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**Esthetician – All Trades**  
**Business Management Part - 2**  
**Reception Duties**



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# Business Management Part - 2

## Reception Duties

### Rationale

*Why is it important to learn this skill?*

First impressions are important, and a client's first contact with a salon is often through reception, whether over the phone or in person. Reception is also where the financial transactions occur and products are displayed. Attitudes, behaviours, proficiencies, customer relations, and the physical surroundings are all on display for customers to observe and judge.

### Outcome

*When you have completed this module, you will be able to:*

Describe and demonstrate reception duties.

### Objectives

1. Describe client interactions.
2. Describe products and services.
3. Describe maintaining office and waiting areas.

### Introduction

In many ways, this module is about information flowing through a salon: from estheticians to clients, estheticians to reception, and reception to clients both inside and outside the salon. Reception and reception duties are central to the flow, and although each salon operates in a unique fashion, reception plays a central role. In some salons, staff may be solely dedicated to reception duties; in others, estheticians may perform reception duties. A journey person is a well-educated and respected specialist who is thoroughly trained in the full scope of their trade and capable of functioning in any salon environment. This module will present you with common operating procedures that, when understood, will assist the apprentice in promoting their trade as a well-trained, capable worker.

# Objective One

*When you have completed this objective, you will be able to:*

Describe client interactions.

## Interpersonal Relations

Relating and communicating with others is a multi-faceted process. One must always be mindful of their posture and body language. Make sure to stand straight with the shoulders pulled slightly back. This projects an image of confidence and helps a person feel confident. In order to move smoothly and confidently, repeat movements in your mind before performing them. This applies to shaking hands, looking people in the eye, and performing services. Know exactly where tools and supplies are located. When performing services, movements will be sure and efficient. Good tradespeople are always identifiable by the accurate, easy, assured way they interact with their tools.

When using technical language with clients, make sure to speak slowly enough for others to hear. Most people are not familiar with technical terms, and they need to hear the words clearly. Avoid slang and words such as “like” which are used to stall while a person considers what to say next. Using these types of words may undermine your position as a well-educated and thoroughly trained tradesperson. Before speaking, practice what will be said.

Be aware that something may be common to an apprentice or journeyperson, but brand new to a client. A client may ask a question that has been asked countless times. Keep in mind, the information is new to the client. Remember your own interest and enthusiasm when the information was new to you. Try to portray that interest and enthusiasm to the client with your tone of voice and attention to them as you answer.

Listen to what others say, rephrase their message in your own words, and then present the information back to the person. They will confirm that you understand them or they will correct you.

People appreciate being treated honestly, even when the news is unfortunate. If the salon is running late, let people know. They would rather know the truth than show

up early and waste their time in the waiting room. Smile. Face people directly. Focus attention on the client. Answer directly and honestly. If you don't know the answer to a client's question, inform the client that you will get the answer. Quickly and efficiently find the answer and inform the client.

## Telephone Etiquette



Include your name and the name of the salon when answering the phone. Ask the caller how you can help them. Never cover the phone with a hand, ask the caller if it is OK to be put on hold; if so, place them on hold. Never speak to others in the salon while speaking with someone on the phone. When taking messages, write down the name of the caller, the name of the recipient, the date and time of the call, and any other pertinent personal details. Ensure accuracy by repeating the message to the caller. Deliver the message to its recipient.

## **Greeting and Directing Clients**

Greet clients when they arrive and wish them a good day as they leave. Pay attention to each client by turning your body square to them and looking them in the eye as you speak. Smile! Upon check in, confirm the client's name. Confirm their service to make sure that what they expect is identical to what is written in the appointment book. Check periodically throughout the day for clients who must fill out forms. Have the forms ready before the client enters. People appreciate an efficient and attentive service. Direct clients to the comfortable chairs in the waiting area and inform them of what is provided. People feel comfortable when they know what to expect. Inform them of what is available: children's books, magazines, beverages, and the location of the washrooms.

## **Scheduling Appointments**

When scheduling appointments, begin with basic information such as the client's name, date of appointment, and service(s) requested. Other details may include the cost of the services and the time required before, during, and after the service. A client may not know what options are available. Some options may relate to the services they are requesting. This is an opportunity to inform them of services and products that they may appreciate.

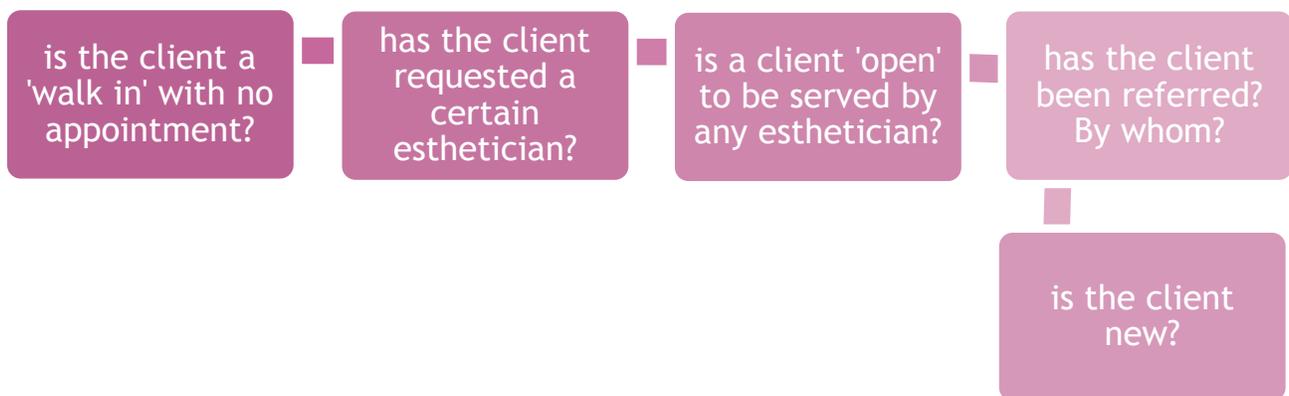
A new client will need to arrive early to fill out forms. At this point, an esthetician will ask for information regarding contraindications. This may be the time to inform clients that they need to bring flip flops, or that they will need to wait 20 minutes after the service is completed for drying their nail polish. At the end of the scheduling conversation, review all the details with the client as a final confirmation. Make sure to mention the day in both numerical and name form. For example, Thursday the 12<sup>th</sup>. Sometimes people may get days mixed up and think that Thursday is the 11<sup>th</sup>.

Asking questions can save money, time, and energy. For example, some clients arrive at a spa in order to have a manicure; however, they have gel nails. The client did not think to mention it, and now a problem arises. In order to perform the manicure, the salon must remove the gel nails. Is the salon equipped to remove them? Removal will require extra time not factored into the original service. Will the removal of the gel nails set the spa behind? The client did not enter the salon knowing that extra work needed to be performed. Is the client willing to pay for the extra work? How will the

client react to the news of the increased cost? Will the salon be forced to cancel the appointment because they do not have extra time?

Although a detailed client consultation will be done when the client arrives, a salon may have a few basic questions to ask during the scheduling of an appointment. Examples include: will the client be wearing contacts (these can prevent or limit some services), and will the client have freshly exfoliated skin (this can prevent or limit some services).

Additional information to be included while scheduling appointments may include:



## Client Concerns

Concerns range widely. Pre-service concerns can vary from how long a service will take, to worries about parking and hygiene. Post-service concerns also vary greatly. Clients may be unhappy about the service. For example, a client paid for one hour of service, but the apprentice completed the service in 45 minutes. The client may feel that they only received three quarters of the service for which they paid. Clients may be concerned with how to care for their new lashes in the weeks following their artificial eyelash application. Many clients are concerned about privacy. Will their service be in a private room? It is important to only perform services for which the salon and its members are equipped and trained.

An apprentice must show initiative to suit their level of knowledge and skill. Be aware that, in order to grow as a tradesperson, an apprentice will need to perform new things for the first time. This may be unsettling, but it is necessary. If a new task is clearly beyond the knowledge and skills of an apprentice, they should defer to their journeyman for leadership. After asking for guidance, follow with a genuine interest in learning the new skill.

## Professionalism

**Professionalism** can be defined as the sum of a person's attitude and approach to their occupation, including knowledge, skill, ethics, and mindfulness. Since ethics are integral to professionalism they need their own definition. **Ethics** can be defined as the moral principles that govern a person's behaviour. These concepts permeate through a person's life, and each individual must spend time reflecting on their personal growth in the areas of professionalism and ethics.

Be courteous with others, be honest and tactful, show discretion, and be flexible. Do not show favouritism to clients; represent yourself, services, and products honestly. Fulfill obligations and practice flawless infection control. Strengthen the

esthetician trade through professionalism. Each trade is a small community. Tradespeople know or know of many other tradespeople in the area. Clients, apprentices, and journeymen move between salons. Speaking negatively of others is never a flattering quality. If a person speaks ill of others, knowledge of their behavior will spread. Clients will be reluctant to be serviced by an esthetician who talks about others, and employers will be reluctant to hire such a worker.

## Preventing Complaints

Things do not always turn out well. The best way to deal with customer complaints is to prevent them from happening in the first place. The three main areas of conflict are:

- *The extent of the service.* Make sure that customers understand what is provided and what is not.
- *The time required.* An experienced tradesperson knows that the job is more than just the job. For the apprentice, performing any task involves prior setting up and planning. After a job is complete, things must be cleaned and put away; paperwork must be finalized. The client must understand when they need to arrive in the salon. Their arrival time must be made clear to them. Do they have

the address? Are they familiar with the area? Where can they park? In order to arrive on time, they need to factor in many variables. The client also needs to know how long the service will last. Finally, must they remain in the salon after the service to accommodate drying or curing?

- *The cost.* Many people are uncomfortable discussing money. As part of a business, it is imperative that all parties understand the exchange of money for a service. Some salon menus read *Leg Waxing -- \$70 and up*. Indeterminate prices increase a client's stress level and open the door for conflict. Keep in mind, clients will sometimes change their mind inside the salon. They may choose an additional service or negate a service they had previously chosen. Either way, know the salon's policy regarding how these last minute changes may or may not affect billing and scheduling.

## Dealing With Complaints

Sometimes complaints cannot be prevented; they must be resolved quickly and efficiently. Each salon should have a protocol, and knowing the protocol will help resolve complaints. For instance, some salons will not offer cash refunds for services that have been performed. Instead, they will repeat the service without charge. Whatever the protocol may be, learn it.

Here are the key points:

- *Remain calm.* Complaint resolution is a thoughtful process, not an emotional reaction. Clients may become angry, defensive, or hurtful.
- *Don't make hasty decisions or promises.*
- *Gather information.* From everyone that was involved. People involved in conflict will rarely present all the information relating to the situation. They may bend the truth or withhold information.
- *Refer to your journey person.* Keep your journey person or supervisor informed; at some point, they may take ownership of the situation.

Most customers will return to a place of business after they have stated a complaint or dissatisfaction with service, if they feel that they have been treated with respect and the problem has been rectified.

Some complaints are small and can be quickly resolved by the esthetician during the service. Other complaints are more complicated and will need to be referred to a journey person, manager, or owner. Always try to resolve the conflict quickly and efficiently, but remember: life is not full of happy endings. Some conflicts are never resolved.

## **Post Service**

After a service has been completed, recommend to the client products that will extend the positive effects of the service, as well as products that will keep them looking healthy. Also recommend that they reschedule an appointment for an optimal time. For example, if the client has been waxed, recommend an appointment for the soonest time that a waxing will be effective. Rebooking will encourage repeat business and ensure that a client can get in. This is especially important during busy seasons when many clients want services within a limited span of time.

# Objective One Self-Test

1) How does an apprentice make sure that their movements are confident, clean, and efficient?

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2) Indicate three things that are important when speaking on the phone.

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3) Why should clients be told what is available to them?

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4) Why might a new client arrive early at a salon?

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5) Indicate three concerns that a client may have with a salon.

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6) What may cause a customer to not go to an esthetician?

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7) What are the three main areas of customer complaints?

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8) What should an apprentice do if they cannot manage a customer's complaints?

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# Objective One Self-Test Answers

- 1) By practicing the movements mentally before making them.
- 2) Any of the following: smile, pronounce clearly, have pencil and paper ready, quiet background, computer on and ready.
- 3) Knowing what is available will make them more comfortable.
- 4) A client may have to fill out forms.
- 5) Concerns may include:
  - How long a service will take.
  - Parking.
  - Hygiene.
  - Unhappiness about the service.
  - After care.
- 6) If the esthetician speaks poorly of others.
- 7) The extent of the service, the time required by the client, the cost of the service.
- 8) The apprentice should refer the client to a journeyperson, manager, or owner.

# Objective Two

*When you have completed this objective, you will be able to:*

Describe products and services.

## Products and Costs

All of the products purchased by a salon are called *inventory*. After the products are ordered and received by the salon, they are streamed into two categories: products used during services, and products sold to the public. Products are priced according to many factors. How much was the product purchased for? What profit can be made by selling the product at a higher cost? How much are people willing to pay for the product? How much does the product cost at other salons? For example, a quick drying top coat may dry in 15 minutes instead of 30 minutes. However, quick drying top coat may cost more than regular top coat. If a salon purchases and uses the more expensive, quick drying topcoat, they will have to charge the client more to cover increased costs. However, because of the reduced drying time, the salon may have a decreased turnaround time in between clients. As a result, the salon may be able to perform more services in one day, thereby increasing profits. As a final factor, tradespeople prefer to work with certain tools and materials. An apprentice or journeyman may choose a tool or product based solely on personal preference.

## Display Techniques

Products are displayed in order to be aesthetically pleasing and to sell. The arrangement of products can enhance the look of a salon. Make sure that labels are facing outward for easy reading. Arrange products in interesting shapes and colour combinations. For Halloween, orange and black products can be featured, arranged in the shape of a pumpkin.

Products are prominently placed to increase their profile. A product can be prominently displayed because it is new and the salon wants to introduce it. Products should be separated so clients can easily find what they are looking for. The makeup should be in one area, the foot products in another.

Related products can be placed near each other to increase upselling. For example, a client is looking for a new powder foundation. Place the appropriate brush next to the foundation, and the client may decide to purchase a new brush as well.



A Christmas display at the entrance of a salon, featuring products that are on sale. Photo courtesy of MC College, Saskatoon

## Product Promotion

Products can be promoted in a variety of ways for a variety of reasons. Products can be highlighted because they are new, or they can be reduced in price to sell old stock. Products can be promoted in conjunction with a service. If a client purchases a service,

they can purchase a related product for a reduced cost. Quite often, this product will assist in their home care regime.

Products can be promoted in conjunction with the seasons. They can be promoted when a new apprentice or journey person joins a salon. A new member may bring a new service to the salon that was not previously performed. The salon may advertise this new service and discount related products. Some salons promote products on a regular basis. For instance, a salon may promote a new product every month.

Products can be promoted based on the salon's relationship with a supplier. A supplier can sell something to a salon at a reduced price, then the salon can pass the savings on to clients. Frequent customers and first time customers can be given special offers. Birthdays are an occasion to give away a free sample or service. Trial sizes can be offered to clients, and special deals can be offered during slow days of the week or times of the year. For instance, January is often a slow month because people have spent money on Christmas gifts and travelling. Offering special deals during slow times can even out the income of a salon, instead of having high intakes some months and low intakes in other months.

After a client has received a service, the apprentice or journey person may suggest appropriate products to aid the client's home care regime. Single use products can be given to the client. For example, a dermaroller can be given to the client after the service. If not given away, it must be disposed. A salon may incorporate the costs of some supplies inside the cost of a service and then give the supplies to the clients. Sometimes, partially used supplies accrue. They take up space. They can be given away.

## **Product knowledge**

Knowing products is very difficult. New products are being developed all the time, and it takes a thorough understanding of a product and extensive work experience to match a product to a client. Some salons assign only a few workers to keep up to date on products, and only these workers recommend products to clients. In other salons, all staff members are encouraged to learn about and sell products. Never rely on the claims of manufacturers. Studies undertaken by groups who have no money to gain

are the most reliable. These can be found in *Consumer Reports* or other similar documents.

It is essential to know the ingredients of all products that will be used on a client, and it is imperative to know which ones are most likely to cause allergic reactions. During the client consultation, ask the client if they are allergic to any of the high-risk ingredients that will be used. If the client does have a relevant allergy, a new, safe product must be found.

# Objective Two Self-Test

1) Why may a salon choose to use a more expensive product?

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2) Why might a product be prominently displayed?

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3) Why might a product be given to a client after the service?

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4) Who provides the most reliable information regarding products?

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# Objective Two Self-Test Answers

- 1) The product may reduce the time taken for services. A product may be chosen because it is favoured by an apprentice or journey person.
- 2) It is on sale, new, or part of a promotion.
- 3) The cost of the product may be built into the price of the service, or the product may be a 'single use' type.
- 4) Groups who have no money to gain are the most reliable sources of information.

# Objective Three

*When you have completed this objective, you will be able to:*

Describe how to maintain office and waiting areas.

## **Professional Image of Reception Area**

Prominently display the certifications of all journeypersons working at a salon. Display the business license and other certifications.

## **Maintain an Attractive, Clean, and Comfortable Salon**

Each salon will have its opening routine. The routine will include details such as when staff are expected to arrive, turning on devices, setting up rooms, and many other tasks. Upon being hired, inquire about the routine and learn it ahead of time. The day will eventually arrive when each apprentice has to open the salon alone.

People can make food at home, but they choose to eat at restaurants. Just as a restaurant provides people with atmosphere and experience, so should a salon. Many clients come to a salon to be tended to, to feel pampered and special. Most salons are peaceful, quiet spaces with soothing atmospheres. Calming music or sounds of water are popular. Colour schemes are usually neutral, including beiges and soft greens. 'Outdoorsy' colours are popular while 'electric' ones are usually avoided. Comfortable seating must be provided in order to promote the feeling of pampering and relaxation. Beverages and magazines are often offered.

Each salon will also have its own end-of-day routine. It is also imperative to learn this routine ahead of time, before an apprentice is asked to close the salon for the night. At the end of each day, every salon will go through some form of cleaning regimen. For more information on what is commonly expected, refer to the module **EST 1** *Sanitizing, Disinfecting, and Sterilizing*.

# Objective Three Self-Test

1) Where should a journeyperson's certificate be displayed?

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2) What type of atmosphere is created by most salons?

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3) What types of colours are often chosen in salons?

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4) Which module outlines the daily cleaning routines at a salon?

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# Objective Three Self-Test Answers

- 1) In a prominent location.
- 2) A quiet, soothing, relaxing, pampering atmosphere.
- 3) Neutral colours, beiges, and soft greens.
- 4) **EST 1** *Sanitizing, Disinfecting, and Sterilizing.*

# Module Summary Self-Test

1) What should be kept in mind when an apprentice or journey person is asked the same question multiple times?

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2) When answering the phone, identify three things that may need to be considered in addition to the usual information?

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3) True / false. Most customers will not return to a place of business after they have stated a complaint or dissatisfaction with service, if they feel that they have been treated with respect, and the problem has been rectified.

4) How can products be arranged to increase upselling?

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5) How can a salon's relationship with a supplier benefit the salon's clients?

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6) Which two routines are involved in a salon?

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# Module Summary Self-Test Answers

- 1) The question is new to the customer and it should be answered completely and enthusiastically.
- 2) Is the client a walk in, have they requested a certain esthetician, are they open to being served by any esthetician, has the client been referred, is the client new?
- 3) False.
- 4) Related products can be placed next to each other.
- 5) A supplier can provide a discount to a salon, and the salon can pass the discount to clients.
- 6) Opening and closing routines.