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• FEATURE

How to serve **sustainability** in the beauty and aesthetics industry and why **eco-friendly** practices matter?

By Winner of ABIA 2024 Best Eco Salon/Clinic – Sara Bowtell (House of Samara)

Fellow salon owners have been curious about my sustainability journey and eco-friendly practices and have asked how they can start their own salon sustainability journey. The most common questions I hear are: Is it time consuming? Does it require a large financial outlay? Is it actually worth it?



So, before I begin, grab yourself a cuppa and enjoy what I promise is a short and insightful read that will make you re-think the sustainable practices in your business!

My experience of operating a sustainable skin and nutrition clinic is that you can start small because small ideas lead to bigger ideas and bigger ideas create change. Sustainability is ever evolving and starts with simplicity and goals that are achievable you don't need to do anything complicated or expensive to start with. Think about the small changes you can make in your own business.

Take the drink cup you are holding in your hand for instance, have a good look at what is it made of? Is it a disposable cup if so, how many of these are you using in a day, how about your team and customers? If you add that little number up that's a lot of cups that are single use that are being used each day, and the yearly figure may take you by surprise! Do the same for water if you are using bottled water for clients how many bottles are you going through per day, per week and per year? Whilst plastic water bottles are recyclable if we install a water station, we take the need to recycle out of the equation. It's also going to be a more cost effective for you as a business owner and better for the planet.

Now let's go back to the simple disposable cup in your hand and the fact that they are a pretty tricky thing to recycle. The biggest issue with disposable cups is the plastic lining that makes them waterproof which means they are unable to be recycled with paper or if compostable outside of a dedicated composting recycling system. The plastic lining is also problematic for the environment taking up to 30 years to breakdown and are also not so great for our health and wellbeing.

As you know Australians love their coffee with 2.7-5 million cups going into landfill every single day which is absolutely eye watering! When I first heard this statistic, this was one of the first changes that I made in my business and switched to reusable keep cups and a water station for clients.

Now the great thing about reusable keep cups is that not only are they keeping waste out of landfill and reducing your carbon emissions they are a nifty little marketing tool. Having your own beautiful business branding on the reusable cup for yourself and all your staff members is a winner. It will not only create awareness in your local community about your salon or skin business but will also demonstrate that you are committed to reducing your environmental footprint! Australian consumers have demonstrated a preference for clean beauty along with sustainability and eco-friendly practices if you aren't across these preferences or are yet to think about eco-friendly practices now might be a good time to start as the industry is moving that way.

Serving sustainability in the beauty and aesthetics industry can commence with something as simple as the cup you are serving your drinks in. It's a cost-effective, meaningful and sustainable first step towards building eco-friendly practices in your business.

Now that I've got you thinking about one small change that you can make in your salon, clinic or spa in the next edition we are going to take a deeper dive and investigate what other areas of your business may have room for improvement.

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