

Your salon has been reopened for a while now, but there are still many clients you haven't seen back yet. Not to mention all of the potential new clients that you know are in search of their new beauty spot.

There are a few reasons people may be taking a break from beauty services, such as working from home leading to less pressure to keep up with services, lack of funds, or being nervous about having someone directly touch them. And we don't blame them for any of these.

You may think it's a no-brainer that you've kicked your cleaning up about 12 notches, but have you talked about your changes to apprehensive past and future clients enough for them to feel comfortable enough to come see you?

You kicked your cleaning up a notch.

It's time to kick up the communication, too.

COMMUNICATE THE CLEAN.

There are basic safety precautions we're all set to follow, but many salons and spas are going above and beyond with their sanitization measures in order to create the cleanest environment possible, making clients feel perfectly safe being literally in someone else's hands.

Some locations, unfortunately, might be taking the easy way out. You've all heard the story about that one spot a few blocks down where the afternoon front desk girl doesn't wear a mask. And you can bet that they have clients on the lookout for a new place to visit, where they feel more protected.

But how will they ever find one? That's where you come in.

Communicate to both regulars who haven't been back yet or new potential customers all of the things you're doing to stay sanitized to keep employees and clients as safe as possible.

Even practices you may have been doing for years, like sanitizing nail tools, are worth bringing up. Fewer clients were thinking about the little things before COVID, but now people are hyper-aware. So it's worth sharing all sanitization practices you follow, not necessarily just the new protocols.

Most importantly, make sure your staff is fully able to speak to the changes the company has made. If they have an apprehensive client come in, they should be prepared to speak at length about all of the procedures and guidelines your location is following now in regard to cleaning and sanitation.

Communicate via Social Media

Share photos, videos, carousels, or boomerangs of your new cleaning measures. Need some ideas?

- Client after photos in their masks
- Stylists in their masks or face shields
- Create a fun infographic about sanitation steps being taken
- A stylist wiping down their station
- Your secret 6-foot-tall wall of Clorox wipes
- Picture of the salon floor showing clients at socially distanced stations
- *Be creative!*

Communicate via Email

Is a stylist back but with limited hours? Let their clients know.

Is your salon offering fewer appointments per day to clean more between services? Let clients know!

Give them the full scoop about the business itself and the new sanitation measures you're following, along with any info they may appreciate about their specific stylist. Make clients feel like they're part of the team.

By providing updates and information, they'll feel safe about visiting and appreciate being kept in the loop. *After reading the next section, Promote What Creates Distancing, use your salon's take on these items for email content. This is the kind of stuff people are looking to hear from their trusted brands (you!).*

Communicate via Website

Add an easy-to-find section on your website regarding your new COVID sanitization practices, allowing both current and potential clients an immediate look into what business is doing to keep them safe.

Consider offering viewers a special email address where they can contact management and ask any further questions they may have. During this uneasy time, it's important to make clients feel as if your business is personable and approachable; many people may still be scared to get beauty services, and by making yourself open and available to them, they'll feel even safer with you.

PROMOTE WHAT CREATES DISTANCING.

While new sanitation measures make up a huge part of making customers feel comfortable in your space, there's another: offering ways to keep them *out of your space* altogether.

Now, why would we so thoroughly discuss our cleaning measures if we're then going to endorse ways for people to stay out of our squeaky-clean locations?

First of all, no matter how clean and sanitized your location is, some people are still going to be hesitant; any way to cut back the time spent in the salon is preferable. Second, if areas are kept uninhabited or with far less foot traffic, there's less frequent cleaning needed and more time can be spent doing other tasks.

Some ways to promote distancing are:

Booking and paying in advance.

Encourage clients to book their next appointment and pay in advance either by using your online scheduling tool or by calling in. This way, fewer people are visiting the front desk in the salon. You could even provide a discount to those who use the phone or website to schedule and pay to provide extra incentives.

eCommerce.

If you offer eCommerce, suggest to clients that they purchase retail online rather than in-store. When people browse the retail section, who knows how many bottles of shampoo they'll pick up and touch! Try providing a discount for online shopping to motivate them to buy their products online instead.

Reconsider Cancellation Fees.

Not forever, but we're not out of the woods yet with COVID. If someone is concerned they've been in contact with someone who has COVID-like symptoms—or they are experiencing symptoms themselves—don't make clients feel like they must keep their appointment to avoid a cancellation

fee. Respect and appreciate their wanting to cancel and keep your staff and clients as safe as you do!

Call Clients Before Appointments.

If you have the bandwidth, instead of dismissing cancellation fees, try calling all clients 24 hours in advance to ensure they will be making their appointment. Use it as a chance to not only remind them to bring their mask but as a way to remind them about some of the key things they'll notice differently around the salon, too.

Video Consultations.

No one feels awkward having video meetings anymore. Use this new normal to your advantage! If you can manage to do any consultations over video rather than having the client come in, we say go for it.

Empty your waiting area.

Advise clients to call when they've arrived and have them wait in their car until their provider is ready for them. Then simply call them back and have them enter the salon. It's that easy!

These methods of providing extra care and service for clients will make your salon stand out even more: people will feel valued, safe, and recognize how much you care about the health of your employees and clients.

Communicate any of these extra measures you take on your social media, email marketing, and website as well. **Remember:** clients won't experience those safe feelings if they aren't aware of the mountains you're moving for them. So don't give them a reason to be unaware. Shout it all from the rooftops.

While COVID has resulted in immeasurable hardships in the beauty industry, there's one positive: it's given us a way to create a closer bond with our clients. We are able to not only make them feel beautiful, but now we can make them feel safe.

Keep this in mind when communicating any safety measure to clients: whether it's a social post promoting pre-booking, or an email about how stylists prep their areas for each new client, overcommunicate. Show new clients how much more you can offer them, and show past clients what they've been missing.