

# HOW CAN I AFFORD A SALON RECEPTIONIST?

By Marie Drever

Salon and clinic owners ask me this ALL the time. In our industry, where the lion's share of revenue comes from per-treatment fees, it's a stretch to justify a front of house role that doesn't directly contribute to your revenue stream. Or is it? What if your receptionist can actually make you money? Then, the question becomes: How can you afford NOT to have a receptionist?

**If you're still wondering how a receptionist or front of house person gives you a return on your investment in their wages, you need to evolve with the times and think it through logically. Challenge what you think you know about the reception role. This one-person welcome party for your clients can do a whole lot more than answer the phone and wave the EFT machine at people as they leave.**

For your business to grow to the next level where your service is consistently 5-star, you can't afford not to have a receptionist or front of house specialist.

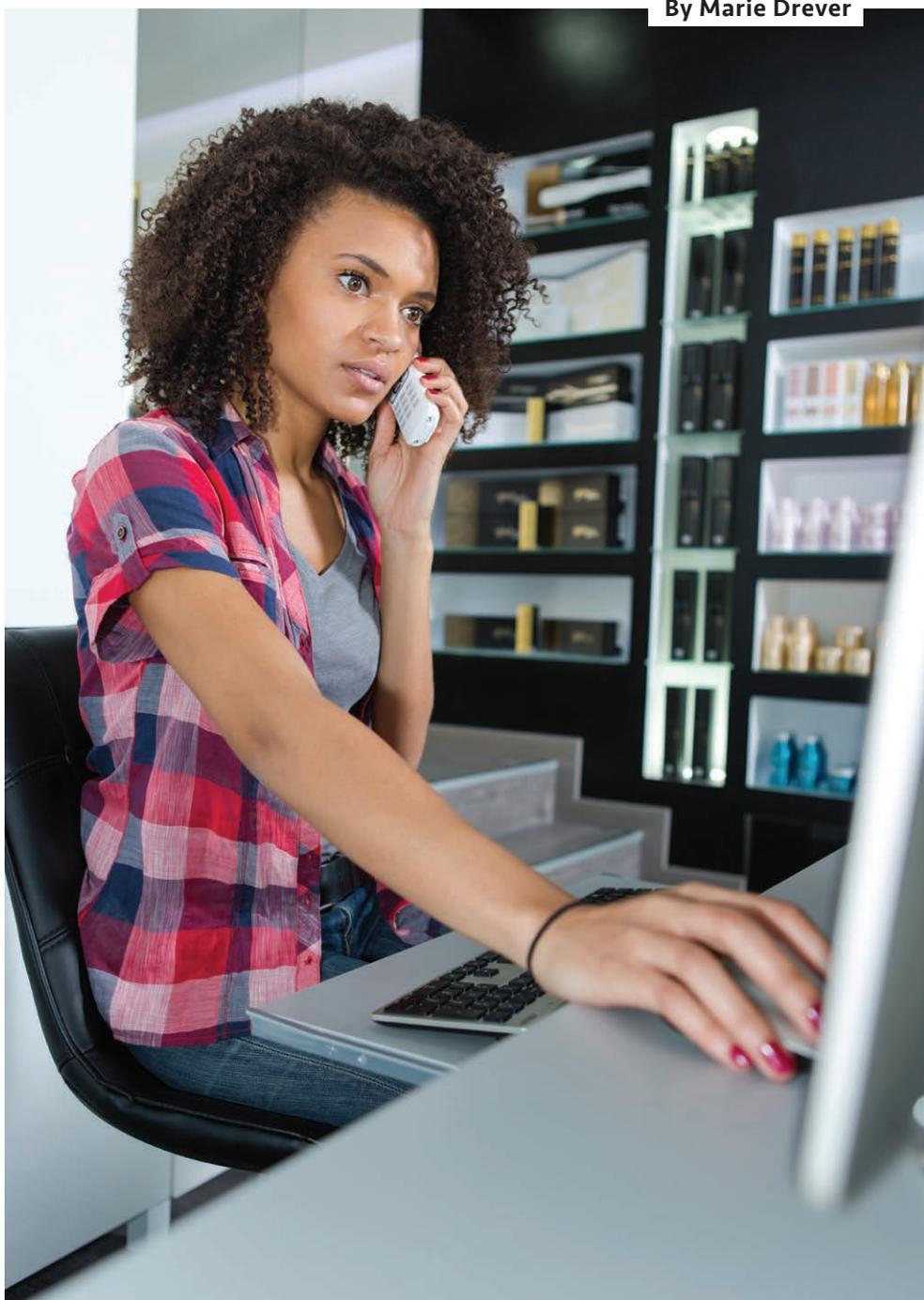
Take a step back and have a critical look at your reception processes, operational systems and service delivery. Ask yourself: How could we do this better? Where are the gaps, the missing pieces that hold us back from giving every client a 5-star experience, every single time?

These are the sorts of questions I ask my salon owner coaching clients when we're getting clarity around improving their reception processes.

Are your retail products priced?

Who does your ordering? Do you squeeze it in yourself between clients or after hours? Are your shelves always sufficiently stocked? Or are you continually disappointing clients because of your inconsistent and inefficient ordering system?

Are your testers clean? Really clean?



Do you survey your clients? Regularly?

Do you put your salon promotions in place well ahead? Or, like most salons, is it a last minute thing you only just get across the line, if at all?

How often do you re-merchandise your reception space to give your clients a fresh and inviting shopping zone?

A well-trained and engaged receptionist can take care of ALL these things for you ... plus plenty more. What about those special touches

you long to give your clients, but never get around to because you're madly multitasking? Imagine your receptionist giving each client a generous welcome - maybe a fresh glass of water with lemon, or a complimentary skin analysis. It's the extra dimension to your service delivery that turns client visit into client experience.

Still not convinced? Wondering how you can improve your salon turnover simply by having a capable, trained person at the front of your business? Let me explain.



To get the full value from your receptionist, you need to be specific about the responsibilities and expectations of the role. (You actually need to do the same for every role on your team, but let's leave that for another article.)

Start by developing a clear policy and procedures manual specifically for front of house. This manual will outline everything that's required and expected of the role, and describe exactly how you want each process done - client greeting in person and on the phone, stock taking and ordering, stock merchandising and the professional handling of every contact or visit from general enquiry right through to end-of-sale, cash handling, wrapping presentation and so on. Don't be afraid to be prescriptive; it's how you achieve consistency across the process and turn it into a system in itself.

**Your manual might include:**

- welcoming clients into your space the way you want, not how your team member thinks it should be done or has been trained to do elsewhere
- answering the phone in a professional, friendly way and asking the right questions
- how to discuss rebooking to keep your rebooking at 90%+ (you could include sample scripts here)
- handling complaints (give clear direction on

- the language to use and when to escalate)
- the process around sampling
- clearly outlining the capabilities of everyone on the team (to prevent mishaps when booking clients)
- making sure all payments and prices are explained (no surprises at the register)
- updated information on ALL current promotions so clients can be easily informed and delighted with your discounts/offers
- detailed explanation of how your online booking system works
- step-by-step process for collecting and recording client details
- letting clients know about your free Wi Fi and location of the bathroom.

With your front of house policy and procedures manual complete, it's time to devise a comprehensive task list - a checklist of daily, weekly and monthly tasks and responsibilities for the role. This document empowers your receptionists to move on to the next job without having to check in with you at every point for instructions. That means higher productivity and value for your business from the receptionist role, and fewer interruptions for you. Win/win.

While we'd all love to think having a receptionist is a "set and forget" solution, effective leaders

know that communication is the key to keeping things on track with your team.

Schedule fortnightly meetings with your receptionist to keep them up-to-date on new happenings in the salon, clarify any issues, trouble-shoot concerns, and give and receive feedback. Your receptionist can be the face of your salon or clinic business, but also the eyes and ears. Your receptionist can provide you with valuable insights into what's going on in your salon, particularly around the client experience - you just need to ask for their input.

A great receptionist helps set the tone of your salon and, with the right person in the role, you'll find yourself delegating more and more tasks their way, perhaps eventually trusting them with the day-to-day running of your salon. Then the question becomes: What are you going to do with the extra time on your hands? That's up to you: enjoy some work/life balance without feeling stressed out 24/7, book yourself that longed-for holiday or use the new-found hours to work on your business smarts and generate big thinking vision for your business future.

**For more salon wisdom email ZING Coach Marie Drever [marie@zingcoach.com.au](mailto:marie@zingcoach.com.au) or visit [www.zingcoach.com.au](http://www.zingcoach.com.au)**