

Capitalize on the Season

By Nanette Miner

Granted it is the holiday season, one of the best moneymaking periods of the year, but there are ways that you can make even more money during the season and not necessarily have to see more clients.

In no particular order then, here are some suggestions for generating additional revenue during the holiday period:

Gift Certificates

Gift certificates are one of the easiest ways to make money and provide no services in return. Believe it or not, only 30% of all gift certificates are ever redeemed. Isn't this great? You get to keep 70% of the money without ever having to exchange it for a product or service. Gift certificates are also marvelous presents for your male clientele to give their female-halves. Make sure that each of your stylists as well as your receptionist or cashier offers gift certificates to each client during their interaction with them. Make sure your "salespeople" are emphasizing the convenience of giving gift certificates as presents, which is a wonderful benefit for the gift-giver.

Buy-One-Get-One

The trick with the buy-one-get-one special is to schedule the "free" appointment for after the new year. This way you get the money *before* the end of this year and can schedule services for a slower time in your salon. You can arrange the buy-one-get-one in the way that it best suits your needs and finances. For example, you might offer a buy-one-get-one *free* option, or a buy-one-get-one at *50 percent off* option. You may also offer *buy-two-get-one-free*. Finally, you may offer a series, or a booklet of services, available at holiday time *only* that allows the customer to purchase five services and receive the sixth for free, as an example. In general, people love discounts. Even if it means that they spend \$200 right now in order to save \$50 further down the road.

Pamper Yourself

You can appeal to a wide range of clients by emphasizing that they need to pamper themselves. At holiday time women, especially, are running ragged trying to make sure everyone else has a wonderful time. When do they take time for themselves? A simple suggestion is all that's needed to help these women realize that they need to take time for themselves as well. You may offer *pamper yourself* pedicure's, manicures, nail polish changes, or a *Whole New You* for the holidays!

New Year New Look!

If you find that your clients are just too busy during the holiday season to take time for a makeover impress upon them that a new look would be a great way to start their new year. December would also be a great time to purchase this "gift for yourself" to take advantage of in the *new* year. December is the one month each year when people open their wallets freely and rarely stop to consider how much they are spending, in total. In addition, when we're buying presents for everyone else, it's quite rational to buy one for ourselves as well, isn't it?

Men's Night Out

Men frequently have no idea what to get the women in their lives. Purchases such as clothing, jewelry or accessories are nerve wracking because these types of presents are so subjective and it's so easy to make the wrong choice. A man can never go wrong, however, with a certificate to a salon. Think about holding a men's night on an evening when you would normally be closed. Have gift certificates already prepared, in different denominations and for different products and services, and have enough staff on hand to be able to give one-on-one attention to each man who enters the salon. You may be considered offering hors d'oeuvres. You want the interaction to be relaxed and pleasant; so that the man not only believes that his purchase was the *right* one, but also feels comfortable having done business with you. Who knows? You may gain a new customer along the way as well.

Offer Gift Wrapping

Finally, while this is not a product or service that you can make money from, gift-wrapping it is a wonderful way to thank your loyal customers for their patronage throughout the year and to make their stress-filled holiday time just a little bit easier. Send a holiday note early enough in the month of December alerting your customers that on the day that they have an upcoming appointment with you, they can bring their gift purchases and you will have them wrapped while they are having their service. This will be especially welcome "gift" for your clients if they've spent the morning Christmas shopping and have their appointment in the afternoon. They'll be happy to come in with all their bags and leave them in *your* lap for an hour. You may want to limit the service to afternoons and weekends so that you can utilize high school or college students to do the wrapping. If you're thinking *very* far ahead - - you may even offer to do prom makeup and hair in exchange for gift-wrapping work - - in this way you won't even have to pay the gift wrappers!

And don't forget to enjoy the holidays yourself!

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