

Chapter Four: Communicating for Success

Cosmetologists should study and have a thorough understanding of communicating for success because *communicating with a purpose is the basis of all long-lasting relationships with clients and coworkers; you must be able to verbalize your thoughts and ideas with clients, colleagues, and supervisors; you need to be able to navigate sometimes complex and difficult personal issues with those in your work environment; practicing professional communication ensures your clients will enjoy their experience with you and return; and the ability to control communication and effectively express ideas in a professional manner is a necessary skill for success in any career.*

Human Relations (p.46-49)

The ability to understand people is the key to operating effectively in many professions.

Basics of Human Relations

- Human beings are social animals. We like to interact with others.
- When people are secure, they are happy, calm, and confident.
When people are insecure, they can be worried, anxious, and overwhelmed.
- You will, in your personal and professional life, encounter people and situations that are difficult to handle. Try to remember that these people are feeling insecure or they wouldn't be acting that way.

Practical tips for dealing with situations you may encounter

- Respond instead of reacting (don't let someone else dictate your emotions)
- Believe in yourself (trust your judgement)
- Talk less, listen more (you were given two ears and one mouth for a reason)
- Be attentive to your client's needs and ask for help from a manager if you are unsure how to handle a situation
- Take your own temperature (if you are tired or upset, it may affect your interactions with clients- take a deep breath; get yourself settled)

Golden Rules of Human Relations

- Communicate from your heart; problem-solve from your head
- A smile is worth a million times more than a sneer
- It is easy to make an enemy and harder to keep a friend
- See what happens when you ask for help instead of just reacting
- Show people you care by listening to them and trying to understand their point of view
- Compliment people even if you find them challenging or unpleasant
- For every service you do for others, do not forget to do something for yourself

- Laugh often
- Show patience with other people's flaws
- Build shared goals; be a team player
- Always remember that listening is the best relationship builder

Communication Basics (49-51)

Effective communication is the act of successfully sharing information between two people (or groups of people) so that the information is successfully understood.

Meeting and Greeting New Clients

- Always approach the client with a smile on your face.
- Always introduce yourself. Names are a powerful tool.
- Take a new client on a tour of the salon; introduce them to people they may have interactions with while in the salon.
- Be yourself.

Intake Form (also called a client questionnaire or consultation card)

The Client Consultation/Needs Assessment (p. 52-57)

The **client consultation**, also known as the **needs assessment**, is the verbal communication with a client that determines the client's needs and how to achieve the desired results.

Preparing for the Client Consultation/Needs Assessment

- Have a variety of styling books that your clients can look through (at least one for each hair length) and an assortment of photos showing color options
 - A **swatch** (bundles of hair) **book or ring** from haircolor manufacturers is also a great tool
- Have a portfolio of your work on hand. This means keeping a camera at your station and taking photos (with client permission of course) after a service.
- When you show a photo, explain why you performed the various services the way you did.
 - If a client brings a picture of a cut/style/color that you know will not be complementary on them, explain that every cut/color will not work on every person; diplomatically explain how you can make the style work with modifications for hair type, skin type, desired maintenance, budget, lifestyle...

The Consultation Area

- Be sure the consultation area is comfortable
- Read the intake form carefully
- Make notes on the form throughout the consultation
- After the service, record any formulations or products that you used

10-Step Consultation Method

- **Read the intake form:** Make comments to break the ice and initiate conversation
- **Assess the client's current style:** Carefully styled? Classic? In sync with clothing and image?
- **Determine the client's preferences:** Ask the client what they like most/least about their current cut and style. Is she happy with the amount of time she has to take to style her hair? If she could change something, what would it be?
- **Analyze the client's hair:** thickness, texture, manageability, condition
- **Review the client's lifestyle:** Does she spend time outdoors? Swimming? Is she a businesswoman? Artist? Mom? What are her styling capabilities? How often does she shampoo her hair? How much time does she have for styling each day?
- **Show and Tell:** Have client look through books and point to styles she likes; repeat what she tells you using specific terms (chin-length; shoulder length instead of short/long)
 - Listening to the client and repeating, in your own words, what you think he is telling you is called **reflective listening**
 - Restate what the client has said and ask for confirmation
- **Suggest options:** Ask for permission to give suggestions
 - **Lifestyle-** the style should fit the client's time and ability
 - **Hair type-** recommendations based on thick/thin/medium density; fine/medium/course texture; straight/wavy/curly/extremely curly wave patterns
 - **Face shape-** make suggestions based on client's face shape (oval, square, round, heart)
 - **Color recommendations-** Be sure your client understands your suggestions (does she know what you mean by *blonde*?)
 - **Discuss upkeep and maintenance-** Explain to the client what will be necessary to keep the style she has chosen in good shape between appointments
 - **Review the consultation-** Reiterate everything you have discussed by saying something like, "What I heard you say is..." Use precise terms and visuals to demonstrate the end result; this is the most critical step of the consultation process.

- **Once you both have the same understanding of the upcoming service**, ask if she is ready for you to proceed and start the service.
- **Concluding the Service:** Once the service is finished and the client is satisfied, take a few minutes to record the results. Note anything you might want to do again. Make notes of final results and any retail products the client purchased. Date the notes and file them.

Special Issues in Communication (p. 57-60)

Handling Tardy Clients

- Know and abide by the salon's appointment policy
 - Most salons limit the amount of time a client may be late before having to reschedule
- If your client arrives late and it will not jeopardize other appointments, take her but explain WHY you are able to take her
- If you have a habitually late client, schedule them last or tell them their appointment is actually earlier than it is
- If you are running very late, have the receptionist call your clients and give them the opportunity to reschedule or to come a little later

Handling Scheduling Mix-ups

- Stay calm
- Explain the situation without assigning blame
- Move the conversation away from who is wrong and work towards resolving the confusion

Handling Unhappy Clients

- Try to find out why the client is unhappy; get specifics
- If it is possible to change what she dislikes, do so immediately. If not, check the schedule to see how soon you can make an appointment to set things right
- If the problem cannot be fixed, honestly and tactfully explain why
- Never argue with the client
- Do not hesitate to ask for assistance from a more experienced stylist or your manager
- Confer with your manager after the experience to get advice

Handling Differences

- Working with clients from a different generation, the basic rules of professionalism should guide you
 - Older clients may not like chewing gum, slang, or the use of yeah
 - Ask older clients how they wish to be addressed (first name or full name)

- Be careful not to reference age (not aging skin but dry or less elasticity)
- Younger clients may be up on current trends- you can relate to their image but always be professional, not so much like a peer

Getting Too Personal

- **Always remain professional.** It is not your job to be a counselor, career guide, parent or motivational coach.
 - If things get too personal, try to steer to neutral ground.
 - If client discusses a personal problem, listen, tell her you are sorry, and then ask “What can we do to make your visit better today?”
- **DO NOT GOSSIP.** If a client is gossiping, gently change the subject.
 - Try books, movies, celebrities, beauty, styles, weather...

In-Salon Communication (p.60-63)

Communicating with Co-Workers

- Treat everyone with respect
- Remain objective
 - Resist being pulled into conflicts or cliques
- Be honest and sensitive
- Remain neutral
 - Do whatever you can to avoid picking sides in a dispute
- Avoid gossip
- Seek help from someone you respect
 - If you have trouble with a co-worker, ask someone for advice
- Do not take things personally
 - If you think someone is upset with you, find a quiet time and ask if something is wrong-it may not have anything to do with you
- Keep your private life private
 - Never discuss your personal life and relationships in the salon

Communicating with Managers

- **Be a problem solver.** If you speak to your manager about a problem, think of possible solutions beforehand
- **Get your facts straight.** Be sure you have your facts and information correct. Do not waste your manager’s time.

- **Be honest and open.** Listen and learn.
- **Do not gossip or complain about co-workers.** Only go to your manager about a co-worker if you have already tried to resolve the problem on your own.
- **Check your attitude.**
- **Be open to honest criticism.** It will help you to grow professionally.

Communicating during an Employee Evaluation (p. 63)

- Look over the employee evaluation document so you know how you will be evaluated
- Remember the criteria are there to help you become a better stylist and to ensure the salon's success
- Do a self-evaluation (using the form) when it is coming close to your evaluation time. Be honest. Think about your comments.
- Before your evaluation meeting, write down any thoughts or questions so you can share them with your manager. Participate in your career by communicating your desires and interests.
- When you meet with your manager, show her your self-evaluation. Let her know you are serious about your improvement and growth.
- After the meeting, thank your manager for taking the time to do the evaluation and for guidance given

"Find what you are passionate about and continue to work hard every day towards a successful future. Even when you think you've reached the top, keep striving for new success because the possibilities are endless."

- Nino DeAngelis, Celebrity Salon Owner