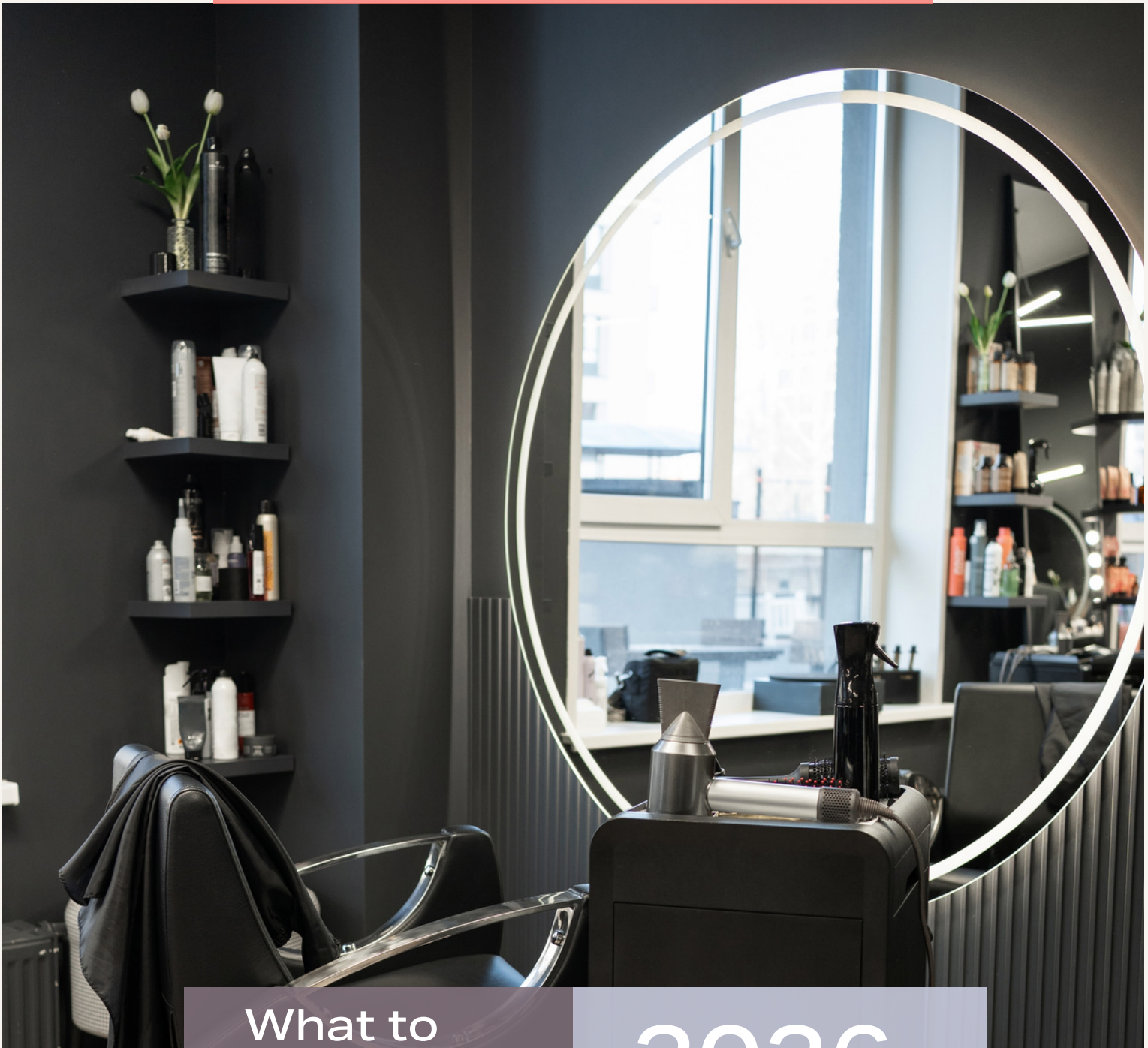


SALON INDUSTRY TRENDS



What to
expect in

2026

What to Expect in 2026

We've researched current business models, monitored growing and upcoming beauty industry trends, and combed through data from our latest customer survey.

Why? To bring you this **Salon Industry Trends 2026 Report** that reveals what's working for other salon pros, looks at current pain points, and keeps you in the know about trends and innovations to help prepare your business for the year ahead.



Many of the insights we uncovered were unsurprising (looking at you, sustainability and AI). However the answers provided in our customer survey highlighted some **important changes in the industry**.

Dive in now to learn more >>



Industry Overview

In our 2025 Trends Report, the industry showed strong momentum, with 67% of respondents reporting business growth of 30% or more in the prior year. In the most recent findings, growth has stabilized across much of the market.

Over 40% of salon owners reported that their business performance remained consistent year over year, while nearly one-third (32.7%) experienced some level of improvement.

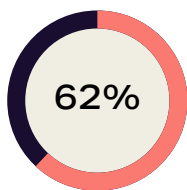
While a smaller segment of owners reported softer growth compared to 2024, these shifts highlight a maturing market and signal new opportunities for salons to focus on efficiency, retention, and strategic investments to drive their next phase of growth.

The main challenges and frustrations were:

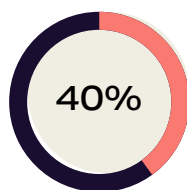
- Rising costs/fees
- Finding new business
- Social media integrations
- Recruiting and retaining staff



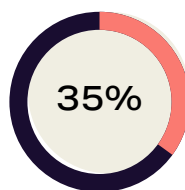
The biggest risks for 2026:



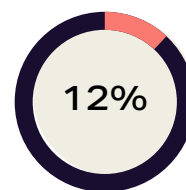
Rising
operating
costs



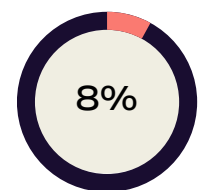
Hiring
& staff
retention



Customer
price
sensitivity



Competition
from suites/
independents



Regulatory
changes

The Bigger Picture

- The beauty industry generates over \$650 billion in revenue worldwide
- Experts predicted the United States would generate a revenue of US\$104.74bn in the Beauty & Personal Care market in 2025
- There is a forecast of 2.9% annual growth until 2030
- The men's personal care market is projected to hit \$276.9 billion by 2030

What's Working Well

Social media and digital marketing were the winning strategies with 52% of the votes.

Other tactics to drive business included word of mouth, networking, allowing flexibility around staff working hours, better time management, and consistently delivering the best service and products.

Just **32.7%** of respondents reported experiencing business growth in the last year.

Tactics to boost business included:

- Hiring new stylists
- Pushing retail sales
- Encouraging rebookings
- Improving client communications
- Attracting clients via social media and Google

31% said training or talent development was their biggest growth opportunity for 2026.

The main strategies to drive business included:

- Social media
- Email marketing
- Providing excellent service
- Encouraging rebooking before clients leave the salon





Salon Industry Trends 2026

Based on what we've shared so far, here are the 6 big trends we expect to impact the salon industry this year:

- 1 Personalized, Experience-Driven Services
- 2 Science, Sustainability, and Well-Being
- 3 Beyond Grooming: Male Self-Care
- 4 Tech and Client-Centered Tools
- 5 Education and Retention
- 6 The Rise of Gen Z



1

PERSONALIZED,
EXPERIENCE-
DRIVEN
SERVICES

The Experience Economy

Clients want to feel seen, and that starts with a thoughtful consultation and services tailored to them. Research from McKinsey shows that 71% of today's consumers expect to receive a personalized experience when they shop. What's more, nearly 80% of consumers are more likely to make repeat purchases from a company and recommend that company to a friend or family member if they receive a personalized experience.



A cut or color alone isn't enough anymore. Providing excellent, individualized customer experiences is how to stand out in 2026.

Pay close attention to greeting your clients, take notes on special events or news they shared, so you can ask how it went during their next service. If you serve coffee, remember how they take it (Cream? Sugar? Black?) Serve snacks or offer water, and suggest hair products for home maintenance that are exclusive to them.

What you do to connect on a personal level will vary widely based on your resources, salon size, and vibe. Our survey revealed many salons are also adding extra services to provide a more complete customer experience.

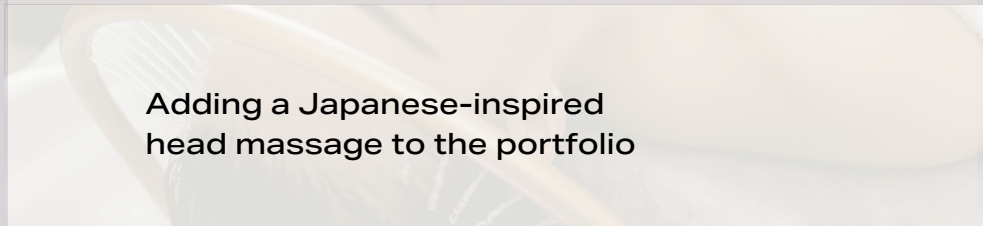
Here are some ways respondents are glowing up their salon experience:



Boosting skill set to include spa services

Repurposed an unused room to rent out to a massage therapist and grow profits

Seeking approval to sell hair pieces



Adding a Japanese-inspired head massage to the portfolio

We even had one ambitious respondent acquire a license to serve liquor at their salon!

If you have the budget and skills in house, offering unique add-on services is a great way to stand out from the crowd, but you don't need to invest a ton of cash to get more customers through the door. What your customers value most is feeling valued and seen.

Good customers will already be impressed with a solid experience from skilled staff at a reputable salon. Win clients over by providing a smooth booking process, relaxing waiting area, or client newsletter to boost engagement.

“Don't follow in someone else's footsteps but make your own.”

Roberta K, 2025 salon survey respondent



Sometimes just a personal touch can keep clients coming back. A smile and greeting them by their name when they arrive for their appointment can work wonders. As can offering them a complimentary tea, coffee, or water while they wait.

What This Means in 2026



Bespoke Services

Customized services create stronger relationships and give you a clear reason to price at a premium.



Premium Salon Experience

Tools like digital consultations or smarter client notes will help you deliver a more elevated, consistent experience, every visit.



2

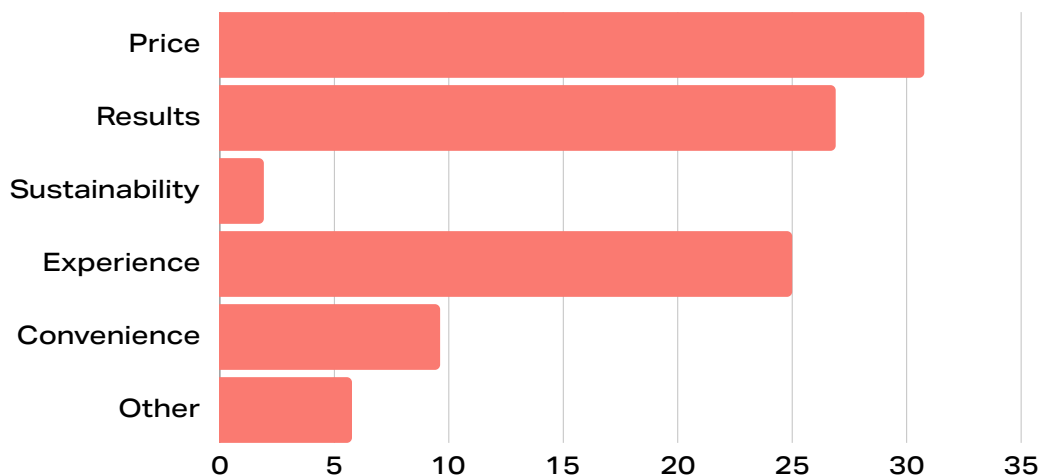
SCIENCE,
SUSTAINABILITY
& WELL-BEING

Responsible Beauty

Today's clients care about who they're supporting. Sustainability, transparency, and authenticity play a bigger role in buying decisions, especially with younger generations. It's less about chasing every trend and more about standing for something real.



We asked what clients care most about right now. With the current economy, it's hardly surprising that almost one third answered price (31%). Results and experience followed close behind with 27% and 25%.



Interestingly, sustainability ranked lowest at just 2% with 5% answering "don't know".

Is sustainability something clients don't care about?

Reports from McKinsey, Nielsen, and Statista highlight sustainability as an important industry trend. What's more, several respondents specifically mentioned being excited about "newer", "better", and "cleaner" products, with one keen to "include health as well as beauty services and products". This suggests salon pros do recognize the importance of sustainability, but maybe call it a different name.

Although it has been around for at least 30 years, clean beauty was always considered somewhat of a niche market. Now it seems that hair and beauty are officially part of the wellness conversation.

Clients are gravitating toward services that don't just change how they look but how they feel. The focus is shifting from quick fixes to more holistic, feel-good experiences, with consumers looking more closely at ingredients, packaging, and how products are made.



QUICK TIPS

If like 5% of respondents you're unsure what your clients value, try our Reputation Management tool to seamlessly collect and publish their feedback.



Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of what they put in and on their bodies, and how it can impact their health and well-being." NielsenIQ

Industry data shows a clear shift toward natural, organic, and eco-friendly hair care products, as more clients actively seek out sustainable options, pushing salons and brands to rethink the products they use and recommend.

What This Means in 2026



Natural Products

More product lines using plant-based and organic ingredients for skincare and haircare services.



Scientific Advances

Focus on developing advanced solutions with ingredients like niacinamide and peptides for improved hair texture.



Stronger Positioning

Salons that highlight clean products, responsible practices, and a genuine brand story build deeper trust and loyalty.



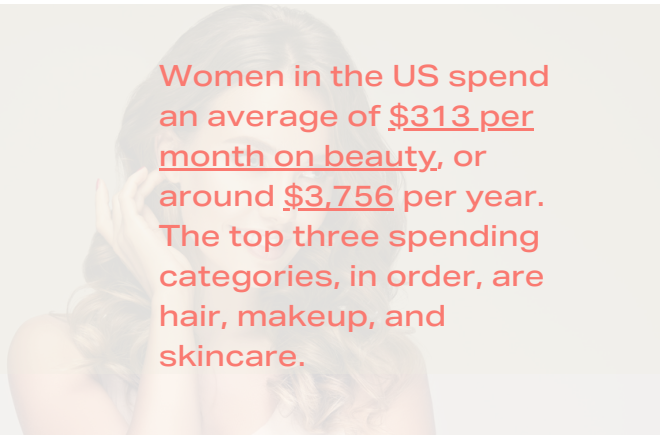


3

BEYOND
GROOMING:
MALE SELF-CARE

Self-Care Is Not Gendered

We only need to look at spending habits to see that self-care has become a serious investment. This shift builds on the rise of personalized, experience-driven services but expands the target those experiences are designed for.



Women in the US spend an average of \$313 per month on beauty, or around \$3,756 per year. The top three spending categories, in order, are hair, makeup, and skincare.

Did you know men are spending just as much on their appearance at around \$2,928 per year, across the same categories? The reality is men's grooming in 2026 looks very different than it did even a few years ago, going way beyond barbering.



The male beauty business is booming. What was once framed as "maintenance" is now openly embraced as self-care. In fact, the men's personal care market is expected to reach \$276.9 billion by 2030.

Social media, and especially TikTok, has been a key driver when it comes to male grooming. More men are booking professional services such as facials, scalp treatments, color services, and skincare. They're choosing to invest in their appearance, and engage with beauty brands that feel inclusive, modern, and judgment-free.

According to Ipsos, men are also showing an increasing interest in cosmetics and makeup.



You have the same 24 hours as Beyoncé.

Whitney L, 2025 salon survey respondent

Alongside the rise in men's self-care is a broader expectation for inclusive beauty spaces. Clients want salons that welcome everyone regardless of gender identity, expression, and background, and reflect that inclusivity in their messaging, service menus, and online presence.



Inclusive branding builds trust and expands your potential client base, after all we're seeing that men respond to salons that speak to them intentionally, without outdated stereotypes. This can be as simple as ensuring you use clear, welcoming language on your website and booking pages to remove any hesitation.



What This Means in 2026



Bespoke Services

Salons that lead with inclusivity stand out as modern, thoughtful, and values-driven.



Service Growth

Men's grooming and self-care services create new opportunities without reinventing your business.



Brand Positioning

Inclusive language and visuals signal that your salon is forward-thinking and welcoming.



Client Loyalty

When clients feel comfortable and represented, they come back and refer others.



4

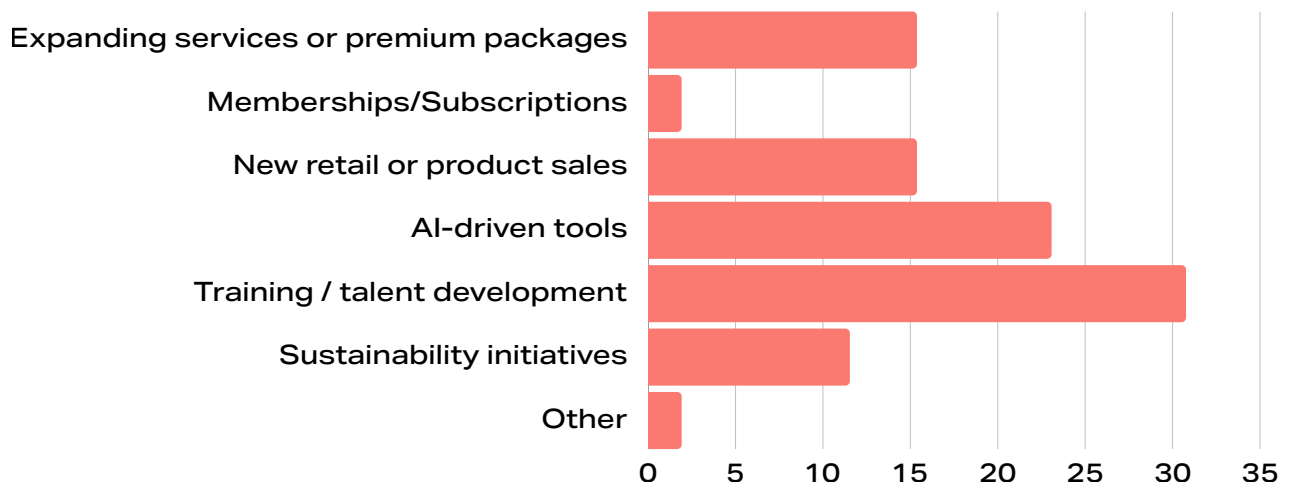
TECH & CLIENT- CENTERED TOOLS

Convenience Is Non-Negotiable

Beyond hairstyle trends, technology will continue transforming the salon experience in 2026, from AI-powered scheduling, online booking, and digital consultations to performance reporting and client data analytics.

Our survey showed that many professionals are turning to tech and salon software to reduce manual tasks, have better visibility of business growth, and to gain more time with the clients in the chair.

What do you see as your biggest opportunity for growth in 2026?



There is also growing interest in using AI as a cost-saving mechanism. In fact, a few respondents went as far to say that they had replaced their receptionists with online booking.

If you own a small business and need to cut back, that could be an option but while there is a lot you can do with your salon tech, it's important to not lose the human touch at your salon.

One respondent said their main focus was "client satisfaction, achieved by constant reminders to staff and touching base with the clients on a regular basis."



DaySmart Salon helps your day-to-day run more smoothly, drive profits, and boost client loyalty. Here are the top features as voted by you and how you said they are helping you meet business goals.

Online Booking

"Having clients be able to book without any contact with us is a game changer. I love it."

"Fewer phone calls mean less interruption from clients."

Reputation Management

"Since we started it has raised our reviews from 50 to 50000! Great tool. And anyone with a 3 star review or less comes to me before it can be posted so I can fix any issues."

Client notes

"I use the reports multiple times per day. The ability to communicate with clients through text and online booking is a lifesaver."

Reporting

"The dashboard reports are critical to us: daily, weekly, monthly and yearly comparison. We can adjust and call out for bookings quickly."

Flexibility & Convenience

"The app on my mobile device keeps me on track"

Appointment Scheduling

"I like how it keeps records of the last price, purchases and notes."

What This Means in 2026



Shift from Manual to Digital

A surge in the use of software to manage salons, spas and other small to medium business. Salons that adopt tech early will stand out, save time, and run more smoothly day-to-day.



Client-Centric Approach

Clients expect seamless, convenient experiences: booking, reminders, and personalized communications, and to feel personally cared for.



Stay Top of Mind

Set text reminders for clients due a root retouch, a keratin treatment, or highlights upkeep. Use SMS to let clients know about holidays or what is going on at the salon. You'll increase your visibility while making clients feel valued and part of your community.

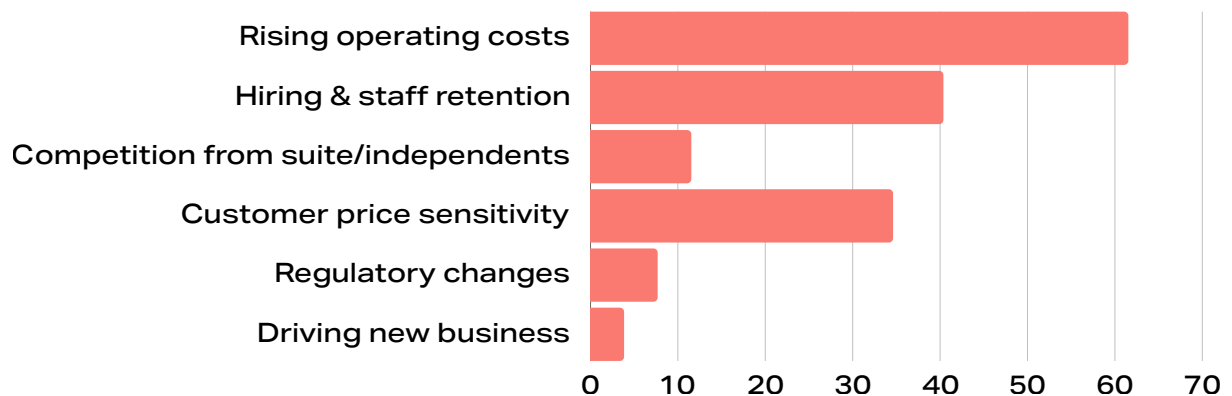


5

EDUCATION & RETENTION

Education as a Retention Strategy

We asked what the biggest business risk would be in 2026. Given the current economy, rising costs were a major worry with 62% of the votes. A close second, however, was hiring and retaining staff.



This is a topic that comes up every single year and today's talent wants more than a chair and a schedule. They're looking for salons that invest in their growth, help them build confidence, and support long-term careers.

In 2026, education is one of the biggest reasons stylists choose where to work and whether they stay. Ongoing education, from advanced cutting and color techniques to business, branding, and wellness, is becoming a major differentiator for salons competing for top talent. For many stylists, access to learning opportunities matters just as much as pay.

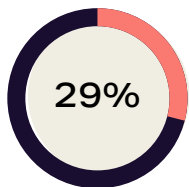
In fact, "education" was a recurring answer to the open question "What new trend or change in your industry excites you the most?"

One respondent even answered the question "Do you feel prepared for any upcoming regulatory and compliance changes?" with "Yes, because my manager is also an educator."

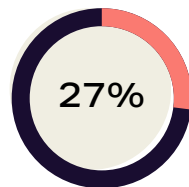


In last year's survey, 49% rated education and training as top priorities to maintain staff. This year, just under a third said they planned to compete for talent in 2026 by providing education and training opportunities.

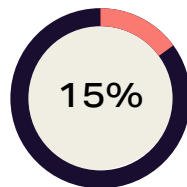
How do you plan to compete for talent in 2026?



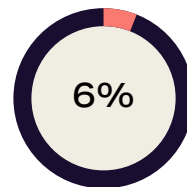
Education & training



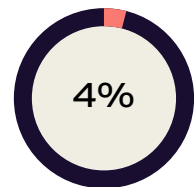
More flexible scheduling



Higher pay/commission splits



Offer benefits



Transition to booth/suite model

Inexperienced stylists and struggling to retain staff were two frustrations that popped up in the survey results. Leveraging education is a great way to kill two birds with one stone.



Don't give up ten minutes before the miracle. Believe it's so and it will be."

Anonymous respondent,
2025 salon survey

What This Means in 2026



Attract New Talent

Salons that offer education attract more motivated, career-minded professionals.



Retain Good Employees

Continued learning boosts confidence, skill level, and service quality, which directly impacts client satisfaction.



Unlock Opportunities

Identify top-selling retail brands and partner with distributors to offer education-based incentives. Set team sales goals to unlock free in-house or virtual education, and reward top sellers with a paid ticket to a local or online workshop.





6

THE RISE OF
GEN Z

The Social-First Client

Gen Z isn't "up next" anymore. Spanning from 1997 to 2012, they're already booking appointments, engaging with salon content, and influencing beauty trends online.

By 2026, more of them will have real spending power, and they're discovering salons almost entirely through social media. If your salon shows up on their feed, you're already halfway there.



This generation values more than just great hair. They care about wellness, sustainability, inclusivity, and authenticity. They expect brands to reflect those values, not just talk about them.

Beauty brands have become more active on social media to build brand awareness, boost visibility, and establish a solid online presence. 7 out of 10 US GenZers even report buying beauty products as a result of influencer marketing.

Gen Z is also at the forefront of another trend, affordable fun.

It focuses on turning beauty into something playful, accessible, and easy to try.

Think:



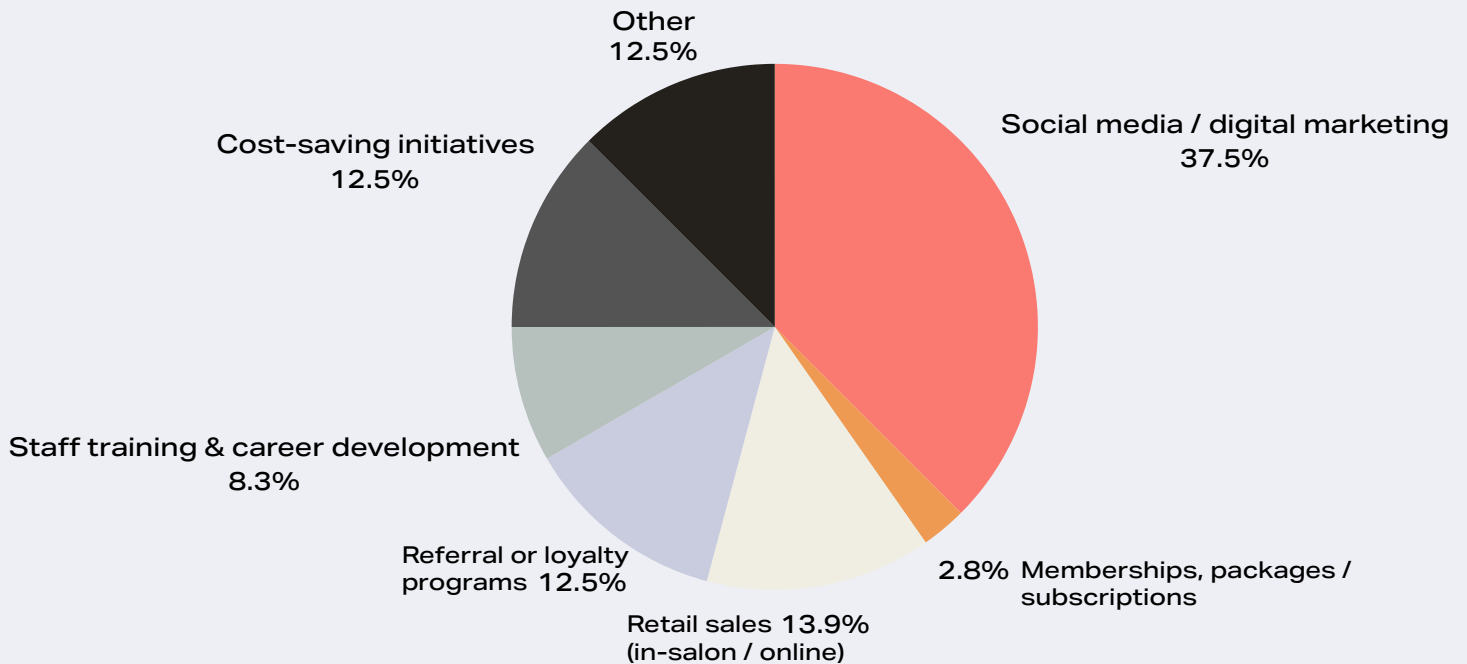
- Bright colors, playful names, and multi-use products that encourage experimentation
- Low-risk pricing that makes trying something new feel easy and exciting
- Social media as a means to drive discovery, shareability, and community



Don't miss out on clients because you're afraid of social media. Watch our webinar with Salon entrepreneur Yene Damtew for expert tips you can apply today.

37.5% of survey respondents are already leveraging social media. This is an extremely smart tactic if you are looking to attract Gen Z, since they are the most active on social networks, spending an average of 3 hours per day vs 2.25 hours for Millennials.

Which business strategies have been most successful?



What This Means in 2026



Clearer Values

This generation values sustainability, wellness, and brands with real values. Salons that align with those values earn trust faster.



Leverage Social Media

Strong, authentic social content can directly drive bookings.



Potential New Clients

Winning Gen Z early builds long-term loyalty as their spending power grows.



Staying in the Loop

Engaging with Gen Z will open your salon to new trends and business opportunities, like affordable fun.



Why These Trends Matter for Your Business

These trends show what's popular now but also how your salon can grow *next*.

They reflect who your future clients are (hello, Gen Z), how they discover and choose salons (social-first, values-driven), and what they're willing to invest in, whether that's personalized experiences to men's self-care and wellness-focused services.



When you lean into these shifts, you can:

- ✓ Grow revenue with premium services, smart add-ons, and experiences designed for individual clients vs a quick one-size-fits-all menu.
- ✓ Future-proof your salon by aligning with where the industry and your next generation of clients is headed.
- ✓ Attract new audiences who are actively engaging with beauty brands and booking online - potential untapped markets that could boost sales in your local area.
- ✓ Run smarter with tools that remove friction, save time, and support clients and teams. Trust us, both you and your team will be thankful!
- ✓ Build deeper loyalty by showing up with authenticity, inclusivity, and a genuine focus on wellness. This can also be applied to your team to help you retain talented stylists.

The salons that win in 2026 won't just follow trends. They'll use them to build stronger brands, healthier teams, and more sustainable growth.



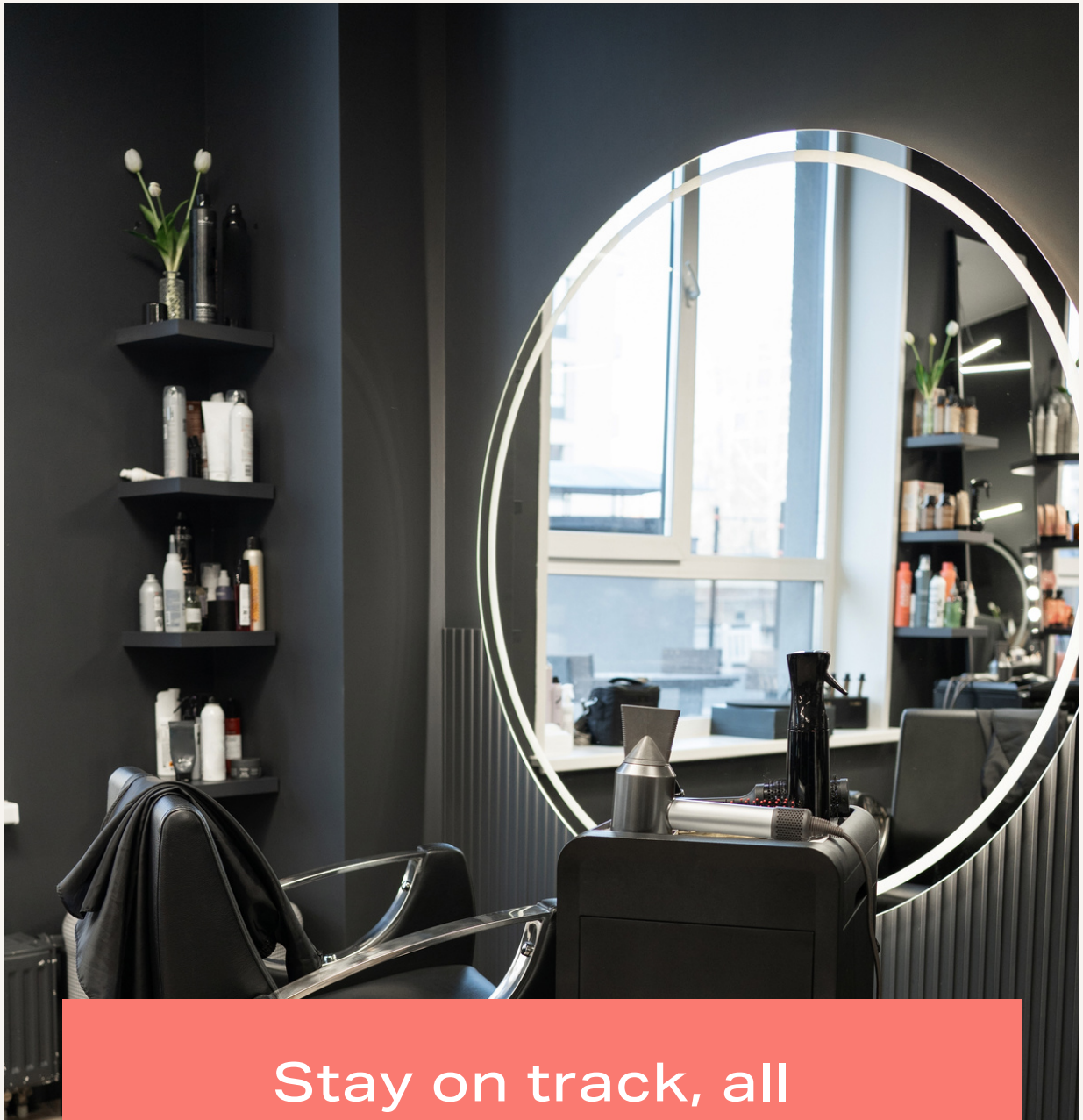
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Book your demo

Sources

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