



LNE & SPA *Chat*

+ with **RENÉ BROOKBANK**

Owner of Beach Beauty Bar in Huntington Beach, Calif.

How can you define the concept of your spa? — Beach Beauty Bar is a boutique day spa catering to the local community. We are located in the heart of downtown Huntington Beach and enjoy living among and serving our neighbors. We specialize in waxing, skin care and massage services.

How many treatment rooms and other amenities are there? — Three tranquil treatment rooms and a private outdoor retreat, The Deck, which is the perfect venue for special events. The Deck features an amazing ocean view and guests are encouraged to arrive early or stay late to relax on the rooftop escape.

How many employees do you have and what are their specialties? — One full-time and five part-time employees. We have two estheticians, one spray tan specialist and three massage therapists.

What would you say are your biggest challenges? — My biggest challenge is staffing for massage therapy. The bulk of our business is skin care and waxing,

but our massage business is growing. My goal is to build the massage business to the point where we can bring a therapist on full time to alleviate this staffing challenge.

How do you manage the stress that work brings into your life? — I incorporate a daily combination of physical exercise and mindful gratitude into my routine. My work and home are five minutes from each other, so I am able to take my dog on a walk to the beach at least once a day. During this time, I practice mindful gratitude for everything in my life. Additionally, I play tennis and work out at a local gym.

“ I have a staff of stars — that’s what makes my job enjoyable. ”

What takes most of your time every day? — I am the owner and a working service provider. Providing services definitely occupies most of my day, but I am able to balance my time by planning ahead whatever needs to be done.

What is your hiring process? — I am very selective in hiring. I don’t post ads for employees, but rather I seek people I know. I sometimes hire someone before I truly have enough business for them, knowing that if they have the right personality, maturity and work ethic, I can help them build their business quickly.

How do you evaluate employees? — Client retention is a big factor in evaluating employees. Is the staff member sending a thank you note to each new client; is he or she following up with the client? Beyond that, I look for reliability and a can-do attitude. Employees stand out as stars when they are willing to jump in and exemplify a positive attitude toward their career. I have a staff of stars — that’s what makes my job enjoyable.

How do you train the staff? — We have a program called Training Tuesdays. For an hour and a half on Tuesdays, myself or another staff member provides training in an area of expertise. Our training is widespread, including client retention, belly-to-belly marketing, social media, product knowledge, treatment protocols, etc. Our product partner reps also provide us with



training on product knowledge, along with trade shows and online videos on various topics.

What are your retail goals? — Our retail goal is 35-40 percent of total revenue. We started specializing in acne last summer and our retail numbers have been on target month after month. We are clearing up acne and our clients are sold on the products, making retail a slam dunk.

What incentives do you have for your staff to reach these goals? — I am currently working on developing a tiered commission plan, increasing commission percentages at certain levels.

Where is the retail area located? — Three retail areas are located in the lobby/waiting area, with all skin care products tastefully displayed on one whole wall. In addition to the product shelves, we have point-of-purchase retail on the checkout desk and another area of retail, including jewelry and gift items, in the waiting area.

What can you tell us about your marketing techniques? — Marketing is by far my favorite part of managing the spa. Brand identity is important to me; I spend money on graphic design, making sure all of our printed materials, social media and graphics always stay true to our brand ID. I have seen tremendous results in belly-to-belly marketing. I started this business in early 2014 with no clients. We have grown our client list to 600 plus clients in less than two years by being active in the community and fostering our client relationships. We support local events where we can build brand awareness and host two major events each year that generate lots of new clients.

How do you keep clients loyal? — Relationships are the key to client loyalty. While we host client appreciation events and have a rewards program, the key to loyalty is living and working in the same community as our business. We are able to develop authentic relationships when we interact with clients outside of the spa, at the dog park, at the local gym, etc.

What are the most important lessons you have learned from failures or challenges? — Take your time in everything that you do, rush decisions can be costly. The biggest lesson I have learned is in regarding product partners and how much to purchase. If you are going with a line that has multiple products, start small. Work with your product partner to identify best-sellers. And, when you are looking to add people to your staff, take your time as well. Look for the hidden gems.

What are the most popular treatments? — Skin care services are the most popular treatments followed closely by waxing. We definitely have a reputation for waxing, especially in brows and Brazilian. We’re also known for our acne offerings, we have lots of clients who come to us specifically for acne.

What advice could you give someone who would like to manage a spa? — My advice would be to live and work in the same community, if possible. Entrench yourself in that community and develop a sense of community within your spa. People are your most important asset. Take the time to find the right staff members—they are out there.