

# Brand Aid: Making Your Salon Stand Out

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Too often in the tanning and salon industry, the lion's share of the marketing attention is focused on getting your clever name "out there." But, but beyond name recognition, how are you effectively answering the question: "Why you?"

I believe the four most dangerous words in business are: All things being equal. If all things are equal in the minds of your prospective customers, they will make purchasing decisions based on two basic criteria: price and proximity. If the only thing that you have going for you is that you are the closest and/or the cheapest salon, your growth will always be limited.

To survive and thrive in today's challenging economy, you must stand out. You have to be known as *the best choice* – for something. What can you offer, provide, deliver, feature, command, highlight that no one else can? What unique problem can you solve, celebrity can you feature, service can you claim, event can you host or charity can you support?

Better put: To what question are you the answer?

As you sit down and put some serious brain power behind your marketing effort, here are a few key steps to keep in mind:

**1. Be Remarkable** – Author Seth Godin describes being remarkable as being "worthy of being remarked about." So what are you doing in your business that causes others to notice, perk-up, pay attention and most importantly, talk about you – to others? Being darned good at what you do is not your competitive advantage. It's just the entry fee. Being good just puts you on the same level with most of your competitors who are also really good at what they do. To truly thrive in business you have to creatively and legitimately stand-out, be noticed and remembered for something different. What's your schtick, your clever tag, claim or far-superior packaging? Take the time to truly craft or discover your competitive advantage and then promote the heck out of it! Build your brand identity with the clear intention of not just being good, or even great, but of being truly remarkable.

**2. Have a Plan** – It used to be said that if you build a better mouse trap, people will beat a path to your door. Not anymore. It just means you've got a warehouse full of mousetraps. There are so many voices in the marketplace clamoring to be heard that it's almost deafening. Wake up! Customers aren't going to find you on their own. You have to know who all your audiences are and create a simple plan to get your marketing messages out to each of them. Who would want to buy your products or visit your salon? What do they watch, read or listen to? Where do they congregate, recreate or dine? Where do they connect, collect or gather? You need to be where they are – and that doesn't happen by accident. Being better than the competition isn't enough. You have to have a well-crafted plan for how to reach your customers – where they are! And then reach them again and again.

**3. Be Very, Very Visible!** – The greatest enemy of success in business is anonymity. If people don't know who you are, they can't buy what you're selling. From your standout signage, or eye-turning storefront to your bright packaging, killer Web site, viral videos, charity events and public presentations, to be well known, you have to be ... well ... known, seen *and* remembered. Look at what your competition is doing to be seen by customers and do more – much more. Market more. Crank up the PR and find creative ways to get interviewed by the press. Be active in professional associations and service clubs. Volunteer your time, speak, write books or articles, advertise, exhibit, network, blog, Tweet and always, always do everything you do with consistency,

professionalism and class. Build your brand by being creative, unique and desirable – and then promote the heck out of it!

*David Avrin is the author of the best selling "It's Not Who You Know, It's Who Knows You!" (©2010 John Wiley & Sons) He is known internationally as the Visibility Coach. An in-demand speaker, author, marketing consultant and executive coach, David shows entrepreneurs and organizations how to stand apart and raise their profile in a competitive marketplace. Visit him online at [www.visibilitycoach.com](http://www.visibilitycoach.com).*