

introduction

As I review the year in order to analyze its overarching themes, I look to a couple of places where we have rich troves of data. One of those data sources is Google Analytics, where I can see which content on Nailsmag.com has been most viewed in 2018. I can see what sections and what specific articles our readers are looking at, whether they have come to our site via one article and found another, whether they saw a post on Facebook and found a story, or whether they read a story in our early-release digital edition.

What Google Analytics is telling us for 2018 is that the most popular content relates to health care, specifically conditions that affect the nails and skin. Far and away the most popular articles on our website this year — and through the last few years as well — are those about identifying common disorders, properly handling them in the salon, and knowledgeably explaining them to clients. I think this bodes very well for the industry: It indicates to me that nail professionals know that information is powerful and that understanding the health aspect of manicuring as well as the beautification aspect is critical to success and client retention.

Another piece of data is the annual Big Book survey, where we gather data on the demographics of our readership and questions on how nail professionals run their businesses.

This year, our survey tells us that service prices are flat (page 12). We monitor the service prices for the most common nail salon services and this year the changes in average services prices are within the margin of error. This means that even if there is a 3% increase in the average price of an acrylic fill, it may actually be flat or even down since the margin of error is +/- 5 points.

We look at service prices as one of the most telling “vital signs” of the health of our industry, so we expect (we hope) to see them grow year over year. As most of you know, prices in the nail industry move slowly and often move in the “wrong” direction. This is due to the proliferation of low-cost salons, and also due to simple supply and demand. When a good manicure can be had for \$15 with no appointment needed, it’s hard for a salon to justify a \$40 manicure. I don’t mean that to say that a salon doesn’t deserve to charge higher prices or that good nail technicians don’t earn their rate; I simply mean that in today’s professional salon environment, it’s ever harder to stay competitive.

Earlier in the year we did a consumer survey and asked women who regularly go to a salon for nail services WHY they chose the salon they did. As much as you, the nail professional, believe it was because you do great nails, what clients told us was it is because your salon is clean and convenient.



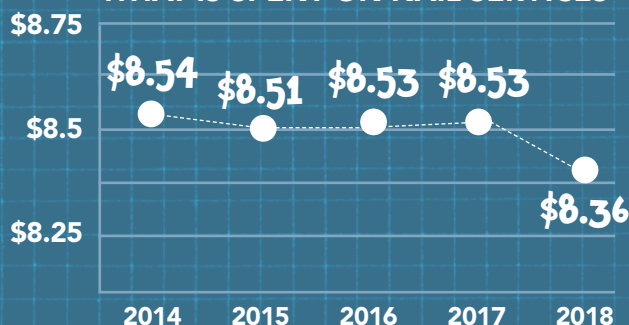
WHAT IS YOUR ETHNICITY?

Vietnamese	72%
White/Caucasian	25%
Other	3%

Number of nail techs and nail salons in the U.S.:

2018	Variance Over 2017
395,658 # NAIL TECH LICENSES	10.0% ↓ DOWN
54,386 # NAIL SALONS	3.7% ↓ DOWN

WHAT IS SPENT ON NAIL SERVICES



Most of you told us that you find this as your number-one business challenge: dealing with low-cost salons and dealing with the sheer number of salons (see page 14). While the number of salons is leveling out (see chart above), the percentage of Vietnamese salons is increasing. This is important because we estimate that service pricing in Vietnamese-owned salons is, on average, 30% lower than non-Vietnamese-owned salons. That price differential is lower than it used to be, though, which is good news for all salons, no matter who owns them. When prices are higher, clients begin to put a higher value on good service, and, hopefully, begin to recognize the professionalism of this service. Nail care is still a licensed profession in most states, requiring education, testing, and issuance of a license by a state body. It has been and continues to be deemed important enough to require the oversight of a legislative entity.

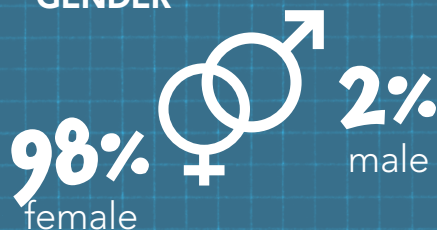
Your second biggest business challenge is dealing with client behavior, which can be annoying, frustrating, and inconsiderate. In a way that makes sense, though, doesn’t it? If a customer’s primary motivation for patronizing a salon is that it’s nearby and clean (talk about a low bar), they may not consider your time valuable enough to show up on time (or at all, apparently). But what always heartens me is that I see a direct correlation when I look at the earnings of top nail professionals. The nail technicians who are making good money (see page 8), retaining their clientele, and trying new products (see page 14) are unable to take walk-ins (page 14) and aren’t complaining about inconsiderate clients. So, while cleanliness and convenience may be driving a lot of your customers into the salon, what’s keeping them there is great nails, outstanding service, and you.

Here’s to a prosperous, fun, and data-driven year.

— Cyndy Drummey

nail professional profile

GENDER*



HOW OLD ARE YOU?

25 or younger	2%
26-30	10%
31-35	10%
36-40	14%
41-45	18%
46-50	17%
51-55	14%
56-60	8%
Over 60	7%

What is the highest level of school you have completed?*



Some high school	2%
Finished high school	28%
Some college/AA degree	44%
Finished college	17%
Some graduate school	2%
Finished graduate school	7%

How long have you been doing nails?

Less than 1 year	3%
1-2 years	11%
3-4 years	10%
5-6 years	8%
7-8 years	5%
9-10 years	7%
11-12 years	4%
More than 12 years	52%



What best describes your home life?*



WHAT LICENSES DO YOU HAVE?



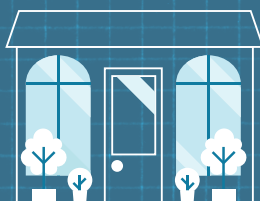
AT WHAT AGE DID YOU START BEAUTY SCHOOL?

17	13%
18	6%
19	5%
20	6%
21	5%
22	5%
23	3%
24	5%
25	5%
26	5%
27	2%
28	3%
29	3%
30-39	16%
40-49	10%
50+	4%
Other response	4%

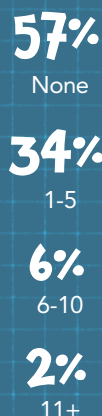


WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SITUATION?

Salon owner doing nails (not a booth renter)	39%
Nail technician (booth renter)	20%
Nail technician (employee)	16%
Other	14%
Nail technician/salon owner in a salon suite	9%
Salon owner NOT doing nails	2%



HOW MANY OTHER NAIL PROFESSIONALS WORK IN THIS SALON?



How long have you worked at your current salon?

Less than a year	23%
1-2 years	19%
3-4 years	16%
5-6 years	7%
7-8 years	5%
9-10 years	6%
More than 10 years	24%

WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOUR COMPENSATION SYSTEM?

I own the salon, and I also do nails and keep what I make from services I personally do.	27%
I am a booth renter, I pay rent to the salon, and I keep all my service fees.	20%
I am an employee and I receive a percentage of my service fees (no salary).	13%
I own the salon and pay myself a salary.	12%
I work as a freelance nail technician, traveling or doing nails for on-location work.	
I receive a fee for my work.	6%
I work in a "salon suite" where I pay monthly rent for my space and keep my own earnings.	6%
I am an employee and I receive a salary.	4%
I am an employee and I receive a salary plus a percentage of my service fees	3%
I am a booth renter; I pay a percentage of service fees to the salon as rent.	2%
I am an employee and my compensation is based on the number of clients I serve or the amount of business I do (for example, I receive a higher commission if I bring in more clients).	2%
Other	5%

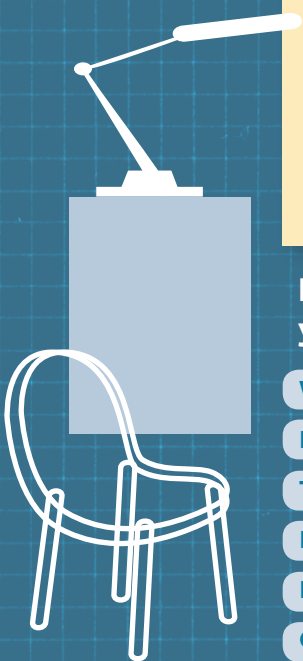


ON AVERAGE, WHAT IS YOUR TOTAL WEEKLY INCOME?
(include service income, tips, and commissions combined)

\$150 or less	12%
\$151-\$250	11%
\$251-\$350	10%
\$351-\$450	13%
\$451-\$550	9%
\$551-\$650	13%
\$651-\$750	6%
More than \$750	26%

On average, how many hours do you work each week?

5 or fewer	3%
6-10	7%
11-15	3%
16-20	13%
21-25	9%
26-30	14%
31-35	10%
36-40	20%
41-45	5%
46-50	10%
More than 50	6%



DO YOU PAY RENT TO A SALON/SUITE?



34% yes 66% no

HOW MUCH IS YOUR BOOTH RENTAL PER MONTH?

UP TO \$100	3%
\$101-\$200	5%
\$201-\$300	11%
\$301-\$400	12%
\$401-\$500	23%
\$501-\$600	9%
\$601-\$700	13%
\$701-\$800	7%
\$801-\$900	6%
\$901-\$1000	3%
\$1000+	8%

How often do you pay your booth rental?

Weekly	29%
Monthly	28%
Twice a month	2%
Every other month	2%
Less often than every other month	6%
Other frequency or not applicable	33%



ON AVERAGE, HOW MUCH DO YOU SPEND PER MONTH ON NAIL SUPPLIES?

up to \$50	20%
\$51-\$100	24%
\$101-\$200	25%
\$201-\$300	17%
\$301-400	8%
\$401 or more	6%

DO YOU RETAIL NAIL CARE PRODUCTS TO CLIENTS?

46% Yes

44% No

8%

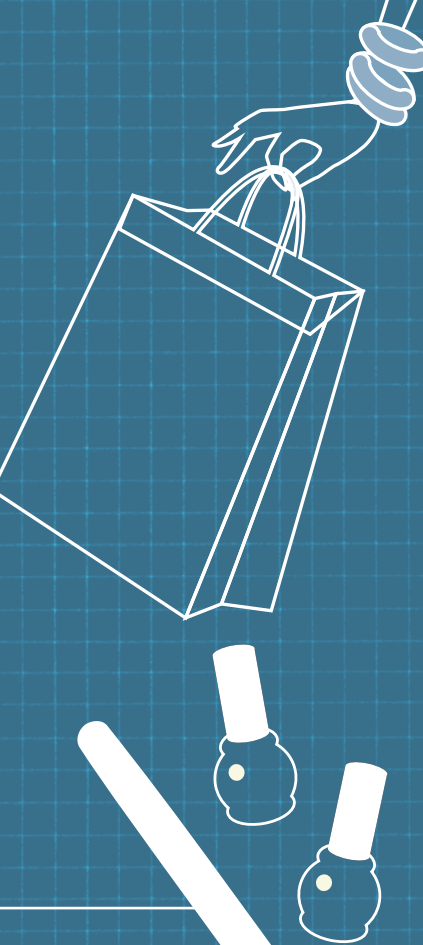
The salon has retail products for sale, but I personally do not.

2%

Other response

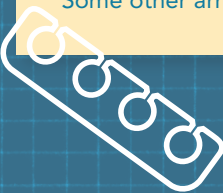
ON AVERAGE, HOW OFTEN DO YOU SHOP FOR NAIL SUPPLIES?

Twice or more a week	10%
Once a week	17%
Three times a month	13%
Every two weeks or twice a month	18%
Once a month	26%
Every other month	7%
Quarterly	7%
Less often than quarterly	4%



Are you personally responsible for purchasing your own nail products/supplies?

Yes, I provide all my own supplies, including tools and equipment.	76%
I provide some supplies; the salon provides some supplies.	8%
The salon provides all my supplies, except my tools.	8%
The salon provides all supplies, including tools and equipment.	6%
Some other arrangement besides those listed above.	2%



WHERE DO YOU MOST FREQUENTLY SHOP FOR NAIL SUPPLIES?
(Choose two you use most often)

I shop in a professional beauty supply store.	85%
I order from an online-only distributor.	49%
I buy directly from the manufacturer.	22%
For some items, I buy from non-traditional places that don't carry professional nail supplies (arts and crafts stores, for example).	13%
I buy products at tradeshows.	10%
I order by phone from my dealer's catalog or deal sheets.	9%
I shop at an open-to-the-public beauty store	7%



WHAT DAY IS THE BUSIEST DAY FOR YOU OR YOUR SALON?*

2%	4%	8%	10%	27%	24%	25%
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

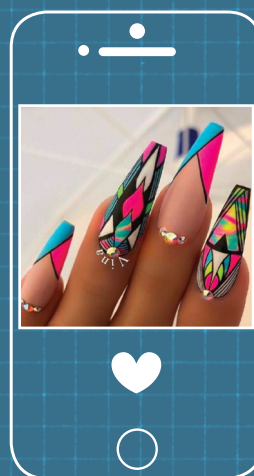
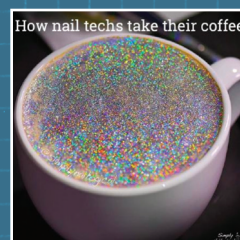
How many of each of the following types of training have you attended within the last 12 months?

	0	1	2	3	4	5	More than 5	No response
Trade show/conference	42%	31%	12%	6%	2%	0%	5%	2%
Class with dealer/distributor at the dealer's location	55%	19%	10%	6%	2%	1%	3%	5%
Class with dealer/distributor not at the dealer's location	59%	15%	11%	4%	1%	1%	4%	6%
Class with manufacturer at the manufacturer's location	77%	8%	6%	1%	1%	1%	2%	5%
Class with manufacturer not at the manufacturer's location	67%	13%	6%	3%	0%	1%	3%	7%
In-salon training	58%	15%	8%	4%	2%	2%	5%	8%
Online training (include webinars or online video offered by a manufacturer or distributor)	31%	15%	14%	9%	5%	3%	19%	3%
In-person networking event	62%	14%	7%	5%	2%	1%	3%	7%
Paid private training or independent training (in person)	69%	13%	6%	3%	1%	1%	3%	5%
Paid private training or independent training (online)	78%	9%	2%	2%	0%	0%	2%	8%
Tutorial videos on YouTube	12%	4%	6%	10%	4%	4%	59%	2%
Training on other social media	34%	6%	9%	7%	4%	3%	32%	5%
Non-nail related training (business seminar, for example)	47%	17%	12%	3%	2%	2%	10%	7%



PLEASE INDICATE WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING YOU AND/OR YOUR SALON HAVE.

	I HAVE	THE SALON HAS
Pinterest page/account	91%	21%
Instagram account	91%	45%
LinkedIn profile/account	90%	21%
Snapchat	87%	19%
Facebook page/account	83%	64%
Twitter account	80%	33%
YouTube channel	71%	35%
Instagram business account	54%	68%
A blog	48%	59%
A website	41%	75%
Foursquare page/account	36%	73%



How nail techs take their coffee



Me when my client has finally chosen a nail colour

WHAT SERVICES ARE OFFERED IN THIS SALON?



gel-polish.....	90%
manicures	90%
pedicures	85%
nail art.....	80%
soak-off gels	77%
acrylics (traditional, not a dip system).....	63%
hard gels (traditional gels).....	59%
waxing	55%
nail reconstruction.....	50%
eyebrow services	49%
natural nail care only (not gels, acrylics, tips, etc.)	45%
paraffin dips.....	45%
hair care.....	40%
acrylic dip systems.....	37%
makeup.....	29%
eyelash services	28%
skin care.....	28%
hybrid gels/tube gels	26%
eyelash extensions	26%
massage	25%
tanning	11%
airbrushing for nails.....	8%
Other (please specify)	3%
<i>includes permanent makeup, wholistic health treatments, spray tanning, barbering</i>	



DO YOU CHARGE FOR NAIL ART?



How do you charge for nail art?

Different rates for different types of art.....	47%
Per finger.....	16%
I don't have a formal system	10%
Flat rate based on the complexity of the design	7%
Another way (please explain)	3%
Flat rate for nail art.....	2%
Charge per minute that it takes, regardless of technique	1%
Charge per color	0%



WHAT IS YOUR AVERAGE PRICE FOR EACH OF THESE SERVICES?

	2018	2017	% CHANGE
Basic manicure	\$21.34	\$20.93	↑ 2%
Deluxe or specialty manicure	\$29.76	\$30.85	↓ 4%
Basic pedicure	\$33.72	\$33.56	—
Deluxe or specialty pedicure	\$47.28	\$45.96	↑ 3%
Full set acrylics (sculpt or tips)	\$46.31	\$45.56	↑ 2%
Acrylic fill	\$29.71	\$30.57	↓ 3%
Gels (traditional/hard gels)	\$48.53	n/a	—
Acrylic dip systems (full set)	\$35.14	\$38.83	↓ 10%
Gel-polish	\$28.53	\$29.72	↓ 4%



client services



WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR CLIENTS ARE WALK-INS?

1%-10% 20%

11%-20% 10%

21%-30% 12%

31%-40% 3%

41%-50% 5%

51%-60% 4%

61%-70% 0%

71%-80% 2%

81%-90% 0%

91%-100% 0%

none 44%

Which of the following appointment booking methods do you use most frequently?



traditional paper calendar/paper booking system39%
computer software program18%
texting with clients14%
online booking program or app13%
smartphone booking app.....11%
Other5%

WHAT ARE YOUR TWO BIGGEST BUSINESS CHALLENGES RIGHT NOW?

Competition/too many discount salons 27%
Dealing with inconsistent clients (late, no show, length between appointments) 25%
Product and general business costs 21%
Maintaining social media for business 21%
Building and retaining clientele 20%
Advertising/marketing 17%
Finding and retaining quality staff 15%
Pricing 15%
Keeping up with trends 15%
Educating clients 9%
Dealing with the economic downturn 8%
Other 6%

Have you tried any new products in the past year that you are excited about?

65%

Yes

17%

No

15%

I have tried new products, but I am not excited about any of them.

2%

I don't know

We asked salon clients WHY they chose the salon they go to, and we asked nail professionals why they THOUGHT clients chose their salon. The responses on the right are nail techs' responses to the question.

Clients:

Why have you chosen the salon you currently visit most frequently?

It's a clean salon, which is very important to me. 57%
It is convenient to where I live or work. 50%
It is reasonably priced. 50%
They do great nails. 39%
The salon is comfortable and relaxing. 38%
The hours are convenient and I don't need to make an appointment. 37%
It's convenient to where I shop or do errands. 32%
The salon does NOT require an appointment. 30%
The salon was recommended by someone I know. 26%
It's fast; I can get in and out quickly. 25%
They carry a good variety of polish colors. 23%
The salon has only licensed nail technicians, which is important to me. 22%
My favorite nail technician works there. 13%
I get my hair done or other services at this salon, so it's convenient to get my nails done there. 9%
I read good reviews about this salon online. 9%
The salon carries or uses my favorite products. 8%
I saw an ad for it or got a coupon for it, so I tried it out. 6%
I like talking to the other customers. 5%
I read about the salon in a magazine or newspaper. 1%

Nail techs:

Why do you believe clients choose to patronize your salon?

48%
It's a clean salon, which is important to them.
11%
It is conveniently located to where they work or live.
23%
It is reasonably priced.
50%
We do great nails.
31%
The salon is comfortable and relaxing.
12%
The hours are convenient.