

HAIRDRESSERS SPOT HEARING LOSS



ABSTRACT

Almost everyone has experienced the special bond between clients and hairdressers. A campaign that leverages this special bond has the unique opportunity to start important conversations about hearing and hearing loss.

This targeted hearing health/hearing protection advocacy program mobilizes hairdressers and salon professionals to promote healthy hearing practices among their clients, taking full advantage of their client's time in the salon.

Working through national hair styling professional associations, major hair styling chains, and salon-product manufacturers, the Hairdressers & Hearing Awareness Initiative Relay (HHAIR) will provide salon professionals worldwide with hearing health and hearing loss awareness education.

The two-part training modules will focus on: 1) best hearing health practices in salons to protect both client and professionals; 2) conversation starters for clients that enable stylists to deliver home hair care/hearing health tips as well as more general information about protecting hearing in everyday life. Training sessions can be promoted and scheduled at hairdressers' industry events and through e-learning courses available on a dedicated HHAIR website.

Among the topics covered at the sessions will be a focus on the smart use of blow dryers. This hair care staple reaches decibel levels (80–90 dBs) that can cause damage to both hair professionals and clients. Salons and hairdressers may want to consider ear protection for themselves and clients and/or selection of quieter blow dryers.

Practical styling information will also be provided. Hairdressers are sometimes asked to find ways to discreetly ‘hide’ hearing instruments via hairstyles. The educational program could provide them with effective styling strategies to help their clients by either matching the hair color or haircut with the hearing instrument.

As part of the program, hair salons can also opt-in to store-wide healthy hearing practices (such as a commitment to use noise-reduced hair drying equipment) and train employees in hearing health and communication techniques for hearing impaired clients (such as speaking facing the mirror to assist in lip-reading and comprehension). In-store signage and decals will announce the salon’s commitment to hearing health and also serve as a prompt for discussions with clients.

Partnering with salon networks such as the L’Oreal or International SalonSpa Business Network (ISBN) will provide access to more than 250,000 hairdressers who see an average of 10 million clients per week. Such a campaign has the opportunity to reach more than 110 million persons per year. In addition, HHAIR could bring their message to the ISBN annual conference, reaching salon professionals outside of the network and continue to spread healthy hearing messages through ambassadors to in-store and regional shows.

RATIONALE

According to a recent study by the School of Marketing, University of Western Sydney, *Building friendships and relationships: The role of conversation in hairdressing service encounters*, (non-task oriented) conversation played an important function with respect to building friendship with clients and also assisted in the development of long-term client/hairdresser business relationships.

Earlier this year (November 2012), L’Oreal launched a program to mobilize American hairdressers to speak up about AIDS. The program expects to start one million conversations about HIV testing by 2013.

HHAIR has the potential to be a long-term sustainable project that reaches millions of people around the world as the average hairdresser see 55 customers per week.

GOAL(S)

- Educate hearing care professionals to improve healthy hearing practices in salons and in homes
- Start a campaign that rallies hair stylists to serve as ambassadors for healthy hearing
- Reach salon clients worldwide with healthy hearing awareness and hearing preservation tips

AUDIENCES

Hairdressers

Salon owners

Salon customers – men, women and children

EXECUTION

Preparation (1 year)

Work with salon association and hearing care organization to develop a targeted education/awareness building training package for hairdressers and salon owners

Commission a program logo suitable for decals, information materials – perhaps used to identify hearing-friendly salon equipment, etc.

Work with hairdresser associations, retail groups and salon product manufacturers to arrange for training session at upcoming national and international conferences

Secure sponsorship from product or equipment manufacturer in participating regions (US, UK, Asia/AU)

Develop dedicated website for HHAIR e-learning courses; include easy-to-download materials for salon distribution

Prepare direct mail and member eInvitations to generate participation/sign-up

Design in-store displays, decals and simple hearing health checklists for free giveaway to clients

Arrange for hearing care professionals to conduct training classes at conferences and professional meetings

Implementation (1 year – first year program)

Conduct training sessions at national/key market conferences

Award “decals” to salons that sign commitment to healthy hearing practices

Distribute in-store materials, decals and giveaway materials to participating salons

Encourage active participation by stylists and salons via a “secret shopper” initiative; volunteer audiologists in each market who assess success of program in salons and award “gold” status – audiologists receive free salon visit, pre-paid by sponsor

Motivate salons to use the HHAIR decal in advertising and direct mail to showcase salon’s healthy hearing practices and invite conversation about hearing health

DELIVERABLES

Develop comprehensive training program for hairdressers and salons

Conduct training programs for 1,000 hairstylists in three regions (U.S., Europe and Asia/Australia)

Sign up 100 participating salons in 10 markets in each of three regions