

# The art of turning beauty sauna covers into a science



## BUILD YOUR BUSINESS

MAISHA FROST SOLVES YOUR PROBLEMS

**QUALIFIED** therapist Lema Cankar-Avdij, 31, plans to open a holistic beauty salon, Alternatives, in Holloway Road, North London, in the early spring, offering complementary and mainstream treatments from Chinese acupuncture to facials.

She came to me for advice and ideas and I called on the help of beauty and health expert Rita Roberts, who runs her own consultancy and training agency.

BEAUTY therapy is a thriving area for the woman entrepreneur, Rita says. "Lema's ideas represent the latest thinking — that today's treatments need to make the client look and feel good," she says. "Scientific innovation is revolutionising the business and everyone must be properly trained so they can use the complex equipment now available. The more treatments you are qualified to offer, the better the business's chance of success."

Opening a salon will cost upwards of £30,000. "Converting part of your home for a salon is the most cost-effective way to get started," advises Rita. "If you take over an existing salon, remember clients often move with the therapist so ensure the lease gives you time to develop a clientele."

"For professional advice consult your local Business Links. Avoid locations with smells or excess noise. Parking and transport must be easily available and consider the area's cultural make-up as this will determine treatments you offer."

"The salon must be welcoming. Colour matters — soothing lilac and refreshing green are ideal for a mixed clientele. Getting the furnishings and layout right are the foundations of success. The Hairdressing and Beauty Equipment Centre is an excellent source for advice and products. Save money by customising standard furniture. Salon Services sells good-value daily essentials.

"This business is strictly regulated," she says. "You will need health and safety licences from local authorities and insurance from specialists such as HSBC. You also need to conform to consumer and data protection law. Lasers require a special licence."

Membership of a trade organisation, such as the Guild of Professional Beauty Therapists, will give valuable support and boost your credibility.

Rita advises: "The treatments you offer determine the chosen equipment but always test them yourself first." She says two products worth consider-

ing are the new Caci Visualase laser hair-removal systems and the Caci's Futur-Tech unit as a means of giving facials and tackling wrinkles and stretch marks.

"They are expensive but state-of-the-art technology and minimal running costs make them potentially highly profitable," Rita says. "To attract the clients I would also recommend mesotherapy — the injection of plant substances to treat cellulite — which comes with impressive credentials. The Cosmolight helps to treat circulation and muscular problems holistically and the Biogenie body sculpture unit may also be popular."

"Two American ideas could be winners here. With the first, customers set a price and let the salon devise a beauty cocktail that includes a remedy, something holistic and a treatment showing a visual difference."

"The second trend is for a day spa where reductions are offered if a group of friends come for a package of treatments. Series of treatments also encourage loyalty. Therapists need a website but should also ask to be listed on sites of companies whose products they use."

"Every cost, however small, must be recorded. If cash becomes tight offer a therapist a concession or become part of a franchise. Pamela Stevens UK is the company to consult for that."

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MODERN METHODS: Rita, right, oversees Lema apply a beauty treatment