

**W**e as beauty experts, should not underestimate the **many** talents we possess. After all we derive **our** living from using our flair and imagination. Careful observation and acknowledgement of **our** skills **and experience** is the key to **our** personal and **professional** success. Appearance counseling provides just such an outlet for **our** many talents and creativity This article introduces appearance counseling as a **valuable** enhancement to **the esthetician's** practice. After reading this information and absorbing the ideas, you **will** be able to:

- Comprehend how appearance counseling differs from image consulting/development.
- Understand **what this** particular career involves, as well as the education or training needed.
- Identify possible candidates for appearance counseling from your current clients.
- Understand how appearance **counseling** can help you to sell a multitude of **other** salon services.

When I first introduced appearance counseling to my clients some eight years ago, the concept had an immediate appeal. It was a fresh and vital approach to image **consulting/development** that had previously never been offered in a salon setting because it involved both **the** physical and psychological aspects of appearance and confronted the pervasive power of beauty and its implications. Image consulting/development does not include both the physical and psychological aspects of appearance. Image consulting/development does not include teaching and encompasses only the superficial aspects of wardrobe being the individual.

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appearance counselor is **trained** to diagnose the client's color season (warm or cool) and to thoroughly **explain** the concept of the seasonal color theory. Once the client understands the concept they are less likely to select colors that are unflattering to them.

### The silent language of color

**Certain** colors have psychological implications that must be respected if one is to **accurately** portray **the** image they wish to communicate. In order to recognize more clearly the assets and liabilities of color, the **first** step for the client must be **an** understanding of the psychological ramifications of colors. For example red is associated **with** activity, aggressiveness **and sexuality**. Its influence can be **both** good and bad. It is therefore, necessary for the client to know just how to use it to **obtain** its beneficial effects without negative results.

### The client's personal style type

Determining the client's taste is the basis for the second training session. Identifying the client's personal style type makes it easier for her to create her own individual trademark. The appearance counselor uses teaching aids such as posters, catalogs **and** videos to instruct the client **about** the four basic fashion style types; classic/elegant, feminine/romantic, dramatic/exotic **and casual/sporty**. The client is encouraged to identify her taste by **associating** her style preferences **with** one of the **four** primary fashion style types. It is the responsibility of the appearance counselor to advise the client on a fashion style **type** that will best represent her both professionally and **socially**. She then provides the client with a list of wardrobe items. Having a list of clothing styles and **accessories** associated with a specific fashion-style type will help her to avoid haphazard shopping and reduce trial and error purchases.

### The fundamental elements of proportion

After the client's fashion style type has been determined the appearance counselor records the client's measurements. A perfectly proportioned **figure** is rare. The appearance counselor assists the client in **determining** her body type by taking precise measurements of her bust, waist, hip and back waist. The counselor records these measurements on a special figure analysis worksheet and uses a standard clothing size chart to determine the client's shape and **profile**. The client's body shape will fall into one of the four body style categories; hourglass, triangle, inverted triangle or rectangle. Equipped with this information the client can easily select the **appropriate** apparel suited to her own frame based on the principles of balance and proportion.

By now the client is seeing her wardrobe for what it really is. She is encouraged to examine the various clothing items in her closet for **their** potential. Clothing that does not fit or is not **flattering** is **either** to **be** altered or discarded. It is during this session that the client is taught how to develop **an** eye for value. She is advised to initially **purchase** only the major items that she truly needs to transform her look. The appearance counselor provides the client with a list of **reputable** shops that will work within her budget.

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beauty, enabling them to enjoy it in themselves and others. Doing this work and watching my clients experience the joy of self-discovery, has brought me incredible satisfaction as well as financial rewards. Appearance counseling, by its very nature supports all other salon services such as lash tinting, eyebrow shaping, body waxing, dietary health management and therapeutic facials.

### Judging a book...

It is not uncommon for even the most unimaginative person to make assumptions about another on the basis of a casual encounter. These judgments are often based on stereotype and prejudice, and are deeper than a hasty, impersonal, and trivial reflection. The focus of appearance counseling is to provide clients with a rich source they may draw from to mastermind the type of impression they wish to portray. Technically, the client learns how to use design elements such as space, line, shape, texture and color. Design principles are also taught such as balance, movement, repetition, emphasis, contrast and unity.

The art of image development is not a difficult one to learn. Any esthetician who loves style, and will take the time, can acquire the necessary skills and techniques to help her clients create a more powerful image.

### Instant impact

An image however, is most effective when it has been designed to suit a specific individual. To achieve this, the appearance counselor, like a detective, must probe more deeply. The more careful and studied the client is, the greater the chances are in producing the desired result. Instead of the mere color of someone's skin and hair, facial expression, height, weight, or physical features leading to a quick conclusion, it must be a combination of these things and more: the clothes she is wearing, the way in which she looks, or does not look, her gestures and personal habits. There is also an additional, and much more important aspect to one's presentation and this is the psychological interpretation. It is the appearance counselor who teaches the client the significant associations that invariably lead to prejudicial assumptions in the mind of the observer. Armed with this knowledge the client can then, and only then, defend themselves from miscommunicating messages.

### Full potential

Appearance counseling begins with a consultation during which the appearance counselor asks the client a series of questions, that are designed to probe her lifestyle, personal tastes, values, and professional goals. This process is essential for image transformation to take place. This information is then reviewed by the counselor and is the basis for a plan to help the client achieve her full potential. The detailed questionnaire also prevents expectation discrepancy narrowing the gap between what the client thinks they will be getting from the program and what they will actually be offered.

### Enhancing personal coloring

Once the client has completed the questionnaire and is interviewed, the first session is scheduled. The three-part appearance counseling program starts off with color training. A complete understanding of color is essential because color can create beauty or destroy it. The selection of color and its application should be handled with the utmost discretion. Sadly, many clients, unaware that certain colors allow their complexion or emphasize more irregularities, will choose shades that are unbecoming to them. The

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## THE ART OF MAKEUP APPLICATION

The last of the three sessions brings together the client's total look. A well made-up look **creates an** impact. **The** appearance counselor **uses** the seasonal color concept **as** a guide to evaluate the client's cosmetic inventory and when selecting or custom blending her foundation. Makeup shades are carefully coordinated to match and **support the** client's own natural coloring.

The entire makeup regimen will depend upon the **client's** personal preference, her **technical skills**, and her time constraints. At the end of the session the appearance counselor provides the client with **a** detailed outline of principles and techniques that **are** specifically tailored for her facial shape and features.

### Course of study required

Appearance counselors combine practical advice **with a** warm and very **human** touch. This field offers great opportunities for the interested esthetician. However, image development requires integrity. If you are considering a **career** in **appearance** counseling you will need to *seek* information from **a** reputable training **institution that** offers certification in the field. **Carefully** choose a program that is best suited to your interests, **abilities** and goals. The cost of these programs vary widely depending upon how complex the methods of training are. In addition, the **esthetician** seeking to become **an** appearance counselor should also consider a study of psychology as it pertains to image and self-projection. You will learn the specific tools that will build your confidence, earn you respect and advance your career. ■



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