



Fully Appointed

You may have heard about Square, the mobile payment and financial services company created by Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey. You may have even seen a mobile retailer use the service, swiping a credit card through the brand's tiny magnetic reader that connects to the auxiliary jack of a phone or tablet.

What you may not know, however, is that the company also offers Square

Appointments, an all-in-one program that enables business owners (including those with brick-and-mortar establishments) to do much more than accept payments. Spa owners can manage their appointment calendar, run analytics, keep stock of inventory, organize employee schedules and send invoices. The program also lets guests book services online and receive text and email reminders for upcoming appointments.

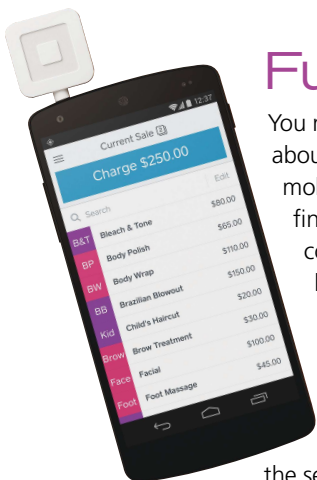
Square's on-the-go payment option is ideal for business owners who host off-site events and still want to make sales or book clients, but it can also work for those spa professionals simply

looking for an all-in-one payment and appointment system.

"With Square Appointments, we've created a technology that helps spa owners behind businesses of all sizes unlock the value of every sale," explains Square spokesperson Alex Rafter.

Downloading and using the Square payment application is free; a 2.75% fee is taken from each transaction and split between the brand and respective credit card company.

For more information, visit squareup.com.



Everlasting Love

This past February, Heidi Lamar, owner of Spa Lamar in Scottsdale, Arizona, had an unbelievably busy Valentine's Day. To help couples celebrate the day of love, the spa owner put together a special package, complete with chocolate-dipped strawberries, sparkling cider and flowers placed in each suite. At the

end of the day, one of Lamar's clients mentioned that it was a shame she had to wait another year to experience the romantic package again.

"Why do we squish all the romance into a single day every year?" Lamar pondered. Thus, her spa's "Valentine Anytime Day" promotion was born. On the 14th of every month, Lamar offers the same package she created for Valentine's Day, enabling duos to choose any of the menu's side-by-side massages. And because Lamar's entire 14,000-square-foot spa is co-ed, couples can experience the steam room, sauna and whirlpool simultaneously. "This allows them to relax, unwind and spend the full day together, which they really appreciate," she explains.

The March 14th promotion was an immediate success, and Lamar reports that her spa hosted more clients on that day than it did on Valentine's Day. "Now we've started to go all out," she says. "I even decorate the spa's exterior with red and pink balloons and streamers a few days before the 14th!"

★ Retail Rockstar

The star: Cuccio Naturalé Butter

The spa: Domani Day Spa, Schenectady, New York

Why it flies off the shelves:

"I like to say that Cuccio's Butter made our spa 'arrive'," laughs Domani Day Spa owner Anita Hug. "I've carried these hydrating body lotions in my spa since day one, almost 20 years ago. My clients love this product because it helps to heal and calm common skin disorders and it lasts 24 hours. I tell them that when they wash their hands hours later, the butter comes back to life! Unlike a lot of other creams, the formula doesn't just sink into the skin and disappear."

How it's promoted: "Our retail section has eight shelves packed wall-to-wall with all of Cuccio's varying scents," explains Hug. "I also use the butter with my body treatments and massages and during the massage portion of facials, and I keep the tubs at every manicure and pedicure station. Two weeks ago, I stocked 20 of the full-size coconut tubs—today, I'm down to just three. In other words, there's really no need to promote them!"



ANITA HUG



BOTTOM LEFT © GETTY IMAGES, BOTTOM RIGHT, COURTESY ANITA HUG

PRO TOOLS



ROSIE L. DAMBRUCK

The pro:

Rosie L. Dambruck, spa director, Hibiscus Spa, Westin Dawn Beach Resort & Spa, St. Maarten

Her tools:

1. Enlist stellar staff. “I believe a spa’s most important asset is its staff and that good employees build a strong customer base,” says Dambruck. “Train your staff on a regular basis to ensure that procedures are being followed correctly. Reinforcement training, focused on protocols and product knowledge, really helps to encourage superb performance in retail sales and an overall professional attitude.”

2. Keep ‘em around. “Employee retention is another crucial component of the spa industry. My key to maintaining a long-term staff is to identify, and then

communicate effectively, what you expect from your employees,” explains the spa director. “Then, acknowledge and reward them when they provide excellent services. This helps to maintain a positive working environment.”

3. Trust in teamwork. “When putting together your spa’s promotions, involve your staff by engaging their creativity and expertise,” Dambruck advises. “Instead of discounting services, work with employees to create an added-value special that will enhance the customer experience. Not only does this avoid margin erosion, it also motivates your staff to promote the special.”

Creative Consults

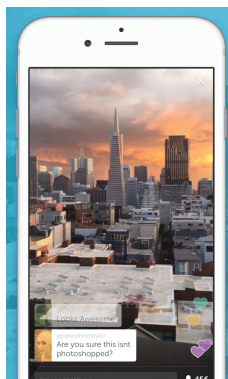
You may have had a Skype date with a friend abroad or FaceTimed with family in another state, but have you thought about using these live-streaming services to benefit your business? Miami-based McAllister Spa has done just that, and recently began scheduling video chat consultations.

“Previously, when clients called our spa to discuss their hair or skin issues, we were forced to deduce their problems over the phone,” explains owner William McAllister, whose spa includes a hair salon, nail salon and blow dry bar. “Then they’d come for their in-person consultation and the situation was completely different from what we initially thought.” He adds that half the time, the spa would need to schedule a second appointment to properly address the problem, but the customer would never return.

However, by using video sessions, McAllister’s staff can often determine hair and even skin problems within just a few minutes. “We had a video call with one client who had cystic acne,” he reports. “We immediately referred her to a dermatologist because our esthetician knew she couldn’t help until the client had seen an M.D.”

The program launched in April and, as of the end of July, the spa had held more than 50 virtual appointments over Apple’s FaceTime (apple.com/mac/facetime), Periscope (periscope.tv) and Meerkat (meerkatapp.co). The results? All but two of the clients came into the spa for their quoted service.

Both staff and clients appreciate the virtual consultation model. Staff loves it because they can be more readily prepared when customers arrive and clients love it, “not just because they get a free consultation from the comfort of their home,” McAllister explains, “but because they walk through our doors and know exactly what to expect and how much they’ll pay.”



Tag, You’re It

Individual name tags are an important aspect of customer service-oriented industries, but continually having to order personally engraved pins can be costly. Enter the Mighty Badge, a reusable nametag system for businesses with anywhere from two to 200 employees.

The brand’s starter kit includes software that allows business owners to design customized name badges featuring up to three lines of text and a small image or logo. A home printer can then replicate the labels on a clear insert, which slips between a lens cover and the badge. If the employee leaves, the insert can be removed and the badge reused. The metal badges are available in various sizes in gold, silver or white and have magnetic backings to ensure that spa uniforms aren’t damaged by unsightly pinholes.

“I can show my customers a professionally printed badge next to one that has been created on a home computer and they can rarely tell the difference,” says Marla Kott, CEO of Imprint Plus, Mighty Badge parent company.

Starter kits of 10, 50, 100 or 200—and refill kits of two or four—enable a business owner to order the exact number of badges they need for their staff.

“We designed this kit for ease of use, and so that businesses don’t have to spend more than they need to,” says Kott, whose company also produces reusable spot signage for retail areas, in addition to a variety of other name-tag solutions.

For more information, visit themightybadge.com.