



*"Clients don't care how much
you know until they know
how much you care"*

ROMANCING THE CUSTOMER

The Key to Successful Retail Sales

The objective of this chapter is to share some of the approaches I have found successful for increasing retail sales in the spa and salon. Ultimately, each and every skincare therapist needs to develop a technique or an approach that feels right for them.

In my experience, both as a client and as a successful therapist, retail is all about giving a damn. It is absolutely nothing to do with 'flogging stuff' and everything to do with caring about each and every client who places themselves into your professional care.

In all retail arenas, there are individuals for whom sales just magically happen and those for whom sales remain something of an enigma. This chapter aims to enlighten the sales-enigma therapist and inspire the successful one. Whatever the case, I would love for every therapist to feel great about retail and every client to feel great about indulging in a little, but highly pleasurable, retail therapy.

Stop, Look and Listen

Having been responsible for selling anything from skincare to sheepskin coats, I have found there are two constants: a passion for the product and a sincere determination to delight the customer. Very early in my retail career, I was given a valuable piece of advice, and that was to use my eyes, ears and mouth in the ratio that God had provided. Therefore, trust what you see, listen, listen and listen some more, and only then share your observations.

This may all sound pretty obvious. In my experience, though, the listening part is skipped almost every time. This is where client care and retail sales are lost in a moment. The skill is to match the needs of the client with the best product or advice, and the only way to do this is to develop excellent listening skills. Although it can sometimes feel like you have to have the instincts of a detective with the skills of a mind-reader, effective listening really does mean the difference between a sale and the client leaving with nothing.

Develop a mentality that means you can let go of the outcome - work without an agenda. The second that you (or your manager) has an agenda, the sale will mysteriously disappear. Clients are not stupid and will recognise when they are being sold to rather than being genuinely helped and supported by a great therapist. You may disagree; perhaps they yield to your sales pitch and you get the sale, but I can guarantee you will lose the customer. They will no longer trust you and therefore won't book for more treatments or spa visits, so the short-term win has resulted in a long-term loss. The quote I hold in mind is that 'trust takes a lifetime to build but is lost in a heartbeat'.

Always be sincere, genuine and full of integrity when recommending products to your client. Sometimes this means recommending a product or service you don't sell. My experience is that clients will be so thrilled with your honesty and integrity, they will recommend you whenever they can.