

You choose how you participate in the SALON TODAY 200! Check out ALL the cool categories your salon can win. Enter one or enter them all!

21st Annual

salon today 200

The competition that was built on salon growth now stretches beyond it to examine all the best management practices that contribute to salon success.

At first glance, this application might seem daunting, but remember, there are 11 competition categories, and you can compete in as few or as many categories as you want. It's up to you to design your ST200 experience.

This year's categories include: Growth, Compensation & Benefits, Employee Education, Salon Culture, Retention & Referral Programs, Customer Service, Inventory Management, Philanthropy, Technology, Retail & Merchandising and a new one for this year called Profit Center.

ALL SALONS MUST COMPLETE THE APPLICANT INFORMATION SECTION. THEN, EACH APPLICANT MUST COMPLETE AT LEAST ONE OF THE BEST PRACTICE SECTIONS. You may though, compete in as many Best Practice sections as you want. All essay responses should be typed on a separately and clearly marked by Best Practice section, essay number and salon name.

SALON TODAY 200 Processing Fee: If you enter using the online system the processing fee is \$75 and you can pay by credit card when you submit your application. If you choose to download the application, fill it out, then mail it in, the application fee is \$125, which helps us cover additional data entry and processing costs. Please make check payable to SALON TODAY Magazine and send with your completed application to Joyce Alverio, c/o SALON TODAY, 2150 E. Lake Cook Road, Suite 500, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089. Applications are due August 31, 2017!

The SALON TODAY 200 will be published in the January/February 2018 issue and posted online in December 2017. Good luck!
See back cover for SALON TODAY eligibility and criteria rules.



>APPLICANT INFORMATION

Salon name: _____

Salon owner name(s): _____

Salon street address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Business phone: _____ *Owner Cell No.: _____

E-mail address: **We communicate results and ST200 news through email. Please use an address that is frequently checked.* _____

Website address: _____

Have you applied before? Yes No If yes, have you been named a Salon Today 200 Salon before? Yes No

**Your mobile number will be held strictly confidential, and will only be used to verify information on your application or to contact you about stories in Salon Today.*

OFFICIAL 2018 APPLICATION

1. In what year did your salon/spa business open?

_____ (year opened)

2. Does your business include more than one salon/spa location?

_____ Yes How many, including this one? _____ total locations
_____ No

3. Rounded to the nearest thousand dollars, please provide your company's:

2015 Gross Revenue: \$ _____

2016 Gross Revenue: \$ _____

(Please note: This data is only printed in the SALON TODAY 200 issue if you enter the Growth Category, but we like it for all salons so we can establish aggregate numbers for the entire ST200 class.)

4. Approximately what percent of your salon's current gross revenue is generated by each of the following categories? (The sum should equal 100%. If none in a particular category, write "0." Please round to the nearest whole number.

Hair color service sales _____ %
Hair cutting service sales _____ %
Chemical service (straightening, conditioning, perming) _____ %
Nail service sales _____ %
Retail sales _____ %
Skin care, body care and spa-type service sales _____ %
Other _____ %
Total=100%

5. How many square feet of space does your salon business occupy?

(If more than one salon, please provide the square footage for each location. Round to the nearest hundred feet. Example: 3,500)

_____ square feet _____ square feet
_____ square feet _____ square feet
_____ square feet _____ square feet

6. How many total employees do you have? _____

7. What is the total number of client transactions (tickets) your business had in the last fiscal year? _____

8. What is the average price charged at your salon(s) for:

Shampoo, cut and style _____
Single process color _____
Basic manicure _____
Basic 60-minute facial _____

*Round to whole dollars (Example \$42)

9. Do any of the salon/spa owners perform client services?

_____ Yes How many perform client services? _____
How many hours per week, on average does each owner perform client services? _____
_____ No

10. Do you consider yourself to be either a day spa or a salon/spa?

_____ Day Spa
_____ Salon/spa

11. Have you hired a salon coach/consultant in the past three years?

_____ Yes _____ No
If yes, then who? _____

12. What single revenue related key performance indicator (KPI) do you review most frequently to assess the health of your business? Or if you could only review one, which would it be?

_____ Client count (number of tickets or transactions)
_____ Average ticket total sales/client count
_____ Client retention (for existing clients)
_____ Client retention (for new clients)
_____ Retail per client ticket
_____ Percent of service clients buying retail
_____ Productivity (percent booked)
_____ Frequency of visit
_____ Percent of clients pre-booked
_____ Other, please specify _____

13. Do you have non-compete and/or non-solicitation contracts with your service providers?

_____ Yes If yes, have you ever had to defend it in court? ___ Yes ___ No
_____ No

14. Do you have an annual salon improvement budget for remodels, equipment, etc. (exclude repairs and maintenance)

_____ Yes _____ No
If yes, what percentage of your overall budget does it represent?
_____ %

15. How are your staff paid? What percentage of your team are

_____ Commissioned Service Providers
_____ Salaried
_____ Paid an Hourly Wage
_____ Independent Contractors (Pay you a rent)
Total = 100%

16. Do you hold regular staff meetings? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, how often?
_____ Daily
_____ Weekly
_____ Monthly
_____ Quarterly

17. Do you lease or own your real estate?

- lease
- own
- combination

18. Approximately what percent of your total salon expenditure falls into each category listed below? If none, write "0." Round to the nearest whole number. Total should equal 100%

- Conventional employee benefits (medical, dental, 401K, etc.): _____%
- Education/Training Benefit: _____%
- Insurance (property and business-related policies): _____%
- Labor costs (include owner compensation as a service provider): _____%
- Marketing/Advertising: _____%
- Owner compensation: _____%
- Professional services (legal, accounting, etc): _____%
- Rent/Mortgage: _____%
- Supply costs: _____%
- Taxes: _____%
- Telecommunications (phone, fax, internet): _____%
- Utilities: _____%
- Profit: _____%
- Other (specify): _____
- _____
- TOTAL (should equal 100%)

19. Of which of the following industry associations are you a member? (check all that apply)

- Cosmetologists Chicago
- Intercoiffure
- International Salon/Spa Business Network (ISBN)
- The International Spa Association (I/SPA)
- National Cosmetology Association (NCA)
- Professional Beauty Association (PBA)
- 2 to 10 Network
- Other (specify below)

20. What are your best-selling retail hair care lines? (List top 3)

21. What hair color lines do you use? (List top 3)

22. What texturizing systems do you have? (List top 3)

23. What skin care lines do you use in the salon? (List top 3)

24. What cosmetics lines do you carry in the salon? (List top 3)

25. What nail care lines do you use? (List top 3)

26. What salon software do you use?

27. What other industry technology tools do you use? (Example: DemandForce, ZeeZor)

28. Of the following expense areas, please rank from 1 to 5, which are the least to most controlled, with 1=least controlled and 5= most under controlled)

	LEAST UNDER CONTROL			MOST UNDER CONTROL	
Service payroll	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
Non-service payroll, including managers	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
Credit card processing	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
Service supplies, including backbar and color	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
Advertising, marketing and promotions	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
Education & training	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
Inventory & shrinkage	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
Retail commission	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
Cost of service assistants interns/new talent	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____

29. As the owner, what keeps you “up at night” or causes you concern? Please rank the following, with 1= most likely to keep you up, and 5= the least likely.

	INSOMNIA			SOUND SLEEP	
Lack of ability to reduce expenses	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
Threat of walkout	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
Service staff not busy enough	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
Threat of competing salons taking clients	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
Not understanding how to improve profitability	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
Poor local economy	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
No bank financing to expand	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
Ineffective salon managers	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
Unhappy with product line	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
Legal issues	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
Other, specify	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____

> BEST PRACTICE SECTIONS

To be eligible for the SALON TODAY 200, you must complete at least one of the following BEST PRACTICE sections A-K. After that, you may apply for as many of the Best Practice sections as you want. (You can receive honors in multiple categories!) Please place an “X” in the box next to sections you are completing. For the essays, clearly mark the essay letter for each question in all of the categories for which you are applying. Do not answer essay questions for sections in which you are not applying.

Essay Directions: The ST200 essays tend to be the most challenging portion of the application process for owners. Each category essay section includes a number of questions designed to get applicants thinking about everything they do in that category. It is not necessary to address every single question within the essay if it is not applicable to you or your program. Responses should be descriptive and detailed, yet succinct and to-the-point in nature. Avoid flowery prose that doesn't communicate actual facts about your program. Bullet points are accepted and even encouraged when it helps communicate details. Statistics showing actual measurements in something related to that category is encouraged. Please include any images, graphs or materials that help communicate your essay. AN ESSAY RESPONSE IN ANY CATEGORY SHOULD NOT EXCEED 1,000 WORDS.

A) GROWTH

1. Rounding to the nearest thousand dollars, please provide your company's:

2015 Gross Revenues: \$ _____

2016 Gross Revenues: \$ _____

(Please refer to documentation instructions on page 8 for information on verifying gross revenue.)

2. Based on your salon's growth for the first six months of this year (2015), by what percentage will salon gross revenue for 2017 exceed salon gross revenue for 2016?

(Round to whole number, please. Example: 11%) _____ %

ESSAY A:

Looking back between 2016 and today, what drove your substantial growth in total revenue? Please give us three examples of new management ideas you implemented that were responsible for growth in this timeframe. What do you believe is driving growth for 2017, and how to you plan to keep that momentum in the future?

B) COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

1. What is the average annual gross income (including salary, bonuses and commissions-before taxes) for a full-time stylist in your salon?

- Less than \$20,000
- \$20,000 to \$29,999
- \$30,000 to \$39,999
- \$40,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$59,999
- \$60,000 to \$69,999
- \$70,000 to \$79,999
- \$80,000 or more

2. How are your service providers paid?

- Salary
- Commission
- Combination
- Other, please specify _____

3. Please list any traditional and non-traditional benefits your salon provides employees. (Example: Traditional: medical insurance/ Non-traditional: gym memberships)

4. On average, how much do you pay for benefits per full-time employee? (Round to the nearest dollar)

\$ _____

ESSAY B:

Explain your compensation plan for team members. What do they need to achieve to grow to the next level? How do you track and communicate their progress, and how are they encouraged to track their own progress? When a stylist is promoted, how is that communicated to the team and/or guests? How do you address specific employee requests for flexibility or more time off? In addition to salary, what other benefits or creative opportunities do you offer employees?

C) RETENTION & REFERRAL PROGRAMS

1. What is your salon's average new client retention rate? (over a 90-day period) _____ %

2. What is your salon's average return client retention rate? (over a 90-day period) _____ %

3. What is your salon's average pre-booking rate? _____ %

4. Do you have a loyalty program that rewards clients for service or retail purchases? _____ Yes _____ No

5. Is advancement in your compensation structure tied to individual retention and/or pre-booking rates? _____ Yes _____ No

6. Do you have a program that encourages clients to refer your salon to others? _____ Yes _____ No

ESSAY C:

Do you have a loyalty program for established clients? If so, how does it work? How do you encourage both clients and team members to pre-book future appointments? Do you have an active referral program? If so, how does it work? How have any of these programs shifted retention or new client numbers? List specific measurements if you have them. What kind of employee or client competitions have you hosted to encourage growth in retention, pre-booking or referral numbers?

D) CUSTOMER SERVICE

1. Do you have a mystery shopping program? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, do you share the results with your staff? _____ Yes _____ No

2. Do you have an employee or team of employees on staff who are charged with monitoring and improving customer service? _____ Yes _____ No

3. Are your front desk/booking operators scripted? _____ Yes _____ No

4. Do you train on customer-service initiatives? _____ Yes _____ No

ESSAY D:

From check in to check out, describe the expected guest experience at your salon/spa? What specific things do you and your team do to enhance the guest experience? What's your procedure for training service standards? How do you ensure that customer service is consistent from visit to visit? How often do you reevaluate your standard customer experience and look for ways to add more value? How to you test your team on guest service standards?

E) EMPLOYEE EDUCATION

(Training Programs and Advanced Education)

1. Do you have an in-house training program?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, on average, how long does your program last? _____ months

2. On average, how many hours of instruction do new hires receive per week? _____ hours

3. On average, how many trainees do you have in the system at any one time? _____ trainees

4. Does the salon contribute financially to an employee's advanced education for events outside the salon?

_____ Yes _____ No

5. On average, how much does the salon spend on advanced education per full-time employee per year? \$ _____

ESSAY E:

Describe your education program for new hires, including who does the training, how long it lasts, how trainees are evaluated throughout the program and how they are introduced onto the floor. Describe your education program for all employees, including how often you meet, how do you encourage attendance, and who teaches the classes. How do you bring outside educators into the salon if you do, and how do you encourage team members to seek outside education? How are these team members encouraged to share what they learn with others on your team?

F) SALON CULTURE

1. In three words, describe your salon culture?

ESSAY F:

As the owner, how do you establish the desired culture for your salon? How do you ensure that new hires match this culture? Do you have a team mission, vision or culture statement? If so, please share them. What specific team activities have you established to establish or encourage team culture? How do you evaluate that employee attitudes and actions are in line with your culture, and what steps do you take when they are not? What is the last culture-building idea that you have borrowed from another company, and how did you implemented it?

G) INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

1. How often do you order retail products?

- _____ once a week
- _____ twice a month
- _____ once a month
- _____ other, please specify

2. How often do you count AND adjust your inventory?

- _____ Daily
- _____ Weekly
- _____ Monthly
- _____ Quarterly
- _____ Twice a Year
- _____ Annually
- _____ Other, please specify

3. What percentage of your total square footage is devoted to retail? _____ %

4. How much money would you estimate is tied up in current inventory on your shelves or in your storeroom right now? \$ _____

ESSAY G:

Describe your current inventory management program, including who manages your inventory, how it is managed, and how often it is managed. Who from your team meets with your manufacturers' district sales leaders and how do these DSLs support your retail sales? What is your internal process for evaluating the particular success of a product SKU? How do you ensure that you don't run out of winning products, and how do you encourage sales of sluggish products? Explain the process for evaluating and adding a new line of products to your lineup. How often do you change merchandising displays?

H) PHILANTHROPY

1. On average, what is the value of the products and services you donate to charitable organizations each year?

\$ _____ per year

2. In addition to the services that you donate to events organized by others, do you organize your own philanthropic efforts each year?

_____ Yes If yes, what is the event? _____
_____ No

3. Are employees required to participate in the salon's philanthropic campaigns?

_____ Yes _____ No

ESSAY H:

Describe your team's philanthropic activities. Do you partner with a particular charity? How do you raise funds, assistance or awareness for this cause? If you have developed your own philanthropy or program, please explain in detail. How do you encourage team participation? How do you encourage your clients to support or participate? What is your system for donating services/products to organization who ask for your help? How do you let your community know about your philanthropic activities? How has the philanthropic work you do helped your salon grow?

I) TECHNOLOGY**1. Which of the following are components of your salon's technological capabilities?**

- salon management software
- management app
- management by computer reports
- salon website
- e-mail newsletter
- social media marketing
- online appointment booking
- automated appointment confirmations
- online gift card purchases
- WIFI access for clients
- computers for use by employees
- Other, please specify _____

2. What year did your salon first become automated? _____

3. What year did you establish a website? _____

ESSAY I:

What are the most important technology tools you use to manage and grow your business every day? How do you educate yourself and your team about new technology and what is your adoption process? How do you use technology to recruit new team members? How do you use it to attract new clients? How does technology enhance growth in your business? How do you use it to market to existing clients?

J) RETAIL & MERCHANDISING

1. What is your average retail \$ per ticket? _____

2. For 2016, retail sales equaled what percentage of overall sales?

_____ %

3. Do you pay a commission on retail sales?

Yes If yes, how much? _____
 No

4. How often do you rework your merchandising displays?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Annually

ESSAY J:

How do you educate and encourage team members to retail to clients? What are the different ways that clients are educated about your retail offerings? Who manages retail displays throughout the salon and how often are these changed? Describe a successful retail competition or merchandising display and how did it fuel retail sales? (Specific results are always appreciated.) What is the last retail idea you borrowed from another business and how was it implemented?

K) PROFIT CENTER**1. What new service category did you successfully bring into the salon/spa in the past two years?**

2. Approximately how much did you invest on equipment, training, salon design modification and marketing to bring the new service category into the salon/spa? \$ _____

3. How much revenue has that new service category generated for the salon and spa since its implementation? \$ _____

What percentage of your overall budget does that represent?

_____ %

ESSAY K:

How did you research the new service idea? Explain how the team was trained to deliver the service? Did you need to hire new personnel or design a new service area in your salon/spa, and if so, how? How did you market the new service category to your clientele and how did they respond? How do you plan to continue to grow sales for this new service category, and what are your projections?

>WHAT'S YOUR SALON'S STORY?

SHOW US YOUR STUFF

Got a great photo of you, your team or your salon interior? Send it in! SALON TODAY publishes as many of the photos of ST200 honorees as space allows. If you want to be considered for the cover – submit a few different portrait-quality shots of the owners. NOTE: Please submit digital files only. They must be 300 dpi and at least 4" x 6". Please submit digital images on CD or uploaded with your entry.

OWNER STATEMENT

ALL ENTRIES MUST BE SIGNED AND DATED BY OWNER: To the best of my knowledge, all of the information I have provided for the 2018 SALON TODAY 200—including financial documentation—is accurate. Subject to applicable law, I hereby grant to Bobit Business Media/SALON TODAY Magazine and its affiliates, subsidiaries, licensees and assigns (collectively, "Salon Today,") an irrevocable, perpetual and royalty-free right and license to use, reproduce, edit, display, transmit, prepare, derivative works of, modify, publish and otherwise make use of all or any part of my application materials (including without limitation my essay(s), photograph(s), marketing pieces(s), name, biographical material, company information, and likeness), in any and all media, whether now known or hereinafter created, on the Internet and throughout the world and for any purpose. In addition, the rights granted to SALON TODAY include, but are

not limited to, the right to edit, feature, caption, affix logos to, and to otherwise alter or make use of all or any part of the submitted application materials. I acknowledge that any marketing piece or photograph I submit and/or all or any portion of my essay responses may be published in SALON TODAY magazine, in other SALON TODAY publications, on SALON TODAY's website, or on or in some combination of the foregoing (collectively the "SALON TODAY Media"); however, SALON TODAY will have no obligation to make any use of an marketing piece, photograph, essay or other application materials. I hereby represent and warrant that my application does not and will not infringe, violate, or misappropriate any copyright or trademark, or any other right of any third party, and I have the right to grant any and all rights and licenses granted to SALON TODAY herein, including but not limited to all necessary rights under copyright, free and clear of any claims or encumbrances. I agree to indemnify, defend, and hold SALON TODAY harmless from and against, and hereby waive any right to pursue, and claims or any nature arising in connection with the inclusion in, publication or display on any Internet site, or any other use authorized under this statement, of any materials included in my application.

Signature _____

Eligibility & Criteria

1. Your salon/spa opened on or before January 1, 2015.
2. Your salon/spa has generated annual service and product sales revenues of at least \$250,000 per year since 2015.
3. Your business is primarily a provider of professional salon services, including, but not limited to one or more of the following: hair care, nail care, skin care, body care and spa treatments.
4. You completely fill out the Applicant Information portion of this form.
5. You completely fill out at least one Best Practice section (sections marked A-K). You may choose to fill out as many as you think you qualify for.
6. If you enter the Growth portion of the competition (Section A), you also will need to provide documentation to verify financials for 2015 and 2016.
7. You pay the non-refundable \$125 processing fee for the mail-in application, or \$75 for the online application.
8. You sign and date the Owner Statement above.

DOCUMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

To qualify for Growth, (Section A) portion of the SALON TODAY 200, you must include verification of gross revenues excerpted from your business's 2015 and 2016 tax forms. Copies of the first page only suffice. For example if your salon is set up as a corporation, include the pages from your 1120 tax forms showing your gross revenues. Financial documentation is only used for verifying revenue and calculating revenue growth, if applicable.

DEADLINES AND PROCESSING

All entries MUST BE UPLOADED or POSTMARKED no later than Wednesday, August 31, 2017, and sent to: SALON TODAY Magazine, SALON TODAY 200
2150 E. Lake Cook Road, Suite 500, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089

Attention: Joyce Alverio

Entries MUST INCLUDE a non-refundable \$125 processing fee. Checks can be made out to SALONTODAY magazine. Note: Payment of this fee is to cover processing of your application only, and does not guarantee that you will be featured in the magazine. (If you choose to enter via the online system, the fee is only \$75.)

Did you remember to ...

- Fill out your Applicant Information?
- Choose from at least one of the 11 Best Practice Sections, including completing those questions and the essay on a separate sheet of paper?
- Include financial documentation if required?
- Include non-refundable \$125 processing fee? (If you enter online, the fee is only \$75.)
- Sign Owner Statement above
- Include photo (optional, but recommended)?
- Label all materials with your salon's name?

salontoday.com



Call Joyce Alverio at 847-415-8037 or e-mail joyce.alverio@bobit.com with any questions about the Salon Today 200.