



# Happy Hiring

Whether you're seeking your dream job or a new member for your dream team, **KAT HILL** rounds up some advice from experts to assist...

**Y**our staff shapes your business and power really is with the people. Murmurs of skill shortages have been heard across most industries, and the *National Hairdressers' Federation* believes that the beauty industry is experiencing a recruitment crisis of its own. A survey conducted by the organisation, which supports and advises UK hair, beauty and barber businesses, revealed that 82% of employers in the sector stated that recruiting qualified and experienced staff is 'very difficult' or 'difficult'.

"Increasing competition from other employers, coupled with a shortage of people looking for work, is creating a recruitment crisis across the UK for our industry," states Hilary Hall, NHF chief executive. The organisation also highlighted research from the Local Data Company, which showed that beauty salons, nail bars, and hair and beauty salons are all in the top 10 of new businesses

opening. This means that, as well as a shortage of people looking for employment, there are also more employers competing for staff with the right skills, the NHF states.

"Having a nail business can not only be fun but lucrative, and recruiting the right staff is key to success," comments Monika Shine of Semilac UK. "There is no shame in admitting you need help with some aspects of the business, rather than being out of your depth and getting things wrong."

"Running your own business is a steep learning curve, and you need the right people in place to make the journey as smooth as possible."

So, what's the key to finding the right staff, seeing a smooth recruitment process, keeping them happy and retaining them? Read on, as *Scratch* speaks to recruitment experts for their top tips...

## MEET THE RECRUITMENT EXPERTS



Stefania Rossi, owner of Utopia Beauty & Spa and Stefania Rossi Recruitment  
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Brooke Roberton, director at Oracle Beauty Recruitment  
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Heidi Bannister, managing director at Arthur Edward Cosmetic Recruitment  
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Monika Shine, CEO of Semilac UK  
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Liz Richards, head of salon sales and education at Cuccio Europe  
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Charli Jepson, business owner and Nail Harmony UK educator  
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Linda Hill, founder of Linda Hill Recruitment  
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## Notes for employers

### Attracting the right staff

Stefania Rossi believes that to attract the right staff to your business, you need to create an environment in which they can thrive. "As an employer, you should make your business attractive to staff members. Show off your brand and create awareness. After all, it's your brand that embodies your brand, business and identity."

"You know your brand and that it represents your clients, staff, identity and vision," Stefania continues. "Identify the benefits of your business culture and show it off. As a salon owner, be proactive and showcase what's on offer, such as career development, self-improvement and self-development opportunities. As a business owner, what packages can you offer, and what staff benefits and incentives are there? Detail what's on offer; it's a two-way conversation. Change the steps you take to attract staff."

"Be very clear on the type of person you are looking for and your expectations," agrees Linda Hill. "If you are unsure of what you want, it will be harder to find the right person."

**"Determine the most popular treatments in your salon and test candidates on these," reveals Linda Hill. "Remember it's not just about doing a great treatment; ultimately, it's about how your staff treats your clients so that they come back time and time again."**

### Advertising the role

"There are lots of steps that business owners can take to find new staff," explains Brooke Robertson. "Consider advertising either through social platforms such as the business Facebook page, and promoting the advert to reach a targeted audience to help the right candidates see your jobs."

"In addition, advertise on a jobs board that's targeted to the beauty industry. At Oracle Beauty Recruitment, we have a jobs board on our website that is targeted to beauty candidates only. It's £28 to advertise a job on our website and 5% is given to charity. Another option is to utilise the services of a recruitment agency that is specific to the beauty industry."

"The cost to hire a permanent candidate is more costly than advertising through a job board or social platform," Brooke continues. "However, it is a lot more effective in terms of finding the right candidate. We know the specifications and will find someone according to them on behalf of the business owner."

Consider working with local colleges and training centres, urges Stefania Rossi, who comments: "My first point of call is local colleges and training organisations to identify if there are skill individuals seeking work."

"Referrals are the most powerful way to find staff," adds Linda Hill. "Provide incentives to staff for referring new team members."

"As an employer, I'm a firm believer in the power of social media, however I do not think that a job role should simply be determined by what you see on a candidate's profile," reveals Charli Jepson. "It is imperative to request CVs for anyone seeking to work in your establishment. Read through all applications thoroughly to ensure you're not wasting your time or anyone else's for that matter."

### Know what's needed

As well as a contract of employment, there are also a variety of other aspects you must consider. "All business owners and employers must conform to employment legislation and understand their rights," explains Heidi Bannister. "You can find information on employing people on the government's website."

"The business owner needs to decide whether to hire contractors or staff after creating a sound legal structure which covers registration and insurance," adds Monika Shine. "The decision then needs to be made on whether to rent out a desk. This can be beneficial for the nail technician regarding finances and flexibility, but there could be negatives in terms of isolation and managing administration and bookings if the desk is rented on a solo basis."

"Insurance, sick pay and maternity pay all need to be accounted for," says Charli Jepson. "It can leave some salon owners out of pocket if they haven't foreseen or planned ahead for situations that may arise. You are most certainly set to make a bigger profit from an employed therapist, but be sure to account for any eventuality."

"Make sure all your compliance is up-to-date and you know what is expected of you when the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) laws come into effect on 25 May," states Linda Hill.

"Good insurance is a requisite," adds Brooke Robertson. "I would recommend highly that employers invest in a good insurance policy, covering public liability, product liability, employer's liability and treatment liability, to cover any employees that may make a mistake."

"My businesses have an employee handbook," adds Stefania Rossi. "I feel it's very important as it clarifies exactly of what is expected of staff and the required standards. I also suggest having treatment procedures in place for every area of the business – from reception duties to how to conduct a manicure or pedicure. Everything should be recorded."

"In the handbook, have clear guidelines for general practises, as well as uniform, appearance, behaviours, in term both treatment of client and other staff members. I also ensure all health and safety practices that need to be adhered to in the salon are enclosed."

### Retaining staff

"There is no one-size-fits-all formula for retaining staff," explains Stefania Rossi. "But you can implement a structured way with training development and up-skilling staff members."

"If a staff member is upskilling and developing in your salon, you are keeping your standards high, offering the best treatments and remaining competitive in the area. Invest in your staff. Retaining staff is about rewarding and developing them. You create loyalty in that kind of culture."

"It's important to recognise and reward their achievements. Listen to your staff and empower them. After all, they're on the front line with your clients."

"Staff members may move to new pastures if they feel there is no progression for them," warns Linda Hill. "Have a clear progression plan for each team member where you collectively discuss their training needs. Also, consider being more flexible with working hours for your loyal and long-standing staff members."

### The interview process

Time spent interviewing and assessing candidates is well spent in the long run, advises Stefania Rossi as she shares her current strategy...

"I always start a recruitment procedure with a telephone conversation with a candidate. Through this conversation, I can gauge more about that person, including their enthusiasm and energy level. It's ultimately a little test too; as I often leave telephone messages and don't receive a call back!"

"If that telephone conversation goes well, I invite them in for a formal interview with me. The second interview is with two members of my team in a more informal environment, such as a coffee shop. We do two interviews to see the applicant again and to find out whether the answers match up from both interviews, as well as to consider their punctuality, personal presentation and enthusiasm."

"After that, we carry out the trade test to test their skills. We usually do about two or three treatments. One will be a gel polish application on myself, and then a manicure or another nail treatment on another team member. I will look to see if the applicant tailors the treatment to each team member as they should with a client. As a candidate, the trade test is an important way to show off their skill, personality and creativity."

"It might seem a little over the top, but for me it's important that the recruitment process is a two-way conversation. Each stage gives the applicant the opportunity to open dialogue with the salon owner and team members. I recruit for personality and I train for skill."

### Self-employed or employed?

The salon environment allows for flexible employment – but what suits your set up? "There are definitely positives and negatives to renting a chair," reveals Liz Richards, head of salon sales and education for Cuccio Europe. "However, before you embark on this, be sure to check out all of the legalities and what future pitfalls could cause you problems should your new technician leave. For instance, to keep a tech self-employed this could in fact, in the eyes of the law, deem them to be employed. Also think about finances and how the arrangement will work for you. The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service – or ACAS – is a great source of free legal help."

"Be clear to state whether the position is employed or self-employed so that applicants can be certain of the role they are applying for," Charli Jepson explains. "There are many positives to renting out a nail desk but be sure to know what you can and can't implement in terms of rules for hours and holidays for example. As they are self-employed, it's an entirely different situation to employing somebody with set hours and days. This can cause problems but can also be mutually beneficial for a salon owner, such as a client base being brought into the salon regularly and allowing a space to be filled that may be otherwise empty."

"Be sure to check that the therapist has adequate insurance and their personal and professional skills match your own," Charli continues. "Make sure that what you expect from them is all outlined at the trade test and interview date. Have a contract written up, including areas such as professional conduct. Be sure to mention any clients of the salons remain with the salon should the therapist leave to pastures new."

# Notes for applicants



## Where can I look for jobs?

So, the hunt is on! But where to start? "If you are looking for a salon-based job, follow as many salons in your area as you can on all social media platforms," advises Charli Jepson. "Contact them and enquire if they are looking for someone at the moment. If not, ask if you are able to drop in a CV for consideration. Don't simply send a few pictures of your work and assume they will open a space for you."

"If you do see an advert, send your CV and also make contact stating you have done so. Include a covering letter with some information about yourself, and have references ready to send over if requested."

"If you don't want to be scouring the internet looking at job boards and salon websites, then consider working with a recruitment consultant," adds Linda Hill. "The service is often free and they will match you with the job that suits your needs and fits your skills."

## DID YOU KNOW...?

Stefania Rossi is set to reveal a new online tool for finding your fit – Hidden Talent. The platform is set to become a national recruitment academy for beauty professionals. Job-seeking therapists will be able to join for free and gain access to tips, opportunities and develop their skills with video content, industry information and job opportunities.

## Check your CV

First impressions count. Your CV and portfolio may be the first thing your prospective employer will see of you – so you have to make it count. Use your CV to sell yourself and your skills.

Tailor your CV to what you think the employer will be seeking for the role. Highlight where your skillset and relevant experience will shine in the job. Describe your achievements, rather than listing your previous roles responsibilities. What positive outcomes did your involvement see? An increase in retail sales or happy clients returning to the salon? Include these points!

Being in a visual industry, ensure your CV is presentable and easy to read. Show your professionalism and attention to detail with a mistake-free CV. Always ask someone to take a second look before sending anything to a prospective employer.

Take the time to revise your CV and know it inside out. It's highly likely an employer will have it to hand and will question you on various aspects.

"I would definitely add a cover letter highlighting your skills and include a professional picture," adds Brooke Robertson. "The beauty industry revolves around personal presentation, and this gives you a head start."

## Ace your Application

Keep your application relevant and personalised to the job and the employer's needs, reveals Monika Shine. "Employers may expect interviewees to live nearby, have at least one year's experience and know how to deal with client demands," Monika says. "You'll need to have detailed knowledge of how to offer a perfect manicure and all that comes with it. Being aware of the competition and current trends is also very important. The salon owner may ask the job applicant to demonstrate they have all these skills in place."

## Nailing an interview

Although nerve-wracking, the interview stage is an important part of the process and the opportunity to show your enthusiasm and aptitude for the role.

"Sell yourself!" implores Charli Jepson. "Tell them what you would bring to the salon – such as clients, professionalism and great service. Be sure to ask questions, too. What products does the salon use? What are the salon's opening hours? What is expected of you as a therapist? Be honest about services you feel are your strongest and weakest. A good employer will invest in you to ensure you're confident in all areas."

"It is very important to make a positive impression," says Brooke Robertson. "The beauty and spa industry is all about making others feel and look good, therefore it is essential that your image portrays this. Be confident and walk into your interview feeling poised and upbeat. Offer a strong handshake, a warm smile and don't fidget."

"You need to enter any interview exhibiting a positive and confident attitude, this is key and sometimes more important than any work experience. Try to relax and be yourself. The interview is a two-way deal, you are also interviewing them; you're both finding out if the job is suitable."

"Smile and prepare," advises Heidi Bannister. "Be sure to have examples you can talk through to highlight previous experience and successes. Always make sure your enthusiasm for the role and company comes over. Don't be afraid to ask for the job!"



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**"If you're applying for a salon job, consider wearing smart, professional wear to the interview. A smart, unbranded tunic will have you looking prepped and ready for the role."**

## Tackling the trade test

"At the interview stage at Semilac's salon, we ask job applicants to show us their portfolio and how they apply a manicure," reveals Monika Shine. "Straight away, this test shows how they work around the products, equipment, tools and clients. The salon owner will also be looking for knowledge and skills related to the job, demonstrated in their portfolio and how well you fit in to the salon atmosphere. They will be looking how well you present yourself and if you have a flair for nail design."

"Try and find out what the process is beforehand so there are no surprises on the day," Heidi Bannister adds. "How many models will you work on? What services do they want to see you perform?"

"I would always suggest taking some basic equipment along. This will ensure you can perform a variety of services. Focus on customer service; make sure your model or client has the very best experience."

## MONEY TALKS!

"Don't be hesitant when talking money!" advises Charli Jepson. "Know your worth and go in with a realistic figure in mind – especially if you have a built up loyal client base. Be realistic and take note of the stated amount."

## Job finding fibs!

A recent survey by job site, Adzuna.co.uk, revealed that as many as a third of job-hunters have lied on their CVs.

The survey of 3,587 participants either in, or looking for, employment asked if they had lied on their CV – 37% admitted to doing so at some stage in their career. Of those that had lied, 83% said they still got the job.

The survey also found that 56% would be prepared to tell a 'big lie' in order to bag their dream job!

"It is best to find the right angle for your experience; dig deep and think about relevant tasks that you might not have realised you had done," advises Doug Monro, co-founder of Adzuna.co.uk.

"Tailor your skills and experience to fit the role you are applying for, because putting something that isn't true on your CV might get you the interview – but it won't get you the job." [www.adzuna.co.uk](http://www.adzuna.co.uk)

## INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

- ✓ Research the salon and the role
- ✓ Prepare a few questions to ask the interviewer
- ✓ Practice your travel route to the interview
- ✓ Bring copy of your CV and portfolio
- ✓ Check your appearance – is your uniform clean and fresh? Is your hair neat and tidy?
- ✓ Carry a bottle of water. "To help keep calm, I would also always suggest taking something to drink with you," comments Heidi Bannister.

## TOP TIP

"Trust your gut," advises Linda Hill. "Whether you are a salon owner interviewing a potential staff member or a candidate going for an interview, you need to leave the meeting feeling positive, energised and excited. If you don't, then it's not the right fit."