

A close-up photograph of a hairdresser in a white shirt smiling while using a black blow dryer on a client's dark hair. The client is a woman with long dark hair, smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is softly blurred with warm, bokeh light spots.

Beyond
the
Technique™

HIRING THE RIGHT PEOPLE FOR YOUR TEAM

by KATI WHITLEDGE

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I was told this once and I'll never forget it: **Be slow to hire and quick to fire.** If you know in your gut that you have someone on your team who's rude or has an attitude problem...Or if you do have an employee that's struggling with a particular skill set and just isn't getting it, there's only one thing to do before you decide to let them go. You can first try repositioning them, to see if there might be a better position they can be in to serve themselves, the team, and the customers better. Because we can pretend that the customers aren't aware of what's happening behind the scenes, but we know better. They can get a sense of those things, even if they don't know exactly what's going on.

So today I want to talk about how to prevent that in the first place – the need to reposition or let someone go. And that's where that advice comes in handy.

- Kati

Be slow to hire, quick to fire.

HIRING THE RIGHT PEOPLE FOR YOUR TEAM

1 Spread The Word

2 Craft Your Message

3 Phone Call

4 Salon Tour

5 Sit-down Interview

6 Skills Audition

7 Decision-Making

STEP 1: SPREAD THE WORD

First, let your team know: “Hey everyone, we’re hiring for two more hairstylists. We’re getting busier, we’re hoping to grow, we have the room, etc., so we’re beginning the hiring process.” Let everyone in house know the game plan.

The second thing to do is let your customers know. Everybody knows somebody. So the easiest way to let them know is possibly by email, and preferably a more official marketing email, with your logo; make it very professional looking and informative. Why send a very official email? That way they can forward it on to the perspective candidate they have in mind.

The other way to let your clients know is through Facebook, and any other social media as well. You can also take that another step and create a Facebook ad. For that, I’d recommend reaching out to a social media marketing professional who can help you really target the right people. You’re not going to try to just get in front of hairstylists or beauty school students through those ads, but also the people



Everybody knows somebody.
Build those relationships.

who hang out with them! Or think about the age group that you're looking for and the levels of hairstylists you're looking for. What are they going to be looking at when they're on social media, who do they follow? You can then reach them through those platforms as well.

We also have stylists that will travel. When they're in a salon where they have the chance to grow personally, professionally and financially, they'll make the trip. It is not out of the norm to have employees willing to travel thirty minutes to an hour and a half to get to work. They often move

Then just make sure that if you're doing a Facebook ad or boosting a post, your targeting is on point with the people you're looking for or the people who hang out with them or know them.

The next way of spreading the word is by **building relationships with the beauty schools in your area**. I will tell you that it's worth the drive. We personally go all over to beauty schools. We'll go from Madison, WI a little bit farther over to Milwaukee (about an hour and a half away) to talk to beauty schools. And it pays off! My second hire ever was from a Milwaukee beauty school, and as of now she's a master stylist on our team and is also one of the managers at our salon. So sometimes it's worth the trip.

closer later on, but there are some people willing to make the drive if it's for a great position that can help them grow.

Another platform to use to spread the word is Craigslist. Now, Craigslist now charges you for your post, but remember that you get what you pay for. So whatever you're putting in your ad or your message, make sure that it's directed at the right people.

And a platform for hiring front desk representatives, is Indeed.com. Again, you'll pay for that exposure, but it will help vet out the right people for you.

STEP 2: CRAFT YOUR MESSAGE

Let's just say that we choose the Craigslist ad route. In our area, I believe it costs \$25 to post your ad for hiring. The posting title should be something that includes the position and your specific location. Make sure not to be too general. You're not just looking for any hairstylist. What in particular are you looking for? Stylists fresh out of school? Stylists with a certain level of experience?

I'm going to share what's been very successful for us.
This is what we wrote and posted for our candidates:

"Do you have a similar story to Rachel? [the name was changed for publication] We believe some of you are similar to Rachel, and if so, you might be the right fit to join our team! Rachel is the most loving, giving, and hardworking stylist we have on our team. Her goal is to make everyone happy. She often asks, "What do you think you'd like to do today?" This is what she asks her clients, because she's a very supportive person. Prior to Rachel joining our team, she had quite the journey. She started as a stylist at a salon, but a couple years later some of the others were leaving to go rent their own suites. She decided to follow along and transitioned to an independent contractor. She soon realized that she was ill-equipped to run her own business and became very down about her lack of success.

Maybe like you, she doesn't have a very self-promotive personality. Rachel eventually decided to close her suite and return to a salon setting as an employee. Because she now lacks the confidence from her prior experience, she ends up working at a low cost-for-services chain. But that's not what she envisioned for her life, when she chose the beauty industry. Deep down she knew she was capable of more. She was searching for a salon that she felt matched her capabilities and worth, especially with the nine years of experience she had at this point. After seeing an ad similar to this one, Rachel applied at our salon and joined the Be Inspired Salon Team.

Now we admit, we were hard on her at first. If you're a supportive person who will do anything to avoid conflict, it is very hard to accept critique. But we knew Rachel was capable. She never gave up, and it's paid off in a very big way. Today Rachel is one of our lead stylists, and one of our bridal hair experts.

What we'll never forget: she thanked us for building her confidence, and let us know that in all her years in the industry, she is making more money now than she ever had, and more than she ever thought she would. She no longer fears that she won't be able to support her daughter.

So maybe you're like Rachel. Are you seeking more for yourself professionally? Maybe today is the day that you choose to believe you can have an abundant life. If you're ready for similar success, apply at Be Inspired Salon."

Wow. How much are we revealing to them through this letter? We're basically saying that we're ready to push you from where you are to where you want to be. It's not going to be easy, but it will be worth it. And what are we looking for here? We're looking for a hairstylist, preferably with experience, who hasn't had the greatest success in the past. Because typically, they just need the right environment. So we want to reach those people, and tell them that it will be worth it to try.

We're saying right from the beginning that Rachel is loving, giving, and hardworking. And we're asking, are you like her? So hopefully, we're disqualifying people right from the beginning who aren't like her. Don't be fearful of doing that! You want the right people to apply, so you can find the perfect people for your team.

Of course on Craigslist you should also add photos - photos of the team, the salon, potentially the products and past work - so they can get an idea of the culture and what it'll be like to work with your team.



And do you need to do it this way? Not necessarily. You could list the job responsibilities, expectations, duties, etc., but I just thought: what a unique way to ask if peo-

ple have something in common with a stylist on our team who we already know is amazing. And we want more stylists like her, so what better way to get our message out than by relaying it in a story format.

to complete this challenge. We look forward to seeing your innovations.”

And this could work for hairstylists, front desk, social media reps, or any position, just depending on what project you can

So once you have your message created, remember that when you're posting it you need a call to action. So at the bottom of your ad, tell them what to do next. “Go [here] to apply.” Do they need to physically come in and apply in person? Or is there a link on your website for them to apply online?

Once you include your call to action, decide if there are any other hoops you're going to make them jump through. Here's our example. We were hiring a social media assistant to take over all of our salon social media sites. What we said was this: “Thank you for your interest in the position. Your next step to qualifying for an interview is to create a social media plan for the following scenario. We currently perform hair color services using Goldwell products. We are currently launching a new option within our Goldwell hair color line, called Elumen. We would like your creativity for how we should promote this on all of our social media platforms. Here are our two goals: 1) Convert followers into new guests, 2) Create an ongoing conversation among our followers and existing guests. You have until Thursday at 12 pm

give them. And it shows you a few things. First, you'll be able to see if they can really follow direction. Secondly, you'll see if they can meet a deadline. Three, you can tell if they're open to working hard to get hired. One person complained to me once and said, “I've never had someone ask me to work for free.” You too may receive one compliant here and there, which will make it very easy for you to disqualify them. It is hard to find the right people, but this will make it so much easier. Make them work for it and prove how much they want the job, and prove they have the qualities you want in an employee.

STEP 3: PHONE CALL

The phone call is the first interview. I'd recommend it be done by a leader of the salon (though not necessarily the owner—a manager or coordinator is a better option). For this first official phone call, stick to basic questions. If their answers to the few basic questions impress you, then they can come for an in person interview.

What you're really looking for is a reason to disqualify them immediately. For example, are they even able to start right now? We've had people apply who aren't even moving to the area until a certain future date. It's hard to rely on that. They could arrive and then have a ton of things going wrong with their life and be unable to work. Or they're in school, but won't be available full-time perhaps for another four months.

Ask right away what interests them about the job. For hairstylists, we ask, "On a scale from one to ten with ten being a master level, how would you rank your skill set in the following areas?" And then go through services such as long hair cutting, razor cutting, clipper cutting, updos and special occasion styles, makeup applications, highlights, lowlights, balayage, foiling techniques, color formulating (what color line are they currently using?), waxing, and any other services you provide.

And here's what to be wary of. If they're fresh out of school and giving themselves and eight or nine out of ten on any area, be careful! If they come out of school

thinking they're that capable, they'll find out pretty quickly that they're not as good as they think they are right now. Or they may not be moldable. If they really think they're almost a master level in technique, then what could you teach them? It's a red flag.

I also ask what they're currently earning, and what their salary expectations are. Hairstylists should typically have their expectations in line with what's realistic, depending on if they're in school or have more experience. (This could be a great question for front desk staff, or any other position outside of hairstyling as well.) I find it interesting that most hairstylists don't know, especially right after school, what they should be making. I don't think that a lot of them know that nationally the average hairstylist makes thirty thousand a year. And that's actually a bit gracious; it's usually a little below that. So if they're coming to the table with something higher than expected, you can feel free to bring it back to reality, just by asking questions about whether they know about those national average incomes. And make sure

that they know that that average value definitely doesn't apply to most people in their first year. It also depends on your location, success beyond the technique, and how much you're able to charge.

And do you want to be above average? If you're following us you already know that the answer is yes. You should strive to be a superior class of professional.

Another great question: What is the longest amount of time you've held a job? Please do not make exceptions in your mind. Your past typically predicts your future. If someone has struggled to hold a job, that won't often change.



You should strive to be a superior class of professional.

STEP 4: SALON TOUR



First, tell your candidate that you'd love to have them in for a salon tour, and offer a couple of potential dates and times.

In my experience, if they call in, and offer any issue with why they physically can't come in, I have never given anyone a second chance. How badly do they want this opportunity? If they truly do, they'll make it happen. I've seen it too many times, and it's too much of a red flag for me. I need to be able to trust people and their integrity, and if they can't show in person when they're supposed to, I won't be giving any more of my valuable time to that candidate.

For the salon tour, your manager or lead stylist should be in charge. This is the second round of potentially disqualifying them for the position. Do they appear to be along the same lines as everyone else working for you? This is an example: If our brand is a swanky, upscale salon boutique, there will be certain styles that come in that won't be a good fit for our clientele. It's not even that you wouldn't hang out with this person, but if they don't look the part that our clients expect, there will be a challenge in coming

together and fitting together.

Your salon has a culture, and its own breed of people. And your clients do too, and they expect those to match up. So do make sure that your candidates look the part, and would fit in to the atmosphere of your business. While you don't want to judge someone based on how they look, your clients will. They will take notice of how your new hires look and fit into the environment, and that is something you need to keep in mind in the beauty industry. When you're selling "beauty", you need to have employees that your clients will trust and spend money with.

Also during this tour, I have the stylist fill out a couple of personality quizzes. One is their "DISC" profile. If you go to DISCpersonalitytesting.com, there is a cool blog that will help you discover the personality of your team. And if you don't do this already, I'd recommend to do it for your entire team as a fun exercise. You should find out the kind of personalities and people you're working with, and who you work well with.

These are the four personality types:

D

“D” Personalities are dominant, driven, don’t need repeated directions, and are always ready to take action. Sometimes they tend to be less precise, because they’re so driven. They’re more task oriented than people oriented, though they can sometimes be great with people as well.

I

“I” Personalities are inspirational types. They’re very into people. People energize them, and they love to be the center of attention. They want to know everyone, and tend to be great at sales, but also often fail to complete tasks. You may have to repeat directions to them.

S

“S” Personalities are supportive. This will probably be 70–80% of your stylists. They’re steady, supportive, and dislike change. They move at a methodical pace and they love people. They may also lose a bit of accuracy because of this.

C

“C” Personalities are logical and analytical. They’d rather know what the right steps are than the easy steps. They’re more precise than intuitive. They are very task oriented and pride themselves on accuracy. This makes them great technicians with amazing results, but they may struggle communicating with people.

Everyone will have a dominant type, and a secondary type. If possible, it’s really great to know both of these, so you can be sure you’re putting people in the right positions.

There’s also another quiz, about the five love languages. I love to know about people’s top two love languages. This can be found at 5lovelanguages.com. It’s cool; everyone wants to be shown love in some of these ways more than others. The five languages are time, touch, positive affirmations, acts of service, and gifts. And it’s great to identify these when you’re hiring. If someone’s top love language is positive affirmations, you know that you should

be hypersensitive to giving them positive feedback. If gifts are a top category then consider giving them a surprise \$5 gift card or a small token like that when they do a great job. If you recognize these things, you’ll understand what drives them and how you can best appreciate them, and it will be reciprocated.

These tests can be very impactful for the relationships you’re building. When you work full time, you probably spend more time with your coworkers than you do with any family or friends. So at a full time job, you are in a relationship with the people around you, and you want the relationships to be fulfilling.

STEP 5: SIT-DOWN INTERVIEW

So finally, once they've filled out these profiles, they don't have any major red flags, and you're fired up about them, you'll invite them back for the sit down interview. This is technically their third interview. Once again, your manager should facilitate this interview, along with either the owner or a top leader on the team present as well. Because when you finally sit down with them, you want your people there. Now you've already judged their appearance; they appear to be a good fit. Now you want to judge them based on really getting to know them. Will they really fit in with all of you?

So here are some good questions to ask to make sure their values are in line with yours:

- 1 / If you could volunteer anywhere, what organization(s) speak to your heart?
- 2 / If I called your former boss (or your school instructor) what would they say about you? And then I'd follow that up with; what would be one thing they'd tell me that irritates them about you? Because otherwise they'll stick with positive things. This way you can really discover things they might not be as proud of.
- 3 / Then I'll bring up what I mentioned earlier about spending so much time around coworkers. What are we really going to learn about you when you start with us? And not just positive things again; what things might we not love but learn to live with?
- 4 / If you weren't in this industry, what could you see yourself doing? Great answers are ones that mention other service industry positions where they are serving others or helping others in some way.
- 5 / Besides relatives and friends, who are three people you admire and why? This another great way to get to the heart of a person.
- 6 / What do you know about us? Do they know enough about your company? Do they know how awesome you are? Or are they just going through the motions and applying everywhere? If they've really taken the time to learn about you, they could really be worth a second look.

STEP 6: SKILLS AUDITION

Now, your leaders, owners or managers have had this sit down interview, and you're interested in someone. It's time for the fourth interview. And I know this seems like a lot of steps, but like I said, **be slow to hire and quick to fire. This will be their official audition.** You want to see what they're actually like in this position. So for a hairstylist, this is how it works: Tell them, "We will provide you with a model. Please come in at this time and date, and bring your cutting tools. We'll provide the rest."

In the meantime, find a model. You can search on Facebook, or among contacts that you have. Let them know that if there are any mistakes made or anything they're not happy with, you'll fix it for them for free. Make sure the model knows exactly what to expect.

Typically, at this point a manager will still be the one running this, but an owner can certainly be involved by now as well.

So, they'll come in and bring their cutting tools, while you provide the blow dryer, flat iron, shampoo, conditioner, capes, combs—all of those basic items. I'd recommend that you have the service be a precision cut like a bob haircut or crop/pixie or even a blowout for something simpler. Never do color; I learned that the hard way. I had someone come in for this skills audition and they brought their cousin as the model for a color. The manager at the time spent four hours of her life helping with this color service. The stylist had never used our color line, she was new in the industry and

was very slow. The cousin basically got a great free service from us, we used a ton of product and it took way too long. It was definitely the wrong call.

So learn from us: don't do color and don't let them bring their own model. If they bring their own model, they'll automatically be more comfortable with that person, and they're also guaranteed a rave review! There won't be authenticity to the model's final opinions.

One of the main things you're looking for during this audition is how they interact with the client – both verbally and non-verbally. Do they stand close to the client, do they look at them when they ask questions, and do they turn the client to face them? What are their natural tendencies? Any skill set or technical issues you recognized can be improved. What can't be easily improved are people and their communication habits and natural tendencies.

STEP 7: DECISION-MAKING

Finally, after they go through this fourth interview, you should have a pretty good idea if they're the right fit or not. You know if they dress and look the part, that they've worked hard for it, shown up every time, and demonstrated their ability to communicate and their skills. Now you'll let them know that you're going to discuss it and contact them by a specific date. Give them that deadline so they have a specific expectation.

Then managers and leadership team members, and anyone else who were a part of this process should all meet together and come to a final decision. Trust your team. If you're not the one hiring, trust your team members to choose the right people. As long as everyone has a clear idea of who you're looking for and the expectations you have in mind, there is no reason for you not to trust their decision.

You should also trust your gut. If there are some red flags now, those won't miraculously go away later. It is typically going to come back and make you regret not trusting your gut. If you're feeling something's off from the start, trust yourself and know that there are plenty of great candidates out there. Don't be desperate—it could cost you clients and profits in the long run.

Overall, this is the best way to go about your hiring process. The goal here is simple: you want to hire the right people for your team. And nothing I shared here was about blowing us away with how phenomenal you are technically. I've had applicants whose hair color, haircuts, and updos were unbelievable. But they knew it. And their attitudes were not in line with the people we hire. We only hire people who want to be a part of a team. Of course you can have stars on your team, but they should still be team players. They should still want to see the whole team succeed and build each other up.

Are you fired up to start the recruiting and hiring process? I hope this guide offers you tremendous insight and inspiration to build the right team for your Salon. Best wishes to all my beauty professionals!

Still have questions? Contact us at info@BeyondTheTechnique.com


REFLECT

Take a few minutes to write down your top 3 takeaways.

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