

Little white lies are lies we tell that we think are harmless - but there are little white marketing lies some beauty professionals believe that are doing more harm than good—keeping them from acknowledging and acting on the truth:

Lie #1 “We provide exceptional customer service.”

Wrong.

The truth is, most beauty professionals are merely meeting client expectations. Clients expect to be treated like guests. They expect for services and products to provide the results and performance you promised. They expect to feel pampered and important at your salon or spa.

If nothing about the experience at your salon or spa is *outside of the expected order, beyond what was expected or better than the competition* in some way that is *meaningful to your clients*, you’re not providing exceptional, extraordinary or excellent customer service. At best, you are meeting expectations.

But don’t just take my word for it.

Take the results of a 2011 Customer Satisfaction Barometer, conducted by American Express:

- According to the study, **70%** of Americans said they would be willing to **spend almost 15% more** with businesses they believed (really) provided excellent customer service.
- With such an indicator, you would think that businesses would make customer service a top priority; but in the same survey, **60%** said they *don’t believe* businesses are making customer service a high priority.
- In fact, **26%** said they think businesses are actually paying **less attention** to service. Only **29%** of US consumers said that recent shopping experiences **exceeded** their expectations.
- Only **24%** of US consumers believe that you value their business and will go the extra mile to keep it.
- **48%** of those who said they would not pay more for good service said it’s because they expect good service, every time. (And why shouldn’t they?)

What most businesses should claim, instead, is that:

“Less than 1/3 of our customers think we provide exceptional customer service.”

Not quite so impressive, is it?



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Lie#2 “Our employees set us apart.”

Wrong.

At best, it’s a distinction without a difference. Why? *Every business* enjoys a unique employee culture because no two businesses have exactly the same make-up of people.

Your employees set you apart – so what? So does everyone else’s.

If you want to stand behind the claim that your employees set you apart, you need to be able to point to unique capabilities, characteristics, strengths or accomplishments in order to prove it. (And before you say, “our employees provide exceptional customer service,” please re-read the first little white marketing lie!)

Lie#3 “Word of mouth is our best marketing.”

Wrong.

Unfortunately, for most of the business owners making this claim it’s *technically* true—but only by default. Because what most are really saying is that they have no idea what else – if anything – in their marketing mix is producing any results. Or worse, because word-of-mouth marketing is actually the only form of marketing they’re engaging in.

And even that is a little white marketing lie because (1) **‘you’** can’t do word of mouth marketing. *By definition*, your customers do it for you and you have no control over whether or how it occurs—hardly strategic! And (2) your clients ***are not*** going to walk out of your business and tell other people about you **unless and until you give them something to talk about!**

Most business owners who make this claim are engaging not in word of mouth marketing, but in “**accidental marketing.**” To give you an idea of how effective this is as a marketing strategy, let me ask:

- Would you engage in “accidental bookkeeping,” hoping that customers would still pay you (and pay the right amount) without setting prices or giving them a bill?
- Accidental accounting or tax reporting? Accidental, random purchasing?
- Would you provide services to your clients by accident – without consultation to find out what they need, without education, and without strategy?

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Lie#4 “We can’t sell retail because of diversion.” or the equally popular: “...because we’re aren’t salesmen.”

Wrong.

Have professional products made their way onto mass retailer’s shelves? Yes. Can consumers buy most of the same products you sell online? Probably. Does this mean you won’t be a profitable retailer? **It doesn’t have to.**

**To sell more retail in the salon and spa, you have to build client trust.
To build client trust, you have to sell more retail!**

What’s more, selling the right products to your clients **is your responsibility**; you are likely the only person who will observe their hair, scalp or skin conditions and know how to improve or treat them.

It would take a full-scale revolution of sorts to stem the tide of diversion. And hiring “sales people” to take over your retail sales would be a huge mistake.

What’s needed is a change of mindset, a change of how the retail game is played in the salon and spa, and new tools that can do the selling work on your behalf.

Lie#5 “Our customers love us.”

Wrong.

This lie is especially dangerous. When you begin to believe that your customers love you more than your business shows that they need, want and love your customers, you’re in trouble. You’re just a hop, skip and a jump away from complacency, neglect or even the condescending disdain that will reveal just how fragile that customer relationship was.

Love is unselfish, patient, slow to take offense and overlooks shortcomings. Love puts the interests of the object of its love ahead of its own. Those who truly, deeply love are almost unconditionally faithful to the object of their affection.

Customers, on the other hand, are self-centered. **They are in the relationship for what they are getting out of it.** (And why shouldn’t they be?) They are likely to take offense and notice shortcomings. If their interests change, or dissatisfaction occurs, they will quickly go elsewhere. And they are fickle. Most are more than open to the possibility of being wooed by another offer and many welcome any opportunity to experience something new.

**Your customers are sitting at the bar,
made up, looking hot—just waiting
for someone else to buy them a drink.**



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That's where the 2012 Salon and Spa Marketing Calendar comes in:

Have you ever watched NBC's "The Biggest Loser?" One of the most coveted prizes each season is the meal plan. Why? The meal plan does the work for the individual—they receive pre-portioned helpings, the calories are already counted, each meal is delivered right to the front door every day and it's all part of a strategic plan to help the contestant.

The 2012 Salon and Spa Marketing Calendar is the salon and spa marketing meal plan.

Everything is laid out, month after month, week after week and day after day to help build a strong, strategic marketing program that will give the salon, spa or independent professional the means to truly:

- Develop a truly exceptional-extraordinary-and-excellent customer experience
- Deliver over-the-top (and beyond the expected) customer service
- Identify what truly separates them from the competition and communicate their unique strengths to clients
- Develop a highly engaged, motivated and loyal employee culture
- Go beyond 'accidental marketing' to effective, easy-to-manage and enjoyable strategic marketing
- Change the mindset of employees who are resistant to selling retail
- Learn how to make selling retail a strong part of the client experience (and one that is profitable to the business!)
- Find out how to cultivate genuine "customer love" and loyalty



Change the Way You Play the Game (to sell more retail)
To sell more retail in your salon or spa, you have to build client trust. To build client trust, you have to sell more retail. Here's why:

- Selling the right products to your clients is your responsibility; you are likely the only person who will observe their hair, scalp or skin conditions and know how to improve or treat them.
- Selling clients the right products gives them the tools they need to meet long-term goals for looks they want to achieve, the quality of their appearance and their hair/scalp/skin health.
- Selling products keeps you on the client's mind; when they use your products at home they will remember the advice and instructions you gave and will watch for the benefits you predicted to materialize.
- Small is one of the most powerful memory triggers. Selling professional products (designed with painstaking attention to fragrance as well as performance) will stimulate subconscious memories of how clients felt relaxed, pampered, special and important while in your care at the salon or spa.
- Products that perform as advertised and deliver on benefits give clients a reason to come to back to your salon or spa in order to repurchase.
- Selling products which perform as you said they would reinforces the client's confidence in your knowledge, expertise and ability. Product prescription and performance proves that you are the expert!

Convince? Now that you know why you should do it, are some ways you can make selling retail an organic part of your business and which can take all the pain and fear out of the selling process for you?

- First and foremost: always and only make authentic recommendations. If you sell for your own benefit (rather than a client's genuine need) you will lose trust. Once lost, trust is difficult to regain.
- Use a visual take-away tool, like a prescription form, business card with an area to list recommendations or some other system, religiously, as part of each and every client appointment.
- Change your mindset. You are a service provider, and making product recommendations is part of that service. You have a professional obligation to tell clients about what you observe and how products and services can help.

- Talk about problems and solutions, not products. Talk about conditions and cures. Talk about the client's goals—like achieving a celebrity look—in terms of products needed for styling and maintenance at home, makeup palette and step-by-step procedures, highlights, hair color or texture, etc.
- Talk in terms of the benefits to the client, not the virtue or "newness" of any product. It's not that you have a great new product that does such-and-such, it's that your client needs a product because it provides certain specific, unique client benefits. See the difference?
- Put selling tools to work on your behalf. Merchandise, focusing on client-centric benefits from the inside-out. Website and blog posts, e-mail newsletters, social media status updates, posters on windows and walls, shelf and station talkers, point of sale displays, samples, try me! stations, bag stuffers, thank you notes or e-mails, prescription pads, recommendation cards and appointment reminders—all least 15 ways to introduce your clients to the products they need—without saying a word!
- Reimburse pricing to include products in the price of certain services, (such as texture or hair color services) where you know that reparative, reconstructing or color extending products are needed. That way, you're a hero—you're "giving" products to your client's best interests and introducing products into combination packages.

May is National Photograph Month
These lots of good reasons for you to partner with a photographer for cooperative or cross marketing:

- Model or client shots for use in advertising or contests
- Creating your own look book or portfolio
- Before and after client transformations
- Photographing your salon or spa for pictures to use in marketing, advertising, your website, social media, press releases, invitations, etc.
- Photos to help get releases for bridal services or graduation, homecoming, prom and other events
- Head shots professional men and women can use for social media, resumes, portfolios or advertising
- Product photos to create your own online or print catalog, e-mail or direct mail ads
- Public relations events, charity benefit events, fundraisers and other press-worthy events
- Photo-documented the life and changes that occur in your business over time, photos of your staff for corporate holiday cards, etc.

May 5 - Cinco de Mayo

- In honor of Cinco de Mayo, extend a \$5 promotion to clients such as \$5 off every \$50 spent in May on retail and/or services or \$5 off a specific service or product
- Post interesting facts or have a trivia contest about Cinco de Mayo and related traditions on your Facebook page, at an event or in-salon.
- Cinco de Mayo is a great opportunity to partner with a local Mexican restaurant or bar for part happy hours or another event complete with piñata, door prizes, limbo contests, etc. Take pictures of guests wearing sombreros. Hold a hot chili pepper eating contest. Hold a drawing for a gift card or prize basket
- Offer prizes to add contacts to your database. Afterward, extend a follow-up offer or an invitation to your next special event to all those who attended.

May 10 - Tourist Appreciation Day

- Place rack cards at city tourist points of interests.
- Advertise in tourist directories. Extend offers to the employees of businesses that cater to travelers.
- Hold an open house event where you treat guests like "tourists." Give tours. Collect contact information. Create a punch card designed to look like a ticket or map and have guests "check in" at each stop in order to learn more about products and services, receive samples, consultations and demonstrations.
- Reward participants when they have visited all the stops on your "tour." Hold one or more door prize drawing at the event and collect contact information to add to your database. Send attendees home with information about products or services featured at the event and a bounce-back offer. Follow up by e-mail.
- Do a big "Partner with other businesses to create a larger scale, multi-business customer tour route and rewards program.

May 19 - H - Work at Home Moms Week

- Extend a special offer to work-at-home moms.
- Take nominations for exceptional work-at-home moms, or hold a drawing to reward one or more local work-at-home moms with a pampering or work-oriented service, product or prize package.
- Do you have slow daytime hours during the week? Attract work-at-home moms by offering free add-ons or offering special rates on products or services sold during slower hours, or by holding a work-at-home moms networking or social event.

Facebook Twitter **May** Blog E-Mail

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

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With how-to, ideas and even content for:

- social media
- events and contests
- e-mail and web marketing
- service and product launches and promotions
- retail and service sales

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Announcing the release of the 2012 Salon and Spa Marketing Calendar



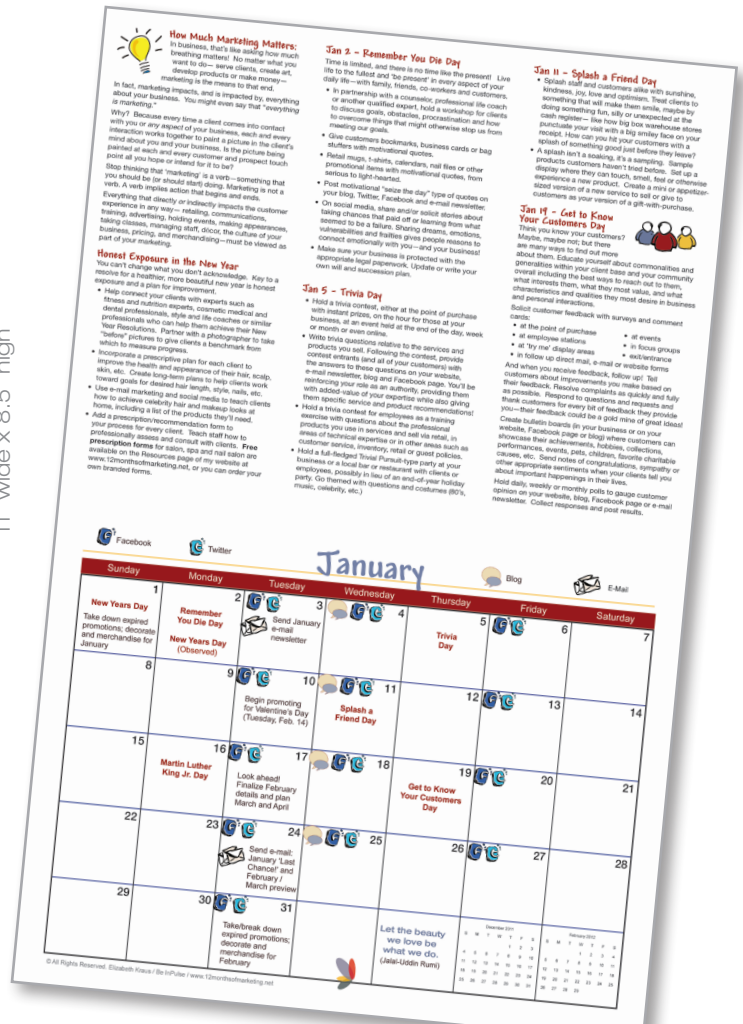
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Available for individual purchase on amazon and www.12monthsofmarketing.net

- Ideas, how-to, content and even a built-in schedule —build year-round marketing momentum:
 - attract, engage and retain clients
 - get more referrals
 - sell more retail
 - get more employee buy-in and loyalty
- A great tool for distributor sales consultants to help launch new products and sell through retail
- Includes links to free templates and worksheets as well as more online resources
- A great gift for salon and spa owners, independent professionals and beauty school students and graduates, **or**,
- A great addition to distributor and beauty supply stores, for sale to beauty professionals

Distributors, Beauty Supply Stores and Cosmetology Schools:

- Purchase in quantities at low bulk rates from 100 to 10,000 — a small investment that could result in thousands in retail sales and new clients for your clients in 2012!
- \$16.95 retail price makes it a valuable gift to your customers or profitable for resale. This publication can even be branded to your business, reinforcing your role as the client resource!
- Digital sample available for qualified resellers. Email request for information to elizabeth@beinpulse.com.



by **Elizabeth Kraus**, owner of Be InPulse branding, marketing and design, author of 365 Days of Marketing, Make Over Your Marketing, the 2011 Salon and Spa Calendar and 12 Months of Marketing for Salon and Spa.

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