

# 6 Common Mistakes Salons and Spas Make and How to Avoid Them

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Despite current business challenges, this seems like a great time to be opening or operating a wellness- and beauty-oriented business. [Studies and data](#) show us that consumers are more interested than ever in taking responsibility for their own health and wellness. But these operations are still complex to operate and depend on clients spending discretionary income on an experience, the result of which is often not even visible. In order to be successful, you'll want to avoid some common mistakes and misconceptions.

## ● Mistake #1: A fuzzy why

So you want to open or grow your salon or spa. Now what? Given that there are approximately 22,000 spas and 80,000 salons in the United States alone, why should a client choose yours?

### Avoid it by:

**Having a clear identity and vision.** Without core components of your brand, clients see no reason why they should return, or continue to do business with you. Need a template for your business plan? Here's one for [salons](#) and one for [spas](#).

**Making sure you have a clear target demographic.** You must know who you want your clients to be.

**Building a strong brand and keeping it consistent.** Without evident branding or consistency, clients feel they can get these services anywhere. And they will. [Learn more in our guide to create a brand that sets your business apart.](#)

## ● Mistake #2: It doesn't add up

Math may not be your strong suit, but this is not a "Field of Dreams" endeavor.

### Avoid it by:

**Paying attention to cash flow.** Even new businesses that are attracting clients and getting good press go out of business when they run out of operating cash.

**Compensating your staff in the right way.** Don't just create a plan that mirrors your competition with sky-high comp; you don't know if they're making money either! Be sensible and create win-win career paths for your team that are fair to the business.

**Budgeting.** Without budgets, especially on the spending side of the equation, there are no controls on cash flow, and you can burn through money faster than imaginable.

**Being profitable.** Sometimes in people-oriented industries, "profit" gets a bad rap. There's nothing wrong with being profitable—it allows you to keep the doors open and reinvest in the business.

## ● Mistake #3: Failing to understand the importance of the team

A spa, salon, or wellness experience is about much more than the result of a service. Clients don't become repeat visitors because they like your furniture.

### Avoid it by:

**Hiring people who understand and relate to your vision.** Not doing so is the quickest way to create a dysfunctional workplace. [Check out our Ultimate Guide to Staffing.](#)

### **Following sensible hiring protocols.**

Just because you like someone doesn't mean they'll be a great staff member. Take the time to understand how to evaluate and then develop talent over the long term.

**Reserving the final word on product and treatment decisions for leadership.** It can be tempting to allow employees undue influence over product and treatment selections.

They should participate, yes, but the owner/manager/management team should ultimately make the decision, keeping the vision focused.

**Creating a collaborative and team-oriented culture.** Spas and salons are team sports; we get the best results when we all work together.

## ● **Mistake #4: Creating confusion and unintentional roadblocks for clients**

You may feel like you're overstating the obvious, but don't make assumptions about how your messaging and marketing are being received.

### **Avoid it by:**

#### **Being clear, especially in your storefront presence, about what you offer or do.**

Don't assume that everyone walking by can understand all that you offer just from your name. Use signage, photos, and retail displays to make it clear.

#### **Making it clear to clients when you're open.**

Clearly post days and hours of operation on your bricks-and-mortar door or window, on the homepage of your website, and on your Facebook page. Don't make potential clients dig around to figure out when they can visit!

**Offering online booking.** Today's clients are used to running their lives on their mobile devices at the click of a button. Offering online booking will increase your bookings, especially after-hours, and free up your desk staff for better customer service.

**Publicizing your safety standards.** If we've learned nothing else this past year, we know that the always-clean-and-hygienic salon and spa worlds still need to communicate the steps we're taking daily to keep guests and staff safe. Post these on your website and Facebook page, through online check-in, and physically throughout your facility.

## ● **Mistake #5: Forgetting about retail**

The importance of home care for clients, as well as multiple revenue streams for the business, became very apparent in 2020.

### **Avoid it by:**

**Choosing brands that fit with your overall branding vision.** Don't be a trade-show victim. (Alright, we haven't had trade shows in a year, but the sentiment still stands.) Don't just offer products that are the current deal at your distributor. Pick brands that will become your partner in business, not just a merchant.

#### **Making the most of retail displays.**

You'd be shocked at how many clients leave a salon or spa without realizing that we offer retail products. Take lessons from the big box retailers; light your shelves, price tag your merchandise, and keep it clean and organized!

#### **Including technicians/stylists/service providers.**

You will definitely make some retail sales to walk-ins, especially with good merchandising, but the bulk of your retail revenue will come from the professional recommendations of your staff. These recommendations should be woven through the entire service experience and presented in writing at the conclusion of the visit. And staff needs to earn commission on their sales, or you won't get any.

**Getting into e-commerce.** As mentioned above, a trained and incented staff will drive retail for you, but what happens when clients can't/won't come in? At minimum, make your top sellers [available for sale through your website](#)—and you must continue to offer curbside pickup.

## ● Mistake #6: Forgetting the greater ecosystem

Consumers are more interested in wellness than ever, and that extends to the time they spend outside a wellness facility.

### Avoid it by:

#### **Paying attention to the world around you.**

Make every effort to have green, sustainable, or organic processes, procedures, and products. You don't have to be all in or LEED-certified, but your clients should be aware that you care about the environment.

**Engaging with your community.** Participate in and host events for charities and causes that are important to your clients.

**Having a purpose.** Especially if your target market includes Millennials or Gen Z'ers, be sure to connect your business to some socially minded initiatives.

#### **Working on your leadership skills.**

Staff members and clients alike are drawn to businesses that provide positive, upbeat environments and interactions. And that comes from the top down. Constantly improving your leadership skills will help you attract and retain both guests and staff members.

It's not just the hour or two the client is with you that you have to influence them. Once they have departed, are they still feeling the effects of their treatments? Were they educated? Did they enjoy their overall experience? If the perceived value doesn't extend beyond the duration of the visit, the financial investment may not add up for your guests. Avoiding these common mistakes will speed your journey to profitability!

See how Mindbody supports salons and spas.

[Explore the software.](#)

