

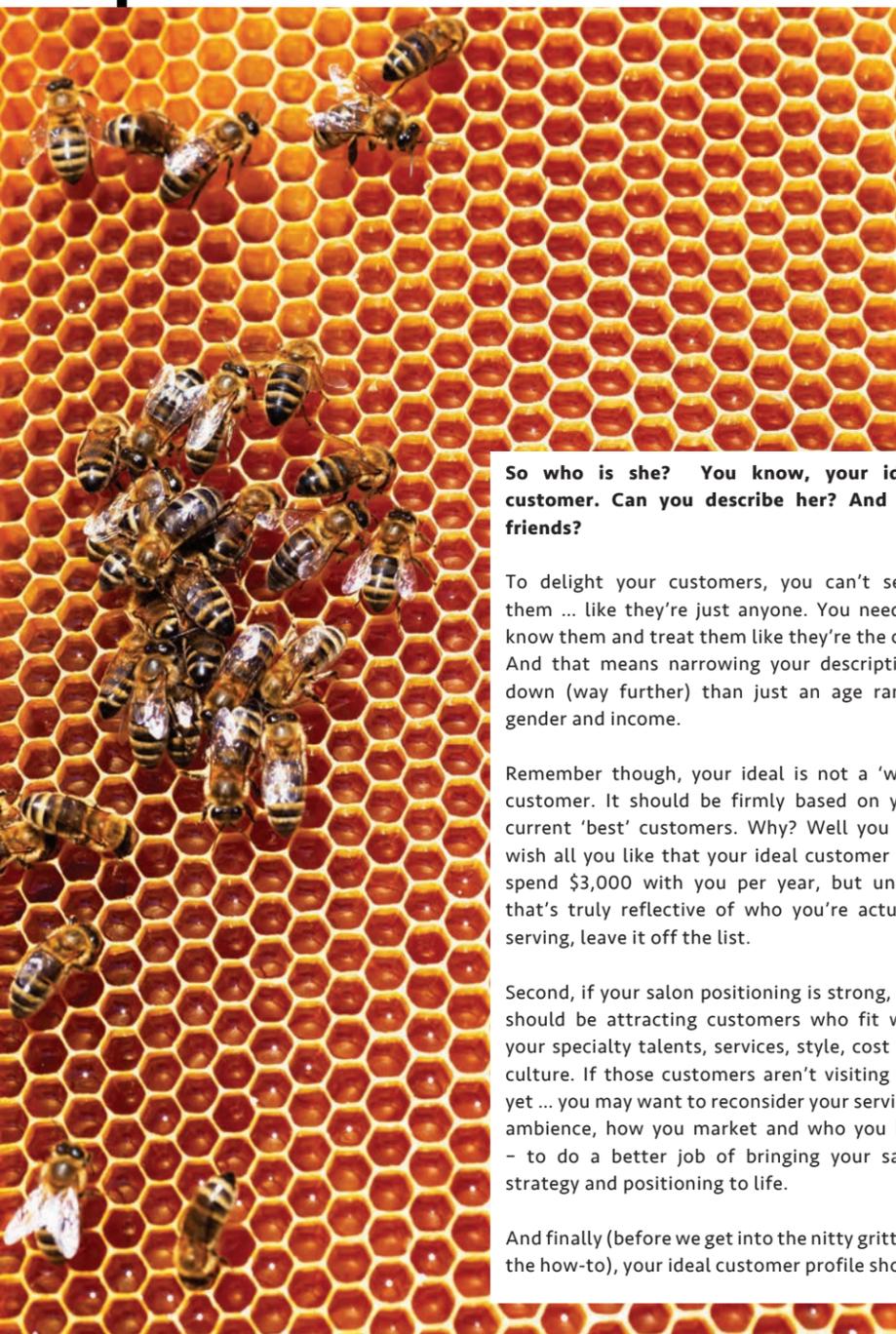
BE A BEEKEEPER NOT A ZOOKEEPER

Who, what, when, where and why do your customers buzz?

By Neil Osborne

Your best work, comes with a narrow focus. That's exactly what a beekeeper has, every day – just bees. Unlike a zookeeper (who tends hundreds of different

animals) a beekeeper has a singular focus, and knows his bees, inside and out. That's exactly as it should be with him, and with you and your customers. Why? Because having a hive doesn't guarantee a yield of yummy honey and nor does having a salon...



So who is she? You know, your ideal customer. Can you describe her? And her friends?

To delight your customers, you can't serve them ... like they're just anyone. You need to know them and treat them like they're the one. And that means narrowing your descriptions down (way further) than just an age range, gender and income.

Remember though, your ideal is not a 'wish' customer. It should be firmly based on your current 'best' customers. Why? Well you can wish all you like that your ideal customer will spend \$3,000 with you per year, but unless that's truly reflective of who you're actually serving, leave it off the list.

Second, if your salon positioning is strong, you should be attracting customers who fit with your specialty talents, services, style, cost and culture. If those customers aren't visiting you yet ... you may want to reconsider your services, ambience, how you market and who you hire – to do a better job of bringing your salon strategy and positioning to life.

And finally (before we get into the nitty gritty of the how-to), your ideal customer profile should

be narrow, but very deep. The profile must reflect the attitudes, behaviours, motivators and preferences of a collection of similar individuals, rather than a true-to-life snapshot of a single customer you'd love to serve.

BEING A BEEKEEPER

Before you start harvesting your liquid gold, you need to give your ideal customer a name. Don't laugh, with a name they become a real human being, rather than an abstract idea or concept you've conjured in your head. The name you choose should represent the collective of similar individuals, that represent your ideal. Let's say for the purposes of this article, that she's called, Simone.

There's five simple steps to knowing Simone better. And it's important to be super specific when answering the questions that describe her. So let's take look at them:

IDEAL CUSTOMER FINDER – STEP 1: WHO IS SHE?

Understand and describe Simone and know what similarities she shares with her collective group of ideal customers – they're more alike than you think. Define her/them by:

- a. Demographics – age, gender, income, where they live, etc.



- b. Psychographics – personality, preferences, interests, attitudes, etc.
- c. Behaviour – similar like and dislikes, hobbies, passions etc.

IDEAL CUSTOMER FINDER – STEP 2: WHAT DOES SHE PURCHASE?

Understand your ideal customers' journey or purchasing process. Review the needs and benefits that drive her/their purchases:

- a. Where does she begin when she's looking for a new salon?
- b. What is her/their key problem or need – cut, colour, treatment, brilliant service or a place to feel special?
- c. What benefits is she looking for when she chooses a salon?

IDEAL CUSTOMER FINDER – STEP 3: WHEN DO YOU INSPIRE HER?

Find out what lights up this customer when you talk to her. How does the conversation evolve each time you talk? What makes her who she is? Find out:

- a. What does she care about?
- b. What things inspire and excite her?
- c. What's her story?

IDEAL CUSTOMER FINDER – STEP 4: WHERE DOES SHE HANG OUT?

Locate your ideal customers by finding the places they're attracted to – be it a physical

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location or online – you know, where they gather and discuss things. Find out:

- a. Where does she/they hang out?
- b. What does she/they read – online and offline?
- c. What and how do they search, when they're looking for a salon?

IDEAL CUSTOMER FINDER – STEP 5: WHY DOES SHE LIKE YOU?

When building your customer profile, contact both your 'best' and 'newest' customers to gain a better understanding of why they selected

your salon over others they considered. How did you change the way they felt about themselves, and became the one they trust? Chat to them (informally or formally) and ask:

- a. Why did you originally come here?
- b. Why do you continue to come to the salon?
- c. What do we do that others don't?

TENDING YOUR HIVE

Once you've completed the five steps, you'll have a clear picture of who Simone is (and her collective others). These are the customers you should be addressing, attracting and approaching when you're talking about your salon.

Better still, by creating specific communications and activities that appeal to Simone (and others), you'll avoid wasting your time and resources on unsuccessful marketing, and your salon will be buzzing with customers.

Neil Osborne is an elite sales trainer and brand coach who is unique in the salon marketplace. He has devoted more than 30 years of his working life to the Salon Industry and has been responsible for dramatically growing brands and businesses by helping them launch, develop and change their sales results with his salon-specific, results driven methods. Contact him at The SALES CATALYST, 1300 302 859 or go to www.thesalescatalyst.com.au