

Personal Effectiveness: Step by Step Guide

Learning Objectives

It is very important to understand your job role within the salon. If you do not understand what is expected of you while you are at work, how can you possibly fulfil all that is expected of you by managers and colleagues?

Developing yourself as a person and your skills as a stylist are essential if you are going to play an active part within your salon. This element looks at ways in which you can improve your work, both through making the most of your salon's appraisal system, working towards targets, and also by taking advantage of training opportunities while you are at work. It also considers the importance of keeping up to date with developments in the hairdressing industry.

What you will learn:

- Carrying out your job role to salon and National Occupational Standards
- Identifying your own strengths and weaknesses – the appraisal system
- Seeking guidance when instructions are unclear
- Seeking feedback on your performance
- Asking colleagues for help
- Making and taking opportunities to learn
- Reviewing developments in hairdressing regularly and keeping your skills up to date
- Agreeing and reviewing targets regularly to develop your future personal development plan

Step 1 – Personal Effectiveness

It is very important to understand your job role within the salon. If you do not understand what is expected of you while you are at work, how can you possibly fulfil all that is expected of you by managers and colleagues?

Once you have a defined job role, it is much easier to be an effective member of the salon team. As a trainee within the salon, you will be expected to assist all other members of the salon team. Once you have assisted with the treatments carried out in the salon, you will have an understanding of what the treatments involve. This will then allow you to anticipate the needs of the treatments and of your colleagues carrying out the treatments and to therefore give prompt assistance.

If you are unclear about your job role, it is vital that you approach your salon owner or manager to get clear guidelines of what you are expected to do during your working day/week. If you do not have a clear understanding of your responsibilities, your colleagues may view you as lazy when you do not carry out a task that is expected of you. It is also important to carry out the tasks expected of you to salon and National Occupational Standards. For example, there are correct methods, techniques and sequences of carrying out hairdressing tasks and these have been written into the

National Occupational Standards that make up your qualification and are there for a specific reason. If you decide to 'neutralise your way' instead of following your salon's guidelines and those laid down in the National Occupational Standards, you will create problems for your client, your salon and yourself. If you always work to the highest possible standard, you will become a professional, skilled hairdresser who is known for high standards of work and is highly sought after by clients.

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Step 2 - Identifying your own strengths and weaknesses

If you keep making the same mistakes and clients complain or stop coming into the salon, something is obviously wrong! Spotting your own mistakes and then changing how you do a particular job to make sure you get it right in the future is one way of tackling this. However, it is not always easy to be inward looking and this is where a good manager will help by giving you regular work-related reviews or appraisals of your performance at work.

Many large companies provide self-appraisal forms for the employee to fill in and a joint performance appraisal form, which the manager discusses with the employee. An appraisal involves a discussion of your performance from which you as an employee will benefit as well as your employer. It is important to react in a positive way to any feedback or review. Nobody likes criticism, but it is important to listen carefully to what is said.

Appraisal is not just about achievement within your job role or how many sales you may have completed that is really only half the purpose of being a stylist (although an important one for the business!). It is also about your development as an individual. It opens up many areas of discussion between a manager and an employee, including future plans. It should highlight how well you as an individual are coping within your job role, whether the salon is asking too much of you, and provides you with an opportunity to offer your opinions on improvement. Appraisal should be viewed as a two-way discussion, not simply a reprimand for poor performance at work!

An appraisal or team review should happen regularly, perhaps once a month, or every three months. It should:

- Be held at a mutually agreed time.
- Be constructive and open, not conducted in fear of job loss.
- Be objective and as non-personal as possible.
- Be a review for both parties, not simply a judgement of the employee's performance.

- Be constructive and positive.
- Leave the employee feeling enthusiastic, not depressed.

Step 3 – Self appraisal

A self-appraisal form includes whatever the employer/manager feels is relevant to the job role.

When identifying strengths and weaknesses try to be honest with yourself. Do not focus only on your bad points- be constructive. Look at Masako Miyazaki's self appraisal form - she balances negative with positive comments. You should have an equal balance of strengths and weaknesses.

Example answers - Masako Miyazaki's self appraisal form

Salon: Strands

Date: July 2005

Name: Masako Miyazaki

Position held: Senior stylist

Please add comments on how you feel you are progressing in each area listed;

Appearance: Good, I try to look professional every day.

Absences: Could be better, as unfortunately I had a week off with flu last month. I haven't had any time off this month.

Time keeping: Could be better, as I have been late five times this month.

Job performance: Good, I feel my regular clients always ask for me, and I have worked hard this month.

Sales: Good, as above, my sales are from my regulars.

Strengths: I am confident with my treatments and I especially enjoy trying new styles.

Weaknesses: Time keeping, I have missed my bus quite a lot in the mornings.

Any areas of change: I have been helping to cover for Jane who has been off ill this month.

Staff development request: I would like to go on a fashion colouring course if possible, as many clients are booking in for partial colours.

Action plan for next review: To improve on time keeping and to do my course.

Step 4 – Guidance and Feedback

Seeking guidance when instructions are unclear

If you have been asked to perform a specific task but are unsure what you have to do, it is important to find out more information from the relevant person to make the instructions clearer. You should, in the first instance, ask the person who gave you the task to do to clarify the instructions so that you fully understand what is expected of you. Only when you have a clear understanding of the task can you carry this out to the highest standard. Do not be afraid to ask - your colleagues would rather you ask than make a mistake!

Seeking feedback on your performance

To help develop your skills, you need to identify your strengths and weaknesses. Nobody expects you to become an instant expert - you will gain more knowledge and experience over time in the salon. However, you should make sure that all the skills and knowledge you have are up to date. Regular training, reading trade journals and attending trade shows and exhibitions will help you to do this. Be enthusiastic to learn new skills and regard it as a challenge rather than a chore.

A self-appraisal form enables you to identify your strengths and weaknesses and from this you may set short-term and long-term personal targets. A joint review of your performance with your manager, assessor or tutor, should then identify whether your personal targets are realistic and achievable using the SMART formula (see below).

Short-term goals are easier to measure and judge than long-term goals. Achieving these will encourage you to improve further. A short-term goal for the stylist Masako, for example, is to complete a fashion colouring course and gain her certificate. This is rewarding and achievable. A series of short-term goals can also help you achieve a long-term goal.

Long-term goals are not so easy to measure and may be harder to keep in view. They require much more dedication to achieve. A long-term goal for Masako may be to gain two more years salon experience then apply for a job as a stylist on an ocean liner.

Case study: Masako's performance appraisal

Using the SMART theory for Masako's performance appraisal will help her and her manager/assessor decide how best to help Masako achieve her targets. The main problem seems to be her late arrival in the salon on some mornings and it is good that Masako has identified this as a weakness - especially if she is relying on the goodwill of her colleagues to prepare her clients for her when she is late.

Specific - Is her target specific? Yes, but she needs to identify how she intends to tackle her poor time keeping.

Measurable - She must aim to improve her time keeping by 100 per cent, that is, she must not be late at all (only in exceptional circumstances)!

Achievable - Do not aim for something that cannot be realised. Masako should be able to improve her time keeping. She could also have a short-term target to double her retail sales for the next month.

Realistic - Is Masako's aim to improve her time keeping realistic? Masako lives some distance from the salon in a rural area where there is only limited public transport. She does not own a car. The bus service runs every hour on the hour, so if Masako misses the 8am bus she cannot get to the salon in time. Masako needs to make more of an effort to catch the 8am bus. If she is prepared to do this then her aim is realistic.

Timed - Masako should aim to improve her time keeping over the next month when her self-assessment and review will be ready to be done again. This will help her to gauge how well she is doing.

Now Masako has analysed the problem, she needs to find ways to help her achieve her aim. These could involve any of the following:

- set her alarm clock to go off half an hour earlier on working days
- ask if another member of staff (or friend or neighbour working nearby) could offer her a car share, perhaps splitting the petrol costs
- learn to drive so she is no longer reliant on public transport
- change the appointment booking-in system at the salon, so that she starts at 9.30am when she can realistically get to work and then either finish half an hour later or have only a short break for lunch
- cycle to work and get fit at the same time!

SELF APPRAISAL FORM

The purpose of this Self-Appraisal Form is to help you reflect on your job performance and prepare for a performance appraisal interview. Use this form as a basis for key points you may wish to raise with your manager during the interview.

Remember, the three main objectives of an appraisal interview are to:

1. Assess past achievements/failures
2. Consider the need for further training/development
3. Specify way in which future performance can be improved

1. *What parts of your job do you consider you have performed well?*

I am confident with most treatments, however, I still find colouring hard and sometimes need help with layered cuts

2. *What parts of your job do you feel you could have performed better?*

I don't feel I'm very good at reception duties as I'm not very confident when making appointments.

3. *Comment on your overall level of job satisfaction.*

I really enjoy my job and like assisting the other members of the team. Thursday is the best day as this is my 'training evening'.

4. *Indicate aspects of your work you particularly like/dislike.*

I really like putting long hair up. I dislike setting as I find it difficult to fit the rollers in.

5. *What factors, if any, have made your work difficult to perform?*

My confidence level. I need more practice with cutting and colouring. Perhaps a cutting/colouring course would help. More guidance needed on reception duties.

Asking colleagues for help

Some people find it hard to ask others for help, however, in hairdressing you must be able to ask your colleagues for help for many different reasons. When you are training, it is really important to be able to ask your colleagues to help you learn if you are finding certain tasks difficult. Remember - even the most famous hairdressers were trainees once and had to learn what you are learning. Some of you will find some parts of your hairdressing qualification harder than others, but practice makes perfect, and if at first you do not succeed, try and try again (and if you still find it hard - ask for help!).

Tip:

Do not become a 'stuck in a rut' hairdresser - be the best you can be. It only takes a little effort to be creative and your career will be much more enjoyable.

Making and taking opportunities to learn

You may need to seek help from the relevant person in your salon if you are unable to obtain learning opportunities relating to your work. This will probably be your salon owner or manager as only he or she will be able to help give you the opportunity to

learn if there is any cost involved. You may, however, be able to shadow another more experienced member of the team, which should provide you with a learning opportunity. Observing a talented stylist can help you to learn techniques and different methods of working. You must take every opportunity to learn, as it is very easy to sit back and think you know enough, but in our ever-changing industry there is always something new to learn!

Check it out

- Look at the self-assessment appraisal form that you completed earlier.
- How would you tackle your weaknesses?
- What short-term and long-term targets could you set to develop your strengths?

Step 5 – Developments and Targets

Reviewing developments in hairdressing regularly and keeping your skills up to date

Hairdressing is a rapidly changing industry. If you wish to be a part of a busy salon that offers the latest trends and services, you will need to regularly update your skills by attending workshops and courses in cutting, colouring, and so on. Various companies and suppliers, such as Wella or L’Oreal, run such courses.

You should also purchase and read trade journals. These will give you the latest information and often include step-by-step photos of new techniques. At work, you should set aside time to discuss new products that may be coming on to the market with manufacturers’ representatives who may call at your salon.

You need to be aware of what is happening in the industry to enable you to offer the best and most current services to your clients. For example, if a client came into your salon with the latest copy of a fashion magazine and asked you to reproduce one of the hairstyles shown inside but you did not have the expertise to carry out this service, how would you feel? What image would you be portraying of the salon? Would the client have confidence in you and come back? Self-development and training are important to make sure you do not become stale or lose interest or clients by poor product knowledge or skills.

Agreeing and reviewing targets regularly to develop your future personal development plan

Linked into the appraisal system of monitoring performance is the setting of targets for an action plan to improve performance at work. Here are some SMART guidelines to help you:

Specific: Have particular aims in mind rather than too grand an idea. Set a goal specific to you, for example, “I want to complete two assessments each week.”

Measurable: Make sure you are able to measure your aims with a start and a finish. Assessments can be measured against the NVQ performance criteria and ranges. You must know where you are now and where you want to be. For example, product sales might be on average £50 per day and a ten per cent increase would take that to £55 per day.

Achievable: Aim for something that can be realised. You could have a short-term target, for example, to complete an NVQ unit by a certain date.

Realistic: Be sensible in your aims, for example, doing ten cuts per hour is not realistic. How long would it take you to cover all the performance criteria and ranges in one unit?

Timed: You should set a timescale in which to achieve your target, for example, “By next month I will improve my timekeeping by 50 per cent,” or, “By Christmas I am going to have my portfolio for Unit G1 ready to be signed off by my assessor.”

How often you decide to review your set targets is up to you and your salon, but short-term targets are usually easier to manage.

You are in control of your own destiny. If you regularly review how you are doing at work you will be more focused on achieving set targets. Do not let opportunities pass you by because you are too lazy to have a development plan for your future.

Step 6 – Agreeing, working together and achieving objectives

Every salon will have its own working philosophy. Generally this will be to anticipate and fulfil clients' needs within a healthy and happy salon environment thereby promoting a thriving business. In order to achieve your salon's objectives, you and your colleagues need to agree ways of working together in the salon towards a common goal. A salon team will always be made up of people with different strengths and weaknesses and it is important to make full use of everyone's strengths and try to improve the weaknesses. A team will also be made up of different personalities and it is important for everyone to get on when working together as part of a team. The team will only be effective if everyone feels they are working equally and resentment will build up if some team members are not working as hard as others. Make sure you are an effective team member by working as hard as you can. Regular team meetings (ideally weekly) will help to maintain a good working relationship, as any problems can be sorted out in a business-like forum.

How to be an effective team member

On joining a salon you will become part of a team and will be expected to work with other team members - your colleagues - to ensure the smooth running of the salon.

A good team has:

- Clear objectives and a sense of direction
- Good balance of planning and action
- The right number of people
- Good communication
- Flexibility and tolerance
- Clear job roles
- A sense of humour!
- The right mix of skills
- Good listening skills and exchange of ideas
- Enthusiastic, committed team members
- A fair but decisive leader

However, if we act irresponsibly, it may affect the whole team and team spirit can be lost:

- If one member of the group works on his or her own, that is, not as part of the team
- If there is a breakdown in communications
- If team member(s) are unwilling to be flexible and tolerant of others' mistakes
- When there is too much work for too few people
- When job roles become blurred and people encroach upon areas they should not.

As a team member, it is your responsibility to know who:

- All the staff are in the salon
- Is responsible for what
- To go to for information and support.

Step 7 – Help and assistance

Politely asking for help and information

Good communication between colleagues builds good relationships that will be reflected in the smooth running of the salon.

In the salon

You have been working for four hours without a break and are looking forward to finishing your next client because then you will have the time to stop for a drink. When the client arrives you discover that she is expecting a cut and blow-dry but she was wrongly booked in for a trim, so you will not get that break after all. You see that another member of staff is free. If she would shampoo for you then you would have a chance to make a drink.

Do you sit the client at the washbasin, hope your colleague sees her and offers to shampoo her hair?

Or,

Do you say to your colleague, “Michelle, would you mind shampooing my next client for me so I can make myself a quick drink?”

Give reasons for your answer.

Unless your colleague is telepathic or highly perceptive he or she will not necessarily know that you need a drink. You should be able to ask for assistance when necessary and perhaps next time Michelle needs assistance you can return the favour.

If you need help or information, you should ask for it politely. Stating why you require assistance will explain to other members of staff how they are helping you. Being polite and professional at all times will promote team spirit.

Responding to requests willingly and politely

When a colleague asks for your help you should respond willingly and politely to the request. If you do not, you will not be working as an effective team member and will not pass this unit of your qualification. How your colleagues perceive you at work is very important to your working professional life. You should always want to be known as a polite and willing trainee, and if you are not, you will not last very long in this industry. Salon owners, managers and other members of staff do not have to put up with grumpy, rude trainees.

Anticipating the needs of others and offering prompt assistance

When you can see that your colleagues need your assistance it is up to you to offer help and to know whether you are capable of doing that particular job. In order to anticipate the needs of other members of your team, you need to understand your job role and responsibilities within the salon. Once you have worked in the salon for a while you will get to know when certain colleagues' need your help. At first they may need to ask you for help, but you will soon learn when you are needed and this will allow you to anticipate your colleagues' needs and offer your assistance. When you know a colleague needs help it is important to stop the job you are doing (if possible) and give immediate assistance. Try to prioritise the jobs you are responsible for so that you can be as effective as possible in the salon and to all members of your team.

Being capable and competent means doing a job as well as you have been trained to do. Do not attempt to bluff your way through a job as this could put a client or colleague at risk.

Being responsible for your actions involves taking responsibility for any mistakes you may make and taking the appropriate action to minimise any further damage.

Remember

- Treat others as you wish to be treated.
- Never attempt to do a job that you have not been trained to do.
- Never try to cover up mistakes - this will only make things worse.
- Never carry out a task if you are unsure. Always check with a colleague who has more experience or is in authority so that you get it right.

Step 8 – Time Management

In a busy salon you will be asked or instructed to carry out many different services. Your job list may contain a number of items and instructions may be fired at you in quick succession. Don't panic! Here are some guidelines to help you.

- Make a list of the jobs you have been asked to do.
- Check with the relevant person that you have written them all down.
- Ask which ones are priorities, i.e. which ones need to be done first.
- Tick off the jobs/services as you carry them out.
- If you are unsure of any of the tasks that you are expected to carry out, confirm with another member of the team before you begin.
- If a list has been left for you and you cannot understand the writing, ask a colleague to have a look.

In the salon

1. Your manager leaves you a list of jobs to do while she is away on holiday. You are not sure whether any of the jobs require immediate attention or if they are of equal importance. Who would you refer to?
2. The manager is out of the salon and you need to clarify an issue straightaway. Who would you refer to?

In the salon - group work

Scenario A

A colleague asks you to start an application of a full head bleach and you agree to do so. You have mixed the product and are halfway through the application when the stylist tells you that you have used too weak a strength of hydrogen peroxide and, as a result, the hair will not lift quickly enough. She is going to have to re-mix the product

and start the application again. As she will have to use two lots of product but can only charge the client for one, you will have to foot the bill for the first wrong application.

- In your group, discuss how this situation might have been avoided.

Scenario B

A colleague asks you to phone a supplier and order some stock. When the stock arrives you find that you have ordered too much. The company will not take back the extra stock and the salon owner is not very happy because she will have to pay for stock that she does not want.

- In your group, discuss how this situation might have been avoided. Think about the limits of your responsibility.

Scenario C

You cut a teenager's hair. At the end of the service she tells you that her mum is going to come in later to pay. You allow the client to go and the mother never comes into the salon with the money. Your manager is upset because you have cost the salon money and tells you it will be deducted from your wages!

- In your group, discuss the limits of your authority in this situation.

Tip:

Always make sure you understand what is being asked of you. The ability to listen carefully is an important skill. Show that you understand by nodding your head, for example, or if you do not know or understand something, do not guess - ask!

Check it out

Write a list of your responsibilities in your current working role. Do you have the authority to carry out these tasks? If in doubt about your responsibilities, who would you ask for confirmation? (Helpful hint: if you have a job contract, this should contain a job description.)

Remember

The more skills you have to offer as a stylist, the more employable you are.

Step 9 – Reporting problems

There is always a hierarchy within a salon and it is important for you to know the correct channels to go through when you experience a problem. This means you need to know who you should approach with a particular sort of problem. For example, if it is a problem concerning work schedules, you may need to contact the salon manager to help you resolve the situation. However, if you have a wages problem, you may need to speak to your salon owner who holds the purse strings. You should find out who does what in your salon so that you know who to approach with different problems. If you approach the wrong person with a problem, it could make the problem even worse.

Imagine the following scenario: an angry client comes into the salon complaining that the perm you carried out over a month ago has dropped and she has an uneven curl result. She demands her money back. It is not within the limits of your authority to do this, so here are some guidelines to help you handle this difficult situation.

- Be sympathetic and listen carefully to the client.
- Ask her politely to take a seat while you find someone in authority to speak to her.
- Inform your employer or the most senior member of staff that you have a client at reception who would like to discuss her last perm as there seems to be a problem. You should then explain the situation in as much detail as possible so your superior is able to talk knowledgeably to the client
- You should be present at the following discussion so that you can see what the exact problem is and how the problem is dealt with. Only offer input to the conversation if asked.

Here are some of things you should not do.

- Do not get angry with the client.
- Do not be rude and tell her that nothing is wrong with her hair.
- Do not lie and say there is nobody who can deal with her and ask her to come back on your day off!

In another situation, a regular client comes into the salon for a treatment without an appointment. You should never make a client feel unwelcome and should try to be as

accommodating as possible. If it really is not possible to fit the person in at that time, make an appointment. This also applies to a client who is late for an appointment or where a stylist has been over-booked. Re-scheduling appointments can work both ways. It might be as a result of staff sickness; clients may have to be juggled into other time slots. If you always deal with clients in an open, genuinely apologetic manner, most will be flexible!

When a client changes a booking, again be flexible. If time permits and the client's needs can be accommodated, then do so. The receptionist will need to be made aware, so that the time slot isn't double-booked. Flexibility is the way to encourage new and repeat business.

Step 10 – Resolving problems

If you have a problem with another member of the team, it is important to approach that person first. You should think carefully about what you are going to say and make sure your timing and the situation are appropriate. For example, wait until you are alone with your colleague and go somewhere where you are out of earshot of the rest of the salon. Be mature in your approach and never start shouting. Say what you need to say calmly and this should help you to resolve the situation. Listen to your colleague's point of view as well and try to get a 'win, win' situation by resolving the problem so that you can continue to work with each other without bad feeling. If you feel you cannot deal with the situation, you may need to involve your salon manager.



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