

# 4

# Communicating for Success

## Chapter Outline

- Why Study Communicating for Success?
- Human Relations
- Communication Basics
- The Client Consultation/  
Needs Assessment
- Special Issues in Communication
- In-Salon Communication



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# Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- ✓ **L01** List the golden rules of human relations.
- ✓ **L02** Define effective communication.
- ✓ **L03** Conduct a successful client consultation/needs assessment.
- ✓ **L04** Explain how to handle an unhappy client.
- ✓ **L05** Describe how to build open lines of communication with coworkers and salon managers.

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## Key Terms

Page number indicates where in the chapter the term is used.

**client consultation  
(needs assessment)** / 49

**client consultation form** / 45

**effective communication** / 45

**employee evaluations** / 57

**reflective listening** / 50

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**D**o you have outstanding technical skills? Are you ready to unleash your artistic talents? If so, then you are on your way to becoming successful in your chosen career path. It is important to realize, though, that technical and artistic skills can only take you so far. In order to have a thriving clientele, you must also master the art of communication (**Figure 4-1**). Effective human relations and communication skills build lasting client relationships, accelerate professional growth, and help prevent misunderstandings in the workplace.



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▲ **Figure 4-1** Communication is part of building lasting relationships with your clients.

## WHY STUDY COMMUNICATING FOR SUCCESS?

Nail technicians should have a thorough understanding of communicating for success because:

- ▶ Effective communications will serve as the basis for all long-lasting relationships with clients and coworkers.
- ▶ As a professional, you will need to build strong relationships based on trust, clarity, and loyalty in order to have a successful career.
- ▶ You must be able to verbalize your thoughts and ideas with clients, colleagues, and supervisors.
- ▶ The close-knit salon and spa environment will present complex and sometimes difficult interpersonal issues. You will need effective ways to communicate in order to navigate them successfully.
- ▶ Practicing and perfecting professional communication ensures that clients will enjoy their experience with you and will encourage their continued patronage.
- ▶ The ability to control communication and effectively express ideas in a professional manner is a necessary skill for success in any career. This is particularly true in one as personal as nail technology.

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## ■ HUMAN RELATIONS

No matter where you work, you will find that some people are harder to get along with than others. It is not always possible to understand what people need, even when you know them well. Though you think you understand what people want, you cannot always satisfy their wishes. This can lead to misunderstandings.

The ability to understand people is the key to operating effectively in many professions. It is especially important in the salon and spa environment, where customer service is central to success. Most of your interactions will depend on your ability to communicate successfully with a wide range of people: supervisors, coworkers, clients, and various vendors who come into the salon to sell products. When you clearly understand the motives and needs of others, you will be in a better position to do your job professionally.

Because all people have the same needs, the best way to understand others is to begin with a clear understanding of yourself. When you know and understand your motivations, it is easier to appreciate others and to help them meet their goals. When people treat us with respect and listen to us, we feel good about them and about ourselves. By treating others with respect, you create an environment in which customers and staff develop confidence in you. Mutual respect—which transforms a good nail technician into a trusted advisor and colleague—naturally follows.

Here is a brief look at the basics of human relations, along with some practical tips for dealing with situations that you are likely to encounter:

- Human beings are social animals. We like to interact with other people. As human beings, we enjoy giving our opinion and take pleasure in having people help us. Also, we feel pride when we use our abilities to help others.
- A fundamental factor in human relations involves a person's sense of security. When people feel secure, they are happy, calm, and confident. When people feel secure, they can be a joy to be around. On the other hand, when people feel insecure, they can become worried, anxious, and overwhelmed.
- No matter how secure you are as an individual and a beauty professional, there will be times when you encounter people and situations that are difficult to handle. Some people create conflict wherever they go. Try to remember that these people are feeling insecure; if they weren't, they wouldn't be acting in that way.

To become skilled in human relations, learn to make the best of any situation. Here are some good ways to handle the ups and downs of human relations:

- *Respond instead of reacting.* A man was asked why he did not get angry when a driver cut him off. "Why should I let someone else dictate my emotions?" he replied. A wise fellow, don't you think? He might have even saved his own life by not reacting with "an eye-for-an-eye" mentality.







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▲ **Figure 4-2** Be attentive to your client's needs.

- *Believe in yourself.* When you do, you trust your judgment, uphold your values, and stick to what you believe is right. It is easy to believe in yourself when you have a strong sense of self-worth. Believing in yourself makes you feel strong enough to handle almost any situation in a calm, helpful manner.
- *Talk less, listen more.* There is an old saying that we were given two ears and one mouth for a reason. Listen more than you talk. When you are a good listener, you are fully attentive to what other people are saying.

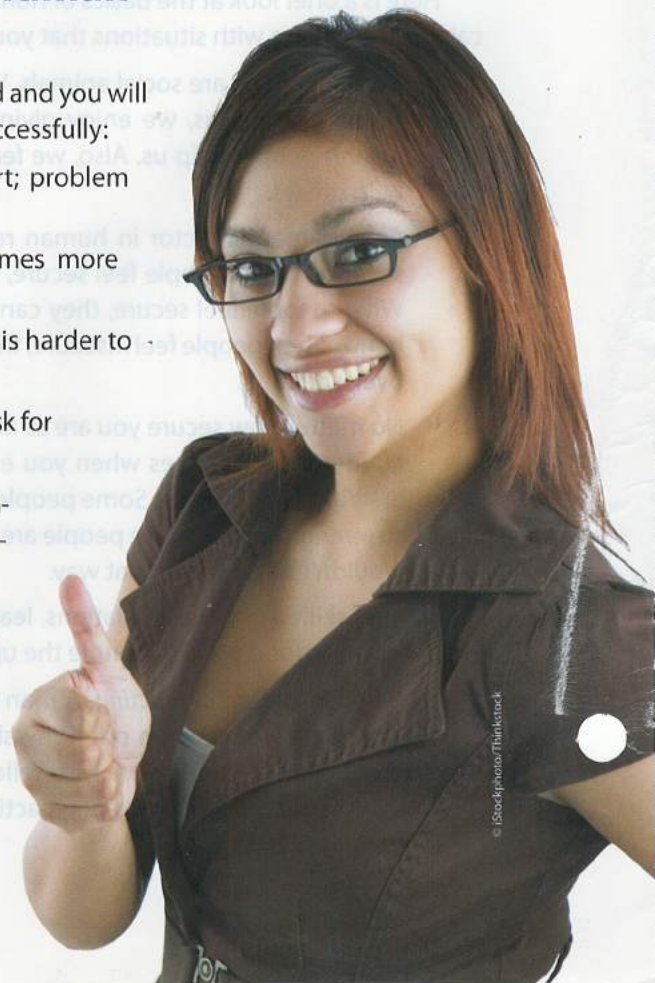
- *Be attentive.* Each client is different. Some are clear about what they want, some are demanding, while others may be hesitant. If you have an aggressive client, ask your manager for advice. You will likely be told that what usually calms down difficult clients is agreeing with them. Follow up by asking what you can do to make the service more satisfactory (**Figure 4-2**).
- *Take your own temperature.* If you are tired or upset, your interactions with clients may be affected. An important part of succeeding in a service profession is to take care of yourself and your own personal conflicts first, so that you can take the best possible care of your clients.

Human relations can be rewarding or demoralizing. The results you achieve will depend on how much you are willing to give and how well you have prepared yourself for that day's services.

## The Golden Rules of Human Relations

Keep the following guidelines in mind and you will deal with difficult situations more successfully:

- Communicate from your heart; problem solve from your head.
- A smile is worth a million times more than a sneer.
- It is easy to make an enemy; it is harder to keep a friend.
- See what happens when you ask for help instead of just reacting.
- Show people you care by listening to them and trying to understand their point of view.
- Compliment people, even if they are challenging or unpleasant.



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- For every service you do for others, do not forget to do something for yourself.
- Laugh often.
- Show patience with other people's flaws.
- Build shared goals; be a team player and a partner to your clients.
- Always remember that listening is the best relationship builder.

### LO1

## COMMUNICATION BASICS

**Effective communication** is the act of successfully sharing information between two people (or groups of people) so that the information is successfully understood. You can communicate through words, voice inflections, facial expressions, body language, or visual tools (e.g., a portfolio of your work). When you and your client are both communicating clearly about an upcoming service, your chances of pleasing that person soar.

## Meeting and Greeting New Clients

One of the most important communications you will have is the first time you meet a client. Be polite, genuinely friendly, and inviting in every way you communicate with the client. You should keep in mind that your clients are coming to you for services and paying for your expertise with their hard-earned money (**Figure 4-3**). This means you need to court them every time they come to see you; if not, you may lose them to another nail technician or salon.

To earn a client's trust and loyalty, you should:

- Always approach a new client with a smile on your face. If you are having a difficult day, keep it to yourself. The time you spend with your client is for his or her needs, not yours.
- Always introduce yourself. Names are a powerful communication tool and should be used.
- Set aside a few minutes to take new clients on a quick tour of the salon.
- Introduce clients to people they may have interactions with while in the salon, including potential service providers for other services such as skin care or makeup.

Be yourself. Do not try to fool clients by representing yourself as someone or something you are not. **LO2**

## Intake Form

Prior to sitting at your station, every new client should fill out an intake form—also called a client questionnaire or **client consultation form**. This form can prove to be an extremely useful communication and business tool (**Figure 4-4**).



**Figure 4-3** Welcome your client to the salon.

## CLIENT CONSULTATION FORM

Dear Client,

Our sincerest hope is to serve you with the best nail care services you've ever received! We want you to be happy with today's visit, and we also want to build a long-lasting relationship filled with trust and complete satisfaction with our services. In order for us to do this, we would like to learn more about you, your nail care needs, and your preferences. Please take a moment to answer the questions below as completely and as accurately as possible.

Thank you and we look forward to building a "beautiful" relationship!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Evening \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your preferred method of communication? \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female

How did you hear about our salon? \_\_\_\_\_

If you were referred to our salon, who referred you? \_\_\_\_\_

*Please answer the following questions in the spaces provided. Thanks!*

1. Approximately when was your last nail care service?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. In the past year, have you had any of the following services done either in or out of a salon?

\_\_\_\_\_ Manicure \_\_\_\_\_ Pedicure

\_\_\_\_\_ Nail Enhancements \_\_\_\_\_ Other

▲ **Figure 4-4** Typical client consultation form. (continued)



## CLIENT CONSULTATION FORM

3. It is important that you discuss with your nail technician any chronic condition(s) you may have, so that precautions can be considered. Examples of conditions would be circulatory diseases, diabetes, peripheral artery disease (PAD), arthritis, high blood pressure, and others.

4. How would you characterize your natural nails?

☐ Normal
 ☐ Strong  
☐ Brittle
 ☐ Flexible  
☐ Other

5. Do you regularly receive any of the following nail services? (Check all that apply):

☐ Monomer and Polymer Nail Enhancements  
☐ Monomer and Polymer Nail Enhancements with UV Gel Overlay  
☐ UV Gel Nail Enhancements  
☐ Fabric Wraps (Circle Type: Silk, Linen, or Fiberglass)  
☐ Manicure  
☐ Natural Nail Treatments  
☐ Paraffin Hand Treatments

6. Do you receive any of the following foot services? (Check all that apply):

☐ Basic Pedicure
 ☐ Spa Pedicure  
☐ Masks or Paraffin Foot Treatments

7. Please share information about your most successful and least successful types of nail services. \_\_\_\_\_

8. What types of frequent activities do you engage in that could cause damage to your nails? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What are your goals for today's nail appointment? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you have a special occasion coming up in the near future where your nails must look their absolute best? If so, when? \_\_\_\_\_

▲ **Figure 4-4** Typical client consultation form. (continued)



## FOCUS ON...

### Understanding the Total Look Concept

While the enhancement of your client's image should always be your primary concern, it is important to remember that nails, skin, and hair are reflective of an entire lifestyle. How can you help a client make choices that reflect a personal sense of style? Start by doing a little research. Look for books or articles that describe different fashion styles and become familiar with them. This exercise is useful for developing a profile of the broad fashion categories that you can refer to when consulting with clients.

For example, a person may be categorized as having a classic style if she prefers simple and sophisticated clothing, monochromatic colors, and no bright patterns. A person who prefers classic styling in clothing would likely want a simple, elegant, and sophisticated look with respect to her nails, makeup, and hair.

Someone who prefers a more dramatic look, on the other hand, will choose nail designs, hairstyles, clothing, and accessories that demand greater attention and allow for more options (Figure 4-5 and Figure 4-6).

Some salon intake forms ask for a lot of detailed information; others do not. In school, the consultation form may be accompanied by a release statement in which the client acknowledges that the service is being provided by a student who is under instruction. This helps protect the school and the student from legal action.

### How to Use the Client Intake Form

The client intake form can be used from the moment a new client calls the salon to make an appointment. When scheduling the appointment, let the client know that you and the salon will require some information before you can begin the service, and that it is important for the client to arrive 15 minutes ahead of her appointment time to fill out a brief form. Also allow time in your schedule to do a 5- to 15-minute client consultation.



► Figure 4-5 A classic look.



► Figure 4-6 A dramatic look.

Courtesy of Artistic Nail Design. Photography by Ted Emmons.

Courtesy of Artistic Nail Design. Photography by Ted Emmons.



## ■ THE CLIENT CONSULTATION/NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The **client consultation**, also known as a **needs assessment**, is the verbal communication with a client that determines his or her needs and how to achieve the desired results. The consultation is one of the most important parts of any service and should always be done before starting the actual service. A consultation should be performed, to some degree, as part of every single service and salon visit. The consultation keeps communication on target. Effective client consultations keep your clientele looking current, stylish, and satisfied with your services. A happy client means repeat business for both you and the salon.

### Preparing for the Client Consultation

For the client consultation to be effective, it is important that you be well prepared to make the most of this dialogue. To facilitate the process, you should:

- Have a variety of pictures showing different nail shapes, lengths, and designs.
- Have a portfolio of your work on hand. To create one, keep a camera or your smartphone handy and, with the client's permission, take photos of your work.
- When you show the photos, explain why you performed the various services the way you did. This will help new clients understand why certain things can or cannot be achieved. It will also reassure them of your expertise, skill, and knowledge.

### The Consultation Area

Presentation counts for a lot in a business that is concerned with style and appearance. Once you have brought the client to your station to begin the consultation process, make sure she is comfortable. The two of you are about to begin an important conversation that will clue you in on her needs and preferences. It is your responsibility to find out what the client's needs are and to make recommendations that meet those needs. To do so effectively, you will need a freshly cleaned and uncluttered workspace.

### The 10-Step Consultation Method

Every consultation should be structured so that you cover all the key points, which lead to a successful conclusion. While this may seem like a lot of information to memorize, it will become second nature as you become more experienced.

To ensure that you cover all the bases, keep a list of the following 10 key points at your station. Modify the list as needed for each actual service.

1. *Review the intake form.* Read the intake form carefully and refer to it often during the consultation process. Feel free to make comments that break the ice and initiate conversation with the client
2. *Assess your client's nails.* Are they long, short, or somewhere in between? Are the nails healthy and strong? Brittle or weak?



3. *Discover likes and dislikes.* Always ask clients what they like or do not like about their nails. Delve into their nail histories to learn which nail services they have had in the past (e.g., nail enhancements) and the outcome of those services.

4. *Analyze your client's hands and fingertips.* Determine the ideal length and shape of the nails, based on the shape of their fingertips and nail bed. Ask clients to share their preferred nail lengths and shapes, and why.

5. *Review clients' lifestyles.* What do their career and personal lifestyles entail?

- Do they spend a great deal of time outdoors? Do they swim every day?
- Are they executives in a conservative industry? Artists? Stay-at-home parents? Do they have hobbies, such as woodworking or sculpturing, that are rough on their nails?
- Do they have strong personal styles that they wish to project?
- How much time are they willing to invest in nail services?

6. *Show and tell.* Encourage clients to flip through your photo collections and point out finished looks that they like and why. This is a good time to get a real grasp on whether they understand, and accept, any personal limitations. Listening to clients and then repeating—in your own words—what you think they are telling you is critical to having a clear understanding of what both of you are really saying. This is known as **reflective listening**. Mastering this listening skill will help you to always be on target with your services and build a deep trust with your clients.

7. *Make suggestions.* Once you have enough information, you can make valid suggestions. Narrow your selections to lifestyle and other characteristics applicable to the desired service.

When making suggestions, be clear by referencing the parameters mentioned in Step 7. Tactfully discuss any unreasonable expectations they may have shared with you by picking out photos that are unrealistic based on their characteristics or personal needs.

8. *Upsell services.* Never hesitate to suggest additional services to make new looks complete or better in some way. For example, you may have provided a manicure service, but by recommending a pedicure or even a color service by a stylist you trust, you could help them achieve their total desired look.

9. *Discuss upkeep and maintenance.* Counsel all clients on the lifestyle limitations associated with a given nail style or service as well as salon and home maintenance commitments needed to keep their nails looking their best at all times.

10. *Review the consultation.* Reiterate everything that you have agreed on. Make sure to speak in measured, precise terms and use visual tools to demonstrate the end results. This is the most critical step of the consultation process because it determines the ultimate service(s). Take your time and be thorough. **L03**

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## Concluding the Service

Once services are finished and the client has let you know that she is satisfied, take a few more minutes to record the results on her client record form (**Figure 4-7**). Ask for her reactions and record them. Note anything you did that you might want to do again, as well as anything that does not bear repeating. Also, make notes of the final results and any retail products that you recommended. Be sure to date your notes and file them in the proper place.

CLIENT RECORD FORM	
FIRST NAME: _____	LAST NAME: _____
Confirm appointments (Check one or more methods of contact):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Home phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Work phone <input type="checkbox"/> Cell <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail <input type="checkbox"/> Text
PHONE Home: _____ Cell: _____ Work: _____, ext. _____	
E-MAIL 1. _____ 2. _____	
Address 1 _____	
Address 2 _____	
City _____	State _____ Zip code _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	Birthday (month/day): _____
Married: _____	Children: _____ Anniversary: _____
Profession: _____	Primary service provider: _____
Referred by: _____	
Service notes: _____	
Retail history: _____	

▲ **Figure 4-7** Client record form.

## FOCUS ON...

### Retailing

The best way to make retailing recommendations is to use this three-step plan to discuss the *what*, *why*, and *how* of the recommendation.

1. Once you have chosen a product for the client, explain, "This is *what* I recommend."
2. Next, explain *why* you recommend it.
3. Finally, describe *how* she should use the product at home.

Educating the client using these three steps helps her to better understand your recommendations and makes selling home-care products much easier.

## Did You Know?

When referring to patrons, some salons use the word *client*, while others use *guest*. Spas are more likely to use *guest* because of the amount of time the client spends on the premises and the fact that spa guests often have lunch during their visits. Medical spas have returned to using *client* because many of these spas are bound by medical privacy laws when it comes to record keeping. Additionally, *guest* is never used in the professional medical field. Go with the culture of the business in which you are working and you will not go wrong.



## ■ SPECIAL ISSUES IN COMMUNICATION

Although you may do everything in your power to communicate effectively, you will sometimes encounter situations that are beyond your control. Your reactions to situations, and your ability to communicate in the face of challenges, are critical to being successful in a people profession.

### Handling Tardy Clients

Tardy clients are a fact of life in every service industry. Because nail technicians are so dependent on appointments and scheduling to maximize working hours, a client who is very late for an appointment, or one who is habitually late, can cause problems. One tardy client can make you late for every other service that day. The pressure involved in making up for lost time takes its toll. Beyond being rushed and feeling harried, you risk inconveniencing the rest of your clients who are prompt for their appointments. No one benefits—not you, not the salon, and certainly not your clients—when tardy clients cause scheduling conflicts to arise.

Here are a few guidelines for handling late clients:

- Know and abide by the salon's appointment policy. Many salons set a limit on the amount of time they allow a client to be late before requiring them to reschedule. Generally, if clients are more than 15 minutes late, they should be asked to reschedule. Most clients will accept responsibility and be understanding about the rule, but you may come across a few clients who insist on being serviced immediately. Explain to them that you have other appointments and are responsible to those clients as well. Also explain that rushing through the service is unacceptable to both of you.
- If your tardy client arrives and you have the time to take her without jeopardizing other appointments, let your client know why you are taking her even though she is late. You can deliver this information and still remain pleasant and upbeat.
- As you get to know your clients, you will learn who is habitually late. You may want to schedule such clients for the last appointment of the day, or ask them to arrive earlier than their actual appointment time.
- If you are running very late, have the receptionist call or text your clients to apprise them of the situation. The receptionist can give them the opportunity to reschedule or to come a little later than their scheduled time.

### Handling Scheduling Mix-Ups

We are all human, and we all make mistakes. Chances are you have gone to an appointment on a certain day at a certain time, only to discover that you are in the wrong place at the wrong time. The way you are treated at that moment will determine if you ever patronize that business again. As a professional, be polite when you get involved with a scheduling mix-up. Never argue about who is correct. Once you have the chance to consult your appointment book, you can say, "Oh, Mrs. Montez, I have you in my appoint-

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ment book for 10 o'clock, and unfortunately I already have clients scheduled for 11 and 12 o'clock. I'm so sorry about the mix-up. Can I reschedule you for tomorrow at 10 o'clock?" Even though the client may be fuming, you need to stay detached. Move the conversation away from who is at fault and squarely into resolving the confusion. Make another appointment for the client and be sure the salon has her telephone number so that the appointment can be confirmed.

## Handling Unhappy Clients

No matter how hard you try to provide excellent service to your clients, once in a while you will encounter a client who is dissatisfied. Always remember that your ultimate goal should be to make the client happy enough to pay for the service and return to the salon in the future (**Figure 4-8**).



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Photography by Joseph Schuyler.

**Figure 4-8** Accommodate an unhappy client promptly and calmly.

Here are some guidelines to follow:

- Try to find out why the client is unhappy. Ask for specifics.
- If it is possible to change what she dislikes, do so immediately. If that is not possible, look at your schedule to see how soon you can fit her in to make the adjustment. You may need to enlist the help of the receptionist, if you have to reschedule other appointments.
- If the problem cannot be fixed, honestly explain why. The client may not be happy but will usually appreciate your honesty. Sometimes you can offer other options that minimize the client's disappointment.
- Never argue with the client or try to force your opinion on her.
- Do not hesitate to ask for help from a more experienced nail technician or your salon manager. If, after you have tried everything, you are unable to satisfy the client, defer to your manager's advice on how to proceed.
- Talk with your salon manager after the experience. A good manager will not hold the event against you, but will view it as an inevitable fact of life from which you can learn. Follow your manager's advice and move on to your next client. **LO4**



## Handling Differences

As a nail technician, you will find the clients you are most likely to attract are similar to yourself in age, style, and tastes. On the other hand, you will also serve clients who are very different from you. This is a positive element in your career. Without both older and younger clients, and ones from different social groups, you will not be able to build a solid client base.

When working with clients who come from a different generation, the basic rules of professionalism should guide you. Older clients, in particular, do not like gum chewing, slang, or the use of *yeah* instead of *yes*. They like to hear *please* and *thank you*. They prefer to keep the topics of conversation professional. Some like to be addressed by the honorific, such as "Mrs. Smith," rather than by their first names. When you meet an older client for the first time, ask how he or she would like to be addressed. Some clients are also sensitive to verbiage about aging. When referring to their hands, do not refer to aging skin. Instead, talk about dryness and solutions to remedy the condition.

Younger clients may not be up on proper etiquette, but many keep up with the latest celebrity looks, so you need to do the same. If these clients are your peers, relate to their image needs, while always maintaining a professional demeanor.

When it comes to slang, the same word can have a different meaning across cultures, which is why it is always best to avoid using slang terms. If the word is fashion-related and your client uses it, use it as well to indicate that you understand and are aware of current trends. Never use cultural slang words you do not fully understand. When in doubt say, "I have never heard that expression before. What exactly does it mean?"

### FOCUS ON...

#### Talking Points

Let's imagine a long-time client reveals to you, one day, that she and her husband are going through a messy divorce. You care for her and want to be sympathetic as she reveals increasingly personal details. Other practitioners and their clients are soon listening to every word of this conversation. You want to be helpful and supportive, but this is not the right time or place. What can you do?

Here are some solutions to consider:

- Tell her you understand that the situation is very difficult, but that while she is in the salon, you want to do everything in your power to give her a break from it. Let her know gently that while she is in your care, you should both concentrate on her enjoyment of the services and not the things that are stressing her.
- Change the subject. What topic could you shift to that seems the most natural?
- Find a reason to excuse yourself. When you return, change the subject.
- Acknowledge her by saying, "I'm sorry to hear that." Suggest a mini-relaxation service the salon is promoting to help get her mind off her troubles.



## Getting Too Personal

Sometimes when a client forms a bond of trust with her nail technician, she may have a hard time differentiating between a professional and a personal relationship. This will be her problem. Be sure you do not make it your problem. Your job is to handle your client relationships tactfully and sensitively, with professionalism and respect. Do not engage in an attempt to fulfill the role of counselor, career guide parental sounding board, or motivational coach for any of your clients.

If your client gets too far off topic, use neutral subjects to bring her back to a conversation about her beauty needs. If she tells you about a personal problem, simply listen and tell her you are sorry. Then ask, "What can we do to make your visit better today?"

If your client is gossiping, change the subject as soon as you can. Try something like, "I just noticed your hands are dry. Let's do a warm paraffin treatment so that your hands look as beautiful as your nails." Then describe the treatment and recommend home care.

Books, movies, videos, and celebrities can all be used to move into conversations about a particular look or style. As a rule, avoid discussing religion and politics. When you cannot find a way to move the conversation back to something beauty related, simply listen and then change the subject. In a worst-case scenario, apologize and excuse yourself, either verbally or physically, to check her client record, to ask another nail technician an important question, or to see if a certain polish is in stock. When you return your attention to the client, move the conversation back to beauty.

## ■ IN-SALON COMMUNICATION

Behaving in a professional manner is the first step in making meaningful in-salon communication a reality. The salon and spa community is a close-knit one in which beauty professionals spend long hours working side-by-side. For this reason, it is important to maintain boundaries. Remember, the salon is your place of business and, as such, must be treated respectfully and carefully.

## Communicating with Coworkers

In a work environment, you will not have the opportunity to hand-pick your colleagues. There will always be people you like or relate to better than others.

Keep these points in mind as you interact and communicate with coworkers:

- *Treat everyone with respect.* Regardless of whether or not you like someone, your colleagues are professionals who deserve your respect.
- *Remain objective.* Different types of personalities working over long and intense hours are likely to breed some degree of dissension. Make every effort to remain objective. Resist being pulled into spats and cliques.







- *Be honest and be sensitive.* Many people use the excuse of being honest as a license to say anything to anyone. While honesty is always the best policy, using unkind words or actions at work is never a good idea. Be sensitive; think before you speak.
- *Remain neutral.* There may come a time when you are called on to choose sides. Do whatever you can to avoid this in a dispute.
- *Seek help from someone you respect.* If you find yourself at odds with a coworker, seek out someone who is not involved and can be objective, such as the manager. Ask for advice about how to proceed and then really listen.
- *Do not take things personally.* How many times have you had a bad day, or had been thinking about something totally unrelated to work, when a colleague asked you what was wrong, or if were you mad at her? Just because someone is behaving in a certain manner, and you happen to be there, does not mean his or her behavior involves you. If you are confused or concerned by someone's actions, find a private place and an appropriate time to ask him or her if something is wrong.
- There is a time and a place for everything, but the salon is never the place to discuss your personal life and relationships.

## Communicating with Managers

Another very important relationship for you within the salon is the one you will build with your manager. The salon manager is generally the person with the most responsibility regarding the salon's overall operation. Often, in addition to running a hectic salon, she also has a personal clientele.

Your manager is probably the one who hired you and thus responsible for your training. Your manager has a vested interest in your success. As a salon employee, you might see the manager as a powerful figure of authority, but it is also important to remember that she is a human being. The best thing you can do to support your manager is to try to understand the decisions and rules that she makes, whether or not you agree with them.

Here are some guidelines for interacting and communicating with your salon manager.

- *Be a problem solver.* When you need to speak with your manager about some issue or problem, think of some possible solutions beforehand. This will indicate that you are working in the salon's best interest and trying to be an asset in the salon's success.
- *Get the facts straight.* Make sure that all your facts and information are accurate before you speak to your salon manager. This way, you avoid wasting your manager's time trying to solve a problem that might not really exist.
- *Be open and honest.* When you find yourself in a situation you do not understand, or do not have the experience to deal with, tell your salon manager immediately. Be willing to listen and learn.
- *Do not gossip or complain about colleagues.* Going to your manager with gossip or to tattle on a coworker could very well make you appear as a

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troublemaker. If you are having a legitimate problem with someone, it is only appropriate to tell your manager after you have already tried everything in your power to resolve the situation.

- *Be open to constructive criticism.* It is never easy to hear that you need improvement in any area, but keep in mind that part of your manager's job is to help you achieve your professional goals and ensure the salon's success. It is the manager's job to evaluate your skills and offer suggestions on how to improve and expand them. Keep an open mind and do not take her criticism personally.

## Communicating During an Employee Evaluation

Salons and spas that are well run will make it a priority to conduct frequent and thorough **employee evaluations**. Sometime in the course of your first few days of work, your salon manager will tell you when you can expect your first employee evaluation. If your manager does not mention it, you might ask her about it and request a copy of the form she will use or for a list of the criteria on which you will be evaluated. The following are some points to keep in mind as you begin your tenure in the salon or spa.

- Take some time to look over the employee evaluation document. Be mindful that the behaviors and activities most important to the salon are likely to be the ones on which you will be evaluated. You can begin to review and rate yourself in the weeks and months ahead, so you can assess your progress and performance.
- Remember, the criteria on the evaluation are there for the purpose of helping you become a better nail technician and to ensure the salon's success. Make the decision to approach the evaluation positively.
- As the time for the evaluation draws near, try filling out the form yourself. In other words, perform a self-evaluation, even if the salon has not asked you to do so. Be objective and carefully consider your comments.
- Before your evaluation meeting, write down any thoughts or questions so you can share them with your manager. Do not be shy. If you want to know when you can take on more services, when your pay scale might be increased, or when you might be considered for a promotion, this meeting is the appropriate time and place to ask. Many beauty professionals never take advantage of this crucial communication opportunity to discuss their future advancements, because they are too nervous, intimidated, or unprepared to discuss these issues. Participate proactively in your career and in your success by communicating your desires and interests.
- When you meet with your manager, show her your self-evaluation and tell her you are serious about your improvement and growth. Your manager will appreciate your input and your initiative. If you are being honest with yourself, there should be no surprises.
- At the end of the meeting, thank your manager for taking the time to complete the evaluation and for the feedback and guidance she gave you. **LOS**





## Review Questions

1. What are the golden rules of human relations?
2. Define effective communication.
3. List some of the information that should go on a client consultation card.
4. What is the total look concept?
5. How should you prepare for a client consultation?
6. List and describe the 10 steps of a successful client consultation.
7. How should you handle tardy clients?
8. How should you handle a scheduling mix-up?
9. How should you handle an unhappy client?
10. List at least five things to remember when communicating with your coworkers.
11. List at least four guidelines for communicating with salon managers.

