



APPWT WEB & AI SOLUTIONS

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The AppWT Beauty and Salon Marketing Manual

Beauty / Salon

Written by Anthony “Tony” Paris

AppWT Web & AI Solutions (AppWT LLC, a family company)



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A NOTE ON SPELLING

This manual is read in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia. Where a word is spelled differently in different countries, both spellings appear the first time the word is used, like color/colour. After that, one spelling is used so the page stays easy to read.

HOW TO USE THE TECHNICAL NOTES

Smaller italic notes marked *For your tech person* hold the deeper detail: exact settings, file names and commands. You can skip every one of them and the manual still makes complete sense. Hand them to whoever looks after your website.

IMPORTANT

This manual describes security practices that AppWT uses and recommends. It is written as general guidance for business owners. It is not legal advice, and it is not a guarantee that any system cannot be attacked. Security reduces risk. No honest provider will promise to remove risk entirely.

Every incident described in this manual comes from work AppWT actually performed. Client identities are deliberately withheld, because a client's security incident is not ours to publish. Where the business involved is AppWT itself, we name ourselves.

A Note From Tony

The conversation that produced this book was booked as a website call. A salon owner wanted a nicer gallery page. Thirty minutes in she said the real thing out loud. Six days a week, three chairs, working until her back hurt, and Tuesday was empty every single week. The gallery page was not her problem.

I have been building and fixing websites for business owners since 1997, and salons, spas and independent stylists have been part of that work for most of it. The same conversation repeats. Somebody arrives asking for a marketing thing, and underneath the request sits an arithmetic problem nobody has ever written down. A beautiful page cannot rescue a week that is losing twenty two chair hours before anybody opens the door.

A salon is an unusual business and that is why it needed its own manual. You sell time in a chair, which cannot be stored, cannot be delivered later, and disappears at the end of every hour whether or not anybody paid for it. Your income arrives in small amounts from many people. Most of your marketing decisions get made while you are holding a brush. Nobody hands a new owner a chair hour calculation, a deposit policy and a claims audit on the day they open. So this book does.

Here is what I promise. Every chapter produces something written down. A ranked occupancy sheet. Six figures on one page. A rebook script. A four sentence cancellation policy. A listing inventory. A gallery standard. A ninety day plan you sign. Every worked example uses figures somebody supplied from their own export, and they are always described that way, because the method is what transfers and the numbers never do.

Here is what I will not promise. You will not find a single industry average in these pages. I have not seen your street, your rent, your team or the salon that opened last year two doors down, so any average I printed would be a decoration rather than an instruction. You will also not find a claim that a particular platform works. Chapter eleven gives you a way to test one and a rule for stopping, which is more useful and considerably more honest.

This book is business information and it is not legal, tax or insurance advice. Chapters four, twelve and thirteen each stop at the same place and send you to a licensed attorney, an accountant or the regulator that applies to you. That is not caution for its own sake. Consent rules for marketing messages, expiry rules for prepaid packages and the line between a cosmetic and a medical claim are all set differently in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia, and all of them have moved in recent years.

One boundary runs through the whole book and I want it stated before you start. A salon works on how somebody looks and feels. It does not diagnose, treat or cure a condition, and a page that suggests otherwise can lead a client to skip the care she actually needs. Chapter thirteen gives you the exact wording that keeps a service description honest, along with the bodies to ask in each market. It is the chapter I would read first if I owned a skin studio.

Work Part One before anything else, in order, and change nothing while you do it. Three or four evenings of counting, no decisions. Owners want to skip it because it asks for a spreadsheet instead of a design. Skip it and every later choice gets made on a feeling. Do it and you will know which day of your week is genuinely expensive, what one hour is worth, and how much you can afford to spend to win a client. After that you can read out of order and go straight at whatever is in front of you.

Some of what is in here will not be comfortable. A loyalty card you are proud of may turn out to be a discount for people who were coming anyway. A favorite/favourite photograph may have to leave the gallery. A page you paid somebody to write may need eleven sentences removed. Those are ordinary outcomes and the book treats them as ordinary. What matters is that you decided with a number in front of you and wrote a date beside the decision.

One last thing. Your client list, your photographs, your booking page and your reputation belong to you, whatever platform is fashionable this year and whichever app everyone is talking about. Platforms change and a good salon outlasts them. Everything here is written so you can do the work yourself, or organize/organise it into a short brief for whoever helps you, and still check the result afterwards.

Anthony “Tony” Paris

Founder, AppWT Web & AI Solutions · Livonia, Michigan

How to Use This Manual

This manual is built to be worked with a pen in your hand and your booking software open beside you. Keep one folder, on paper or on screen, and put every output in it as you go. Fourteen chapters produce fourteen documents, and the last chapter turns them into one dated plan.

The parts

Part One settles the arithmetic. Chapter 1 puts a real cost on one empty chair hour and sorts your empty hours into five types, four of which advertising cannot fix. Chapter 2 defines the five numbers that decide every later choice and shows exactly where each one lives in your software. Chapter 3 takes the cheapest booking available to you, which is the one made by a client still sitting in the chair. Chapter 4 protects the appointments you already hold, with a policy, a deposit rule and a reminder that arrives while there is still time to refill the slot.

Part Two builds the machine that takes a booking from somebody who has never met you. The booking flow first, because that is where every marketing pound is delivered. Then the site around it, tested on a phone on mobile data rather than on the salon computer. Then the facts that must agree in every place that publishes them, including the listing that still says you open on Mondays. Then structured data, which is how you state those facts to a machine. Then the words, rewritten to answer the question that brought somebody to the page.

Part Three fills the chairs and keeps them full. A gallery standard that makes your work comparable instead of assorted. A social loop measured in bookings rather than followers. Loyalty, packages and memberships that buy a behavior you can name. The consent, accessibility and claims rules that protect the salon and the client. Then the measurement habit, the annual calendar and a ninety day plan you sign and date.

The boxes, and what each one means

DO THIS TODAY

A gold box is one action you can finish now. If you only ever act on the gold boxes, you will still be far safer than when you started.

FROM OUR FILES

A dark box is a real incident from AppWT work. Nothing in these boxes is invented. Where a detail was never verified, we say so rather than fill the gap.

FOR YOUR TECH PERSON

A smaller italic note like this one carries the professional detail: exact file names, headers, settings and commands. Skip every one and the manual still reads completely. Forward them to your web person.

The tables, the sheets and the two code blocks

There is almost no code in this book. One block shows a click to call link written the way it has to be written. The other is a structured data skeleton you hand to whoever maintains your site, which will save you paying for a conversation about what is needed. The tables are working tables. Copy the column headings into any spreadsheet you already use and fill them in with your own figures. The technical notes are short and practical, covering things like reminder timing, white balance, buffer time between services and tracking parameters. Skipping one never breaks a chapter.

What this book does not promise

No booking figure and no revenue figure is promised, because both depend on a town I have not seen. Nothing here is legal, tax or insurance advice, and three chapters stop and say so. This is not a technical manual either, so website speed work, general email marketing method and map profile ranking each belong to separate AppWT titles and this one points at them rather than repeating them badly. You will find no vendor prices anywhere, because a price I printed today would be wrong by the time you read it.

If you only have one afternoon

Do four things in this order. Walk your own booking flow on your phone, in a private browser window, as though you had never been to the salon, and fix the three worst faults you find. Publish your opening hours, your prices and your full address as text rather than inside a graphic. Turn on a reminder that goes out about three days before the appointment and carries a link to change it. Then set a deposit rule for any booking long enough that you could not refill it at short notice. All four are free, all four take minutes, and between them they close the leaks that cost salons the most.

Where to keep the outputs

Keep one folder and treat it as part of the business. The occupancy sheet, the six figure page, the rebook script, the cancellation policy, the listing inventory, the gallery standard, the consent records and the claims audit all live in it, each with a date on the front. Put every recurring check and every renewal on one calendar rather than several, because your insurance, your license/licence, your price review, your holiday hours and your claims audit all fall due in the same year. Keep the old versions, since last year's sheet is the only thing that can tell you whether this year's decision worked.

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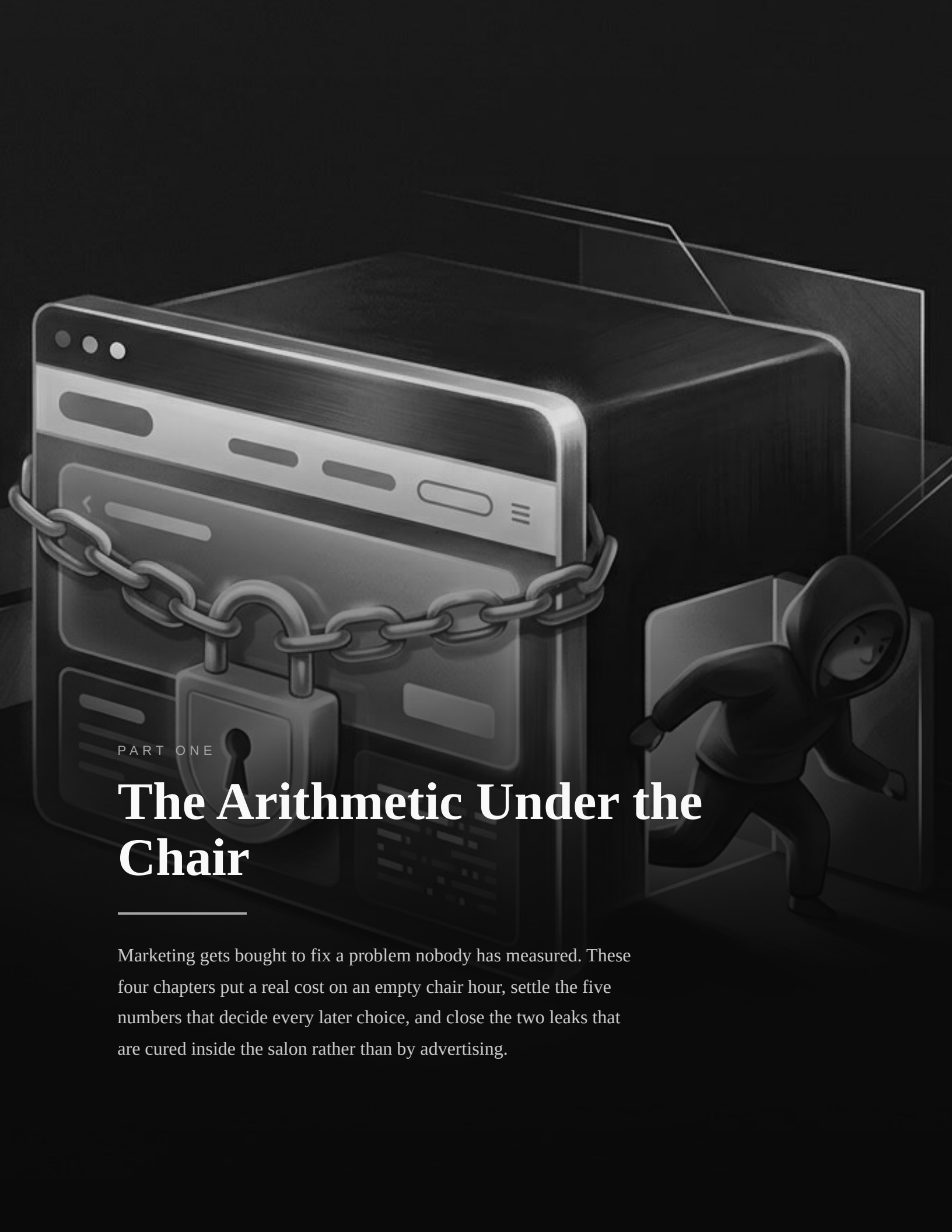
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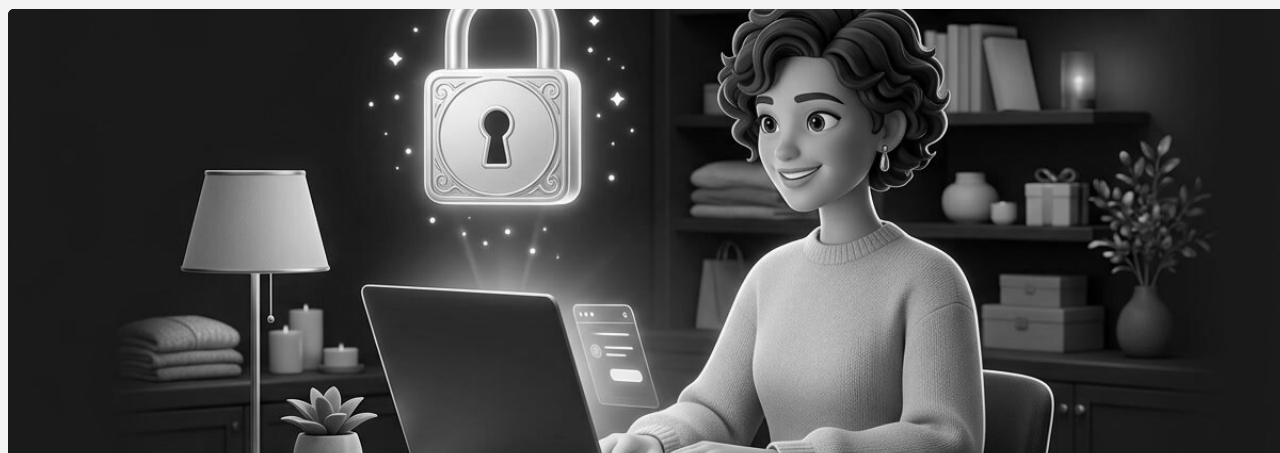
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PART ONE

The Arithmetic Under the Chair

Marketing gets bought to fix a problem nobody has measured. These four chapters put a real cost on an empty chair hour, settle the five numbers that decide every later choice, and close the two leaks that are cured inside the salon rather than by advertising.



What an Empty Chair Costs You Every Hour

Chapter 1. Turning salon marketing into an arithmetic problem you can solve

A salon can be exhausting and half empty in the same week, because the hours nobody sat in still cost money. This chapter puts a real figure on one empty chair hour, sorts your empty hours into five types, and shows which of them advertising can fix and which it cannot.

The salon opens at nine and the last client leaves at seven. Three chairs, six days a week. The owner is on her feet for most of it, and by Saturday night she is finished. On Sunday she opens the booking software and sees a week that does not match how the week felt. Tuesday morning was empty. Thursday had a two hour hole in every column. Friday ran solid until four and then stopped. The week was exhausting and the week was half booked. Both of those things were true at the same time, and neither one explains the other.

That gap between how a week feels and what a week earns is not a mystery and it is not a motivation problem. It is arithmetic that nobody has written down. Marketing usually gets bought to close it, in a hurry, with no number attached to the decision. This chapter puts the number down first. By the end you will know what one hour of one empty chair costs you, which hours are empty, and which of them are worth spending money on. Every figure comes out of your own software and your own accounts. Nothing in this book is offered as an industry average, because your rent, your team and your town are not average.

The Chair Hour Is the Only Unit That Matters

A salon does not sell haircuts. It sells time in a chair, and the chair is there whether anybody sits in it or not. So the unit to measure is the chair hour: one chair, open for one hour, available to be booked. Multiply your chairs by your open hours and you have capacity. Three chairs, open ten hours a day, six days a week, is one hundred and eighty chair hours to sell. That number does not move because you are tired. It moves only when you change your hours or your chairs, which makes it the one honest starting point in the building.

Some costs run whether or not the chair is filled. Those are the ones that make an empty hour expensive rather than merely quiet. List yours before you go any further, because the list is different in every salon and the total is almost always higher than the owner expects.

- Rent, and the share of it that belongs to each chair, which does not fall on a slow Tuesday.
- Water, heat, light and laundry, which run all day whatever the column looks like.
- Booking software, card processing on the account, phone and internet.
- Insurance, board or council fees, and any professional membership you hold.
- Wages for anyone paid by the hour or on a salary rather than per service.
- Your own working time, which is the cost owners leave out most often and feel most.

How much of that lands on you depends on your model. In a salon with employed staff, an empty hour costs the business the wage and the overhead together. In a booth rental salon, the empty hour costs the renter their income while the owner still collects rent, so two people in the same room feel a slow Tuesday very differently. A commission model sits between the two. Write down which model each chair runs on before you calculate anything. That single line decides who is paying for the silence, and therefore who has a reason to fix it.

FOR YOUR TECH PERSON

Most salon booking systems export a date range of appointments to CSV with service name, duration, price and status. Export one full month. Sum the durations of appointments marked as completed to get delivered hours. Capacity is chairs multiplied by open hours for the same month. Those two columns produce every figure in this chapter.

Occupancy Is Always Lower Than It Feels

Occupancy is delivered service hours divided by available chair hours, written as a percentage. It is the most useful number in a salon and almost nobody calculates it. Busy is a feeling produced by the hardest part of the week. Occupancy is a fact produced by all of it. A salon can run near capacity on Friday and Saturday, sit close to empty from Monday to Wednesday, and still feel completely full, because the two loud days are the days the owner remembers. Calculate it once and the argument inside your own head ends.

1. Choose one ordinary month. No holiday closure, no launch, nobody off sick, nothing unusual.
2. Write down your chairs and your open hours, then multiply them for available chair hours.
3. Subtract any hour a chair was genuinely unavailable, such as booked leave with the chair unlet.
4. Export every appointment for the month with its service duration and its status.
5. Add the durations of the appointments that were actually delivered, and only those.
6. Divide delivered hours by available chair hours. That percentage is your monthly occupancy.
7. Run the same sum for each weekday on its own, so every Monday is measured against Mondays.
8. Run it again per chair or per stylist, using an identical method so the comparison holds.

MEASURE AN ORDINARY MONTH, NOT YOUR BEST ONE

Pick a month with nothing special in it. A December, a launch month or a month with a week of closure will each lie to you in a different direction. If the month you chose turns out to be strange, keep the workings and run a second one. Two ordinary months are worth more than one memorable month, and the whole book rests on a number you actually trust.

An empty hour is not one thing. It comes in five shapes, and each shape has a different cause and a different fix. Sorting them matters, because four of the five are cured inside the salon and only one of them is cured by getting more people to notice you. Owners who skip this step buy advertising to solve a scheduling fault, then conclude that advertising does not work.

TYPE OF EMPTY HOUR	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN THE COLUMN	WHAT IT ACTUALLY COSTS	WHAT FIXES IT
Open unbooked hour	A clear gap nobody ever asked for	Full overhead with no service against it	Demand work: visibility, offers, rebooking
Short gap	Twenty minutes wedged between two services	Overhead, plus the service you could not fit	Menu design and rota shape, not advertising
No-show hour	Booked, held, and nobody arrived	Overhead, plus the client you turned away for it	Deposits, reminders and a written policy
Late cancellation	Released too late to refill from the waitlist	Overhead, plus the time spent trying to refill	A notice window with a real charge behind it

TYPE OF EMPTY HOUR	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN THE COLUMN	WHAT IT ACTUALLY COSTS	WHAT FIXES IT
Blocked hour	Admin, cleaning, stock, training, deliveries	Real, often necessary, and invisible in most reports	Scheduling it on purpose instead of letting it spread

Now price the hour. Take one service and write down what the client pays. Subtract the product used, the card fee, and the commission or wage paid to whoever delivered it. What remains is the **contribution** that service makes to rent, light and profit. Divide the contribution by the service duration and you have contribution per chair hour. That figure, not the price on the menu, is what one recovered hour is worth to you. It is also the ceiling on what you can sensibly spend to win a booking, and the reason a cheap service in a long slot can be worse than an empty slot once the product cost is counted.

THE TUESDAY THAT WAS PAYING FOR THE SATURDAY

A three chair salon opens ten hours a day, six days a week, which gives one hundred and eighty chair hours in a normal week. The owner exported one ordinary month and added the delivered service hours. The total came to ninety nine hours in the week she sampled, or fifty five percent occupancy. Saturday ran at ninety two percent. Tuesday ran at twenty six percent. She then priced a chair hour. A color/colour service at one hundred and twenty, less eighteen of product, less three in card fees, less forty two paid out in commission, left fifty seven of contribution across two hours, so twenty eight and a half per chair hour. Tuesday was losing about twenty two chair hours a week, which is roughly six hundred and twenty seven in contribution never earned. That is her number, from her own export, and it is the first figure she had ever seen that made the problem specific. She stopped describing Tuesday as quiet and started treating it as the most expensive day she owned. The method is what transfers here, never the figures.

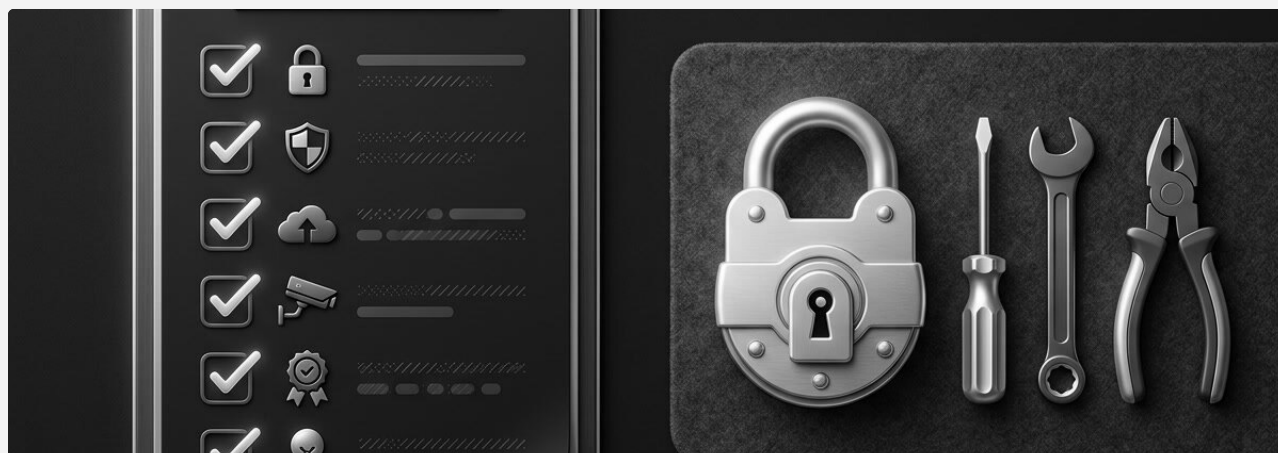
The order of work follows from the table. Fix the shape of the week before you buy demand for it. A short gap closes when the service menu stops producing awkward lengths. A no-show closes when a deposit and a reminder sit behind the booking. A late cancellation closes when a notice window has a real charge attached to it. None of those cost money to fix, and all of them return hours you are already paying for. Only the open unbooked hour genuinely needs new people, and it is the last one to work on, not the first.

You cannot fill a chair you have never counted.

Keep the sheet. Write the date on it, save the export beside it, and put a reminder in the calendar to run the same sum in ninety days using the same method. Everything else in this book points back at this page. When a decision comes up about a booking system, a photograph, a loyalty offer or an advertisement, the question is always the same one. Does it fill a chair hour that is currently empty, at a cost below the contribution that hour produces. Chapter two turns this single figure into the five numbers that answer that question in every part of the salon, and it can be done from the same export you have already run.

WHAT TO REMEMBER

- A salon sells chair hours, so capacity is chairs multiplied by open hours and it does not change because you are tired.
- Occupancy is delivered service hours divided by available chair hours, and it is always lower than the week felt.
- An empty hour comes in five shapes, and four of them are fixed inside the salon rather than by advertising.
- Contribution per chair hour, not the menu price, tells you what a recovered hour is worth.
- Who feels an empty hour depends on whether the chair is employed, on commission or rented, so record the model first.
- Fix the shape of the week before you buy demand for it, because new clients cannot repair a scheduling fault.



Five Numbers That Decide Every Marketing Choice

Chapter 2. The figures that turn an opinion about marketing into a decision

Almost every marketing argument in a salon is really an argument about five numbers nobody has looked up. This chapter defines them in plain words, shows exactly where each one lives in your booking software, and turns them into a spending limit you can defend.

Two people in the same salon can argue about an offer for an hour and never disagree about anything real. One says the discount will bring people in. The other says it attracts the wrong clients. Both are describing a guess about the same five numbers, and neither has looked any of them up. The argument ends the moment somebody exports a spreadsheet. That is the whole point of this chapter. You are not being asked to become an accountant. You are being asked to know five things about your own salon that a stranger with your data could work out in an afternoon.

These five sit on top of the chair hour from chapter one. That chapter told you what an empty hour costs. These tell you what a filled one is worth over a year, how often it refills by itself, and how much you can afford to pay to win the next one. Every later chapter in this book resolves back to them. When you are deciding whether to run a loyalty offer, buy a photograph shoot, pay for a listing or rebuild a booking page, the honest question is whether the change moves one of these five, and by enough.

The Five, and Where Each One Lives

Every figure below comes from your own records. None of them requires new software, and none of them should be taken from a published average, because an average built from salons in other towns with other rents cannot tell you what to do on Tuesday. Where a number is genuinely hard to pull from your system, write down the closest thing you can measure and note the difference. A rough figure you understand beats a precise figure you inherited.

NUMBER	WHAT IT MEANS IN PLAIN WORDS	WHERE TO FIND IT	WHAT IT DECIDES
Average ticket	What one visit is worth, service and retail together	Total takings for a month divided by completed appointments	Whether to sell more visits or better visits
Visit frequency	How many times a client comes in a year	Count visits per client over twelve months, then take the middle value	How hard your calendar has to work to stay full
Twelve month client value	Contribution one client leaves behind in a year	Average ticket, times frequency, times your contribution rate	The most you can sensibly spend to win one
New client return rate	Share of first timers who come back inside ninety days	List new clients from four months ago, then check for a second visit	Whether to fix the first visit before buying more of them
Cost per new client won	What each genuinely new client cost you to attract	Money and paid hours spent, divided by new clients in the same period	Whether a channel keeps its place in the budget

Take average ticket first, because it moves quietly and it moves everything. Two salons with identical occupancy and identical prices can be a long way apart on this figure. The difference is usually add-ons, retail and the size of the service booked rather than the price list. A treatment added at the basin, a home care product that the client would otherwise buy elsewhere, and an upgrade offered before the appointment rather than during it all land here. Average ticket is also the number a discount damages first, which is why it belongs at the front of any conversation about offers.