

★ Retail Rockstar



ROBERT W. ELLIOTT, JR.

The star: Repêchage Vita Cura Triple Firming Cream

The spa: PERK Med Spa, Summerfield, Florida

Why it flies off the shelves: “This formula complements our microcurrent services really well,” explains Robert W. Elliott, Jr., CFO and director of operations for PERK Med Spa. “Our clients love how the cream helps them achieve faster and longer-lasting results that they can feel confident about. They also really appreciate that the product is made from seaweed.”

How it's promoted: “Repêchage is our spa’s exclusive line—our entire retail area consists of eight display shelves filled with nothing but Repêchage products,” adds Elliott. “We drive sales by allowing our estheticians to use samples (which Repêchage provides with every order) on clients’ skin. This enables them to experience the feel of the product before buying it. But the reason we can have such confidence in these products is because of the phenomenal service that we receive from Repêchage—our sales rep is truly stellar!”



PRO TOOLS



CHRISTINE SHOWALTER

The pro: Christine Showalter, director of spa operations, Calladora Spa at Lake Lawn Resort, Delavan, Wisconsin

Her tools:

1. Delivering understanding.

“I believe that knowledge is power, so I provide my team with information regarding all aspects of our spa and resort,” says Showalter. “The information I share varies from budget goals to product cost control and the reasons behind strategic pricing and specials. I present things in small segments, which allows for each team member to ask questions, feel empowered and take ownership.”

2. Clarifying scheduling. “One of the most daunting aspects of being a spa professional is the schedule commitment,” sympathizes the operations director. “With every potential hire, I take time to break down our expectations, the requirements of each position and the flexibility needed in that position. Being honest about the time commitment upfront creates a smooth transition when that person joins the team.”

3. Saying thank you. “I started my career as a nail technician, so I know that those two small words can make a huge difference in someone’s day,” she explains. “Calladora Spa wouldn’t be able to provide the experiences we do without our staff: I have a team that works so hard for me, for my vision and for Calladora Spa. I make a point to thank every employee after every shift—I want to make that difference for my team.”

Supportive Software

If you’re seeking a more robust software program to help manage your burgeoning business, you may want to consider the Millennium For Spas platform from Millennium Systems International (previously Harms Software, Inc.). The software includes a range of spa-specific management and tracking tools, including:

- **Appointment Book** Creates a calendar with individual columns for each staff member, and lets users develop a waiting list.
- **Monitoring Station** Provides real-time statistics regarding hours available for sale and rebooked appointments, including a breakdown for each staff member. Managers can create and maintain employee-specific profiles that can be individually shared and updated. A Sales tab enables month-to-month and year-to-year profit comparisons.
- **Inventory Wizard** Manages inventory counts, keeps track of top sellers and makes recommendations regarding which products should be kept in stock or moved off the shelves.
- **Room & Equipment Resource Management** Helps spas schedule both spa rooms and equipment. For instance, if a hot stone

massage is booked at a spa that has only a single set of stones, the software won’t allow another stone massage to be booked at the same time.

The company, which operates based on monthly, paid subscriptions, provides its own point of sale offering, but also integrates with Constant Contact, Zeezor and Demandforce, among other POS systems.

For more information, visit harms-software.com.



CHARITABLE CHOICE

According to Mintel's 2016 North American Consumer Trends report, purchasers are showing greater interest in smaller, boutique brands that have unique backstories and support global charities. In order to give back to society, simultaneously stay on trend *and* increase retail profits, spa owners may want to explore partnerships with these types of brands.

"'One-for-one' companies and programs are evolving and growing drastically," says Kim Collier, senior consultant, trainer and educator for Blue Spas Inc., a spa design and management firm based in Montana. To understand the one-for-one concept, think of a company like TOMS (toms.com), which donates a pair of shoes for each pair that's purchased. "It's 'money with momentum', and I believe these types of companies are truly going to change the way customers make retail purchases," adds Collier.

To get started, Blue Spas Inc. principal Cary Collier suggests: "Run the cost comparisons and cost benefit analyses that would be involved in partnering with various brands at a range of price points." This, he explains, will help you determine what type of output you can afford.

Although one-for-one brands tend to have higher price points, consumers are willing to pay more because of the charitable connection—as long as the item they're purchasing is of high quality. "Without a doubt, we've found that because of our mission, people are generally inclined to pay more for our bags," explains Oliver Shuttlesworth, founder and CEO of Esperos Bags (esperosbags.com), which donates 10% of each sale to The Nobility Project, a nonprofit that works with rural schools in Kenya to build classrooms, libraries, and science and computer labs. "At the same time, we have tried to place an emphasis on making a product that's high quality and long lasting," he says.

Shuttlesworth believes that the most compelling reason for spa owners to partner with brands like his is the potential to create

"walking billboards" in the form of brand fans. "Our growth comes from word of mouth, and that starts with our retail partners," he explains. "When people love a company, they're more likely to tell their friends and coworkers about it."

Pursuing partnerships with charitable brands that produce unique offerings is key to this word-of-mouth marketing. Take WeWood (we-wood.us), an Italian company that creates watches with remnant wood that would otherwise have been turned into chips or discarded. For each watch purchased, the company plants a tree. "I bought my mom one of our watches, and she ends up in conversations with strangers everywhere she goes because it's so eye-catching!" laughs Shannon Hayward, the brand's vice president of sales in North America.

There's also added value in wearing fashionable and distinctive products. Austin, Texas-based Purse & Clutch (purseandclutch.com) distributes high-quality, fair-trade goods sourced from artisans' groups around the world. "People want to own items that don't just enable them to feel connected to a story but that are unique in themselves too," explains proprietor and executive director Jen Lewis. "They don't want to think 'oh, shoot' when they walk into a room and see five other women with the same bag, which falls apart a few months later anyway."



Feeling Green



Interested in "greening" your spa but concerned that such an undertaking might be too taxing? Fear not: there are a myriad of small, easy changes you can make to ensure that your business slowly but surely becomes more environmentally friendly. With the help of Paul Schmidt, executive director of the Green Spa Network, we came up with the following list of tackle-able tasks.

- Send your guests away from the treatment room with the clean, nearly dry towel that covered them during their service—they can re-use it when they shower or visit the Jacuzzi.

- Install low-flow water filters and dual flush toilets.
- Go paperless by having clients fill out intake forms on tablets and uploading them online. Or, print spa brochures and business cards on plantable paper.
- Replace single-use plastic or paper cups with reusable drinking cups, and consider installing a small dishwasher.
- Switch out your incandescent light bulbs for energy-efficient bulbs, such as halogen incandescents, compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) and light-emitting diodes (LEDs).
- Provide a branded robe and sandals as gifts to regular or member guests. Distinguish

them from your standard offerings so that they become conversation-starters.

- Adjust treatment protocols to reduce the quantity of fresh linens used in each service. Simple changes, like using the floor mat that was stepped on once by your guest to initially wipe product from the tub or shower, can make a big difference.
- Plant potted lavender, jasmine, rosemary or aloe vera around your spa. These varieties generate and improve oxygen quality, and can be used to infuse body treatments.

For more tips, go to dayspamagazine.com.