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# Jingle tills, jingle tills...

Christmas comes but once a year so all retailers (yes, even beauty salons) should do all they can to maximise their sales in the lead-up to December 25, says **Jenny Berich**.

THE LEAD-UP to Christmas is undoubtedly the busiest time of the year for most retailers – in fact many stores generate more than 50 percent of their annual profit during this period.

And although many beauty salons don't even consider themselves 'retailers' in the true sense of the word, there is no reason why they can't adopt similar strategies to other beauty retailers like David Jones, Myer, Kmart, Target, Mecca, Sephora and MAC to maximise their Xmas profits.

Indeed it would be a pity not to, given that beauty salons are one of very few businesses where almost every item they stock can be quickly and easily transformed into a special gift with just a scrap of ribbon and a sheet of wrapping paper – and every treatment on offer can be transformed into a 'gift voucher' even more quickly and easily.

This means salon owners do not have to convince consumers that beauty products and treatments are highly desirable gifts – they simply have to convince them to buy that beauty cream from their salon rather than the salon (or retailer) down the road, round the corner or on the other side of the shopping centre.

Therefore all most beauty salons have to do to enjoy a very Merry Xmas is simply to ensure that all their clients (and potential clients) as well as passersby know what they have to offer. But how?



Fortunately here are numerous strategies that salon owners can adopt to attract extra customers into their salons to generate those extra sales dollars. It is of course up to individual salon owners to decide what strategies they can afford to implement and which ones are likely to produce the best ROI for their salons.

There are nonetheless seven marketing strategies worth considering:

**Advertising:** There are many many ways to advertise your products to your target audience including websites, newspapers, radio, television, billboards, magazines, local newsletters (eg school and community groups) and social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. The key to success is to run your advertisements in the medium that your customers are most likely to see or hear.

**Window displays:** These can be a very effective and a relatively inexpensive way to attract the attention of existing customers as well as new customers – particularly if your salon is located in a high foot-traffic area. Ideally, your store windows should 'stand out' from all the other Christmas windows in your street or shopping centre.

**E-newsletters/mailouts:** A direct mail campaign to existing customers outlining some of your store's products and services is an extremely reliable means of increasing sales as customers already 'know and trust' you and are therefore highly likely to respond warmly to your "gift suggestions".

**Brochures/flyers:** A 'letterbox drop' is an excellent way to reach potential clients in your catchment area by 'advertising' all the products/treatments you have to offer as Christmas gifts.

**Customer competitions:** Any competition that offers beauty products or treatments as a prize is bound to attract the attention of a lot of potential customers. To maximise publicity, run such competitions in conjunction with the local newspaper, TV or radio station (ensure that entrants have to drop any competition 'coupons' into your store rather than just mail it in) or run them on your salon's social media pages.

**VIP customer events:** Social events can be highly effective in putting people in a 'buying mood' as many people adopt a 'pack mentality' in a crowd so when one person buys they buy too – the 'I'll have what she's having' effect. An added benefit of social events is that they attract a lot of customers who are unable to visit your store (and are therefore unable to buy your products) during normal opening hours due to work and other commitments.

**Social media promotions:** Social media accounts such as Facebook and Instagram are an excellent (and inexpensive) method of reaching a wide range of potential customers with all your Xmas promotions. Post information or photos that your target audience will find appealing but most importantly maximise their audience reach by running online competitions or offering exclusive deals – particularly to those who 'share' your posts.

Some retailers might choose to adopt the 'scattergun approach' and apply a wide variety of such strategies to maximise their sales in the Xmas lead-

up while others might choose to focus on just one or two elements. A few might even choose to largely ignore Xmas and just continue with 'business as usual'... There really isn't a 'one size fits all' marketing strategy in the retail world.

Clare Lamberth, the owner of Beauty on Latrobe in Brisbane's trendy Paddington, is however one salon owner who clearly recognises the value of Xmas sales – and the importance of adopting an appropriate marketing strategy.

"Xmas is our biggest and most important trading time," she says. "You only get one Xmas each year so we set out to make each our biggest and best yet."

She explains that the salon, which stocks Ultraceuticals, Ultra MD, Jane Iredale, LaGaia Body and Sunescape products, "has an extensive marketing strategy" for the leadup to Xmas.

"We reach our clients across a number of different platforms including emails, text, social media, in-salon merchandising and of course word-of-mouth," she says. "More recently we have been leveraging Facebook Live and found it a powerful marketing tool to give added value to our clients, as well as effortlessly and effectively keeping them up-to-date with what's happening around the salon."

"We've had many successful promotions but none will match Xmas this year," she continues. "We have just undergone a full overhaul of our treatment menu and are aiming to make this Christmas our most successful ever."

"I've been working closely with the phenomenal salon marketing coach Vanessa McDonald to put deliberate strategies in place. I would highly recommend her particular skill set to any salon owner who needs to get their marketing on-point."

Likewise, Andrea Koukoulas, the owner of Beauty for the Senses in Melbourne's Essendon which stocks Dr Spiller and Epicure skincare as well as Hush Makeup and Fabu tanning products, recognises the importance of Xmas to her salon's bottomline.

"Xmas time is good for us," she says, explaining that she decorates the salon's windows to attract the attention of passersby and creates Xmas packs for clients and others who often buy "last minute gifts".

"We've done promos (including social media) but they doesn't work for us," she says, "but I do insalon promotions and boom we make money. We run out of stock or get booked out – and our November and December figures go up by 20 percent."

If such an increase, or even more, in sales appeals, it is time to start thinking about what you can do to get your share of the Xmas sales pie this year.

Start by browsing the selection of pre-packaged 'gifts' suppliers have created for this Xmas on these pages. If your supplier's offering is on show stock up asap well before Xmas – if it isn't on show contact your supplier directly to check what they have available. Finally if your supplier doesn't have any specific Xmas gift packages, don't panic. Simply set aside a few hours to create some from your salon's existing products and services. ■



Jenny Berich combines over 20 years journalism experience with a lifelong lover of beauty product to keep Professional Beauty readers up-to-date with all the latest news and trends.

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