



# **RAPID FIRE**

Public Relations Firm

**Client: Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar**  
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## Executive Summary

Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar is a hair salon in Syracuse, New York, which specializes in natural hair services. The salon struggles to communicate its services to current and potential clients due to its inconsistent branding. In an effort to provide new business recommendations for HCBB, Rapid Fire PR has identified two key publics: female African-American students and professionals in the Syracuse area.

Rapid Fire PR utilized these two audiences while conducting a triangulated research methodology. We gathered qualitative and quantitative data through social listening analysis, surveys and focus groups. These research methods allowed Rapid Fire PR to learn about our key publics' attitudes and perceptions of hair salons, giving us a more holistic view of HCBB's business problems.

Using the research results, Rapid Fire PR created a series of recommendations, including rebranding, a more strategic social media presence, community outreach and expanding the salon staff.



## Problem and Opportunity Statement

Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar (HCBB), established three years ago by owner and master stylist Lucreaty Love, is an all-natural hair salon located in the Sankofa District of Syracuse, New York. The organization's primary goal is to create confidence for a client through his or her hair (L. Love, personal communication, September 18, 2018). The hair salon specializes in treating natural hair by using methods other than chemical relaxers and promoting natural hair products and styles. Although the salon provides these natural alternatives, there is still an inherent business problem within HCBB. The organization's business problem is the lack of a clear mission, which is caused by inconsistent branding. If the salon cannot establish a clear focus, it may be ineffective in achieving its mission of expanding its clientele. As a consequence of a lack of a clear mission, the salon may lose its primary clientele of African-American college students, and potential customers will continue to remain unaware of the brand. By conducting triangulated research through focus groups, social listening analysis and surveys, Rapid Fire PR will learn more about the salon's existing and potential customers in order to create a beneficial strategic communications plan for the client. Rapid Fire PR has the opportunity to define a clear mission and a consistent brand for HCBB, which may lead to a more professional salon with a growing clientele.



## Situation Analysis

### **Background on the Issue**

Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar's lack of a clear mission stems from three key reasons including inconsistent branding, a disorganized website and unclear social media tactics. One of the primary issues is the variety of services the business offers without a clear, easy way to identify these services across the company's various communication platforms. This leads to confusion and a sense of unprofessionalism.

Specifically, HCBB has information on its social media channels discussing other business ventures rather than the primary focus of the services of the Beauty Bar. For example, HCBB's Facebook and Instagram pages include information pertaining to a variety of services such as hair styling, nails, cocktails and confidence, and financial credit services. The idea of consistency in service is lacking overall through crucial communication channels, creating confusion for clients and future customers. The website does not include all the services offered by the business and is missing nails and makeup, adding to the confusion of a consistent mission for the business. Specifically, the nails and makeup services are mentioned on its social media page but not on the website making the website seem outdated. Also, Love informed Rapid Fire PR she is currently the only employee at HCBB (L. Love, personal communication, September 18, 2018). This is inconsistent with the information found on HCBB's website with the website having biographies of other stylists. The lack of focus in the branding may cause confusion for current and potential customers of HCBB who would be trying to navigate the website and social media pages.

An additional issue is the inconsistent use of social media. HCBB's Instagram page focuses on haircare and disregards the other services it emphasizes on its website such as nails, cocktails and confidence, and makeup.

The website heightens the confusion of the primary mission for HCBB. The website does not clearly articulate the mission and the services. The links to social media pages, such as Instagram, do not work properly. The pictures scattered throughout the website may be seen as unprofessional, as they seem to be personal pictures and postings. Likewise, the biographies of employees are incomplete and inconsistent as far as who actually works at HCBB, adding to a sense of unprofessionalism.

Additionally, speaking with Love, she intends to pursue new business ventures in the future including skin care products, launching of apparel with new logo designs and wig creations (L. Love, personal communication, September 2018). Her diverse approach to creating a confident lifestyle for women furthers the lack of a clear mission for her business. Her business focuses on several missions and objectives, creating confusion for current and potential customers.

### **Consequences of the Situation**

A primary consequence of the lack of a clear mission is the potential loss of customers. Without a concise, professional message to the key publics noted as students, Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar may not reach its full potential and may not be able to fully maintain its clientele base if the services are not clear.

Due to HCBB's lower engagement with social media channels and inconsistency in information on Facebook and Instagram, future clients may not see the company's true, professional image. Currently, HCBB lacks crucial audience interaction and consistency in postings. The overarching desired mission of the business dealing with natural products is not established and customers may feel confusion of HCBB's services including makeup, nails, cocktails and financial services.

With a location close to key target audiences such as students located on the South Campus of Syracuse University, Love can attract clients with a cohesive message and incentives for clients if the right message is constructed. However, without proper advertising and cohesive messages, future clientele may not exist and will go to places that better advertise its services.

### **Resolution for the Situation**

In order to solve the primary issue of having a lack of a clear mission, Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar needs to consolidate the services it wishes to emphasize to have a cohesive message. If the business is able to identify and clarify its primary services, it would be able to capitalize on the uniqueness of being a natural salon. For instance, the idea of having a beauty bar and natural products gives the business a competitive edge over salons who use chemical relaxers. The business could capitalize on the specific targeted demographic and distinctive services to enhance the overall experience of a beauty bar in a professional manner geared toward college students and professionals. If the business engages customers on social platforms, enticing them with promotions and services, the reputability of the business can become stronger.

Love can also schedule consistent social media postings regarding events, promotions and other salon activities across all social media platforms. By creating a content calendar, Love would create a sense of unity and clarification of her messages to her key audiences, therefore targeting college students specifically.

Lastly, by creating an updated website with clear descriptions of the professional services offered, employees and products, the business may present a cohesive and professional message to its publics. Updating her imagery and structure of the website, Love may attract the targeted audience she desires.

### **Research Program**

Additional research would be helpful in order to understand the primary issues the owner faces and how to best proceed through continued communication and client meetings with Love to understand her goals.



Specifically, Love's research with the Upstate Medical University deals with tracking varying levels of dust particles with potentially harmful effects and comparing her salon to other salons that use hair relaxers. With Love's continued research dealing with dust particles at various times of the day, she produces crucial and credible information which should be published through various outlets. Love's research is a key component to her business, as utilizing and publishing comparative research with a reputable medical center would give her credibility and may spark customer growth.



## Analyzing the Organization

### **Competition**

Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar's main competitors are kitchen beauticians and other established hair salons in the Syracuse area, such as A Perfect 10, Adagio and Aissa's Professional African Hair Braiding.

### ***Kitchen Beauticians***

As identified by Love, HCBB's strongest competition is kitchen beauticians (L. Love, personal communication, September 18, 2018). Kitchen beauticians are women who run their business and perform their hair services on their clients out of their own homes. Love explained that kitchen beauticians have a well-developed clientele base of family and friends. In addition, they can offer professional services for lower costs than traditional salons, giving them an edge over HCBB (L. Love, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

### ***Salons***

HCBB's secondary competitors are A Perfect 10, Adagio and Aissa's Professional African Hair Braiding. These salons offer similar services as HCBB and have professional websites that are easy to use and navigate.

### ***A Perfect 10***

A Perfect 10 mentions on its website that it is the "leading natural hair care salon in Syracuse," (A Perfect 10, n.d.). Along with hair services, A Perfect 10 also offers facial waxing services and sells its own line of hair care products. It is open on Saturdays for an extra three and a half hours more than HCBB is open and is open on Monday-Thursday for an extra hour than HCBB is open. In addition, A Perfect 10 displays the hashtags, "#aperfect10hair #tatyournails #AP10Hair #AP10Designs #AskApril," (A Perfect 10, n.d.) on its website for customers and potential customers to follow on social media. A Perfect 10 also makes a point to involve itself in the Syracuse community by "actively spreading awareness about addiction, and making donations to Syracuse Behavioral Healthcare," (A Perfect 10, n.d.). Both salons have fairly similar pricing and are only around a 10-minute drive from each other.

### ***Adagio***

Similar to HCBB, Adagio boasts a "warm, comfortable and relaxed" environment (Adagio, 2018). While Adagio does promote natural beauty, it also offers chemical straightening treatments, which separates it from our client. In addition to hair services, Adagio offers spa and makeup services and also sells a variety of haircare and skincare products. Adagio has a wide range of hours, opening some days at 8 a.m. and closing some days at 8 p.m., allowing working clients to potentially schedule appointments before or after work. Both salons have similar pricing as well and are less than a 10-minute drive from each other. Adagio's website is professional, informative and easy to use. The website also has active links to the salon's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts.



### *Aissa's Professional African Hair Braiding*

Additional notable competitors include salons that offer natural services, such as braiding. Aissa's Professional African Hair Braiding is a popular location for African-American women in the Syracuse area who get their hair braided. Although Love does not currently offer hair braiding services, this salon is still a competitor to HCBB. Aissa's Professional African Hair Braiding's clients are clearly interested in more natural ways of hair care, so it is logical that they may also be interested in the natural services offered by HCBB. This salon has received 230 Google reviews and an average rating of 4.6 out of 5 stars. However, it lacks a strong online presence, with no website and no social media. This salon is also located on Salina street, not too far from HCBB. These women may be attracted to HCBB's all-natural services, as they already chose a more natural hair option.

### **External Impediment**

Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar's operating environment is currently stable. HCBB offers distinct all-natural products and services. It distinguishes itself with the idea of "cocktails and confidence" and prides itself on creating a professional, chic and comfortable salon environment. However, there are projected changes for HCBB's operating environment. By having a stronger, more consistent social media presence, there may be an increase in customer awareness.

Planning promotional, social and educational hair events will also increase new clientele traffic in the salon. One reason potential clients may decide not to come to HCBB may be because of financial concerns, as they may not be able to afford its services. Hosting promotional and social hair events, and providing discounts at the events may help combat losing clients due to financial restraints. These events could also prove to be educational. The educational hair events will be extremely important as many women may not know about the dangers of chemical treatments. After teaching new women about the dangers, they may be more inclined to try natural services, like those offered at HCBB.

Another major change that would increase the profitability of the salon would be having actual employees rather than independent contractors. Having a reliable staff would create consistency in scheduling and the salon will be able to perform more services. This is important because it may help the business in getting the economic benefits of each customer who walked into the salon, received a service and enjoyed the atmosphere. This is an essential step in growing HCBB and retaining consistent clientele.

### **Research Program**

Rapid Fire PR will conduct surveys, focus groups, and social listening of Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar's target audience to determine which factors customers consider when choosing a hair salon, and discover trends in the hair and beauty industry. Using these research methods, Rapid Fire PR can identify factors that may influence a consumer's decision to choose HCBB versus one of its competitor salons. By determining which aspects customers deem important, Rapid Fire PR will be able to better advise HCBB on how to effectively communicate with its target audience.



## Analyzing the Publics

### **Customers**

Currently, Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar's primary customer is African-American college students. Many clients initially come in to transition from using relaxers to embracing their natural hair or to maintain their natural hair. In addition to her primary clientele, HCBB's secondary clients are men, women and children, most of which are local to Syracuse. If Love had to focus on one specific demographic to maintain and grow, it would be college students (L. Love, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

### **Producers**

The primary producer for Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar is the owner, Lucreaty Love. Love is a hair stylist and colorist. In the past, Love has had independent contractors who paid to rent space in her salon. However, Love is currently the only full-time employee at the salon (L. Love, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

### **Enablers**

Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar uses social media for advertising and marketing purposes. Love uses the salon's website, Facebook and Instagram pages to post pictures of clients and products. Clients also have the ability to tag HCBB on Instagram and write reviews on Facebook. HCBB's online presence allows it to attract customers through Instagram who follow certain hashtags or look for specific services like natural hair or braiding. HCBB specifically advertises to college students by offering discounts and handing out flyers on Syracuse University's campus (L. Love, personal communication, September 18, 2018).

### **Research Program**

Rapid Fire PR will conduct focus groups and surveys with Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar's current and potential clients to better understand its main target audience. Rapid Fire PR's current knowledge of HCBB's target audience comes from personal communication with Love, but conducting further research will provide our team with additional details about HCBB's target audience. We also plan to conduct social listening to analyze the salon's various social media accounts. After examining HCBB's social media channels, we plan to ask current and potential clients within the target audience about their social media preferences to determine which communication methods will be most effective.



## SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

- Through the use of white chairs and availability of wine, Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar offers a calming environment for its customers.
- Love is giving back to her community by creating wigs for people with medical conditions that have affected their hair.
- HCBB is close to Syracuse University's South Campus, which may help increase its student clientele.
- HCBB is also close to a lot of churches and businesses that could attract potential customers.
- Love promotes healthy and natural hair and does not offer treatments that use harmful chemicals, which sets her salon apart from salons that use hair relaxers and other treatments with chemicals.

### Weaknesses

- Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar's social media has inconsistent messaging and is hard to find because there are different accounts across multiple platforms that are not all updated at the same time.
- There are grammatical errors on HCBB's social media accounts, which makes the social media posts seem less professional and might negatively reflect the business as a whole.
- HCBB has a confusing website where a potential client cannot see prices of services until clicking "Book Now". The website also displays two "Hours of Operations" that have different times.
- The salon's hours of operation are Tuesday to Thursday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Friday from 9:30 a.m.-7 p.m. and Saturday from 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m., which are shorter than other salons in the area. Its hours do not allow for women to book appointments either before or after work.
- HCBB currently only has one employee, Love, which takes away some of the services that were previously offered (L. Love, personal communication, Sept. 18, 2018). This also may contribute to Love having to turn clients away since she is the only one performing services.
- HCBB is not easily seen from the street because the signage is too small and hard to read, making it more difficult to notice the salon.



## Opportunities

- Upstate Medical University contacted Love regarding her research about the negative effects of chemical hair relaxers (L. Love, September 18, 2018). Partnering with this organization may allow Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar to further promote the benefits of natural hair to its target audience.
- Love expressed her desire to create wigs for those who are suffering from cancer treatment (L. Love, personal communication, September 18, 2018). Partnering with an organization, such as Genesis II Hair Replacement Studio in Syracuse, New York, may allow Love to serve the local community and expand the wig-making services of HCBB.
- About 63 percent of African-American women purchased wigs, weaves, extensions, or styling tools from local beauty supply stores (Mintel, 2015). HCBB could expand its business and increase profits by selling haircare and styling products directly to customers.
- Approximately 7.4 percent of students enrolled at Syracuse University are black or African-American (Forbes, 2018). HCBB's proximity to the school provides an opportunity to attract customers within the salon's target audience.

## Threats

- Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar is located on South Salina Street, which experiences a high crime rate according to the Onondaga Crime Analysis Center (Syracuse Police Department, 2016). The South Side of Syracuse, NY receives a poor reputation on the Internet as being "unsafe", which may negatively impact the number of potential customers willing to visit the salon (TripAdvisor, 2012).
- HCBB is located in the South Side of Syracuse, which has a significantly lower level of income than other areas (Sparkles, 2018). These lower income levels indicate that the local target audience may not be willing to spend money on salon services.
- A study indicated that many African-American women with straightened hair were significantly less likely to consider wearing a natural hair style (Mintel, 2015). This preference may make it increasingly difficult for HCBB to gain more customers, since it does not offer chemical straightening services.
- More than half of women over the age of eighteen have purchased nail products or professional nail services in the past year (NPD Group, 2013). HCBB only offers hair services, which may limit its ability to attract more customers who desire multiple services.

## Key Publics

### **Female African-American Syracuse University Student**



(AfricaMetro, 2015)

Alexis Williams, a Brooklyn native, is a current junior at Syracuse University. She is a 21-year-old African-American student studying political science. She lives on Euclid Avenue in a four-person apartment with her three roommates. She has a car and is single (Steinberg, 2011). Being a college student, Williams is looking to maintain her hair at an affordable price but still receive quality service. While she currently embraces a natural hairstyle, she is always eager to learn about how she can maintain her style and stay on trend. She also tends to post pictures of her hair updates using various platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat (Smith, 2018). Utilizing hashtags, she is able to track and locate other stylists in the Syracuse area (Jackson, 2017). She spends several hours a day scrolling through her social media feeds. She wants to find a new hair stylist for the academic school year while she is away from home. Alexis's need for affordable, yet quality, haircare makes her a strong key public for HCBB.

## Female African-American Generation X Professional



(Via Agency, 2018)

Maya Washington is a 40-year-old African-American female who serves as the Assistant Principal of Dr. King Elementary School (Syracuse NY, n.d.). She graduated from SUNY Oswego with a bachelor's degree in education in 2005. She has been employed in the same school district since graduation, working her way up to her current role. She currently earns \$80,000 per year (McMahon, 2016). As part of the school administration, her appearance is extremely important. It is crucial for her to maintain her hair in order to present herself in a professional and well-maintained manner, as she must frequently interact with parents and school board members. She is in a committed relationship and has a six-year-old daughter (Syracuse, NY Demographics data, n.d.). She lives in a three-bedroom home with her boyfriend and daughter, which she rents in Dewitt. She loves spending free time with her loved ones. She enjoys bonding with her daughter on the weekends by getting their hair styled, nails done and shopping. She also enjoys going on date nights with her boyfriend at least once a week. She occasionally uses Instagram but is an avid Facebook user (Smith, 2018). She likes to find new stores, restaurants and services to try in the Syracuse area, and enjoys using the "recommendation" feature on Facebook to find this out. She tends to pay attention to customer reviews to decide where to visit and explore. Maya's need for quality and consistent hair care to maintain her professional appearance make her a relevant key public for HCBB.



## Research Objectives

- Determine key publics' social media usage and preferences
- Determine key publics' awareness of Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar and its services
- Explore which factors influence the key publics' decision-making process when choosing a hair salon



## Research Methodology and Methods

**Methodology:** Rapid Fire PR utilized a triangulated research methodology in order to address the stated research objectives. Our methodology revealed new facets of Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar and gave Rapid Fire PR a more holistic view of the business problems. A triangulated research methodology allowed us to use a combination of primary and secondary research to gather qualitative and quantitative data. By conducting online surveys and social listening analysis, we were able to gather primary quantitative data. In addition, primary qualitative research was conducted through multiple focus groups. Rapid Fire PR is confident that these three research methods were comprehensive and revealing, allowing us to provide relevant suggestions on how to develop a more cohesive message and brand for HCBB.

### **Research Method 1:** Social Listening Analysis

*Sample Frame:* Social media posts retrieved from Meltwater from January 1, 2018 to October 24, 2018 that match keywords related to Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar, natural hair, African-American hair and hair relaxers. This research method collected information which helped determine the key publics' awareness of HCBB and its services.

*Rationale:* This research method helped us gather primary quantitative data to evaluate and better understand our key publics' attitudes towards HCBB and natural hairstyles. Analyzing conversations on various social media platforms allowed us to understand how HCBB is perceived online and follow conversations about both natural and relaxed hairstyles.

#### *Execution:*

- Recruiting Method: None
- Location: Online (Meltwater)
- Length: 5 hours (1 hour per group member)
- Incentive: None
- Number of Social Media Posts: 30

*Data Analysis Method:* Content Analysis

### **Research Method 2:** Online Survey

*Sampling Frame 1:* Potential clients, specifically focusing on female college students ages 18 to 24 at Syracuse University and female professionals ages 25 to 45 in the Syracuse, New York area.

*Rationale:* This research method allows us to examine the social media usage and preferences of our key publics. It also allows us to explore and understand how our key publics choose a hair salon and which factors they deem important.

*Execution:*

- Recruiting Method: Personal social media distribution, Syracuse University Facebook groups, shared the survey with the owner of Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar to distribute to her clients and shared the survey with local Syracuse female professionals on Facebook.
- Location: Online
- Length: 11-question survey
- Incentive: None
- Number of Participants: 241 respondents

*Data Analysis Method:* Qualtrics Data Analysis

**Research Method 3: Focus Group**

*Sample Frame:* Two focus groups were held, both mainly focused on which factors influence the key publics' decision-making process when choosing a hair salon. The groups also explored the key publics' awareness of Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar and its services. The focus groups were hosted on Tuesday, October 30, 2018 and Sunday, November 4, 2018.

*Rationale:* This research method helped us gather primary qualitative data to evaluate and better understand which factors influence the key publics' decision-making process when choosing a hair salon. This research method also collected primary qualitative data about the key public's awareness of HCBB and its services. Both focus groups provided us with more detailed and relevant information than other research methods.

*Execution:*

- Recruiting Method: We reached out to friends, peers and teachers in person. Additionally, we emailed and called the People's AME Zion Church in Syracuse, New York.
- Location 1: Life Sciences Building, Syracuse University
- Location 2: People's AME Zion Church in Syracuse, New York
- Length: 1 hour (two 30-minute focus groups)
- Incentive: Dunkin Donuts
- Number of Total Participants: 12 total participants, 7 of which fit the ages of the key publics

*Data Analysis Method:* Content Analysis

## Research Results and Analysis

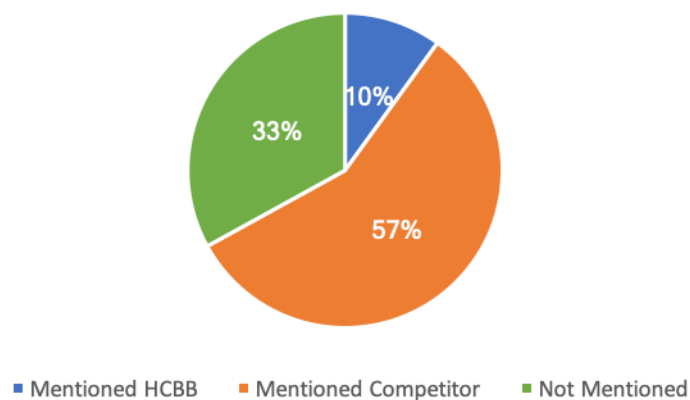
### Social Listening Results and Analysis

#### *Trend 1*

Rapid Fire PR used social listening to determine which hair salons our key publics were currently mentioning and interacting with on social media. We analyzed 30 social media posts and discovered a major lack of awareness of HCBB by its key publics. We discovered that only 10 percent of the content analyzed had mentions of, or references to, HCBB. Therefore, it was concluded that the key publics are not aware of HCBB and its social media presence, and this is reflected in our key publics personal social media habits.

Due to the minimal mentions of HCBB, Rapid Fire PR decided to do further research and look at who the key publics actually are mentioning. This research not only revealed a lack of awareness of HCBB but also highlighted that HCBB has more competition than originally noted. At the client meeting, it was stated that HCBB was the only natural hair salon in Syracuse, New York; however, through the social listening research, we discovered this is not true. It was discovered that A Perfect 10 is a natural hair salon in the Syracuse area. Interestingly, out of the 30 posts that were analyzed, 57 percent of the posts all mentioned A Perfect 10. This suggests that HCBB's key publics are more aware of its competition than they are of HCBB.

Social Media Posts Mentioning Hair Crea'Tique  
Beauty Bar

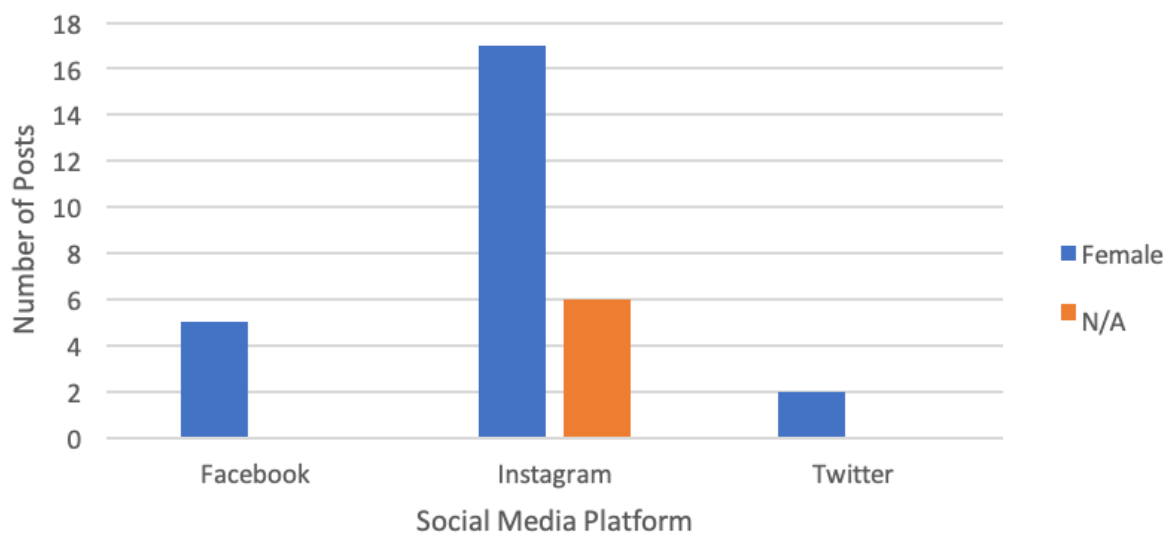


## Trend 2

Rapid Fire PR conducted social listening research to observe the relationship between social media platforms and gender. After analyzing 30 posts, we discovered that only three social media platforms were used: Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Instagram had the highest number of posts at about 77 percent of all 30 analyzed posts. On Facebook, there was 17 percent of the total posts, and only about 6 percent were found on Twitter. Across all three platforms, each had high percentages of female users who were creating and posting content related to natural hair and hair salons, with 63 percent female participation and 0 percent male participation. Interestingly, the other 36 percent of posts came from business accounts, which were prevalent on both Facebook and Instagram.

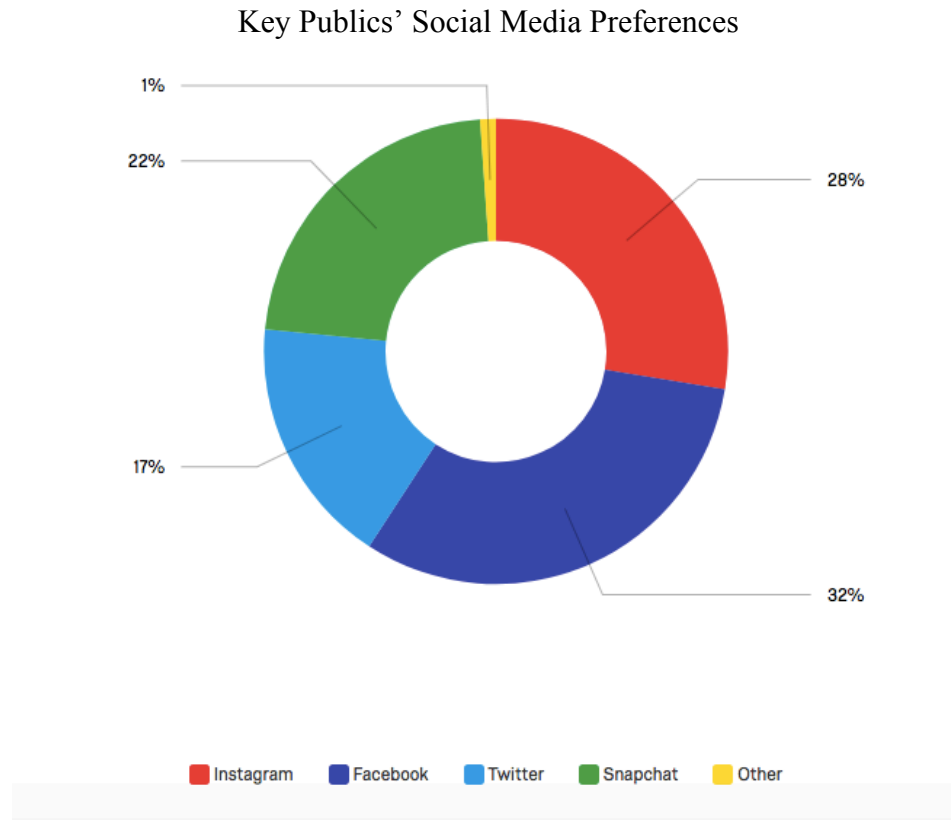
Instagram was the most highly used platform and about 77 percent of users posting were female. However, it is worth noting that the other six posts were labeled as “not applicable” for gender, meaning the content was posted on a business account as opposed to a personal account. Facebook was the next most popular platform with about 16 percent of all posts analyzed, all of which were business accounts posting, so gender was not applicable. On Twitter, there was 100 percent female participation. From this, we concluded that Instagram is the most efficient platform to target potential clients because of the higher usage rate by our key publics and less competition among other business accounts who are primarily using Facebook.

Social Listening Analysis by Platform and Gender



## Qualtrics Survey Results and Analysis

### *Trend 1*

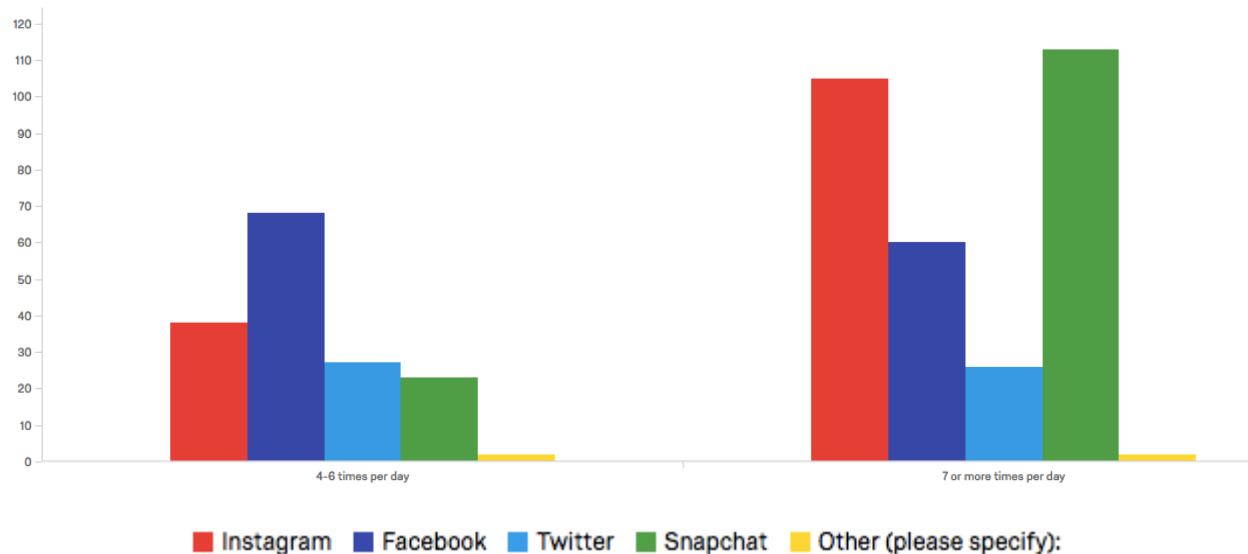


We surveyed 241 potential clients to determine their hair salon and beauty habits. One of the questions we asked was about their social media preferences so that we could discover which platform our target audience uses the most. Respondents were asked to select all of the social media platforms they use from a list of six, including a write-in option. About 32 percent of respondents selected Facebook as the platform they use most often and about 28 percent of respondents selected Instagram. On the other hand, 22 percent of respondents selected Snapchat and 17 percent of respondents selected Twitter as the platforms they use the most often. With respect to those who selected “Other”, about 50 percent of the write-in responses were Pinterest and VSCO.

When looking at the responses from our target audience, of the respondents who identified as black or African-American, approximately 78 percent selected Facebook and approximately 67 percent selected Instagram as the social media platforms they use the most. The data from this survey question exemplifies that Facebook and Instagram are the two platforms potential clients use the most. Based on the data from the social listening, we found that Hair Crea’Tique Beauty Bar does not often appear in searches on Facebook and Instagram. Combining that with the data found from the survey, HCBB should increase its presence on these platforms to most effectively reach its target audience.

## Trend 2

### Key Publics' Daily Social Media Usage



In addition to social media preferences, we also wanted to be able to determine how often our key public uses each platform. We asked respondents to choose from using each individual platform 1 to 3 times per day, 4 to 6 times per day, seven or more times per day or not at all. The visual above shows the total number of responses for using each platform 4 to 6 times per day and 7 or more times per day.

With respect to social media used 1 to 3 times per day:

- About 42 percent of respondents said that they check Facebook 1 to 3 times per day
- About 27 percent of respondents said that they check Twitter 1 to 3 times per day
- About 22 percent of respondents said that they check Instagram 1 to 3 times per day
- About 10 percent of respondents said that they check Snapchat 1 to 3 times per day

Approximately 25 percent of respondents said that they check Facebook seven or more times per day, 11 percent said they check Twitter seven or more times per day, 44 percent said that they check Instagram seven or more times per day and 47 percent said that they check Snapchat seven or more times per day.

When continuing to look at the responses from our target audience, we wanted to focus on the age, since each generation uses social media differently. Of respondents ages 18 to 24, 62 percent said they checked Instagram seven or more times a day while only 19 percent said Facebook. With respect to respondents ages 35 to 44, 62 percent said that they check Instagram 1 to 3 times per day while 46 percent said the same for Facebook. It is interesting to note that respondents from both age groups selected Instagram the most, but use the app different amounts of times throughout the day. Approximately 72 percent of respondents ages 18 to 24 selected



Snapchat as an app they check seven or more times a day, which was one of the highest percentages from that age range, yet Snapchat did not come up as a popular social media platform in general. Based on this information, younger individuals might tend to use social media more frequently throughout the day while maybe older individuals might use it less frequently. In addition, it is important to take Snapchat into account as being a popular social media platform looked at the most in a day by our younger respondents. Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar should use this data to determine how often it should utilize each social media platform throughout the day depending on the age of the audience it would like to reach.



## Focus Groups Results and Analysis

Rapid Fire PR conducted two focus groups with our key publics. The first focus group was with female Syracuse University students ages 18 to 24, and the second focus group included local Syracuse residents ages 25 to 45. The participants were asked to share their opinions on hair salons and services, and express what factors they enjoy or dislike in the salon experience. Participants were also asked about their awareness and experience with Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar.

We had twelve total participants; however, only seven participants were in our key publics. We had four participants ages 18 to 24 and three participants ages 25 to 45. The information gathered from the focus group members that did not fit either key public was not used in this report.

### *Focus Group 1*

Three members ages 18 to 24, one member age 25 to 45.

*Theme 1: The relationship with a hair stylist is valued more than any other quality in regards to choosing a hair salon.*

Overall, most participants strongly suggested that a relationship with their hair stylist trumped other qualities they seek in hair services. They noted the importance of being respected for their wants and wishes when it comes to haircare due to the importance of trust needed in a stylist-client relationship. They want the stylist to remember their specifications for their individual hair needs, have a diverse skill set and be accommodating. For example, one participant said, "I would drive several hours to return to my original stylist because she gets me; she knows exactly what I want and you don't understand how hard that is to find." While price, location and overall ease of service were important qualities the participants admired, the relationship with the stylist ranked superior.

*Theme 2: The harmfulness of chemical relaxers is a well-known idea and most participants do not use them.*

When discussing the use of chemical relaxers, the participants were extremely vocal in regards to their experiences with various products. While most of the participants had not used the chemicals themselves, they were well aware of the harsh side effects from research of close, personal relationships. For example, one participant noted, "my mom always warned me about using relaxers. That's why before I go to a new salon, we always research the business to know about them." From personal recommendations, hair relaxers were not a popular beauty routine choice for the participants, favoring natural hair products and styles instead.

*Theme 3: Social media plays a crucial role in finding a stylist that best matches an individual's wants and needs.*

When discussing how participants found their current hair salons, most participants stated they used some form of social media to find a stylist that matches their preferences. Specifically, most participants used Instagram and specific hashtags based on hair preferences and geolocation to find stylists in the area. By utilizing posts, participants explained that they would analyze the



post to figure out the quality and services of the salon. Also, by searching client posts, participants stated they would base their interest level off of public sentiment. For example, one participant said, “I want to have versatility and the ease of going to one location that knows what I need. I am able to look on social media to see who is in the area and what kind of services they offer.”

### *Interesting Observations*

Participants adamantly expressed negative responses to the term “chemical relaxer”, but participants looked confident while positively talking about natural hair. For the most part, all participants had stories through family and friends about the harsh side effects of the chemical and were not allowed to use the chemical from an early age. There was a visible disapproval from the entire audience.

The one participant that is a client of Hair Crea’Tique Beauty Bar did not display nonverbal cues to express positive experiences about the business. She said she had a positive experience at the salon, but did not give many non-verbal cues about her attitude toward HCBB. Afterward, the participant who knew of the HCBB was asked by another participant where their hair was styled, indicating an interest in the work of the hair salon.

The participants also were adamant about having a stylist that knows their preferences and will travel for the service. One participant claims they would travel hours away in order to return to the stylist that can meet these needs.

### ***Focus Group 2***

Two members ages 25 to 45, five members were not applicable

*Theme 1: Short waiting times, cleanliness and good customer service are the most influential factors when people choose a hair salon.*

Nearly all participants stressed the importance of efficient timing and scheduling at hair salons. When asked what factors would cause them to switch hair salons or stylists, long and inconvenient waiting times were mentioned repeatedly. One participant complained that, “you wait and you wait and you wait. Sometimes its hours. I don’t have that kind of time, so I’ll just switch it up and go to someone’s home.” In addition to short waiting times, participants also stressed the importance of customer service. They want stylists to be attentive and give clients their full attention when servicing them. Within the topic of customer service, one participant expressed her frustration when hair stylists do not listen to what she wants done. “If I’m paying you for a service, you better do what I ask you to do.”

*Theme 2: Women who have had negative experiences with chemical relaxers in the past now wear their hair naturally.*

Out of three participants who had used chemical hair relaxers in the past, two now wear their hair naturally after experiencing negative side effects. One complained that when using chemical relaxers her “scalp would burn every single time with scabs.” Even though not all of the



participants had experiences using hair relaxers, one participant stated that “a lot of people are going natural” now and that “this is the time to do it.” The rest of the female participants agreed with her evaluation. With this growing trend of natural hair, one of the participants commented that is important to “have a beautician that knows your hair” and knows which styles and methods are best for an individual’s hair type.

*Theme 3: Being active in the community is important for local businesses to build relationships with current or potential clients.*

When asked to share their advice for local hair salons, participants enthusiastically expressed their desire for local businesses to be actively involved in the local community. Participants agreed that “being present in the community is an easy way of having your name known and passed around.” Participants often rely on word-of-mouth from friends and family when choosing local businesses. Regarding hair salons in particular, one participant recommended “offering something free to the community for back-to-school or holidays.” Participants agreed that providing salon discounts periodically, such as back-to-school deals for younger clients, was a great way to generate business in the low-income areas of Syracuse.

*Interesting Observations*

Despite all participants being from Syracuse, none of them had heard of Hair Crea’Tique Beauty Bar before. One participant was confused by the salon’s name, saying, “I don’t understand if it’s a bar, barber shop or salon. What is it?”

When talking about features in quality hair salons, one participant mentioned “having a good social media presence and being able to see some of the work and stuff they’ve done.” Clients like being able to see that a hair stylist is qualified and skilled before booking with them. Another participant also commented that if a hair salon is going to have a website and social media accounts, then she’d like it to be easy to book online through those channels.



## Recommendations

After conducting thorough triangulated research using social listening analysis, surveys, and focus groups, Rapid Fire PR has come up with strategic recommendations to improve Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar's brand awareness and communication with its current and potential clients.

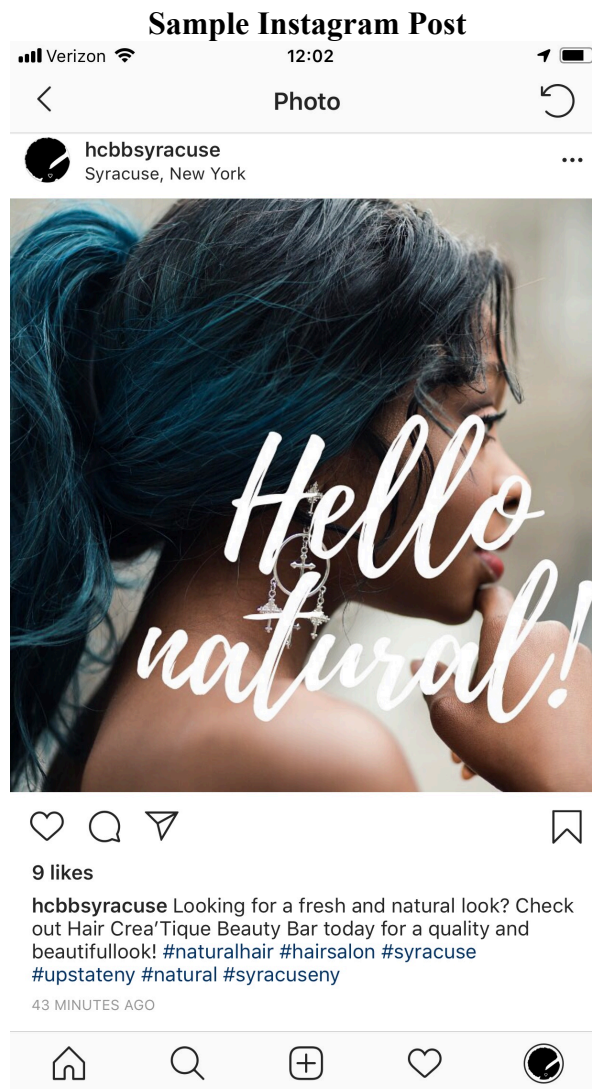
### **Recommendation 1:**

Through survey and focus group results, we discovered that professionalism was highly valued by HCBB's key publics. Therefore, our first recommendation involves developing a more professional brand image for HCBB, particularly through its website and social media channels. In order to achieve a more professional website, Rapid Fire PR suggests creating a separate tab on the salon website for clients to book appointments directly, since the current layout is difficult to navigate. In addition, the salon should update staff descriptions and active links to social media platforms on website so that all information is accurate. Our focus group results indicate that people value convenience in the salon experience and like being able to view a salon's social media accounts before booking, making these suggestions relevant.

Another way to improve HCBB's professional brand image would be to have consistent spelling and usage of the salon name across the website and different social media platforms. It is crucial for HCBB to be consistent with the spelling of its name, as this will make it easier for clients to find it on social media.

## Recommendation 2:

Rapid Fire PR recommends using the salon’s current social media accounts more strategically. This can be done by posting more consistently on social media, specifically Instagram, and including targeted hashtags. By posting more frequently, showcasing “before and after” work on clients and specials going on at the salon, HCBB would have a stronger social media presence, which was highlighted as extremely important to members of the focus groups. We also suggest to use more strategic hashtags, such as #hairsalon, #naturalhair, #syracuse and #upstateny to increase the chances these posts are seen by new people that are in HCBB’s key publics.

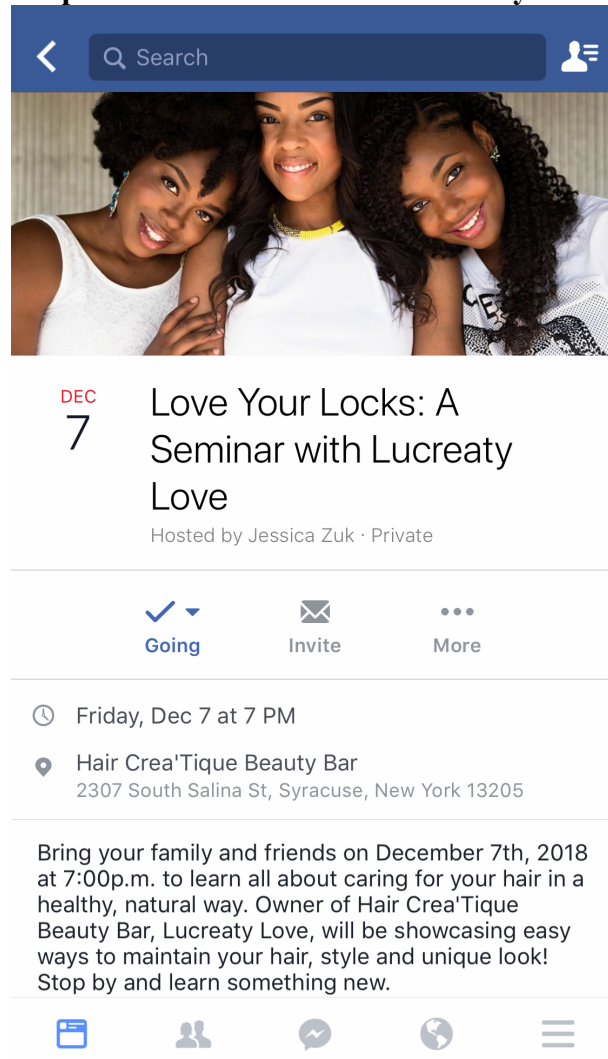


Rapid Fire PR also suggests to expand HCBB’s social media to Snapchat. This suggestion is based on the data collected from the Qualtrics Survey, which revealed that Snapchat is the social media platform that is used most often by the key publics. We suggest creating geotags that can be accessed when in the salon, which would be also be a great form of advertisement for HCBB.

### Recommendation 3:

Rapid Fire PR also suggests that HCBB becomes more involved in the community, as this would increase awareness and positive sentiments toward the salon. Focus group participants enthusiastically expressed their preference for businesses that have a positive impact and relationship with the local community. We suggest two ways in which HCBB can reach out to the community: hosting events at the salon and offering seasonal discounts. HCBB could host educational events teaching guests about the negative effects of chemical hair relaxers, teaching people basic hair styles and maintenance, or fun “girls night out” types of events.

### Sample Facebook Post for Community Events



Offering seasonal discounts such as back-to-school or holiday discounts would make local Syracuse women more inclined to visit the salon. These suggestions are important for increasing positive word-of-mouth reviews and foot traffic to the salon, as well as attracting potential clients.

**Recommendation 4:**

Focus group participants stressed the importance of short waiting times at the salon. Since HCBB does not have any full-time employees outside of the owner, it is more difficult to service multiple clients at once and increase bookings. Based on this information, we recommend that HCBB hires an additional employee who specializes in braiding to help increase clientele and decrease waiting times. Since HCBB would also like to expand its brand to encompass other beauty services, like skincare or nails, adding employees with other specialty skills will help increase the salon's offerings. Having a versatile and extensive offering of services will allow clients to receive all desired services in one localized area, creating a sense of convenience.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Social Listening Coding Sheet

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Instruction</i>	<i>Code</i>
<b>Coder</b>	Coder's Name 1 = Kelly Rogan 2 = Laura Nolan 3 = Emily Sawyer 4 = Diana Kofman 5 = Jessica Zuk	
<b>Key Words</b>	Specific Key Words Used:  1 = All (natural hair). At least one (Syracuse, New York; Upstate, New York; Cuse).  2 = All (hair; salon). At least one (Syracuse; Syracuse, New York; Cuse; Upstate, New York).  3 = All (hair); At least one (South Side, Syracuse; Lucreaty Love; Lucreaty; Hair Crea'tique Beauty Bar; Hair Creatique Beauty Bar; HCBB).  4 = All (Syracuse) (Upstate, NY). At least one (natural hair; African American hair; relaxer; hair salon).  5 = All (natural hair). At least one (Upstate New York; Upstate NY; Syracuse, NY; Syracuse).  6 = All (Hair Creatique Beauty Bar).  7 = Other (Include key words used)	
<b>Type of Search</b>	1 = Social 2 = News	
<b>Media Platform</b>	The platform on which you found the information: 1 = Facebook 2 = Twitter 3 = Instagram 4 = YouTube 5 = News source (include name of source) 6 = Other (include name of source)	
<b>Date</b>	Date the post was published	



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	<p>Write the month, day, and year</p> <p>0 = Missing data N/A = Not Applicable (write in the reason for N/A)</p>	
<b>Age</b>	<p>Age of person who posted the information</p> <p>0 = Missing data N/A = Not Applicable (write in the reason for N/A) 1 = under 18 2 = 18-24 3 = 25-40 4 = 41 – 60 5 = 61+</p>	
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<p>Race/Ethnicity of the Person who posted the information</p> <p>0 = Missing Data</p> <p>N/A = Not Applicable (write in the reason for N/A)</p> <p>1 = <b>American Indian or Alaska Native:</b> A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.</p> <p>2 = <b>Black or African American:</b> A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.</p> <p>3 = <b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander:</b> A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands</p> <p>4 = <b>Hispanic or Latino:</b> A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. The term, "Spanish origin", can be used in addition to "Hispanic or Latino".</p>	



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	<p>5 = <b>White</b>: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe.</p> <p>6 = <b>Asian</b>: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.</p> <p>7 = Other (write in the race or ethnicity)</p>	
<b>Gender</b>	<p>Gender of Person who posted information:</p> <p>0 = Missing Data</p> <p>N/A = Not Applicable (write in the reason for N/A)</p> <p>1 = Male</p> <p>2 = Female</p> <p>3 = Other (write in the gender)</p>	
<b>Sentiment</b>	<p>A social media post's sentiment (or tone) is constructed by using words, quotes, and/or images, which results in positive, neutral, or negative coverage for the information searched</p> <p>0 = Missing Data</p> <p>N/A = Not Applicable (write in the reason for N/A)</p> <p>1 = Positive</p> <p>2 = Neutral</p> <p>3 = Negative</p>	
<b>Sentiment Keywords</b>	<p>What keywords, phrases or images are associated with the post that created the sentiment (tone) coded above?</p> <p>Write in a maximum of 5 keywords</p> <p>0 = Missing Data</p> <p>N/A = Not Applicable (write in the reason for N/A)</p>	
<b>Reach</b>	<p>Facebook: Number of likes the Facebook Page has or number of members a Facebook Group has</p>	



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	<p>Twitter: Number of followers the author of the post has</p> <p>YouTube: Number of Views the video has</p> <p>Instagram: Number of followers the author of the post has</p> <p>News source: Reach estimates the potential viewership of any particular article based on the number of visitors to the specific source</p> <p>Source: Meltwater</p>	
<b>Username</b>	User name of analyzed post	
<b>Date Range for Search</b>	<p>1 = 7 days</p> <p>2 = 2 weeks</p> <p>3 = Last 90 days</p> <p>4 = Custom range (include specific dates)</p>	

## Appendix B: Qualtrics Survey

### Syracuse University

We are Syracuse University students researching hair salon habits in the Syracuse area. All answers will remain anonymous. This survey should not take more than 5 minutes. Thank you for your time.

Are you currently enrolled in an undergraduate program?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Which social media platforms do you use? Please select all that apply.

☐ Instagram

☐ Facebook

☐ Twitter

☐ Snapchat

☐ LinkedIn

☐ None

☐ Other (please specify):



How often do you check each social media platform per day?

	None	1-3 times per day	4-6 times per day	7 or more times per day
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snapchat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LinkedIn	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify): <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you use social media to find new products or services you would like to try?

☐ Yes

☐ No

How often do you visit your hair salon?



How much money are you willing to spend on salon services for your hair?

- ☐ \$0-\$25
- ☐ \$26-\$50
- ☐ \$51-\$100
- ☐ \$101-\$150
- ☐ More than \$150

Rank which of the following factors are most important to you when deciding which hair salon to visit. Please drag and drop answer choices into the order that best describes how you feel.

Quality of service

Salon reputability

Price

Salon location

Salon atmosphere

Relationship with stylist

Products used

Services offered



Please choose the range that includes your age

☐ Under 18 years old

☐ 18–24 years old

☐ 25–34 years old

☐ 35–44 years old

☐ 45–54 years old

☐ 55–64 years old

☐ 65 years or older

Which gender do you identify as?

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Non-binary

☐ Third gender

☐ Other (please specify):

☐ Prefer not to say



Please choose the race that best describes you

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Black or African-American

☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

☐ Hispanic or Latino

☐ White

☐ Asian

☐ Other (please specify):

Do you use chemical relaxers in your hair?

☐ Yes

☐ No



## Appendix C: Focus Group Questionnaire

Welcome (2 minutes)	<p>Welcome. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group. My name is _____, and I will be the moderator for today's group discussion.</p> <p>I would like to talk to you today about your attitudes and opinions about hair salons and beauty routines. The purpose of this focus group is to help a local hair salon improve its services and communication with its current and potential clients.</p> <p>I am going to ask you a few questions; I ask that only one person speaks at a time. There are no right or wrong answers, but please do respect each other's answers or opinions.</p> <p>I will be tape recording the discussion today because I don't want to miss any part of your comments. I will treat your answers as confidential. We are only going to use first names and last initials during the discussion but will not use names in the study. We also ask that each of you respect the privacy of everyone in the room and not share or repeat what is said here in any way that could identify anyone in this room.</p> <p>Finally, this discussion is going to take about 30 minutes. If at any time you want to stop, please let me know. Does anyone have any questions before we start?</p>
Ice Breaker (2 minutes)	<p>[START TAPE RECORDER NOW]</p> <p>I would like to go around the room and have each person say the current city and state she lives in.</p> <p>Thank you. I ask that you say your first name &amp; last initial before giving an answer.</p>
Opening Question (2 minutes)	<p>In the perfect hair salon, what would your ideal experience be like?</p> <p><i>Probe (If not giving enough information):</i> Please elaborate.</p>
Group Discussion – Topic 1 (4 minutes)	<p>Let's talk about hair salons in general.</p> <p>When I say "quality hair salon", what is the first thing that comes to mind?</p> <p><i>Probe: why does this word/phrase come to mind?</i></p>



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Group Discussion – Topic 2 (8 minutes)	<p>Now, let's talk about hair salon services.</p> <p>What would make you change from your current hair stylist to a new one?</p> <p>What features do you enjoy at your current hair salon?</p> <p><i>Why is it the most important?</i></p> <p>Do you use chemical hair relaxers? Why or why not?</p> <p>Have you experienced any negative side effects from chemical relaxers?</p> <p>Does a hair salon's location influence your choice in choosing a hair salon (or something similar)? Why or why not?</p> <p>Would you prefer to book an appointment online, via phone call or in person at your current salon?</p>
Group Discussion- Topic 3 (5 minutes)	<p>Thumbs up if you have ever heard of Hair Crea'Tique Beauty Bar.</p> <p>For those of you that have heard of it, how did you first hear of the salon?</p> <p>What have you heard (if anything) about the salon?</p> <p>Have you ever visited the salon?</p> <p>What have your experiences at the salon been like?</p>
Final Thoughts (5 minutes)	<p>In closing, I would like to pose one last question.</p> <p>What advice would you give me to help local hair salons appeal more to clients?</p>
Review and Wrap-up (2 minutes)	<p>[Provide summary of discussion] Did I correctly summarize your comments in today's discussion?</p> <p>Thank you for coming today and sharing your opinions with me. I hope you enjoyed the discussion.</p>



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