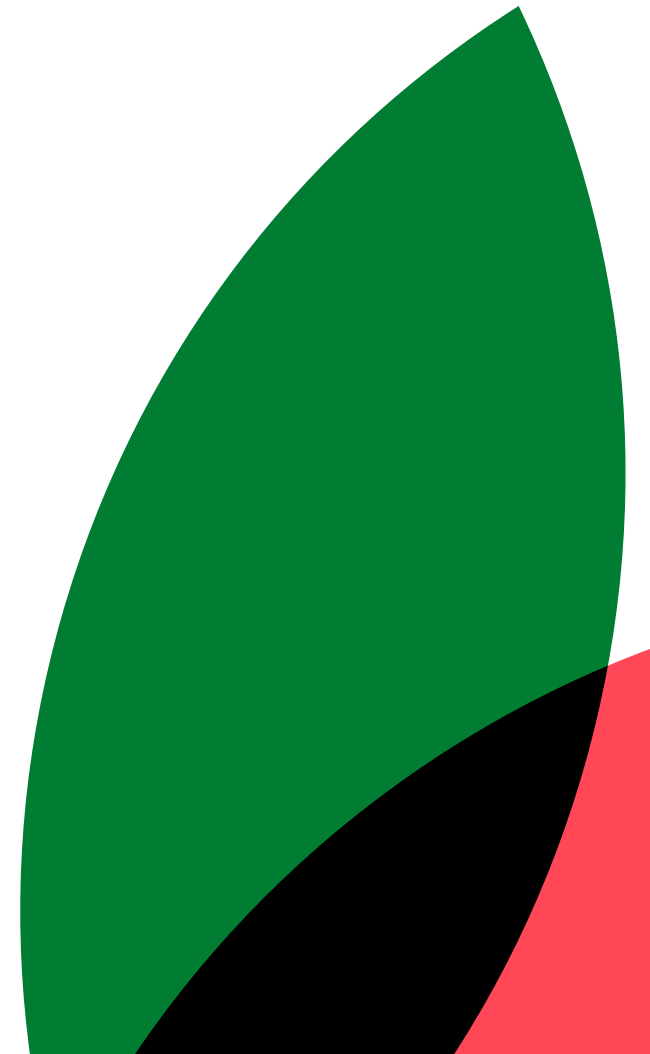




Consumer Insights Report 2025

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Introduction

At the end of 2024, we conducted a large-scale survey with hair salon guests to better understand their behaviours and motivations.

To keep things impartial, we worked with an independent panel, gathering 1048 responses from consumers based in the US and Canada. The survey revealed distinct trends between the two countries, so the main analysis focuses on the 792 responses from the US. Where relevant, we highlight key differences observed in the 256 responses from Canada.

We also carried out a similar survey back in 2022. That means we've been able to track what's changed and what's stayed the same. You'll see some of those shifts highlighted throughout this report.

But this isn't just a collection of stats and graphs. We're lucky to work closely with salons all over the world, and one question we hear all the time is: "What are other salons doing?"

So alongside the data, we've woven in stories and ideas from some of the most

creative, innovative, and forward-thinking salons in the United States and Canada.

This report focuses on four key areas:

1. The Premium Experience
2. AI
3. Retail
4. New Clients

We will wrap up with closing thoughts from Barry Quinn, our President of North America.

Chapter 1: The Premium Experience

How would clients like to see their salon personalize their experience for them?

71% Recommendations for products & at home care

60% Remembering my in-salon preferences

51% Rewards & offers

44% Services provided & recommended

29% Their communication to me

71% of clients want more personalized recommendations for products & at home care.

Clients value expert advice, and when it's customized to them, it feels less like a sales pitch and more like genuine support. Allyson from Hair & Co believes that once a stylist has established a strong rebooking rate, the trust is already there. At that point, it's no longer about selling retail, but about teaching. One of her stylists saw a dramatic increase in her retail sales simply by explaining the product she used, why she chose it, and sharing a quick tip. The results spoke for themselves. The key is to embed this kind of education naturally into the conversation. Start small: when you touch a product, name it, explain its purpose, and offer a tip for at-home use. This empowers clients and helps them to understand why it is best for them without making them feel sold to



Allyson King
Hair & Co – Brooklyn, (NY)

Written by Will Guidara, *Unreasonable Hospitality* explores how going above and beyond to serve others can create unforgettable experiences. Drawing from his time leading Eleven Madison Park to become the world's best restaurant, Guidara shows how putting the customer at the centre of everything can transform relationships.

“While clearing plates for a group of vacationing foodies, they mentioned the only thing they hadn't tried was a New York street hot dog. I saw an opportunity. I ran out, bought one, dressed it up, and served it before their final course. When I presented it as their missing culinary experience, they lit up. I'd served thousands of dishes, but nothing got a reaction like that hot dog.”



Remembering personalised preferences

Cole's Salon is excelling at delivering an exceptional personalized client experience – one standout example being the inspiration they drew from reading Unreasonable Hospitality.

Cole's sets a budget for these thoughtful personal gestures. They don't have to be expensive to make an impact. Small acts of care go a long way, like:

- Walking a client to their car with an umbrella on a rainy day
- Surprising them with a cupcake on their birthday

It's about noticing the little things and making people feel truly seen and special.

At Cole's, the front desk team is empowered to take ownership of the client experience. They play a key role at pivotal touchpoints in the customer journey in delivering these moments.

Key Takeaways:

- **Read Unreasonable Hospitality**

Let it inspire you to elevate your own salon experience by looking beyond our industry and drawing ideas from businesses that deliver unforgettable service.

- **Educate your clients about retail**

Use the relationship and trust you have built with your guests to teach—not sell by simply sharing what you're using, why, and how they can use it at home.



What motivates clients to pay higher prices for a premium hair salon experience?

61% A relaxing or upscaled ambience

61% Cleanliness and hygiene standards

54% Complimentary perks

37% Exclusive or innovative treatments not available elsewhere

34% Highly skilled or renowned stylist



A relaxing ambience combined with a clean, hygienic space encourages clients to pay premium prices.

A relaxing & upscale environment

Many of your guests aren't just paying for a haircut, they're paying for the experience. The atmosphere you create plays a powerful role in shaping their perception of quality and luxury. If other local salons are overlooking this, it's your opportunity to stand out. You're not simply offering a service, you're offering a moment of calm, comfort, and escape in a time where those moments are increasingly rare.

Cleanliness and hygiene standards

It was surprising to see cleanliness and hygiene emerge as the top reason clients are willing to pay higher prices. This isn't about whether your standards are being met—we're confident they are. The real question is: do your clients know that? Your attention to cleanliness could be one of your strongest selling points, but only if it's visible. Consider how you might bring these standards to the forefront whether it's through clear signage, well-trained staff, or thoughtful touches that show attention to detail.

Key Takeaways:

- **Turn ambience and relaxation into your competitive edge**
Investing in ambience (e.g., spa-like touches, high-end furnishings, refreshments, calming music, relaxing scents) can justify higher prices and attract a more premium clientele.
- **Create your own 'Brand Standards'**
Make cleanliness visible. Clients will pay more for hygiene—if they see it. Use clear signs, spotless tools, and visible cleaning practices to show your standards. It's not just a backroom task; it's a key part of your brand.

Chapter 2:

AI

Would you be comfortable communicating with your hair salon via an AI assistant?

62% Yes,
but only basic tasks

20% Yes,
Very Comfortable

9% No,
would prefer human

8% Maybe,
but would prefer human



Would you be comfortable booking an appointment with your hair salon using an AI assistant?

44% I would prefer booking with a person

34% I'm open to it

12% Yes, I'd prefer it

9% No, I wouldn't use AI for Booking

AI is reshaping how salons operate, communicate, and grow

Reimagining the First Impression

Our research shows that clients are increasingly open to AI assisted interactions. AI powered virtual assistants are becoming a practical solution to reduce front desk workload while enhancing the overall client experience.

"We eliminated our front desk on all our slow shifts"

Allyson shared her AI experience from her two Brooklyn based salons. Introducing a virtual assistant has allowed her front-desk team to focus on what they do best: providing a warm welcome and thoughtful hospitality that elevates the in-person salon experience.

Allyson said they have been able to eliminate their front-desk 4 - 5 hours a day, 5 days a week. On busier days when they do have front desk staff on, they know they can let the phone ring through to their virtual assistant to focus on the client in front of them.



AI is reshaping how salons operate, communicate, and grow

Allyson estimated that implementing an AI assistant to cover just four hours a day, five days a week saves approximately \$440 per week—or around \$22k + per year.

Talking about one of their locations with an older clientele who would typically be more tech adverse, Allyson shared how she would personally sit down with them, call the salon together, and guide them through using the virtual assistant. Now they would rather do that than talk to the front desk.

Beyond efficiency, AI also brings unmatched consistency. AI assistants never forget to ask the important questions you need to know from your new guests. Capturing birthdays, confirming marketing preferences, or taking note of specific service needs. That means fewer booking errors, less rescheduling, and a smoother, more professional experience from start to finish.



Allyson King
Hair & Co – Brooklyn, (NY)



Marketing – AI as Your Creative Sidekick

"I think AI is going to come in and play a big part. What's hot with Instagram today is not hot tomorrow. Using AI to follow those trends instead of trying to figure it out is going to be a huge time saver for us"

Social media continues to be a major focus for salon owners, and as our research confirms, it is still important as ever for new clients discovering salons.

Whether it's writing social media captions, brainstorming campaign ideas, or identifying what's trending, AI is quickly becoming an indispensable co-creator in the salon marketing toolkit.

At Salon 718, Michaela uses AI tools like ChatGPT to spark inspiration and overcome creative blocks. While it may not always provide a perfect solution, it's incredibly helpful to her when she is feeling stuck – offering that initial spark to move past a creative freeze and get ideas flowing again.



Michaela Williams
Salon 718 – Brooklyn (NY)

AI – Your Business Partner

AI is not just about improving the client experience, it's also becoming an invaluable partner in running a smarter, more streamlined salon.

Using AI can also help streamline your daily admin so you have more time for your guests. Some salons are already ahead of the curve, using AI to automatically transcribe one-on-one meetings with their stylists, making it easier to track progress, set goals, and keep communication clear

Key Takeaways:

Explore if a virtual assistant could be right for your salon

By striking the right balance, you can enhance the customer experience while leveraging the benefits of AI. It can help you to improve efficiency by automating tasks like appointment booking, reminders, and FAQs, but it's essential to maintain human interaction for a personalized service that your customers value.

- **Use AI as your creative jump-start**

When you're stuck staring at a blank screen, AI tools can help you quickly generate content ideas, draft captions, or identify trending topics giving you the momentum to get your marketing moving. Think of it as your brainstorming partner, not your final editor.

Looking Ahead – What's Next for AI in Salons and Phorest?

As AI continues to evolve, so too will its role in the salon industry. At Phorest, we're committed to helping salons stay ahead of the curve. We're actively working on AI solutions to support smarter, more personalized salon experiences, both online and in person.

Do you want to stay in the loop or even get involved in shaping the future of AI-powered salon technology at Phorest?

Scan the QR code below or [\[click here\]](#) to learn more and join the conversation.

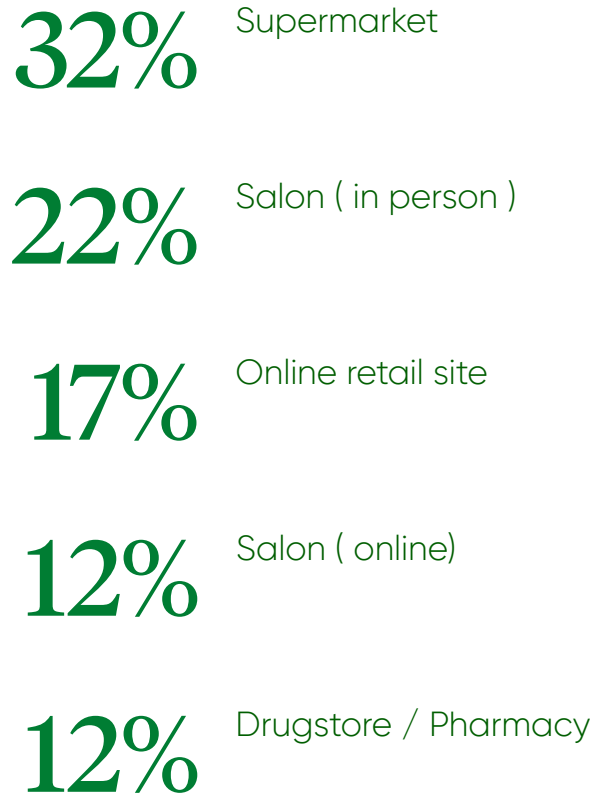


You must be an active Phorest client to sign up to our exclusive AI beta group.

Chapter 3: Retail

Clients in 2025 are more likely to buy their haircare products from their salon

2022



2025



Of the 53% of clients who don't purchase hair products directly from the salon, how many do actually want to?

2022

45% Yes

55% No

2025

82% Yes

18% No



82% of clients who don't buy retail from their salon want to!

**"I don't want them to look at it as selling.
I want them to look at it as telling"**

Randy and Michaela both believe that the secret to retail is all about teaching the client about the product, rather than thinking of it as something you are selling. If you can change the conversation from a sales pitch, to a conversation on why you believe in the products you are using, this comes across as genuine.



Michaela Williams
Salon 718 - Brooklyn (NY)



Randy Evans
The Collective - Seattle, (WA)

"Our secret sauce is the education that we do. Our clients know we are an educational salon."

Randy from The Collective LLC believes their secret sauce over the five decades they have been in business is the education that they provide. Their commitment to education starts from within. This extends to the brands they partner with, chosen specifically for the educational value they bring. By passing this knowledge on to their guests, The Collective fosters a sense of authenticity. It's never about pushing a product; it's about sharing something they genuinely believe in.

At Salon 718, Michaela and the team have innovative ideas on how to naturally talk to their clients about retail and give recommendations without making it feel like a sales pitch. They invite clients to bring in the products they're already using at home, which opens up conversations about their preferences, routines, and budget. This allows the team to offer truly personalized recommendations.

When suggesting new products, they take it a step further by offering a 10% in-salon discount if clients trade in their old products. What's left in the bottles is then donated to homeless shelters, turning a simple swap into something meaningful and waste-free.

Phorest's data across 11,000+ salons shows that , salons who set retail goals sell 2.5x more retail than those who don't.

Extra tip:

Add questions into your consultation forms about hair care and retail to introduce the idea that this is the start of their retail journey with you and starts the conversation for the stylist.

Bonus! We've included a sample list at the end of this report!

82% of clients who don't buy retail from their salon want to!

With 36 years of experience, Valentini's has developed a deep understanding of what drives success in retail.

They first saw a rise in retail sales after introducing complimentary hand massages during each client's visit. This gave their aesthetician an opportunity to discuss skin and scalp concerns. Building on this success, they began offering a complimentary scalp analysis for every new client. Using a handheld camera connected to an iPad, each hair follicle is scanned to provide a detailed and accurate assessment. This allows them to recommend products that are precisely tailored to each guests needs.

Valentini's adds a personal touch by sending each guest a customized follow-up email after their visit. This message thanks them for coming and also includes a list of the products used during their appointment, as well as any additional recommendations from their stylist. Clients can purchase these items directly online with complimentary delivery within their city for any spend over \$75.

Valentini's goes even further by sometimes including complimentary gifts and samples with online retail orders such as travel size shampoos or samples of other product lines such as Dermalogica skin care or Kérastase masks.



Derrick Rutherford
Valentini's - Ontario (CA)

Key Takeaways:

- **Education - Tell, don't sell**

Shifting your mindset from selling retail to simply sharing your expert knowledge and recommending what's truly best for your client creates a more authentic and trustworthy experience.

- **Add a personal touch to your recommendations**

Personalized recommendations show clients that you're not just trying to sell – you're genuinely invested in their unique needs.

- **Consider setting achievable retail goals**

Even small rewards can be a powerful motivator for your team! They don't have to be grand gestures – maybe cinema tickets, or a coffee voucher.



Chapter 4:

New Clients

Factors choosing a new hair salon

2022

71% Google search

56% Salon (in person)

36% Reviews

25% Social Media

18% Google maps

2025

66% Facebook

61% Instagram

57% Google search

52% Google maps

46% Reviews

Social media dominates when it comes to finding a new salon.

Michaela has seen strong results using influencers as part of her social media strategy. Once she realized that influencers with massive followings weren't necessarily the right fit for her brand, she focused on forming partnerships with micro-influencers. Deeply connected to the Brooklyn community where all seven of her salon locations are based, these local influencers proved to be a powerful way to connect with her target clientele.

Michaela strongly believes social media must be paired with grassroots marketing to build true connection and trust. By fostering genuine relationships at the local level, Salon 718 has become more than just a business, it's a trusted part of the neighborhood. This blend of digital reach and real-world connection has helped drive lasting loyalty and brand strength.



Michaela Williams
Salon 718 - Brooklyn (NY)

"You have to be tied to the community for the community to understand that you're part of it"

Luke attributes much of Annastasia Salon's increase in new guest numbers to social media and how his existing clients interact with them online. He believes the real impact comes from how guests share their experiences at Annastasia's online. "When a guest posts about their visit to the salon, that's worth ten, maybe even a hundred times more than if one of our stylists posts a photo of that same guest," Luke explains.

With this in mind, the team places a strong emphasis on creating share-worthy moments. At the end of each appointment, they offer a mini photo shoot so guests can leave with a beautiful image of their new look. Stylists understand that sending the guest a flattering photo is just as important as posting it to the salon's own account. The goal is to make the guest feel confident and excited to share their transformation on their personal social media.

Luke then stresses the next important step to this is the stylists engagement with the content their guest posts. He encourages his stylists to follow their loyal clients online, keeping up with their stories and posts. When they comment or react to a client's post, it not only strengthens the relationship, it also puts the salon's name in front of that client's followers, creating authentic, word-of-mouth visibility.

"What really matters is how you're interacting with your guests online"



Luke Huffstutter
Annastasia Salon -
Portland (OR)

Key Takeaways:

- **Partnering with influencers doesn't have to be overwhelming**
Focus on building relationships with micro-influencers who are genuinely connected to your local community. Their followers are often part of the same audience you're trying to reach, making their recommendations more authentic, relatable, and effective.
- **Turn your guests into your own influencers**
Encourage your guests to share their transformations online. How they showcase their experience can be just as influential as the content your salon posts, turning every visit into a marketing opportunity.

Extra tip:

Based on our Ads Manager data, new client campaigns in the US are delivering an average return on ad spend of 19x.

Salons running these campaigns are also seeing an average of 34 services booked.



77% of consumers prioritize location when selecting a new hair salon.

77% Location

62% Price

62% Opening hours / days

61% Premium experience

44% Referral by family & friends



77% of consumers prioritize location when selecting a new hair salon.

Randy wanted to better understand his potential clientele, so he took the initiative to conduct his own market research by observing foot traffic outside the salon.

He noticed that the area has a strong athletic presence and has a young, active demographic. With numerous tech and biotech companies nearby, he also observed a significant number of professors and graduate students in the area.

Knowing that these people were already passing by his door really helped him to understand where to focus his efforts on getting new clients in the door.

He also took the time to study the physical surroundings and how they might impact both current and future clientele. This included learning about local parking availability and meter fees—practical details that could influence a client's decision to stop in.

Key Takeaways:

Do your own local market research

You can learn a lot about the location of your salon by observing your surroundings. This is key to making informed decisions and growing your business.



Randy Evans
The Collective - Seattle, (WA)

Methodology

The survey was conducted using SurveyMonkey between October 30 and November 13, 2024. Data was collected through SurveyMonkey's paid audience panel, with participants screened to qualify only if they had visited a hair salon in the past six months.

Among those who completed the screener, 48.06% (n=2,083) qualified and proceeded to complete the survey.

Business types including beauty salon, barber, and medi clinics were available but did not qualify participants to proceed. Only completed responses—where participants answered all survey sections—were included in the final analysis and this report.

Participants represented a diverse global audience, with 15% from Australia, 12% from Canada, 15% from Ireland, 20% from the United Kingdom, and 38% from the United States.

The age distribution of participants was as follows: 18–29 years (17%), 30–44 years (39%), 45–60 years (30%), and 60+ years (14%).

Made possible by

- Allyson King, Hair & Co
hairandcobklyn.com @hairandcobklyn
- Derrick Rutherford, Valentini Hair Design
valentinis.ca @valentinihairdesign
- Melissa & Trish, Cole's Salon
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And the Research, Data, and Design teams at
Phorest



Kate Elliott
Senior Product Researcher

About Phorest

Phorest is a fast-growing technology company and dedicated partner for salons, spas, and aesthetic clinics. Seamlessly integrating appointment management with marketing, reporting, and payments, Phorest is an all-in-one solution designed to create exceptional client experiences at scale, foster a thriving team culture, and achieve industry-leading growth.

Founded in Ireland in 2003, Phorest is trusted by over 11,000 businesses across North America, Europe, the UK, and Australia. What sets Phorest apart is its deep industry roots. The team, shaped by former salon and clinic professionals, places collaboration with business owners at the heart of the development process. This partnership shapes innovative tools tailored to the real-world opportunities and challenges of running a salon or clinic.

Beyond the product, Phorest invests in the success of every business it serves, offering unmatched, personalised support. The global Phorest community also has access to expert-led education, exclusive events, and data-driven insights that give owners a competitive edge.

#TogetherWeGrow



A message from Phorest

At Phorest, we're not just passionate about the salon and spa industry – we're deeply committed to its success. We believe this dynamic industry deserves constant recognition and a forward-thinking approach. That's why we're always looking ahead, anticipating your needs and identifying new opportunities.

This report is a testament to that commitment, sharing crucial industry research and diving deep into insights – from client retention and retail trends to AI integration and what defines a truly premium salon experience. Our aim is, and always has been, to equip you with the tools to provide excellent service, drive business growth, and streamline operations.

We're more than just software; we're your dedicated partner in innovation and growth.



Barry Quinn
President North America

Appendix

Consultation Forms Question Examples

Including hair care and retail related questions in your consultation forms not only personalizes the guest experience but also sets the stage for future product recommendations. Here are a few examples of questions you can add to your consultation forms.

Hair Care Routine Questions

These help you understand what the client is currently using and opens the door for tailored recommendations:

- What shampoo and conditioner are you currently using?
- Do you use any styling or heat-protection products? If so, which ones?
- How often do you wash your hair?
- Do you feel your current hair products are meeting your needs?
- Have you ever been professionally recommended a hair care routine? These gently introduce your role in supporting their hair care at home:

Hair Concerns & Goals

These help identify problems that your retail products can solve:

- What are your top concerns with your hair (e.g., dryness, frizz, breakage, oiliness)?
- What are your hair goals? (e.g., more volume, smoother texture, stronger hair)
- Are you open to trying products that support your hair goals?

Retail Engagement

These gently introduce your role in supporting their hair care at home:

- Would you like us to recommend professional products suited to your hair type and lifestyle?
- Are you interested in learning how to maintain your salon results at home?
- Have you purchased professional products from a salon before?
- Are you looking for a low-maintenance or high-maintenance hair routine?
- Do you prefer natural/organic hair care products?



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