

I Just Secret-Shopped Your Salon!

By Brenda Fishbaugh

In my 26 years in this industry, I've seen things over and over that ruin a salon's professionalism. You may have great equipment and a great location; but if your beds have leftover lotion goo where someone swung their legs to get out of the bed (and handprints on the top acrylic), I'm grossed out and not tanning with you – your salon is clearly NOT CLEAN! How many other things do you or your staff overlook?

As I approach your front door, I hate weeds and cigarette butts and dirty sidewalks. Does your door have fingerprints and old, peeling credit card stickers? Yuck! Along with homemade signs hung with scotch tape on the door and counter, it assures me you don't run a clean or professional salon. It feels more like a gas station – not a place where I'd be comfortable lying down naked.

If the person behind the counter is on a personal call, dressed poorly or uninterest-

got the response, "You'll still get a good tan." If lamps are blinking or no longer working, I don't feel I got my money's worth or that the salon is properly run!

This is probably my biggest peeve: a staff with no tan! If you offer tanning beds, a good portion of your staff should have a very nice tan ... it's part of their uniform! I understand about pregnant staff or Skin Type 1 redheads having a spray-tan; but most of your staff – and you – need to use your primary product.

I'm potentially more sensitive to being asked for eyewear than most, but it's very smart to ask every time. I recommend, "May I please see your lotion and eye protection?" It's a double-ask, it's polite, and they can only *show* you. If you ask, "Do you have your eyewear today?" we all know tanners will answer "yes," even if they don't have it. I recommend you ask every time,

Leanna Thomson of Skinsation in Salisbury, MO reminds us that dirty "Bed has been sanitized" signs are ironic and give a really dirty message!

ed, I'm uninterested. Industry leader, Mike Blore, Owner of California Sun salons, feels that female staff should wear makeup and not have a "gym" hairdo. I'm not a fan of the staff or the salon smelling like burnt skin. It's a real turn-off. You may no longer smell it; so, have a friend "shop" you.

In the tanning room, I don't want to feel a sticky floor. I want enough hooks on which to hang my clothes and an empty wastebasket – not someone else's trash. I don't want to lay for 12 minutes looking up at fingerprints on the top acrylic or a lamp blinking (or not lit). I can't tell you how many times I've told the salon staff, "There are two lamps out in Bed 3," and

so your guests line up with their lotion and eyewear ready to show you. You'll see if they have re-worn their disposable eyewear a few times, or if their goggles are broken or missing lenses or need a good cleaning with anti-bacterial soap!

If I use your spray-booth, I don't want a sticky floor! I *do* want the paper "sticky feet," as well as clear disposable eyewear, a disposable thong, nose plugs and one-time-use lip balm, as well as barrier cream and a hair cover. I believe it's the professional thing to do and your staff should explain to guests why they may want to use these protective items (see the two previous *IST* articles for more sunless safety info).



These tanning pros added to my "shopping list:"

Sandi Mueller of Branson Perfect Tan, in Branson, MO hates sloppy sweeping (dirt pushed into corners) and lotion splatters on the floor and walls.

Leif Vasström, President of Supra Brands (lamps) in California, is disappointed if the counter staff doesn't engage him in a conversation about his skin, tanning lotions and different tanning bed options. "I'm always shocked if I don't receive a salon tour and am not asked if I have any friends who might also like to tan," he said. "What missed opportunities to upgrade me and snag an extra customer."

Mike Lipsky of Sunburst Tan in Satellite Beach, FL hates it when salon staff refer to tanning as "safe." The FTC does not allow indoor tanning to be referred to as "safe!" Don't use it to promote sunless, either.

Would your salon survive a "secret shopper?" ■

If you'd like a letter indicating the FDA only allows disposable eye protection to be used once, email me at WinkEase@WinkEase.com with your salon name and Code: IST Use Once.



About the Author:

Tanning industry veteran Brenda Fishbaugh is president of Eye Pro, Inc., makers of disposable eyewear. She travels extensively training

salons on the effects of UV light on vision.

