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Get New Clients While Giving Back to the Community

By: Aaron Sonnenschein

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In order to get massive numbers of nonrepeat clients through the doors, many skin care facilities might consider giving a daily deal website, such as Groupon, half of its service dollars, or perhaps \$35 on a \$70 service. Instead, what about giving that \$35 to a charity that needs it while at the same time servicing a potential new client that might become a regular?

There are so many causes and charities that people are passionate about for a variety of reasons. Even baseball teams, cheerleading squads and Boy Scouts need to raise money. Don't you think all of those moms would jump at a professional service to nurture themselves while at the same time donating to their organization rather than having to sell another box of cookies? Certain groups might have hundreds of members all with friends and families who would be willing to make donations while enjoying a professional skin care service, and who might not be able to afford both.

Now is the time to increase your client list while giving back to the community. Contact the head of your chosen organization and offer a four-week special for all its members, and their friends and families. Make sure that the group you choose is a tax-deductible organization, and then check with your accountant to see if your donation could also be tax-deductible for your facility. Pick a service in your skin care facility that you want to build up, and offer to donate half of the price (or various percentages) of the service back to the organization. Print a flier or guest pass outlining the details of the offer, explaining the donation aspect, and then request that you attend the next meeting to meet the members and pass the fliers out, giving each member as many as they would like. Include a space at the bottom or on the back of the sheet for the person receiving the service to list all of her contact information, including e-mail address, to add to your database. You can even specify certain times this special offer will not be allowed, in order to avoid affecting the highest-volume time slots in your schedule; for example: "Offer not available on Fridays or Saturdays."

Make sure you list your skin care facility's name, address, phone number and hours, along with any other stipulation needed. You might even want to have a line on the sheet that says "group member" and explain that the member who has the most friends and family come in for the service will win a \$100 product gift basket. Or you can even be more specific: If you have a number of unused previous promotions available, announce that anyone who has 10 certificates (pick a number of your choice) that are returned to the spa for the service will win something. You can even step it up by offering to donate 20% of a member's purchase that day to the chosen organization or, if the client rebooks for a future visit, consider adding another \$5 to her overall donation.

When the time limit has expired, invite the entire group to your skin care facility to have its monthly meeting, at which time you can present your donation check. Along with the check, give the organization a detailed list of clients who came in, which members are responsible for the referrals and how much of their services/purchases were contributed to the total donation. If the amount is substantial, contact the local press for coverage of the meeting and your presentation. Consider giving a special award that evening to the skin care professional on your team who raised the most money or provided the most services.

Revive your client base, increase your cash flow, and keep your staff busy and satisfied with new, loyal, returning clients, while helping a worthwhile cause. If many facilities started a program like this, it would do so much good for the industry, and even the world. It's a win-win for everyone.

Aaron Sonnenschein began his career in the professional salon industry at 16, working at Hart Beauty Supply Company, which he later purchased with his wife, Jamie. With a degree in management and marketing from Chicago's DePaul University, he launched JAS International, an import and visual merchandising company. Later working for Mid City/Salon Centric, a division of L'Oréal USA, Sonnenschein is now district manager for Dermalogica.

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