





# THE FOUR ETHICS

BUILDING STRONG  
RELATIONSHIPS  
TO CREATE  
STRONG SALES

by Erin Carey

**W**hat is your ethic? The word means “habit”, and what we do every day, in work and at play, deeply defines who we are.

Every business these days says that it is in the “relationship”-business; this claim has become part of the marketplace jargon. And while it is trite to say, it could not be more true. It is also never been more important, as our marketplace becomes more and more crowded with parity commodities.

On Main Street USA, there is usually more than one of everything, be it an artisanal microbrewery, a tiny boutique offering adorable European-made clothes for kids, or a skin care center. So, what makes your business stand out is indeed the relationships you create with your team members and with your clients. But are you and your business really walking your talk on this one?

All healthy relationships, including business relationships, are based upon respect. This means honoring the best qualities in your employees, clients and yourself. If you want to improve your business, you need to improve your relationships in the workplace. And if you want to improve your relationships with your clients, you must begin by improving your relationships between team members.

Many spa owners and managers underestimate the power of leading by example and proper mentoring of their staff members. A successful spa will be directly linked to its ability to satisfy its clients. The best way to insure clients keep returning is to make sure they leave happy and more educated every visit. It is up to each and every team member on your staff to ensure this happens. Your business is only as great as the team you have in place running it. You can have the most beautiful, state-of-the-art facility featuring the number one product, but without a team that is 100 percent focused on creating and maintaining positive client relationships, you will not be as successful as other spa owners that have the correct recipe.

# 1

## START BY LOOKING IN THE MIRROR

Are you a great role model? When you show up at work, are you fully present, filled with purpose, energy, optimism, and ready to smile, solve problems and serve? It is imperative that you are because your team follows your lead. If you are always distracted by life's million little nagging diversions, then you cannot expect anyone on your team to do otherwise.

Let your team know that this is the standard of expected performance. Expectations must be clearly defined in the beginning, and validated on a regular basis in order to keep employees loyal and engaged. As an employer, you are entitled — obligated — to hold high expectations of your staff. If you do not, they will not only let you down (and let your customers down), but they in fact will feel let down themselves — by you.

One of the most important things for team members to learn is that they are a “product”, and that forming and nurturing relationships with clients are the most crucial service on the menu. This attitude dictates everything from presentation and attire to polite language and proper grammar when conversing with clients.

Matching uniforms and name tags are a great start to a professional atmosphere. At our company, we require a super-clean look for our team, just like we do for our super-organized workspace: hair pulled back, minimal makeup, very short, natural nails, no visible tattoos or piercings, no waves of exotic perfume, and no heavy jewelry.



**KEY TIP:** Keep the focus on what you are selling. In our case, it is great skin with an emphasis on skin health. Our team always generates energy and health, not glamour. This attitude also affects our retail array, incidentally. We do not sell any extra “stuff” like cards or clothes or books — just skin care!

# 2

## EXCELLENCE REQUIRES PRACTICE

Author Malcolm Gladwell maintains that true mastery of any skill requires 10 years of solid practice, and that people who get really, really good at something work at it much harder than other people — because mere talent is not enough.

Present this to your team, not as a grim warning, but as an inspiration: they are building their careers, not merely showing up for a job. Great companies and great brands offer ongoing education to team members. With this in mind, we require all team members to attend mandatory in-store trainings and staff meetings, at least once a month. It often gets so busy and so many of the skin therapists are in and out of treatments all day long, every day, that it is not too often that the entire team is able to come together.

Sometimes it is beneficial to hold these meetings even more frequently — even once a week. Team huddles to discuss goals should be held daily. The point is not merely to impart technical learning, but also to build supportive relationships between team members. Keep the meetings interactive and hands-on, so that team members invest on a personal level.

These educational trainings may be conducted by an owner/manager, vendor or educational leader. Choose a topic every meeting that covers key areas such as treatment protocols, customer service tips, products and ingredient training,

or anything relevant to what is happening in the business. Most importantly, always allow time for an informal staff Q&A to discuss any topics in the industry.

Remember that even if you do not offer particular services at your spa or skin care center, it is important for your team to always be educated on the latest developments and technologies in the industry. Clients are quite savvy these days!



It is great to schedule trainings close to the start of a new month as a way to hold a “pep rally” and go over what is planned for the next month and excite and motivate your team. Announce upcoming incentives and recap the previous month’s successes. Really make your point with team awards quarterly covering areas such as highest retail and service sales, most improved and leadership awards, to name a few. It is extremely affective for team spirit and to boost morale by announcing team successes in front of one another. It encourages others to try harder so that they can be acknowledged in front of their co-workers in the future. The trainings are another great way to ensure consistency among the team by making sure all treatments are being promoted and serviced the same and that all protocols are being followed properly. Expectations must be clearly defined on a regular basis in order to keep employees loyal and engaged in their job.

**KEY TIP:** Keep these meetings about the industry, not about operational issues; those should be discussed in a separate meeting. Everybody loves to receive the validation of their peers in a group-setting — it is great for morale. Be sure to keep any corrective conversations with an employee separate and private, offered to her as an individual in a confidential time and place.

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## 3

### CREATE TOOLS FOR YOUR TEAM

The key techniques to success are to set the bar high, clearly identify the objectives, and nurture the team with tools to reach and exceed those objectives. Provide a monthly goal sheet to provide them with a breakdown of their monthly goal, into daily goals, which they can track. Each day begins with management creating a motivational daily touch-base sheet filled in with each employee's daily retail and service goal. Then, before the hustle and bustle begins for the day, the manager can hold a daily huddle with the team to discuss the daily goal and insure all are aware of their individual goals. Managers can tally where each employee is throughout the day; ensuring each employee knows how close they are to achieving their target. It is imperative that management helps employees stay on top of where they are daily, weekly and monthly. Each employee is required to fill in their goals daily and is held accountable for updating at the end of their shift.

Effective leadership and ongoing staff motivation ensures a low turnover rate, which in turn leads to maximum profitability and customer satisfaction. This straightforward yet personable measurement system gives the manager or owner the opportunity to coach their employees and to provide tools and ideas to help increase their sales if they are struggling. They also have the opportunity to congratulate and provide valuable feedback to those who are achieving their goals. We offer a commission-structure which pays the employee a percentage based on their goal achievement. There is a set percentage awarded for all sales, which increases as team-members achieve and surpass their monthly goal, bringing them into higher tiers. The more effectively the employee works, the more they are rewarded, so it is a win-win for the employee and the business.

**KEY TIP:** Make sure you have an information wall for your team where you can regularly post goal achievements, updates, motivational quotes and protocols all together in an accessible area, such as a break room. If your store is organized, your staff will be too and your customers will take note.

Our goal is to hire skin therapists that are excited to learn and to grow within the business. We often interview candidates that may have 20 years of experience inside a treatment room, but are not interested in the position because they have to help with the front desk and retailing. No matter how wonderful a treatment they can provide, they need to have a sales relationship attitude that inspires them to contribute to all aspects of the business. A successful skin therapist should be familiar with every aspect of our brand and can assist in any way needed. Our team-structure is designed for employee retention, which is the key for growing a successful spa business, or



any business: it is far more cost-effective to nurture and retain skilled team members than to find new recruits.

## 4

### ALWAYS ENGAGE THE POWER OF TOUCH

We know that there is an opportunity for a sale every time we answer the phone and every time a client walks through the door. Great salespeople know that there is no such thing as a “potential” customer; there are only current customers and, possibly, future customers!

Our brand is based upon the power of touch. We define this in a number of ways. Of course, there is the literal, hands-on, tactile experience of the skin care examination and treatment. But we also “touch” with our voices, our facial expression, our eye contact, our body language, our tone, our attitude. The bottom line: touch the client as many times and in as many ways as possible. Listening is also, incidentally, an important form of touch; when you truly hear someone else and respond effectively, you have made a lasting connection.

This powerful dialogue of touch begins with the greeting, whether on the phone, on the floor, or even online. Let us face it: it can be intimidating for customers to walk into your facility and immediately tell you about all their skin concerns. It is important to engage them and offer as much or as little assistance as they would like so you can break down this barrier. If they say they do not want any assistance, always stay nearby, although at a respectful and polite distance, so they can ask you a question if they change their mind. Customers may say they do not need assistance, and we view this as an opportunity to, at the very least, offer them some product samples or a complementary skin analysis. It is the antithesis of hard-sell, but it does subtly turn a “no, thanks” into a “yes, please” in the majority of cases.

We have seen that a customer who receives a complimentary skin analysis will buy on average five products, as opposed to two products by a walk-in client who does not have

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the hands-on experience. We also have found that 82 percent of these customers will return and buy at least two products within a one-month period of that initial visit.

**KEY TIP:** Offering a zero-obligation, zero-pressure complementary skin analysis has been our most effective method of initiating retail sales and future treatment bookings, even with casual walk-ins. Our belief is that the experience of having the skin touched dissolves the customer's resistance!

**And here is another:** never allow employees to stay behind the front desk. All other activities should be dropped immediately to serve the needs of the customer. And this has to be said: no texting or messaging out on the floor. That area belongs to customers, current and future. Coach your team to make immediate eye contact with anyone who even steps into the doorway. A smile will generally persuade them to walk further in, even if they are tentative. While we do not encourage overt, scary pouncing, this is the perfect cue to walk out into the "live area" and greet the new arrival.

The language of greeting, meeting and interacting in the customer's space requires skill and practice. There is an art to "hovering" without pestering, if the customer seems a bit shy or has said she does not need assistance. Work with your team to practice these skills via role-playing during some of your regular meetings, learning how to turn a no into a yes.

Begin with a touch – the "virtual touch" of a real smile. Great salespeople learn to smile at strangers as though they are recognizing a long-lost best friend. It seems real because it is. That initial smile and greeting may, in fact, be the ini-



tiation of a long-term loyalty between the customer and your brand, and that relationship is the most precious asset in your company's inventory. ➡



*Erin Carey is the Retail Store and Business Development Manager for the Dermalogica flagship in Santa Monica, Calif. With an expertise which embraces brand-building, marketing initiatives, client relations, staff motivation, merchandising and special event planning, Carey leads a team of 10 professional skin therapists. Under her supervision since 2009, the industry-changing Dermalogica flagship has become the global business model for all other Dermalogica concept centers worldwide. Born and raised in Los Angeles, Carey holds a BA in Art from CSU/Northridge, and has specialized in retail management since she was 18 years old.*



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