

CAN YOU AFFORD A RECEPTIONIST?

Are you really focused on managing all your business expenses to meet the changing economic climate? A special amount of effort must be put into controlling your wage costs and the productivity that the salon/spa/clinic achieves. It is also vital to look closely at what each individual person on the team is contributing in relation to costs - Is each person profitable and contributing positively to your business?

It is quite simple to analyze each operating therapist you employ however there is one person in the salon for whom it is more difficult to objectively assess the value they bring to the salon and if this contribution has a positive effect on creating extra income. That person is your receptionist.

What is a good rule to help you decide if you are ready for a receptionist?

The rule of thumb is that in order to justify the cost of a receptionist you need five or more productive operators in a salon/spa/clinic. I do not believe you should even consider this expense until you reach this point. But what of the statement *“If you employ a ‘good’ receptionist that is when your business really grows?”* I agree a good receptionist is a valuable asset but you still have to pay their wages and a ratio of five productive operators will enable them to all contribute towards paying the cost of your upfront person.

What exactly is a ‘good’ receptionist?

This is what they must clearly understand when they accept the position.

Your receptionist must recognise themselves as a powerful salesperson. They are not just there to answer the phone and to take money. Their main functions are: -

- To sell appointments.
- To sell products.
- To sell re-bookings; and
- To sell everything about your salon/spa/clinic that contributes to a full appointment schedule.

The measurement of how good your receptionist is – a full appointment schedule!

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So, choose someone for this position that has a sales background or who loves sales and who wants to work hard at growing your business.

A therapist who has been working for you for a couple of years and is 'bored with doing clients' is not the right person.

A checklist of what they must have: -

- A great smile
- A constant 'look for opportunities' attitude to increase sales.
- A 'nothing is too much trouble' attitude.
- The ability to move and think quickly.
- Good computer skills
- Great personal presentation
- Have a 'YES we can arrange that' attitude.
- An understanding they are part of the management team.
- The ability to remain independent and not become 'best friends' with staff.
- Flexibility
- The ability to fill your appointment book.
- Willingness to give team members assistance and support.
- Honesty and integrity.
- The ability to create warm friendly energy at reception.

Some Options That Can Provide Strong Benefits

- A make-up artist – if you carry a range of make up; and
- A person with a marketing background to assist with your marketing.

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Can You Afford A Full Time Or Part Time Receptionist?

Obviously, the busy days of the week are the times that you need your receptionist but what days in today's market are guaranteed to be busy? That changes each week.

Monday is a must day. Why? That is the day that the phone usually rings off the hook for appointments and enquiries, especially up until lunchtime. Your appointments for the coming week can be managed much better by having your receptionist in on the day and focused on converting enquiries to actual appointments. Monday afternoon, after the phone quiets off, is usually a good time to plan the week and get all your marketing organised and ready to go out. Stock orders can also be arranged so that all your stock arrives in time for the busier end of the week.

Late nights and Saturday are most always busy and then you can decide which other days of the week you have a requirement for.

What should you include in a job description for a receptionist to make sure they understand what is required of them on a day-to-day basis?

It is critical that the job expectations and the role be very clearly set down prior to and during the induction of a new receptionist. Here is a list of just some things to get you started: -

- What they should wear and their personal presentation standard.
- How they should welcome a client to the salon.
- How the reception area should be presented.
- Managing the productivity of the appointment system.
- Managing the phone and how you want this done.
- Following up the service of re-booking.
- Following up the products that the therapists have recommended.
- Achieving the salon's goal.
- Looking for opportunities to grow the salon's business.
- Confirming all appointments.

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- Managing the salon stock.

You could add many more things to this list, which should indicate to you that your receptionist, if they were 'good' at their position, would be one of the busiest and most important people in the salon.

You must always, on a weekly basis, manage your receptionist and keep giving them feedback on how they are doing and performing in the salon. Should you employ a receptionist, make sure you invest in this asset through ongoing training and instruction.

Look carefully at your costs before taking on a receptionist in the salon and if you currently have one, make sure they are the right person who is helping, through their efforts, to grow the salon.

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