

Marketing Study: Ted Gibson Salon
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We've come quite a ways since we started talking about marketing and branding last year. We've talked a lot of theory and given some great examples of how developing a strong plan for marketing can help make your business distinctive and special to both your clients and your team. Now let's look at some real life examples of businesses that have done it right.

Across the world, there's trend toward big corporations combining to make large global, mega-companies. In the process the customer often gets lost in the process, customer service suffers, and profits can become the absolute, most, and only important thing in the business. Marketing and brand development in these large companies is handled by big departments with big budgets. Their job is to ensure that their message is understood by their potential customers, on a large scale.

Smaller businesses are charged with the same responsibility to grow, but with more limited budgets as well as a more limited customer base, they have to do it a bit more creatively. Starting this month we'll be looking at some of the most successful salon and spa business stateside and how they handle the task of standing out in a crowded beauty industry.

First out we'll have a look at New York's Ted Gibson Salon. Ted Gibson is one of the most sought after hair stylists in New York. He is represented by Artists By Timothy Priano and his work has appeared in such internationally renowned publications as *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Elle*, *Marie Claire*, *Vanity Fair*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Allure*. He's worked with top celebrities such as Angelina Jolie, Jessica Simpson, Kerry Washington, Keira Knightley, Gabrielle Union, Jessica Alba, Diane Sawyer, Sara Foster, Vanessa Carlton and Ashanti. We spoke to Ted about what makes his business tick and how he keeps Ted Gibson Salon at the top of its game.

What is the philosophy by which you operate your business? Our mission at Ted Gibson is to provide our guests with dedicated, inspired, expertly trained professionals and the highest quality product. Offering individualized beauty services in an oasis from the hectic city. Each guest will look as good as they feel.

Who is your client base? Models and celebrities, professional men and women, hip East Village girls - we have a really diverse clientele.

What does "Ted Gibson Salon" mean to your team and your clients?

Positive great work environment, convenient, hip location and exceptional customer service. I hope that our clients would describe us as friendly and relaxed, a fun atmosphere and with great amenities.

What percentage of your budget do you put into getting that message across through marketing and branding? We devote over twenty percent of our revenues to building the brand of Ted Gibson. Some of it is just as simple as having specific colors for the salon, some things more involved.

Do you have a website? We have a website that will be up in June as you know it takes a lot of money to build a website. We chose to put all that money into public relations. The site in June will have all staff members, a reel for client and guests to look at to see what we are doing for each season.

Do you have a dedicated staff member who looks after your marketing and promotional materials? Our salon manager and owners of the salon come up with ideas to promote and market the business. It is a constant thing.

What methods do you employ in promoting your business? PR! PR! PR! That and excellent customer service. Exceeding our clients expectations – every time – is the best promotion we could ask for.

So do you use a publicist? Yes, they help to get us on television, write-ups in magazines, and help to build relationships that we might otherwise have a harder time developing as quickly.

Do you have a signature service or thing your business is known for? We're known for our value added services: Scalp treatments, make-up touch-ups, hand treatments, quick cleanses for the men, all with Aveda products.

Do you carry other lines in the salon? No, we are single-line focused. We believe that we all should speak the same language and the clients appreciate it.

Are there plans for any "Ted Gibson Salon" branded items other than wet goods? Well, we currently carry a patented hair accessory that I developed called *Bandostick*. It sells in the salon and on bandostick.com.

How would you describe the physical design of your salon? How does it help to convey your message about "who" Ted Gibson Salon is?
I'd describe our space as uptown chic ... downtown. It is a minimal space: 2500 sq foot that has treatment rooms, manicures and pedicures and twelve stations that house some of the best hair dressers in the world. We believe in comfort and excellent customer service. Guests come to the salon and never want to leave.

What is the price range of your services? Hair cuts start with Ted Gibson at \$425 and range to \$95 with junior stylists. Color starts at \$135 with Jason Backe. We also have academy Mondays that are very successful - \$50 hair cuts and color starts at \$50.

Do you use an incentive program to encourage revenue generation by your staff?
Yes it is very important to reward the staff for their hard work.

How has your prior work helped you in successfully developing your brand?
Coming from a professional background, working with Aveda as a global educator, and developing products has helped me in trade and consumer press. That "Ted Gibson" was already a brand of sorts helps the salon gain validity more quickly to potential clients. The more people know about our team and our backgrounds the better the growth is for the company.

What is the single most important characteristic that you would like people to think about when they describe your salon? I'd like them to say we are "real". That we provide great service that exceeds their expectations. That we're chic but comfortable.

Is there anything else about the way you run/market/develop your business that you want to share? Never give up! Accept and honor change, love what you do or change it.

