parents, sisters, brothers, and so on. This type of event is easy to set up for the spa and hassle free for the employees working it. Just select a theme you would like to celebrate or acknowledge and mail out flyers, send blast e-mails, and announce it on your social media platforms. This should all be done at least four to six weeks prior to the event. Also a little something in food and drinks is always appreciated. You can even create a

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basket prize that consists your hot products to add incentive and as each client comes in the door, have them and their guest put their names in for the raffle. It would be great to have daughters, mothers, and grandmothers come in together to celebrate! Keep it simple, real, and fun!

### Referral Programs

I believe referral programs are the easiest way to show a client how much you appreciate them. Options are limitless with referral programs. You can offer different incentives for referrals. Do not be afraid to try new things! Here are some examples:

- If the client purchases three gift certificates, give the fourth gift certificate for free.
- Each time a client refers a new customer, offer a discount on the next appointment. Set the standard so that they know what to expect.
- After five new referrals, give the customer a goody-bag of products.
- When a client refers two new customers, offer their next treatment for free. I love this program because every time I performed a free treatment, I knew I had gained two new clients!

No matter what referral program you decide to incorporate in your spa, giving a little back to the client can and will go a long way in the relationship.

Your local community is at your disposal and should be considered an intricate channel for your success. Being known is one thing in our industry, but being known for greatness is another. Greatness comes to those who give back, pay it forward, and demonstrate their dedication to their community and industry by following certain standards, providing education, and most of all, being a great company. Break out of your shell and head into the local community, schools, and churches to offer your professional services, partner in fundraising, and bring together the community cohesion with your clients, your future clients, and friends.

Sharing knowledge and showing off your professional products and services will you're your client's interest, create sales, and help build lifetime clients.

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