

# Works



Then we all look like heroes to our clients, and we all have a chance to make ourselves known to people who have a lot of discretionary income."

The owners of the month-old Salonblonde already understand the importance of identifying and networking with complementary businesses. Located in Chicago's newly trendy Bucktown/Wicker Park neighborhood, the salon established its Concierge Service to provide clients with information not only on spa and beauty packages, but on nearby restaurants, theaters, hotels and community events.

"One of the major reasons for locating Salonblonde in Bucktown was for the sense of community and relationship-building opportunities," says co-owner Margaret Pasiennik. "Our concierge service plays crit-

own. We just do the same things for those clients that we do for new staff who haven't lived here before."

## Getting Involved

Chambers of Commerce typically make it easy to partner with other local businesses. In Tulsa, the Chamber of Commerce holds "Business After Hours" events that bring many companies together in one location to greet the public, generating business for everyone.

"We always rent a booth there," says salon and day spa owner Marilyn Ihloff, who sits on the chamber's board of directors. "We take a couple of massage techs out there and distribute material, while the spa director collects e-mail addresses. Later when we e-mail them tempting descriptions of

Ihloff actually created an opportunity for farmers in her area and broadened her own world in the process. "We cofounded the Cherry Street Farmers' Market to bring organic produce to the neighborhood," explains Ihloff, who describes her locality as a "gentrified older street." The Farmers' Market is in its third year and doing very well, according to Ihloff, who continues, "We've met amazing people there, and now we have a happy atmosphere every Saturday."

Pasiennik and co-owner Dawn Doerfler at Salonblonde are planning to spotlight prominent local businesspeople in their monthly newsletter. Upon the publication of each issue, they'll host a cocktail reception in the person's honor that will double as a networking opportunity for business owners.

## Business Connections

Businesses in the community can further benefit from becoming a salon's vendors. Among the diverse items on sale at the Salonblonde boutique are flowers provided by a nearby florist and jewelry crafted by a Chicago designer, while Avant contracts with local companies whenever possible. Says Avant Manager Daphne Harrington Busch, "Anytime that we do something like a hair show, we hire local dancers and a local film production crew to shoot the videos."

One category of vendor with whom every salon aims to connect is the press. Good relationships with local newspapers, **Continued**

**"People want to deal with, work with and associate with human beings who not only are knowledgeable but authentic, concerned and joyful in their approach to life," says motivator Mark Scharenbroich.**

ically into this concept. The service directs our clients, whatever their needs may be, to the best in the business. Onsite, by phone or via the Internet, the wide network of contacts and information regularly available to the salon's partners, manager and staff is easily accessible to our clientele."

Providing this type of information is important, too, at Avant in Austin, Texas.

"We're always trying to raise awareness of topics concerning Austin," says Master Stylist and Events Coordinator Kevin Dini. "A salon is a good conduit of information for people new to the area. We can introduce them to restaurants, stores and service providers that we know about but would take them awhile to find on their

our services and mention the hours we have openings on that day, people call right up."

Avant participates in a similar business fair each fall. The Austin campus of the University of Texas gives local businesses the opportunity to acquaint college students with their products and services. "Avant takes a booth and sends a couple of hairdressers," says Dini. "Last year they brought a blow dryer and did on-the-spot consultations."

Don't overlook the Internet as a 24/7 virtual business fair, advises Di-Julius. "We're getting together with local florists and bridal companies and linking our Web sites to each other," he says.

In her Tulsa neighborhood,

