

TREND WATCH | No Tipping Allowed!



With the constant need to stay ahead of the competition, many spas are adopting no-tipping policies to attract new, and retain existing, clients. The draw for clients is the ability to relax without having to calculate tips at the end of their visits; the draw for you is a more relaxed atmosphere. Not sure about how well a no-tipping policy might work at your spa? Some spa owners add an estimated gratuity to the price of services and then pass on the additional earnings to employees. Others let clients know that they're adding a service charge onto the final bill for clients' convenience and offer them an opportunity to adjust the charge as they see fit.

Business has more than doubled at **Hi-Lites Aveda** (www.HLspa.com) in Cathedral City, California, since management switched to a no-tipping policy last July. Owner Darla Di Grandi-Aguilera says, "My mission is to create an environment unlike any other for our guests. The policy was tough for my team in the beginning, but through education and trust they now love it!"

At **body blitz** (www.bodyblitzspa.com) in Toronto, co-owner Laura Polley says that both clients and staff love the no-tipping policy. "My feeling is that body blitz is about health, and tipping isn't appropriate. While many satisfied clients have offered to tip, we simply won't allow it," says Polley.

At **Floating Feather** (www.floating-feather.com) in Boise, Idaho, spa director Lauren Quick believes that she's in the health and wellness business. "People don't tip their doctor or dentist, so why should they tip at the spa?" asks Quick. Instead, she tells clients that the best way to show their appreciation is to rebook and/or to recommend the spa to their friends. Also, tipping doesn't become a factor in how technicians work with a client. "They're no longer preoccupied with how big of a tip they're going to get, or if they won't receive one at all," she says. "We also don't have to track tips at the front desk."

InSpa (www.inspa.com), a growing, privately owned and operated day spa company based in Seattle with six locations in the Pacific Northwest, is committed to creating a comfortable, easy-to-understand environment that doesn't intimidate the mass-market consumer. "We believe a no-tipping policy sets the tone for delivering on our objective," says chief marketing officer Judy Meleliat. "Many of our technicians have been with us for more than five years and we have a loyal base of repeat clients."