



How much do you know about the brushes you're using and selling? Knowledge is power, especially when it comes to the tools of the trade...



With so many brush options available, it can be tricky to sort the wheat from the chaff. This feature explores how your brushes have been made and what they're capable of. Plus, the more you know the better you'll be at retailing them to clients.

Just the Tip

Not all brushes are made equal – and rightly so, as different brushes serve different purposes. One thing that's worth doing your research on is the brush bristles. Do you opt for synthetic or natural bristles? Ionic nylon bristles help to disperse the scalp's natural oils from root to tip. For example, Cloud

Nine's Luxury Dressing Brush is perfect for dressing out waves and curls for a big, bouncy finish, thanks to its ionic bristles. The reason bristles like this work so well for dressing out? The ionic bristles emit a negative charge that helps to neutralise static and smooth the hair cuticles, all of which results in a frizz-free finish.

Meanwhile, other brush brands such as Kent Salon Brushes utilise boar bristles. Sourced from the Chinese wild boar, these bristles are excellent at stimulating the scalp and distributing natural oils throughout the hair, which not only enhances shine, but can also improve hair elasticity. Clients may not be aware that brushes are capable of more than just brushing, so it's worthwhile taking a little time during the appointment to explain the benefits of the tools you use.

One area of product development that has grown significantly in recent years is the scalp brush, with one of the main benefits being even distribution of product when shampooing as well as promoting healthy hair growth – not detangling. Made from recyclable plastic, Maria Nila's scalp brush prides itself on enhancing blood flow, exfoliating dead skin cells and removing product residue for a deeper clean at the backwash and at-home.

However, sometimes a more tender approach needs to be taken when it comes to brush bristles – take The Manta for example, which utilises patented FLEXGUARD technology to enable each bristle to have complete 360 degree motion, so it never reaches the stress point that causes breakage. Meanwhile, its newest offering, Manta Pulse in Deep Ocean Blue, also works to provide tension release, increase blood-flow and circulation by emitting a gentle vibration at the touch of a button.

Size Matters

Blow-drying is the single-most fatiguing aspect of hairdressing according to Robert Reed, former Vice President of Vidal Sassoon's Professional Product Division and co-founder of ERGO Research. To combat this, the size and ergonomics of a brush is crucial. He explains: "In a brainstorm session we hit upon making the brush barrel longer, allowing the user to take wider sections and work more quickly. That was the start of us developing our extended barrel, which is about 20%



longer than other brushes." It was important for the brand to ensure that even though the barrel is longer, the brush remains hand-friendly, so the ERGO team developed their famous silicone textured handle, which helps eliminate hand fatigue.

While ergonomics (an applied science where products work to fit the worker, not the other way around) play a pivotal role in good brush design, size matters too. Christopher Laird, owner of November Collective, agrees the size of the barrel is a big priority for his clients who often have long, thick hair. Expanding on this, he says: "ghd's The Blow Dryer – Radial Brush Size 4 – has become an indispensable tool in my styling arsenal. Perfect for long and extra-long hair, the hollow 55mm diameter barrel, coupled with the vented ceramic design, ensures optimal heat retention, resulting in a faster and more efficient blow-dry."

Testing, Testing 1,2,3

It's important to look for brands who are open and transparent about their product testing processes so you know what you can expect from a product, both in terms of performance and longevity.

Did you know Denman has continuously strived to improve its Denman D4 since it was first created in the 1960s? For example, its iconic red pad changed from latex rubber to synthetic TPE (a rubber-like material that can be recycled easily)

to protect against anaphylactic reactions. And at each point of development Denman turns to the hair professionals it works with on a regular basis for testing. Denman Creative, Brandon Messinger, has given essential feedback over the years to ensure that each version of a tool is optimised before it reaches the market. He says: "I have a two-week rule. I spend two weeks using the brush consistently and then being objectively critical and noting the things I really love about any tool I'm asked to test."

Likewise, Florence Libon, Lead Brand and Product Manager at Olivia Garden EU, shares: "We want to make sure that all our brushes serve hairdressers' needs – which is why whenever we come up with a brush we have an extensive trial period where in-house hairdressers, and hairdressers working in salons around our offices, get to try out the brush ahead of anyone else. If we realise the brush isn't perfect yet, it goes back into development."

Meanwhile, Kent Salon Brushes are also purposefully vocal about their testing processes, which include heat tests, pull tests, drop tests, chemical resistance, as well as UV resistance.

Not only does this help to ensure your tools will stand the test of time, but by brushing up on your product knowledge, you'll be able to better inform clients when retailing tools – it's a win-win. **HJ**



GREAT ECO OPTIONS

Let clients know just how sustainable you're being when it comes to the brushes you buy and how you clean them

1 The Head Jog Straw Radial Brush is made from a renewable, environmentally-friendly material produced at a carbon emission increment of zero. And the material is also super lightweight, making it ideal for blow-drying.



2 Did you know that evo brushes and combs are made with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified hardwood? This means that the wood comes from forests that are being managed in a way that preserves biological diversity and benefits the lives of local people and workers.



3 Help cut down on chemicals when cleaning brush pads with the KLEEN from The Knot Dr. A cluster-type brush, it removes loose unwanted hair, dirt and other fluffy stuff from brush pads keeping them in good working order.

