



SOFTWARE *for all*

No matter your business structure, salon software is capable of supporting you – and this is how

For Independent Salons

Running an independent salon offers its owner freedom over many decisions, however there are also drawbacks to this structure. “The number one challenge we hear from independent salon owners relates to staff motivation and retention,” shares Robert Smith, co-founder and Chief Commercial Officer at Slick. “As the cost of living rises, owners are being squeezed to increase wages, or risk losing members of their team.” Meanwhile, Elizabeth Olveda, Senior Communications Manager at Vagaro notes that “it can be a challenge for independent salons to focus on marketing and branding while they are busy running day-to-day operations”.

So, how can salon software help independent businesses combat these issues? “Slick is launching a new KPI & Targets staff portal that allows owners to set KPIs to motivate and incentivise staff,” explains Robert. “The staff can see in real-time how they are performing and how close they are to their goal. By setting fun challenges or financial incentives, owners can boost not only staff retention but also motivation which in turn helps boost profitability.”

Discussing how Vagaro can specifically help salons tackle marketing challenges, Elizabeth explains: “Vagaro’s branded app packages help independent salons to establish a unique identity, build brand awareness, and nurture client loyalty. Our Design Team creates completely customisable brands based on the salon’s direct needs.”

One reason clients might opt for an independent salon is to receive a more unique experience. Annabel Wood, Writer at Fresha, highlights how this can be achieved: “With Fresha, you can build client profiles to keep track of everything you need to know about your client, allowing for a personalised experience. You can even send automated texts on your clients’ birthdays with a discount.”

Sally Conchie, UK Marketing Specialist at Timely, also explains how software can help when developing client relationships, sharing: “Automated messages can be used to not only inform clients of their appointments, but provide them with aftercare advice, while loyalty schemes can be offered to encourage client retention. Clients can even be marked as VIPs and rewarded with exclusive discounts and special promotions, allowing your business to stand out.” Geraldine Fuscuardi, General Manager, Zenoti UK and Europe, also recognises the significance of engaging with customers, explaining: “Zenoti delivers an all-in-one solution with powerful AI capabilities that completely redefine the level of customer service you can offer, making it instant, deeply personalised and capable of handling any query.”

For Franchises and Salon Groups

Salon franchises and groups often benefit from an established reputation, plus marketing and operational support. However, there are some drawbacks to this structure, with Rikki Tronson, Chief Revenue Officer at Salon Manager, explaining: "Franchises and salon groups often face the challenge of maintaining consistent service quality and brand standards across numerous locations."

Helping to maintain standards across locations, Salon Manager features a centralised client record card system, ensuring that clients' skin test and colour records follow them as they move between different salon locations. However, the software also features robust permission settings, enabling centralised oversight while allowing individual locations the flexibility to manage their day-to-day operations. "This ensures consistency without stifling local innovation," says Rikki.

For brands running a franchise model, Zenoti has some great features to help with royalty fee collections. Geraldine explains: "Zenoti enables businesses to reduce the effort and errors in calculations, payments and reconciliation of dues and royalty fees. You can set the category, such as sales commissions, technology fees, or standard fees, and choose collection frequency. Corporate can easily validate the royalty fees to be paid, approve payments, and initiate collection from all centres in one click."

Meanwhile, with Booksy, those at the top of the management chain can offer customisable permission levels across the software, meaning headquarters can set overarching policies while allowing individual locations to manage their day-to-day operations and make location-specific adjustments.

If you're looking for a software that won't limit your businesses growth, Shortcuts is another option. Chris Dann, Content & Training Specialist at Shortcuts, explains:

"Our dedicated 'Enterprise' platform can be easily set up from a main server account, providing businesses with a centralised level of control over back-end configuration. This simplifies the process of making changes or updates with minimal downtime and disruption to each site. Additionally, this platform is scalable, allowing for seamless expansion of new locations, employees, and products as the business grows."

For Freelancers and Mobile Stylists

According to the July HJ Insider Survey, 49% of the industry are freelance, while an additional 13% are a combination of freelance and employed. With this in mind, many salon software providers have begun to target many of their services at this demographic. Freelance and mobile stylists often face the challenge of dealing with every aspect of running a business themselves, including scheduling,

client communications and handling payments. Chris explains how Shortcuts Aire is an ideal solution for this, sharing: "The software includes a robust marketing suite with ready-made campaigns that can be activated with a simple

click. It also features automated SMS reminders, various business reports, and KPIs."

If you're new to the freelance world and are working on building up your clientele, Elizabeth explains how Varago can help, sharing: "Varago's platform doubles as an online search directory, where freelancers' services can easily be found and booked – helping to alleviate potential troubles in finding and attracting new customers."

For mobile stylists in particular, it can be challenging to determine which clients are within a reasonable distance, and should you choose to, it can also be tricky to calculate a travel fee. "Booksy offers mobile-friendly scheduling, integrated Google Maps and secure payment processing features, making it easy for freelancers to manage their business from anywhere," says Hannah Hulley, Senior Sales

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Manager at Booksy. "If a mobile salon charges per mile the system will work this out for them, or they can choose to charge a set fee for travel. The system will also allow the stylist to set the maximum distance they are willing to travel for an appointment."

When it comes to juggling different duties, some freelance stylists may be looking to software to help them save time on operational tasks, freeing up more time to spend with clients. "The launch of Vish 2.0 includes additional functions like Plan Ahead, which give greater access to existing formulas straight from stylists' phones, allowing us to pre-plan services, while an enhanced Mix More feature makes mixing additional colour swift and intuitive," says John Spanton, general manager at ARKIVE by Adam Reed in Covent Garden, London.

One task that can be particularly intimidating for freelancers is accounting, however Rikki explains how Salon Manager can help with this, noting: "Our financial management tools simplify the process of tracking income and expenses, making tax returns less daunting."

For Co-working Spaces

With the rise of freelancers, co-working spaces have also been on the up; these often follow a rent-a-chair or set payment plan, and provide stylists with a place to work, without the commitment of opening their own salon, the pressure of working under someone else, or the need to go mobile. Slick has worked with leading co-working hubs such as Samantha Cusick and the team at Stā Studios to ensure its platform works for those utilising these spaces. Robert explains: "We built a system that splits payments into each chair renter's bank account, all from the client tapping once on the one card machine – even if the client has received services from multiple freelancers. It makes the co-working space look more professional and ensures the books and accounts stay nice and neat."

However, if you're managing a co-working space, Beu might be a great choice for you, it offers an automated commission split which takes place at the point of sale, ensuring everyone is paid their fair share without messing up any bank statements. While this helps make operations easier for staff, Beu also improves client experience, with a clean, intuitive interface that is easy to navigate – even for those who aren't tech savvy.

Meanwhile, on the topic of division of resources within a co-working space, Elizabeth notes: "It's crucial to have a system in place which keeps track of their usage. Vagaro's resource management feature facilitates the scheduling of shared equipment and rooms, ensuring that resources are used optimally and reducing conflicts over their usage." **HJ**

COMING TO A SOFTWARE NEAR YOU

If all this wasn't enough, check out the software brands that gave us a sneak peek at the updates they're currently working on...

1 AI UPDATES

"At Salon Manager, we're developing AI-driven analytics and personalised marketing automation, and highly efficient stock control systems, offering deeper insights and more effective client engagement strategies across all salon business models," says Rikki.

2 TIP OFF

With the introduction of the new tipping legalisation, Slick is launching new innovations for payments and tipping. "This summer we will release a new integrated tipping function to help staff increase earnings from tips and a new feature that will automate payroll for chair renters and put an end to the manual bank transfers and slow pay-outs for self-employed," says Robert.

3 MAKING CONNECTIONS

Connect by Vagaro is the platform's new app designed to help professionals strengthen relationships with clients and enhance collaboration with team members. "It was developed to address a persistent challenge within the industry – with professionals in these sectors frequently using their personal phone numbers for business," explains Elizabeth. "Now, Connect allows professionals to keep all client communications organised on a dedicated business line, and easily turn conversations into conversions."

4 WIN BIG

Zenoti is sponsoring Deep End, a competition for the best franchising ideas at Innergize in October 2024. Finalists will pitch their ideas to a panel of experts, and the winner will walk away with £40,000; the runner-up gets £20,000. Sudheer Koneru, Zenoti CEO, says: "We're delighted to present Deep End, the first of its kind in beauty and wellness, a new way to foster innovation in the industry and generate new ideas."