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A **MATCH** MADE IN HEAVEN FOR YOUR **ESTHETICS BUSINESS**

THE BRIDE-TO-BE SELECTED AN AMAZING GOWN, stunning veil and dazzling shoes. She invested months of planning into her big day, along with tens of thousands of dollars. However, one week before the wedding, the bride thinks about her skin. Gasp! Will she have to hide behind layers of makeup and her veil because she forgot about effective skin care?

Chances are you have encountered this very stressed-out bride in your spa or salon dozens of times. She waited until the last minute and now wants a perfect glow to match her perfect day. Regardless of having one week or one year to prepare their skin for the big day, there are steps you can take to turn these ladies (and their grooms) into loyal customers.

Creating a bustling bridal business

What are you doing to bring these thousands of brides through your door? With a little marketing and a lot of esthetics expertise, your business can become the go-to spot in your community for bridal beauty. In Tucson, AZ, Gadabout SalonSpas is that go-to place. Opened in 1979 by Pam McNair-Wingate, this successful chain of spas is a fixture in Arizona.

Gadabout SalonSpas' director of education, Julie McGinn, revealed that the spa serviced almost 100 wedding parties last year, about half of which participated in facial planning services booked through the spa's wedding coordinator. McGinn added that Gadabout SalonSpas partners with area bridal coordinators to create a custom timeline for the bride's needs.

"Gadabout offers a variety of options depending on the condition of the skin, including glycolic peels and The Facial 360, which includes a facial for the back (perfect for those open-back gowns). All of the treatments include the décolleté and neck," says McGinn.

bride: ©iStockphoto.com/Ekaterina Monakhova

GET ENGAGED IN THE BUSINESS OF

Bridal **Beauty**

BY CELESTE HILLING

THE BUSINESS OF **WEDDINGS**

Weddings are big business that can boost your bottom line. The popular wedding website TheKnot.com reports:

- 19,000 U.S. couples married in 2010.
- One in five brides spent more than $30,000 on their wedding, not including the engagement ring or honeymoon.
- In the last three months leading up to their wedding, brides spend an average of 11 hours planning each week. Nearly 50 percent of these brides found planning to be more stressful than they expected.
- Nearly one in three brides hires an event/wedding planner.
- In 2010, 29 was the average age for brides, and 31 for grooms.
- June is the most popular month for weddings.

As far as pre-wedding skin care, McGinn suggests, "If the bride has some concerns with her skin, such as acne, we recommend starting a skin care regimen with facials and a prescribed home care plan at least once a month; nine months to a year before her wedding. We can work three or four months out if there are no specific concerns."

What is McGinn's advice for those last-minute brides? "Exfoliate, moisturize, perhaps self-tanner, and don't forget about your brows!"

She also recommends a tie-the-knot travel-sized kit of effective products—this is an example of how to capture retail business for busy brides who want a solution tailored to their desire for picture-perfect skin. Packaged in a wedding-themed box, you can retail this as a bridal shower or honeymoon gift, as well as a gift option for the bride to give the bridal party or out-of-town guests.

Marketing bridal bliss

McGinn mentioned partnering with area bridal coordinators/wedding planners, a very savvy idea. As a business person, you probably already know a handful of coordinators in your area and if not, it is simple enough to find them online and through the chamber of commerce or Better Business Bureau. Advise the planners to encourage these brides to sit down with their esthetician shortly after they become engaged. You may also want to suggest a reciprocal partnership to the planners where you refer business to them and you become one of their suggested vendors.

Consider partnering with area bridal fairs and events. Perhaps your spa/salon could be an exhibitor and offer mini facials during the show. Ask about including product samples and/or gift cards in attendee gift bags. Position your lead esthetician or owner as an expert presenter during the event to speak on pre-wedding skin care. Or you simply may want to attend the shows initially to meet wedding planners and see what opportunities may be a future fit for your business.

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Consider making contact with area resorts, event venues and convention centers. These spots are obvious draws for brides who may be looking for skin care as well as day-of-wedding makeup, nails, hair and massage services. Speaking of which, be sure to package all of your bridal offerings together when marketing your services. The more one-stop shopping a bride can do, the less stressed she will be.

In addition, you can bring the brides to you by throwing a party. Host a community bridal shower featuring mini-treatments. Invite area brides, their moms, bridesmaids and

continues

flower petals: ©iStockphoto.com/Jill Chen

PRE-WEDDING BEAUTY AND DE-STRESSING PLAN

Pass along this regimen and timeline to your bridal clients. This well-thought-out plan gives them one less thing to worry about.

Five to six months before

- Begin a stress-relief regimen by reserving at least one night a week for non-wedding fun or quiet time.
- Get serious about skin care. Start a cleansing and moisturizing program. Consult a skin care coach and make appointments for monthly facials.
- If you do not already, start exercising and eat healthy. Try yoga to look great and be less stressed.

Three to four months before

- Make consultation appointments with potential makeup artists and hairdressers.
- Want to experiment with self-tanners? Now is the time. Consider the neckline of your gown as well as how much of your back will be showing.
- Wear sunscreen, drink lots of water and get plenty of rest now before the wedding madness begins.

One to two months before

- Meet with your makeup artist and hairdresser for trial runs (do not forget your veil).
- Are you keeping up with your monthly facials? If you have not had one at all, this is the time to do so.
- Cut down on tea and coffee. Try whitening toothpaste or an over-the-counter whitening system.

Two weeks before

- Get your final haircut and/or color.
- Load up on fruits and veggies for energy. Nix the salt and fat.
- Exfoliate and moisturize elbows, hands and feet.
- Drink lots of water to help keep your skin clear and glowing.
- Exercise, exercise, exercise!

One week before

- Avoid overindulging in salty snacks and alcohol.
- Get your eyebrows shaped and wax-those legs! You want to be prepared for that honeymoon bikini.
- Have a massage or reflexology treatment (maybe invite your fiancé to do the same).
- Have your final prep facial.

One day before

- Drink lots of water.
- Deep condition your hair.
- Exfoliate your skin (with a tried product, not a new one) so it glistens.
- Get a professional pedicure and manicure.
- Take a relaxing bath.
- Pack an emergency beauty kit of items you should not leave home without.

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friends. This offers another great opportunity to partner with bridal planners. Plus, you could invite restaurants, caterers, jewelers, designers, and other relevant businesses to participate, and set up small booths or offer simple presentations to the attendees. Offer a gift bag, and invite local merchants to submit products and coupons. Your fellow business owners will love you for this easy promotional opportunity.

Engaging brides-to-be can be a match made in heaven for your business. Promote and brag about happy bridal clients who have enjoyed great results. Comments from happy brides are worth tweeting, blogging and posting about, and this will create quite a bridal buzz in your town! We recently had an e-mail that was extremely encouraging: "My wedding is in 12 days and my skin looks great. I'm so happy. I've had friends asking me about what I use. Everything has been working wonderfully." – Kelly

Yes, another success story that ends happily ever after. ■

With more than 18 years in the beauty and wellness industries, ***Celeste Hilling*** *is the founder and CEO of Skin Authority. Hilling is a respected expert and speaker on skin care, beauty, self-esteem and business. She is a resource for leading media outlets. She is featured as a recurring skin care expert for Fox News iMag and InWithSkin.com. For more details, visit www.skinauthority.com.*

WRINKLE REDUCER

Bio-Therapeutic introduces the new **Relaxing Serum™**, their latest anti-aging product. Rich in acetyl-octapeptide-3, it has been shown to reduce the depth of wrinkles on the face caused by expression aging, and helps to extend the effect of injectables used to address this issue, says the company. **www.bio-therapeutic.com**

NATURE'S BLEND

The **Eternox® Wrinkle Reduction System** by **Therapon** is a breakthrough anti-aging system consisting of a natural botanical enzyme peeling gel and a luxurious, airy crème infused with peptides, antioxidants, humectants and micro-nutrients. This two-step system stimulates production of the collagen-elastin matrix while nourishing, hydrating and repairing skin cells, says the company. **www.pro.therapon.com**

PICTURE PERFECT

The **GO! Tie-The-Knot Kit** from **Skin Authority** is a perfect package of travel size skin care products to help skin look smoother, hydrated, revived and radiant in four steps. It is perfect for brides, grooms and anyone who wants to look great for the camera in a hurry, says the company. The kit includes a Daily Cleanser, Resurfacing Accelerator, Tri-Power Peptide Hydrator and Sunscreen Moisturizer SPF 30 UVA 4-Stars. **www.skinauthority.com**

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