



The Top 10 Myths of Employee Recruiting & Selection in the Salon/Spa Industry

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In the salon/spa industry, the most important decision you make every day is who you allow in the doors to care for your clients. In fact, the quality of the services you offer, your reputation, and your ability to grow your business depend almost entirely on the quality of the people you employ. That's why there is no more important managerial skill than the ability to recruit, hire, and retain great people.

Unfortunately, there are some commonly held misconceptions and myths about hiring that can severely hamper your effectiveness and activities if you buy into any of them. Like Mary Kay Ash said years ago: "If you think you can, you can. And if you think you can't, you're right." So, let's dispel some of the most prevalent limiting beliefs (or myths) and put you on the fast track to hiring the best so you can boost profitability, build your business, and make work more rewarding and fun for everyone.

Myth 1

Job board ads and my website are the most effective recruiting tools.

While job boards and your website make it quick and easy for the employer and the applicant alike, they are by far less effective than the top three, proven sources of great employees no matter what industry you're in.

The number one source of proven talent is all the great people who used to work for you. When employees leave you to work elsewhere, they often discover the grass isn't greener after all. In fact, research shows that 20 to 25 percent of employees have gone back to work for a company they once left. Imagine if 20 percent of all the good people who ever left came back to work for you. You'd have instantaneously productive people who require little or no training. All you have to do is ask.

About a month after someone good leaves, call and ask if he or she would consider coming back. And call the great people who left years ago too. Even if they say: "No," you can then ask if they know of anyone else who might be interested.

And don't give your best ex-employees away to your competition without a fight. Anytime someone calls you for references on a former employee you would like to have back, make sure and call that employee and see if you can get him or her to come back to work for you instead.

The second-best source of new talent is every new person you hire. All you have to do is ask them if they've worked or trained with anyone who might be interested in working on your team. Do this even if you're not looking to hire anyone at the moment. Build your recruiting data base now for the day you do have a need.

The third best source is all your present employees. Research shows that employee-referred candidates are three times more likely to be a good match for the job. This is because you employees give these candidates much more detailed information about the job requirements and working conditions than you would. As a result, candidates are only likely to proceed with the selection process if they it's a good match. And, because they're such a good fir, referral candidates who are hired are also much less likely to quit or be fired within the first few months.

The key is to let employees know you need good people and specifically what you're looking for. Ask them if they trained with anyone or have worked with anyone in the past that they liked and who might want to change employers. If you don't already have one, consider implementing a referral incentive or reward program that's fun and creates some excitement. The reward can be as inexpensive as movie tickets or as incentivizing as a generous dollar amount. How much is a great, new employee worth to you?

Myths 2 & 3:

**We're a busy salon and spa; we don't have time to recruit.
I have enough team members. I don't need to recruit.**

Recruiting is like bathing – it's only effective if you do it every day.

If you only recruit when you have "the time," you severely limit your ability to attract the best. When you believe you don't have the time, you narrow a big window of opportunity down to a peephole.

If you don't make any recruiting efforts until you actually need to hire someone, it's just like grocery shopping on an empty stomach – you'll take the first thing that looks good. Feeling pressured to hire someone causes you to be less selective and often results in a bad hiring decision.

Effective recruiting is an on-going process. It is the same as – and just as important as – your marketing efforts to attract new clients. Effective recruiting is proactive and consistent.

Recruiting doesn't have to be time consuming either. Simply print a recruiting message on the backside of your business card: *"We're looking for great people to join our dynamic and fun-loving team. If you'd like to explore employment opportunities with us, call me anytime for a confidential interview."* Give this card to people you think you'd like to hire when you meet them at industry events, training sessions, and community gatherings. Ask your employees, clients, and vendors if they know of any good stylists or technicians they could recommend.

It's also important to make it easy for people to apply. Since most of the great stylists, technicians, and receptionists who want to work are already working, make sure they can go your website to apply on-line at their convenience. But don't ask them to fill out a long, boring application for electronic submission. Just tell them why they want to work for you (what's in it for them) and provide an email form to send you the specifics of when and how they'd like to be contacted.

What gets measured gets done. So, set a goal for the number of recruiting cards you'll pass out or applications you'll collect every week or month. When you take this proactive, marketing approach, you'll soon build a data base of potential applicants to call on whenever needed.

Myth 4

It's impossible for small salons and spas to compete with the big employers for talent.

If you really believe you can't compete with the big guys, you just haven't taken the time to think about all the unique benefits you can offer. These include, but are not limited to, more flexibility (not as highly structured, not as many rules and regulations), family-friendly policies, less competitive work environment, and more personal attention from management.

Exercise: No matter the size of your organization, complete this exercise to hone in on the reasons for your success to-date and craft recruiting messages to ensure your success in the future.

List the Top 10 Reasons Your Clients Frequent Your Salon/Spa:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

List the Top 10-Reasons Talented People Should Want to Work at Your Salon/Spa:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Now, use the reasons people should want to come to work for you to write some great recruiting headlines: “Family-friendly & fun,” “Turn your career around,” “Tired of...?”, “Starting out or starting over?”

Myth 5

People won’t want to apply to work here if we make our jobs hard to get.

If you hire just any properly licensed, warm body that walks in the door, you’re setting yourself up for all kinds of trouble.

First, you’ll lose the talented people you already have because talented people don’t want to play on mediocre teams. Aren’t your best people the ones who are great at their own jobs and who support the rest of the team as well? When there are too many average or below average people on a team, the A-players will start resenting carrying an unfair share of the load and will start to look elsewhere for employment.

Second, the most important decision you’ll ever make is who you allow in the doors to take care of your customers. It’s up to you to set high standards and hire only the best. After all, one bad experience with one bad hire and that’s one client who will never come back again. (And that unhappy client will most likely tell all their friends and family about their bad experience too.)

Third, the harder the job is to get, the more the very best people will want it. If you do a telephone prescreen, then test the applicant’s skills, then interview thoroughly so you understand what motivates and drives this applicant, and then do a thorough reference check before making an offer of employment, the person receiving the offer will feel

very special indeed – like they earned the job on their own merits because they are “a cut above” all the other applicants.

Myth 6

Experienced people are all egomaniacs.

This kind of stereotyping is as silly as believing all blondes are dumb. If you pass over experienced people because you believe you’d be hiring an ego problem, you’re denying yourself and the rest of your staff the benefit of the tips, tools, techniques and wisdom an experienced person has to offer — all this in addition to the healthy client roster they’d probably bring with them.

If you want to find out if an applicant is an “egomaniac” ask him or her to tell you about a time they were on a team or a member of a group. Then listen for the number of “I’s” versus the number of “we’s” in whatever experience they recount.

Myth 7

It’s all about the money.

Even though every talented person who ever left one job for another told their employer it was “for the money,” money is rarely the real reason anyone quits. Over the years, research studies have shown time and again that the number one reason people leave is because of their dissatisfaction with their manager or supervisor.

In a addition to a good supervisor, there are four other things that everyone wants in a job, no matter what industry they’re in or which generation they belong to:

- ◆ Good supervisor/manager and coworkers
- ◆ Work/Life balance
- ◆ Opportunities to learn, grow and/or advance
- ◆ Recognition (appreciation)

Are you delivering what’s needed to keep your best people on-board and happy?

Myth 8

The best applicants make the best employees.

Why did the person who made such a great impression in the interview turn out to be such a dud on the job? The odds are you hired a person with the ability to put their best foot forward and dazzle you with canned answers and perfect presentation skills – instead of a person who would be great on the job.

Many times this happens because the hiring manager has not spelled out what is specifically required to be successful on the job. The best and easiest way to do this is to use the CAPS formula:

C	Capacities: What are the mental (IQ) and physical capacities required? How smart and how strong (physically capable) must the successful applicant be? Capacities are the first and foremost important factors to consider. (No matter how talented or qualified, a person who could not work on her feet for hours on end would not make a good stylist.)
A	Attitude: After capacities, the most important requirement is attitude. According to the U.S. Dept. of Labor, more than 87 percent of employee failures are due to an unwillingness to do the job. Unwillingness is an attitude problem. Attitudes to look for include customer service, honesty, reliability, responsibility. It's much easier to train someone with a great attitude how to schedule appointments than it is to train an experienced chronic complainer to be more positive.
P	Personality: It would be wonderful if you could find the right personality fit each time, but, in reality, there will rarely be a perfect fit because there are actually four personalities involved – the applicant's, the manager's, the job's, and the company's (corporate culture). Personality traits include attention to detail, assertiveness, competitiveness, activity level, dominance, sociability, and impulsiveness. While not as important as the required capacities and attitude, you would not hire the same personality type to be a salesman as you would to be a librarian.
S	Skills: The ability to read and write English is a skill; the ability to learn to read and write English is a capacity. Skills are the easiest job requirements to identify and verify. It is strongly recommended that you test for the skills you need. Have the stylist applicant actually color, cut, and style a volunteer or at the very least walk you through the step-by-step process verbally.

Now, think of two or three of the very best people who ever worked for or with you. Which capacities, attitudes, personality traits, and skills did they have in common?

Myth 9

I know within one minute if someone is going to be a good employee or not.

Psychologists assert that most people make a hiring decision within 14 seconds of meeting a job applicant while a study¹ out of Michigan State found that: "The interview, when used alone, is, on average, only about eight percent more effective than flipping a coin."

Why are so many hiring decisions based on fleeting first impressions and gut-instinct interviews, when the actual best predictors of success on the job are:

¹ *Testing as a Predictor of Training Success and Job Performance*, Dr. John E. Hunter, *Industrial Psychologist*, Michigan State University, 1969

Best Predictors of Success on the Job²

Testing	53%
Temporary job assignment	44%
Reference check	26%
Experience	18%
Interview	14%
Academic achievement	11%
Age	- 1%

There are all kinds of tests on the market that can help you screen in the best and screen out the rest. There are tests for attitudes, personality, intelligence, and honesty to name a few. Or, as suggested earlier, you can create your own tests for capacities and skills and ask attitude and personality questions in the interview.

Myth 10

It's hard to find good people.

If you believe this myth, it can't help but work against you and, in fact, become true for you. You might ask yourself if this "belief" is just an excuse or rationalization for the fact that you haven't had any recruiting success or haven't done any recruiting at all lately.

The truth is you can find good people everywhere if you'll go back to Myth 7 and define what good looks like according to the CAPS formula and create a magnetic company culture. A magnetic company attracts the best and repels the rest. Magnetic companies empower their employees to do the right thing and make a point of having fun while getting lots of work done. Two well-known examples are Southwest Airlines and Disneyland. Even when there are labor shortages, these two employers always have more applicants than jobs available.

And don't think you have to employ thousands in order to be a magnetic employer-of-choice. Just deliver what employees want most from their jobs (Myth 6) and the word will get out. Your employees and clients will be happy to recommend you enthusiastically to their friends and families.

2 Validity and Utility of Alternative Predictors of Job Performance, 96(1), Psychological Bulletin 72-98