



Phorest

# Strategic Growth Guidebook

Build Your Dream Client Base and  
Increase Revenue in the Digital Age

At Phorest, we have often said that the formula for any successful salon, spa, or clinic is to **get your clients in more often, spending more, and generating referrals**. However, while these aspirations may be fundamental, your approach should be adaptable. The most dangerous thing even the most established and successful businesses can do is become rigid while the world is changing around us.

Within the Phorest community, there is always more to learn. We have a unique opportunity to interact with owners, staff and industry educators daily. Throughout the past year, our research team has conducted surveys with hair and beauty clients, analysed data from Phorest salons, and spoken to teams worldwide about their strategies to overcome challenges and achieve their goals.

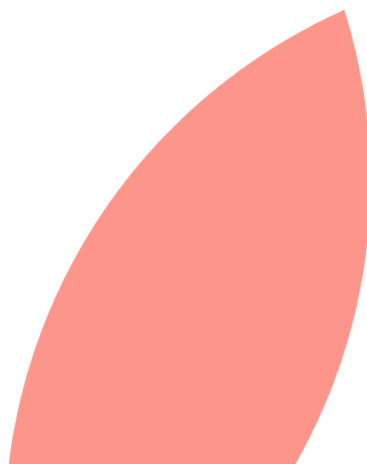
## Do you want to evolve your business mindset and grow?

We invite you to revisit the fundamentals, from brand building to client retention, with a new light. In this ebook, we've woven together data from Phorest research and expert insight. We offer methods to build your dream client base and increase your revenue, highlighting where digital tools will give you an edge. We combine inspiration and action points to consider.



## Together, We Grow

Your Phorest Team






# Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>Plan to Stand Out .....</b>	<b>1</b>
	Your Brand DNA	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Growing Your Brand Awareness .....</b>	<b>7</b>
	How Do New Clients Find Your Salon?	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Gathering Your Community .....</b>	<b>13</b>
	Social Media Marketing	
	Define Your Dream Client	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Forever Clientele .....</b>	<b>25</b>
	Attraction vs Retention	
	How to be Client Obsessed	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Diversify Your Revenue .....</b>	<b>33</b>
	Online Retail	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Born on the Salon Floor, Bred to Help You Thrive .....</b>	<b>39</b>
	Meet Phorest	
	<b>Sources .....</b>	<b>41</b>

# 1 Plan to Stand Out






Your business isn't *just another salon*.

This understanding makes you so passionate. Otherwise, why would you have started your business in the first place? You bring something to the world that no one else can – an essence that is 100% unique to you.

And there are traces of this essence all over your business, like fingerprints, evidenced in the decisions you have already made, such as:

- Your logo
- Your customer service approach
- The atmosphere of your salon
- The personalities of the people you hire.

How would you put this essence into words? This is your Brand DNA.





# Your Brand DNA

## Your Brand DNA is the core of your business identity.

It signifies the unique value you offer your clients beyond your services, giving them a reason to choose you over a competitor. There are lots of places that do hair, nails, or skin care. However, having a strong brand makes you the sole provider of the qualities you possess.

Take a strong brand like Apple or IKEA. These businesses compete on more than just selling smartphones or furniture. Instead, each offers a robust, branded experience down to minor details, forging emotional, memorable connections with their customers and allowing them to signify something more significant. As a result, they have carved out a league of their own.

## Your brand is a promise.

This promise should be:



### 1. Authentic



### 2. Relevant



### 3. Consistent

## Defining your brand DNA comes down to some key elements.

Try outlining these yourself:



**Your Mission:** an action-oriented statement that conveys your brand's purpose and the impact it intends to have.

**For example,** Phorest's Mission is, "We empower and inspire salon, spa and clinic owners to grow fantastic businesses while attracting and delighting loyal clients and talented staff."

**Your Values:** the beliefs you, as a business, stand for.

For example, the Phorest's values are

1. Can-Do Attitude
2. Growth Mindset
3. Serbhís Go Hiontach  
(Excellence in Service in Irish)

**Your Voice:** a description of the style in which you communicate. Sometimes it helps to think of your brand as a person. How would you describe their personality, and how would they speak?

**For example,** Nike's brand voice might be characterised as powerful, inspirational and positive. Hence their famous tagline, "Just do it."

At Phorest, we strive to mirror essential ingredients of the hair and beauty industry in our voice: Courage, Camaraderie and Celebration.

“

I think the only way to succeed in business is to be purpose-driven. So whether we apply this to our personal lives or brand building, purpose has to be at the centre of all we do. Without purpose, I think we set ourselves up to fail.

[...]

I connect with my hairdresser because I see him most weeks in my inbox, talking about things other than hair. I like having that personality. I like having that authenticity. I suppose because I'm a personality-led brand, that resonated with me. And I think it resonates with other people as well. We don't want these faceless global corporations. We like connecting with people.

”



Liz Earle, MBE  
(At the [Phorest Salon Owners Summit 2023](#))







Together, these elements can guide you as you make your business decisions. That way, even if you are faced with a tough choice, you always know how to stay true to yourself.

Whether you make them explicit, they should also form the bedrock of presenting your brand to the world.

So now that you have your brand DNA let's put it into action and show how it can help you win new business.



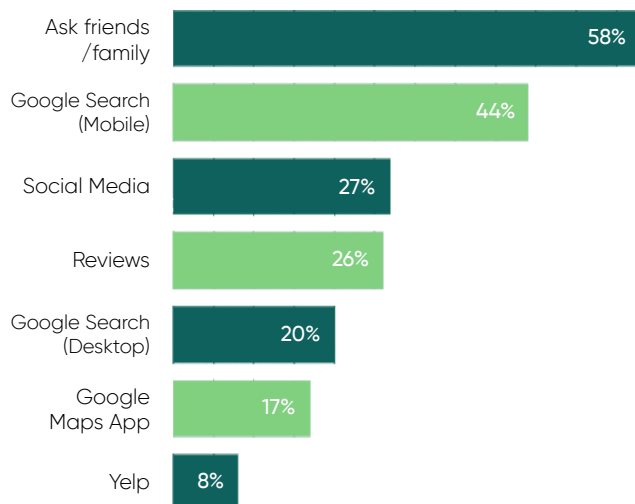
# 2 Growing Your Brand Awareness

Marketing success can't be reduced to only a list of best practices. Now, it's time to think beyond what you are doing and link everything back to the why. Your marketing goals and objectives must align with your business's overall goals and values.

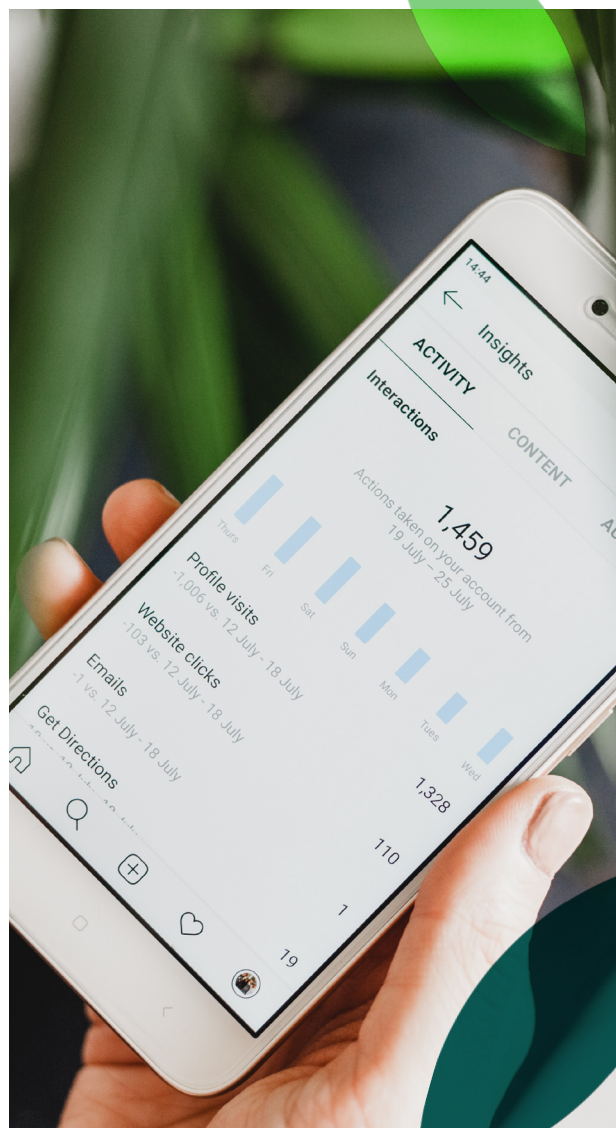
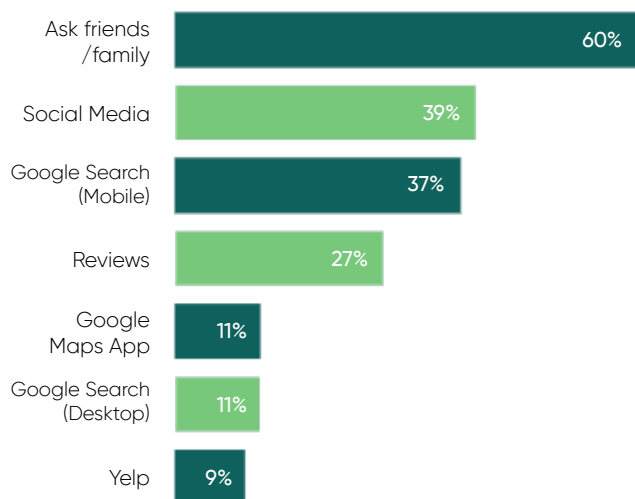


# How do new clients find your salon?

## Where do you look when trying to find a new hair salon/barbers?



## Where do you look when trying to find a new beauty salon?



# 78%

use digital tools (including reviews, google, yelp, and social media).





## A Mini SEO Lesson

“

SEO gives you the opportunity to showcase just how amazing your salon is and is not just a complicated algorithm to crack. In time, and with genuine SEO effort, your business will reap the rewards.

”



**Avril Kealy**  
Phorest  
SEO Conversion Copywriter



Read more on the  
Phorest Blog



[The Salon Owner's Guide to SEO](#)



Learn more on the  
PhorestFM podcast



[Eric Seropyan on Leveraging the Power of Search Engine Optimisation](#)

## First, Audit Your Website

While many third-party agencies offer website audits at a price, it's also something that you can do yourself using one of the many free tools out there.

Try [Google Lighthouse](#) and [Semrush's](#) free tools.

A key area to look at is the speed of your website. Speed is a ranking factor, meaning if your website is slower than your competitors, search engines will likely rank them above you. And from your client's perspective, according to Google, **the probability of visitors bouncing out of your website increases by 32% as page load time goes from 1 second to 3 seconds.**



## Want to Be Visible Online?

Keywords are the words your clients search in Google for services or products like yours. They can be short, such as “nail salon”, “local hairdressers,” and “barber shop nearby,” or they can be longer, like “aesthetic clinic specialising in anti-wrinkle treatments” or “budget-friendly spa near me.”

**For those who use Google, 57% search for salons in their local area, while 20% search for services or brands they want.**

In general, you’ll know best what kind of keywords will relate to your business. However, using keyword-generating tools to see what’s trending in your locality and industry is an important step to ensure you’re not missing out on the real-life searches that people around you are conducting.

**Google offers a free tool to help you research keywords and their estimated search volume.**

However, it’s just as important not to overwhelm your site with these words, as this is known as “keyword stuffing” and can jeopardise your Google ranking.

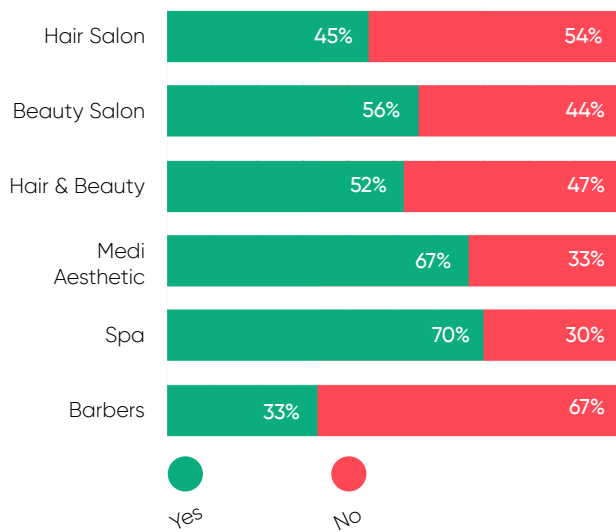
Ensure your service and product pages are as descriptive as possible, written using your own words (not copied from a brand website, for example). If you structure your website well and regularly write high-quality content that reads logically and contains keywords describing your business, you should notice a positive increase in your Google Ranking.



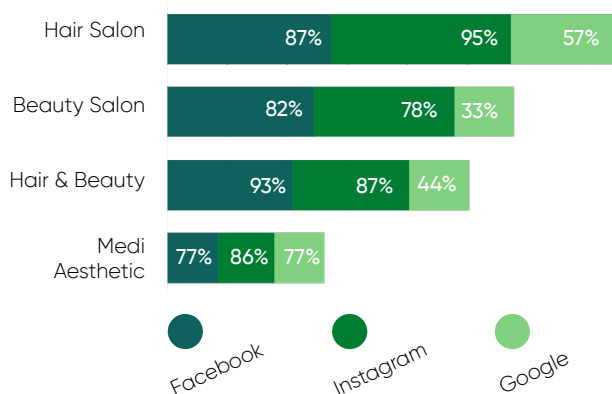


# Here's How Salons are Advertising Themselves Online

Do you place ads/sponsored posts as part of your marketing strategy?



Where do you place these ads?



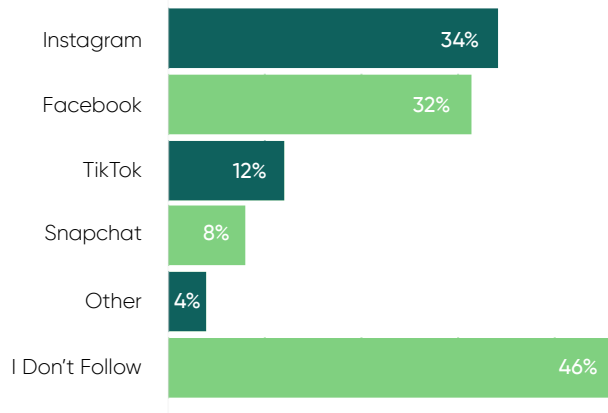
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# Gathering Your Community

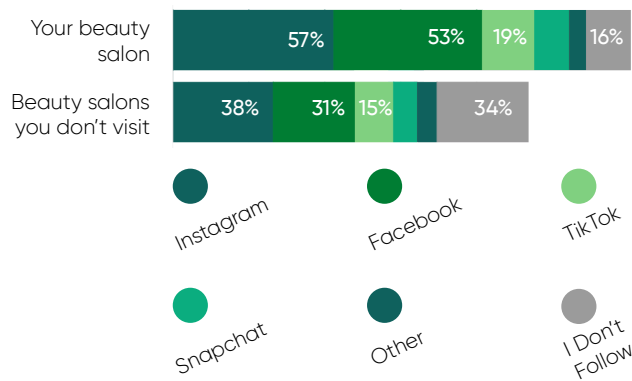


Create a corner of the internet that truly represents your brand, where the types of clients you want to attract would feel at home.

## Do you follow your hair salon on social media?



## What social media platform do you follow your beauty salon on?



Phorest Consumer Discovery Survey 2022.

Devoting the time to creating a distinct social media presence means you have the opportunity to attract new business, drive up followers, and increase engagement all at the same time, sparking conversation and a sense of community around your brand.

Customers that generate through social media marketing posts are **7X** more likely to convert than leads generated through other channels.



Read more on the Phorest Blog



[The Salon Owners Guide to Social Media](#)



Learn more on the PhorestFM podcast



[Ben Lifton on Becoming a Content Kween \(And Why Your Salon Will Thank You for It\)](#)



[Sinead Kavanagh on Standing Out on Social Media, Starting with Authenticity](#)

“

Content marketing will continue to dominate the digital marketing landscape for some time to come. Having a solid base of quality content across all marketing channels is key for success.

”



**Sian Gray**  
Phorest  
Director of Global Marketing





# Video is Dominating Social Media Marketing Channels

84% of consumers have been convinced to purchase a product after watching a video. This makes channels like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram a goldmine for marketing opportunities.

Integrating product demos, webinars, and live video events is vital to keep your content fresh and aligned with what consumers want.

**Video accounts for 82% of all online traffic, with videos 53X more likely to generate first-page search rankings than other SEO methods.**

## TikTok is the Fastest Growing Social Media Globally

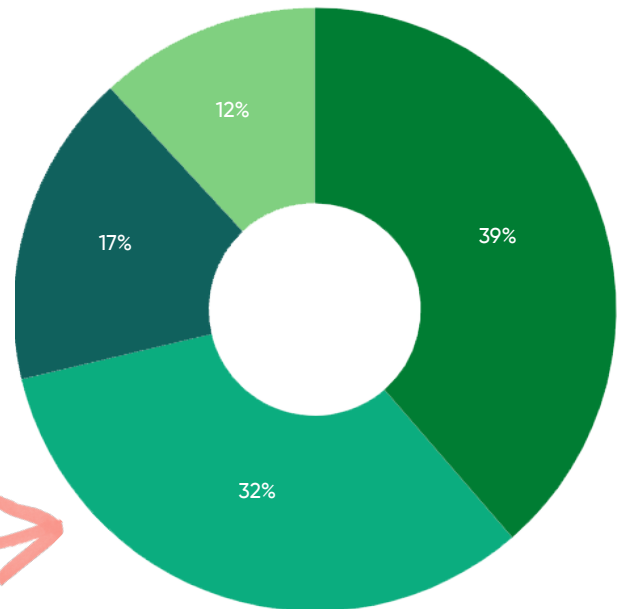
- 1.2 billion monthly users
- 6th most popular social media channel globally
- 92% of users are aged 13-34
- Worth an estimated 12B revenue (2022)



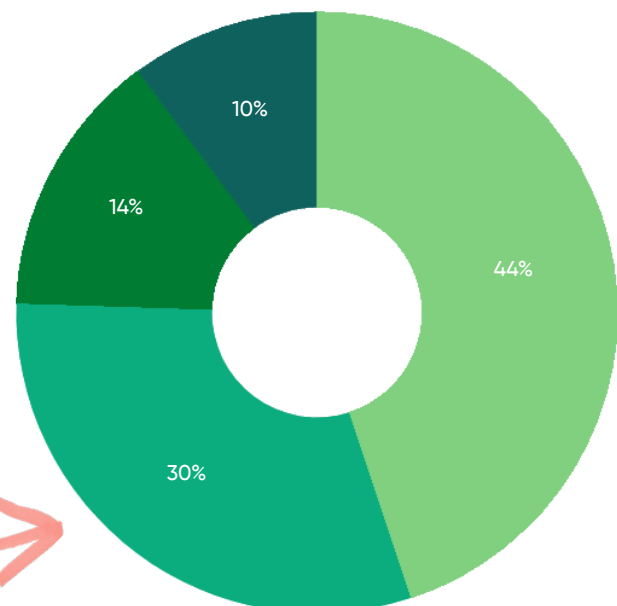
## Easier Booking = Happier Clients



How frequently do you visit your hair salon/barbers?



How frequently do you visit your beauty salon?





**Today's customer demands more comfort than ever before when it comes to ease of booking.**

- Online booking is the preferred booking method for consumers. It is 1.5x more popular than any other method
- 44% of consumers prefer some form of digital booking vs 30% who book over the phone.
- This varies across hair & beauty, with 54% of beauty salon guests booking online vs 40% of hair salon guests.)
- 16% book an appointment in person, while 9% of consumers are walk-ins.

### **High-Performing Phorest Salons...**

Get approximately 6% more of their bookings online rather than in-salon or over the phone.



## The Power of Live

Live video is great for grabbing the attention of your social audience on Facebook or Instagram, making your video content more personalised and engaging. When filming in real-time, your audience feels they're part of it and can influence the content rather than passively watching.



## Make Live Video Work For Your Salon By

### Doing product demonstrations

Show clients how good your products are by doing live demos and allowing them to buy while watching.

### Engaging with comments in real-time

Your audience wants to feel heard. Encourage conversation and reply to questions asked while filming a live video; this helps build connection.

### Making it an event

Social media is word-of-mouth advertising. Create hype by placing a countdown on your website or stories, and offer something exclusive to create FOMO.



## Referrals Still Reign

Price and convenience are not the main driving factors for choosing a new salon.

68% rely on a family/friend referral or word of mouth when looking for a new salon. Compared to 32% of people influenced by price & 26% influenced by convenience.\*



\*Multiple responses were allowed for this survey question  
Phorest Consumer Discovery Survey 2022



## Define Your Dream Client

Here's what salons are telling the Phorest Research Team make a dream client:

- They tell friends and family about your salon
- They leave you 5-star online reviews
- They interact with you frequently on social media
- They rebook consistently

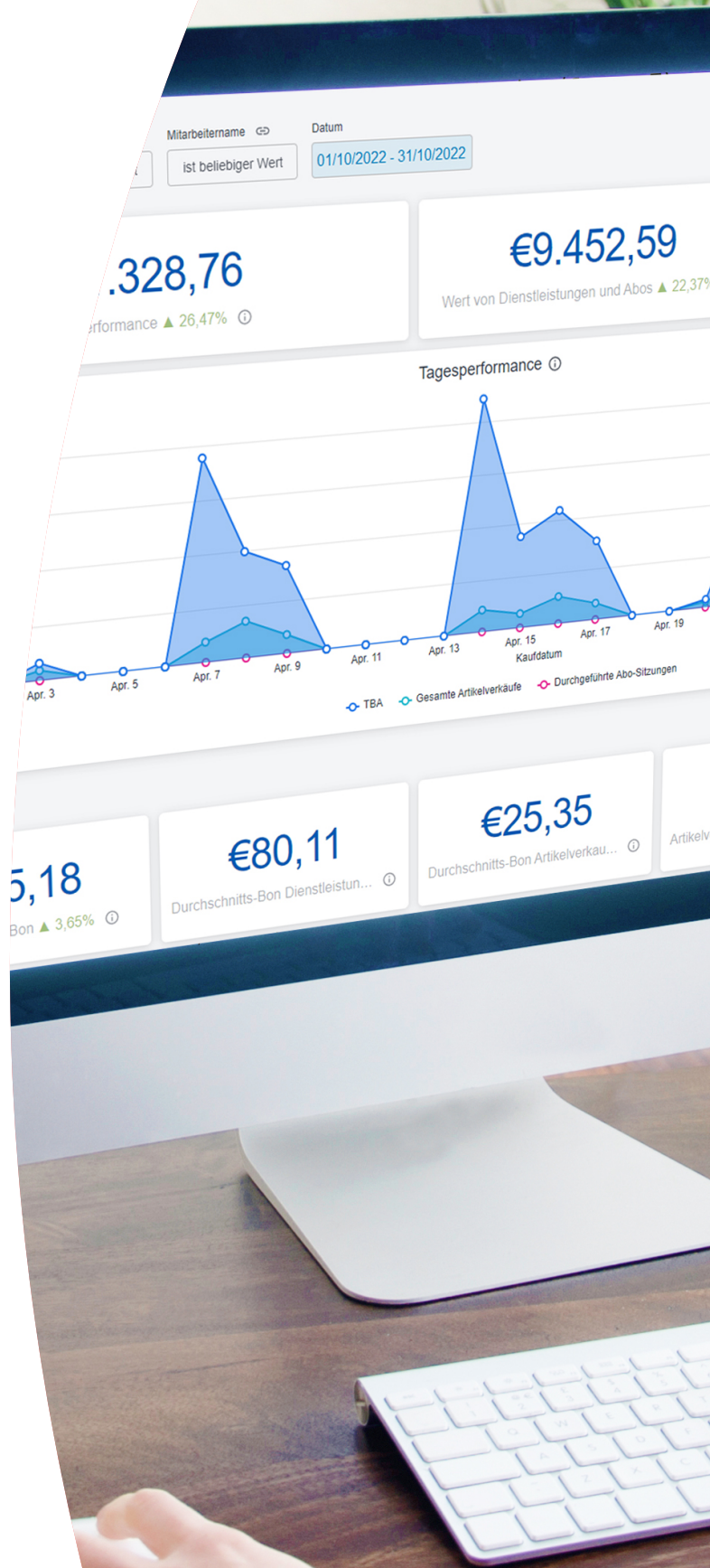


## Create a Dream Client Persona

Building a dream client persona isn't as complicated as it sounds. A dream client persona is, essentially, the type of person you want in your salon most of the time.

## Start With Some Research

Make a list of your top 50 clients. To help you do this, you can use the [reporting tools in your salon software](#) to determine which of your clients spends the most. Who rebooks on time and never misses an appointment?



After answering these questions, use the information gathered to build a broader picture of this dream client.

- What age are they?
- What is their family arrangement/life stage?
- What kind of jobs do they have?
- In what area do they live?
- How do they spend their free time?
- What other brands do they buy?
- Who else do they follow on social media?

Now think about what's important to them

- What are their goals?
- What are their biggest challenges?
- What makes them happy?
- What are their biggest frustrations?

### Don't be afraid to ask

If you aren't getting all the answers you are looking for organically through conversation, why not create a questionnaire? Send out a simple online survey through Google or Survey Monkey.



## Take Some Creative Licence

Many business leaders find it helps to give their dream client a name and bring them to life in a semi-fictional portrait to make them more memorable. Invent a specific person that embodies the characteristics of your dream client with a believable life story so you can form a strategy to connect with them in a human way.

### Meet Lauren



- Some of her favourite brands are Toast, Everlane and Wholefoods.
- However, she is making an effort to shop from sustainable brands and often visits the zero-waste refill shop in her neighbourhood.
- She receives an organic vegetable box monthly subscription and belongs to a natural wine club.
- Her biggest challenge is finding balance in her life—prioritising self-care, her career and her young family.
- She comes in for a facial every six weeks for her “me time” and before significant events (i.e. her friend’s wedding or before international travel)
- She values premium skincare product recommendations but doesn’t have time for a lengthy routine at home.
- She gets frustrated if her appointment needs to be rescheduled last minute or her slot gets moved. She lives by her Google calendar!
- She is 41 years old.
- She is married with a 3-year-old son.
- She lives in London and works as a project manager in a tech company.
- She goes to pilates class three times a week.



## You get the Idea! Now, Try it Yourself

Equipped with this knowledge, you can tweak your salon marketing efforts to target your dream clients better, meeting them in the spaces they would naturally go– both online and in real life. This will save you money on marketing while increasing ROI long-term.

### Don't underestimate the power of a local partnership

If, for example, your dream client persona is a woman in her mid-20s that works in the town's business district, she probably visits the local coffee shop beside her office. You can draw clients like her in with a partnership. Could you use their coffee beans and cups in your salon? And in exchange, this coffee shop would promote a new client discount to your salon. This is a great way to build brand awareness and demonstrate your involvement in the community.



Read more on the Phorest Blog

[Verna Wall & Rich Cullen on Success Stories from the Salon Floor](#)

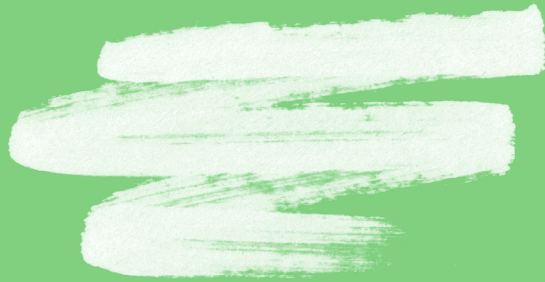


Learn more on the PhorestFM podcast

[Hunter Donia on Building the Clientele of Your Dreams, Insights Gained From Adversity](#)



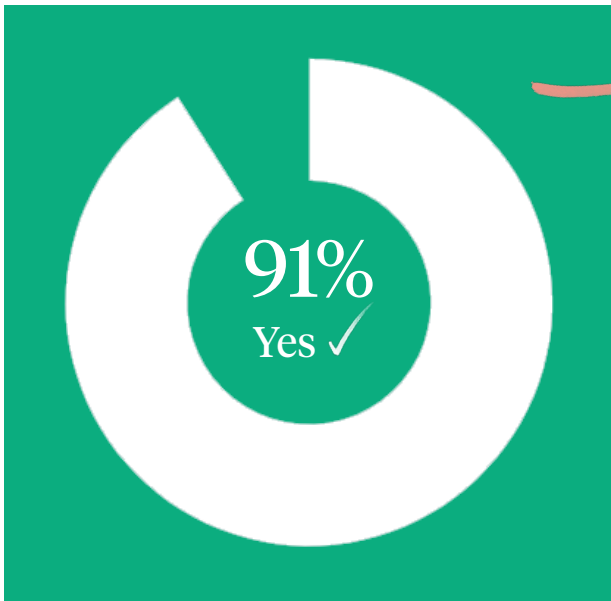
# 4 Forever Clientele



Running a successful business requires some balancing. While attracting new clients should always be on your radar, 91% of people visit the same hair and beauty salon each time they go, making loyal clients your greatest (and most reliable) source of income long-term.



Do you typically visit the same hair salon/barbers each time?



Do you typically visit the same beauty salon (spa) each time?



A mere **5%** boost in customer retention increases profit by **25%**.

Based on Phorest's research of the salon industry, we've calculated the approximate salon industry benchmarks that are good targets to aim for.

- New Client Retention: 30%
- Existing Client Retention: 68%
- Overall Client Retention: 58%



Read more on the  
Phorest Blog

[How to Be Fully Booked Thanks to Client Retention](#)



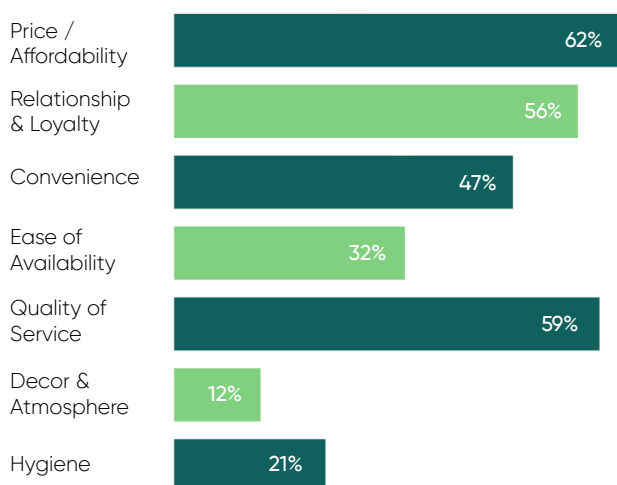


## Attraction vs Retention

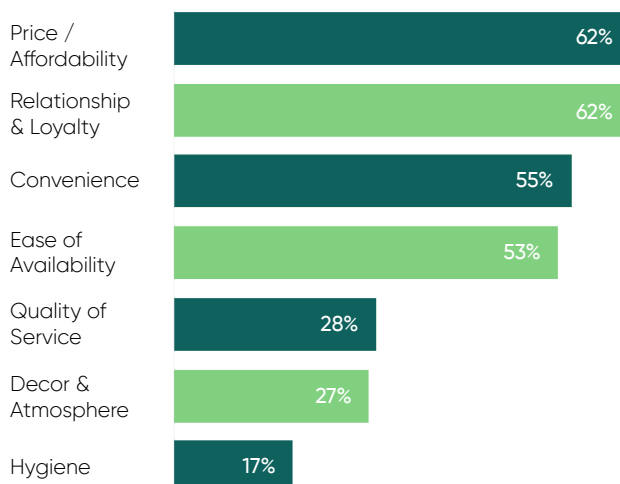
The things that encourage people to visit a new salon for the first time differ from the things that make people stay loyal to a salon.

Regarding client loyalty, everything comes down to value and authenticity. Clients want to feel connected to their salon or spa of choice more personally than ever before.

### What are the main things that keep you coming back to your hair salon/barbers?



### What are the main factors that contribute to you visiting your beauty salon (spa)?



“

You may be doing a great job helping new clients fall in love with your business, but like every relationship, you need to keep learning about each other. Everyone has a role to play in deepening client relationships, from the owner to most junior team members. It's about seizing every opportunity to get to know clients—why they come to the salon and who they are when they leave. It's also about reminding them what your salon is all about—show them with every small detail, 'see, this is what makes our salon special; this is why you choose us; this is why you belong here.'

”



**Sylvie McDermott**  
Phorest COO



Learn more on the  
PhorestFM podcast

[Jay Williams on the Difference  
Between Satisfied & loyal Clients,  
and Why It Matters](#)





## How to be Client Obsessed

“

Clients are looking for that tailored in-salon experience. Consider your client's journey from start to finish—from the moment they step foot in the salon all the way through checkout... Wowing your clients and being considerate of who is in front of you is going to get them back into your salon.

”



**Verna Wall**  
Phorest  
Head of Product Research

In the hair and beauty industry, it is estimated that up to 7 out of 10 clients do not return after their first appointment.



## Wow New Clients

“

I have little brown sustainable boxes. I have my sticker logo on them, and we do a \$30 voucher..we always print them on a little postcard...looks really professional, says 'Welcome to Our Community. Please enjoy \$30 off your next colour service when you return.' And we have hair ties, lollies, expandable face masks that I just get on Amazon or ebay and just change it around sometimes..

It's just a little goodie pack and some samples of some of the products that we have as well. And, yeah, it's really well received. People just see it as a lovely touch. I always say to people if you are going to do it, don't do it really cheaply. Like it just doesn't work. You need to actually make sure it feels like there is some value in there.

”



**Sam James**  
SJ Establishment Adelaide,  
Australia

### High-Performing Phorest Salons...

Typically send their clients a reminder to rebook their next visit 72 hours after their appointment





# A 5-Star experience is a combination of thoughtful details



Kristian Togninis, the owner of Togninis in Brisbane, Australia, gives examples.

## Welcoming them in



The way that I teach the staff how someone sees the salon when they come is that of a blind person. You are directing them around the salon to make them feel comfortable. And I think that gets missed a lot. Some will just go 'take a seat' or 'come through with me.' It's about using your verbal cues too...making sure you are using the client's name, making sure you are using your name, making sure you are explaining things along the way throughout the whole salon.

## During the Service



All the colour areas are done on tables. Why? Because most people that come in for colour will bring in their work. So they can spread out and plug in laptops.

## Taking Payment



Also, if you have got a desk with a receptionist or something. If someone is standing behind a desk, it's a barrier. And that's always scary. So the staff member that performed that service always stands on the same side of the desk as the client, never around the other side because it's a barrier. It's about making that point of resistance, which is paying the bill, to make that feel comfortable.

## Maintaining a Personal Connection



You know your customers; what services they avail of, what colours they use, and what products they buy. Use this knowledge to create personalised marketing messages, offering genuine value, which you send regularly.

## High-performing Phorest salons...

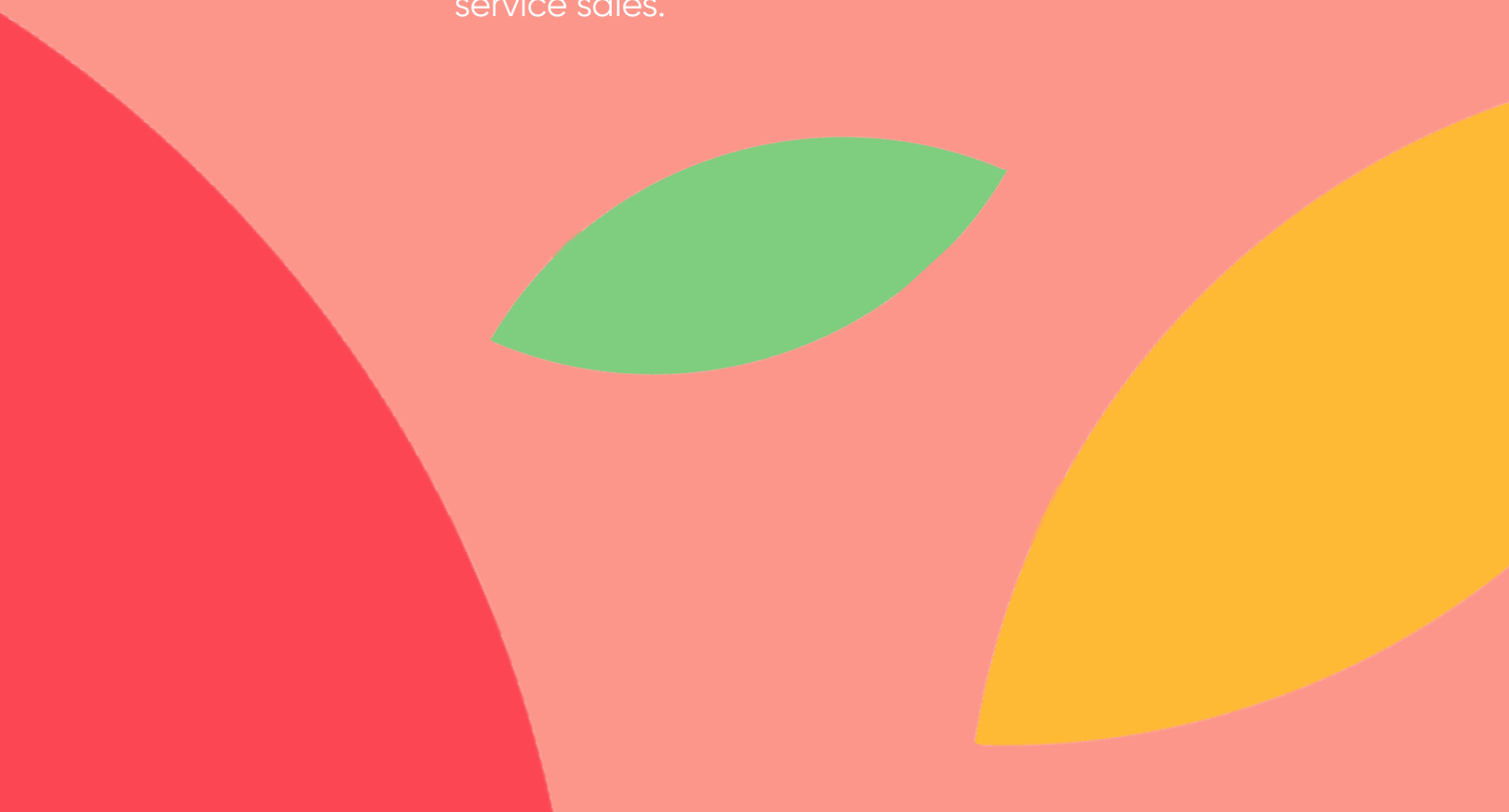
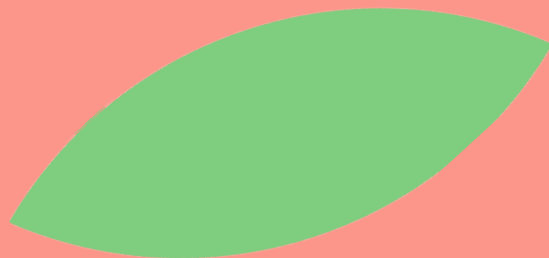
Typically run more yearly digital marketing campaigns than lower performers, with an average of 13 vs 10, generating 32% higher revenue from these campaigns. .

# 5 Diversify Your Revenue



Phorest salons that opened an online store in 2020 have seen a 12% growth in revenue.

Online retail is an increasingly popular way for salons and spas to make money, especially in the event of an unexpected closure, sales-shy team members, or a seasonal dip in service sales.



## Where do you most frequently purchase hair products?



## Where do you most frequently purchase beauty products?



As more consumers turn to the internet to purchase all kinds of products, we asked whether they'd like their salon to provide this. **The answer is a resounding YES for 68% of beauty clients and 54% of hair salon clients!**

## Where Are Clients Purchasing Their Products?

Would you like to buy retail products from your hair salon/barber?

54%  
Yes ✓

Would you like to buy retail products from your beauty salon?

68%  
Yes ✓

Phorest FI  
From the Salon FI





# Optimise Your Online Store for Success

## Offer products people can't get elsewhere

By focusing particularly on professional products and brands and emphasising these in your store's on-page and meta content, you can drive in traffic from clients looking for these specific products.



Read More on the Phorest Blog

[The Salon Owner's Guide to Retail Sales](#)

## Sell gift vouchers online

This is a great way of getting more money into the bank with minimal effort. With the option to buy, print, and send from the comfort of clients' homes, they offer variety and quick revenue generation for any salon.

## Everyone loves a special offer

Have an excess of blonde hair products that you'd like to sell? Why not create a special, online-only discount on these products and plan a [marketing campaign](#) targeting clients who have recently gotten highlights in your salon software?

## Direct people where you need them to go

Create buttons and links to your [online store](#) across your website, socials, and any marketing material that you send. Make it easy for your customers to find you; they will be more likely to shop with you!

## Trending in Retail

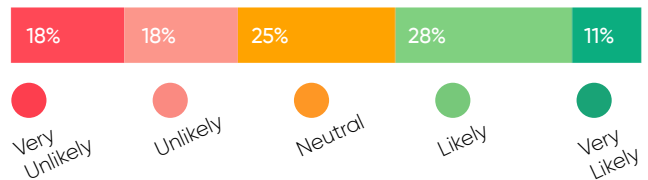
### Social Commerce is Encroaching on Traditional Shopping

Leveraging influencer marketing and creating ads that fit seamlessly into social media feeds and ecommerce platforms is one of the best ways to encourage consumers to buy from your brand. People are choosing to use platforms like Creator Marketplace, Instagram Store, and TikTok.

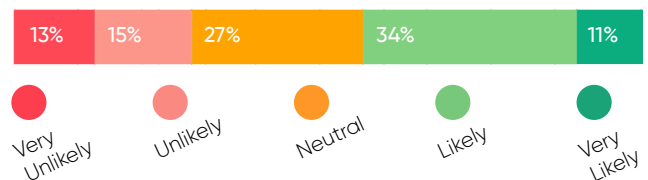
### Curated, Seamless

Being innovative and giving people exactly what they want, almost before they know they want it, is a recipe for success. The hair and beauty industry can quickly adapt to this, particularly by selling customised offerings such as online product refills and/or subscription boxes.

### If your hair salon/barber had a subscription service, would you be interested?



### If your beauty salon had a subscription service, would you be interested?



# Future-Proofing: Giving Your Salon Engine Fuel with Retail Income

## Expert Insight

“

Think of your retail business separately from your service income and your gift card income. In fact, each of them should be tracked independently and have their own budgets...[on using retail profits for future growth] chunk down credit card debts, make a double loan payment, invest in education or marketing and, of course, build a nest egg by saving for future retirement. Any of this would be smart business; not to mention the boost of confidence and empowerment in seeing true financial progress being made.

”



**Steve Gomez**  
Professional Salon & Spa  
Business Coach

Retail sales don't need to passively fall into the same "pot" of money that your services bring in. They can be used for investment in education, marketing, and retirement; all the things will help your business grow and keep you above water without you having to look for outside investment.

6

Born on the  
Salon Floor,  
Bred to Help  
You Thrive





## Phorest Salon Software is Used by Over 10,000 Hair, Beauty, and Aesthetic Businesses Worldwide

Phorest frees teams up to focus on their passion and business success. More creativity. Less admin. Known globally for providing the best salon marketing tools, Phorest touches every point of the salon experience, from custom salon apps, online bookings and inventory to ecommerce and payments.

Our system empowers businesses to manage, market, and grow, not just through innovation in technology but also through mentoring, education, and unrivalled support.

Phorest believes in the human touch at the heart of the salon community. That's why we're the only salon software provider to connect every business with their own dedicated success manager – a committed partner for helping salon owners achieve their dreams.



Listen to founder and CEO, Ronan Perceval, tell the origin story of Phorest in his own words on [PhorestFM](#)



# Sources

The data was collected using surveys conducted by Phorest's internal research team and data from the Phorest system itself;

**Salon Owner Survey:** A survey sent to Phorest salon owners 5 english-speaking countries; UK, Ireland, Australia, US & Canada. 419 responses were analysed using mixed methods

**Consumer Discovery Survey:**

A survey sent to SurveyMonkey's independent panel of consumers across 9 countries; US, Ireland, UK, Germany, Finland, Australia, Canada, Denmark & UAE. 1314 responses were analysed using mixed methods

**Consumer Booking Preferences stats:** A survey sent to friends of Phorest staff in March 2021 to understand how consumers book in with their hair and beauty salons. Responses from Ireland, New Zealand, USA, Canada & the UK were gathered. 402 responses in total were analysed using mixed methods

**Online Store Feature adoption stats:** Data taken from the Phorest global client base spanning 9 countries; IE, UK, Canada, USA, Australia, UAE, Finland, Germany, Denmark. Cohort defined as "used online features" is those who in the month of May 2020 had at least one eCommerce and/or online voucher sale. The cohort defined as "did not use" had neither an eCommerce nor an online voucher sale in May 2020. We then measured total revenue between Jan-Sep incl. For 2019 and Jan-Sep incl 2022 and calculated the % difference.

**Top Performers Stats:** Data taken from 168 Phorest salons in Ireland, UK, USA, Canada. Cohort identified by these salons live since before Jan 1st 2019, in at least the top 30th percentile for revenue growth between 2020-2022 inclusive & in the top 50th percentile for either upsell/care factor or client ratings