

Booth Rental or Full-Service Salon: The Pros and Cons

One of the biggest decisions new nail techs ponder is whether to rent a booth or to work on commission. New nail school graduates who have just paid for their education are often short on finances, and building a clientele can sometimes be a slow process when they have bills and expenses coming at them on a regular basis.

If you happen to graduate nail school with a little capital, booth rental may be an option. Booth renters usually negotiate a monthly or weekly fee for operating out of someone else's salon. Some salons also require a deposit from their booth renters and will give them a key along with the salon rules and regulations. Monthly payments are best, as some months have an extra week; if you pay weekly, you will end up paying extra. By paying monthly you will eliminate that situation.

When you opt for booth rental, you are responsible for all your supplies, expenses, taxes, insurance, clientele building, and all other responsibilities that come with operating a business. Some new graduates do nails part-time and slowly build a clientele while working a regular job to make ends meet. It's important to have a back-up plan in place should you become ill or have an emergency, as it could place both you and your business in jeopardy.

Another option is to postpone booth rental and find employment with an established full-service salon with an existing client base. It is possible to find a salon that understands you are new to the industry with no experience, no clientele, and little capital. Some of these salon owners will be sympathetic to your situation and willing to give you your first start. In a full-service salon, you will usually be offered a base pay plus commission.

As a regular commissioned employee, you will be paid weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. At the end of the year you will receive a W-2 and file regular taxes. Many full-commission salons also offer benefits such as health insurance, sick leave, annual vacation, pension, matching plans, etc. These salons operate as large corporations and sometimes have several locations (Ulta Cosmetics, Mario Tricoci, Elizabeth Arden, and many more). Large chain salons are based in most states. Do your research to find some near you.

The advantage of being an employee is that all you have to do is show up on time and do good work. The disadvantage is that as a new tech, you might not get the best schedule and might have to work weekends and holidays. But as other techs are hired, you will eventually become a senior tech and might even be offered management opportunities. (I



have seen students move right into management within their first year of graduating nail school.) Be on time and be willing to work late hours, weekends, and holidays. Customers can be more generous tippers during those times, so working those hours can be to your advantage.

Successful people in the nail industry are just hard-working individuals who are willing to learn, lead, and grow. Whether you opt for booth rental or commission, it's imperative that you continue to further your education and skills through advanced training. Attending trade shows, workshops, classes, and a lot of practice will help you to grow as a successful nail technician.

See You Soon!

— Roy

Royan Williams has been a licensed nail technology educator, nail school operator, and continuing education instructor for over 20 years. His experience as a school operator has helped him understand the needs of nail technicians, especially those of new students breaking into the nail industry. See more at www.chicagonailschools.com. For free help and advice e-mail: Royan.williams@att.net

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