

How to Select the Right Location for Your Salon or Spa

One of the most difficult steps you'll take as a new business owner is finding the best location for your new salon or spa. There are a variety of factors to consider. This checklist will help you determine the location that's right for you.

Before you start your search, define your target client

What type of clientele are you trying to attract? Are you looking to reach a broad demographic or a very specific niche? What are the needs of your target client? Once you define your audience, you can begin your search.

Target age _____

Gender _____

Income _____

Education level Marital _____

Marital or family status _____

Attitudes/Values _____

Interests/Hobbies _____

Lifestyle/Behaviors _____

Specific needs _____

Location evaluation checklist

You'll want to spend a significant amount of time researching the perfect area for your new salon or spa. When you find a potential location, make sure to visit at various times of the day, and different days of the week.

Traffic patterns: Evaluate traffic patterns for your new location. Are there bottlenecks on access routes that may cause your clients headaches? Will your clients be able to easily turn into and out of your location?

Parking: What type of parking is available during business hours? Will you share parking with other businesses and would that cause any limitations for clients? Is the parking lot well lit?

Public transportation: How important will access to public transportation be for your clients? Will you be close to bus routes and subway/metro stations?

Delivery access: Is there easy access for delivery of equipment or supplies?

Competitors: How many competitors are nearby? Will your salon or spa be unique enough that competitor presence won't be an issue?

Population density: Is there sufficient population density in your area to drive traffic to your business? More importantly, can you reach enough of your clients given the area's population? The [Small Business Administration](#) and the [American Fact Finder](#) (which is the U.S. Census Bureau's portal for community-specific information) are good information sources to find out.

Surrounding businesses: What other types of businesses are surrounding the location? Do they complement/reach the same client base? Or will they conflict with your business vibe? (e.g., you may not want your salon next to a fast food restaurant where the food smells could turn away customers).

Neighborhood ambiance: Does the neighborhood reflect your brand?

Renovations: Will the space meet your requirements? Work with your landlord (and in some cases local town offices) to determine what type of renovations are acceptable. An architect can help you evaluate your space and renovation ideas, and give you cost estimates, before you commit.

Funding: Research potential tax credits or incentives that states and municipalities offer to entice businesses to move to the area. Female entrepreneurs may be eligible for incentives and grants from federal, state, and local initiatives.

Zoning: Make sure the area you are evaluating is zoned for salon and spa businesses. If you have plans to expand into other business areas in the future, make sure the zoning accommodates those as well.

Capacity: Will the space be able to accommodate your current and future plans? If it's too small, you may not be able to expand. If it's too large, you will be paying for extra, unused space.

Safety: Will clients and employees feel safe in the new location and neighborhood? Is there sufficient lighting surrounding the facility if employees or clients have nighttime appointments?

Signage: Are there restrictions on the type of signage you can use to advertise your new location? Discuss this with your landlord.

Talent: Will you be able to recruit high caliber stylists and practitioners in the area?

Determining costs

As you consider locations, be sure to evaluate and compare costs for each facility on your "short list."

Rent: What is the monthly rent, both now and in the future? If the space is in an "up and coming" area, can you predict significant rent increases? Will your business be able to support them?

Renovations: Are renovations needed? Renovation costs can vary drastically depending on the type of building you are considering. Have an architect and/or engineer review your renovation plans to help estimate related costs.

Repairs: Who is responsible for building repairs? Confirm with your landlords (and be sure your lease outlines this as well).

Insurance: What kind of insurance will you need to cover your business? Take the time to get several estimates and determine the right coverage.

Property taxes: Will you be responsible for property taxes? Tenants often are. Be sure your landlord clearly outlines these costs in the lease. Request a written estimate of taxes before you commit to the location.

Utilities: What utilities will you be responsible for? It's likely you will pay for electricity, gas, heating, water, internet, phone, and trash removal. Ask your landlord for an estimate, but be sure to take into account any additional costs based on your business model (e.g., as a salon, you may have to pay more for water or electricity than a business office tenant, etc.).

At the end of the day, make sure you LOVE your new space. You will be spending a lot of time there, and you'll want it to fit your lifestyle. Make sure you're comfortable with your daily commute and that, in the case of an emergency, you can get there quickly.



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