



# TIME SENSITIVE

Toby Dicker, co-owner of award-winning salon group, The Chapel puts the case for charging by time rather than by the service

**W**hen we opened The Chapel in 2001 we had just begun to use a computerised booking system which I found incredibly complicated, with half head highlights, partial, full head, T-section, root re-growth, semi-permanent, permanent, toner and many other confusing terms. I tried to quantify what all the services we were offering were, and how we came up with the prices. It all proved to be very difficult and confusing.

I needed to simplify the billing process and that's when the idea of charging by the time became a reality.

#### **Clients know what they're getting**

With The Chapel clients always know what their bill will be because they have an amount of time agreed before they come in. Most other salons will charge a client separately for cut, highlights, re-growth and whatever the other services they have in the

same appointment, and the client won't know until the end of the appointment what each element will cost or what the total bill will be.

It also frees up our stylists because they are not concentrating on what they will be billing the client and they don't have to justify what a full head of highlights will cost their guests. They are free to use any of the colours and products we have, to create the best possible look for our customers whatever technique or service is required.

#### **Focused service**

Our team only ever look after one customer at a time and they are not put under pressure to sell more services or squeeze in more customers which would compromise on the quality of finish and service. They often say how much they prefer it to the old way of working where they had a junior washing the hair and only 40 minutes to complete the service.

It's good value for money, too. Clients can come into the salon for either a 105 minute

or a 120 minute colour, cut and finish appointment with attentive and focused service and, at £84 or £96 respectively, our guests all see it as an affordable luxury. What we don't want to do is confuse our customers with special 'new client' introductory deals or half-price deals for highlights, where clients are then pushed into a full-price haircut and a multitude of other full-priced services to make up the difference. We just want to keep it simple and do it well.

#### **A point of difference**

It's been phenomenally successful. Since we launched this system in 2001, we've seen good profits, a much higher-than-average client retention rate and have won numerous awards. We've also attracted some great new team members and lost very few.

It's a win, win formula for us, and it creates a lot of interest from other salon owners, but very few have taken the plunge which is great because it means we are still offering something different. **HD**