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# Face value

## Careers in cosmetology offer more than meets the eye

**T**hey're revered, almost adored — thought of as a girl's best friend when a girl's best friends desert her. In some cases, they're nearly as famous as their celebrity clientele, others are invited to weddings and even named as godparents to children of clients.

Though therapist, ego-booster and backup guardian aren't technically part of a cosmetologist's job, making clients look and feel good about themselves is their primary mission. It's no wonder that the industry is seeing an influx of students and recent graduates of cosmetology schools.

In fact, training at such institutions has come a long way from the old days of applying nail polish and learning basic haircutting techniques. Nowadays, students get a well-rounded education in addition to the several hundred hours of real life practice they are required to get by the state.

"A cosmetology license pretty much has everything to do with the head and the hair," explains Richard Cornish, a licensed cosmetologist who practices in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. "It provides you with the ability to do anything with hair — you can get a barber license, which allows you to do very short men's cuts. There are also many classes that consist of hair theory, which covers the processes in coloring hair and everything on the chemical side."

This delicate balance between art and science is what draws many students into the profession in the first place. Coupled with the potential to own your own business, cosmetology is ideal for someone who loves working with people and has an artistic point of view.

### Specialized services

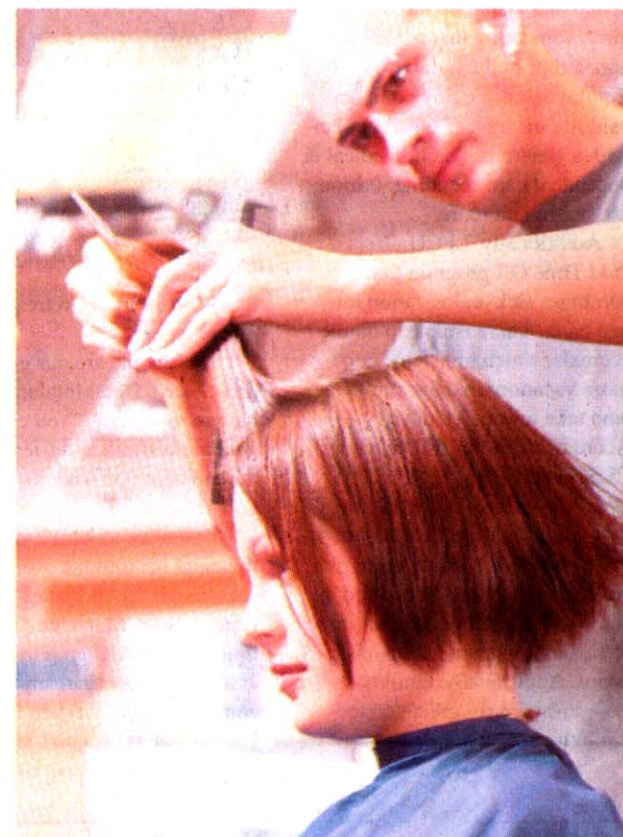
Cornish, who specializes in African-American hair, says future cosmetologists can certainly find their own specialty. Doing so may also make you more attractive to potential clients or employers who are looking for someone with a specific area of expertise.

"Salons have really professionalized over the last decade," says Hayes Batson, president and CEO of Regency Beauty Institute, an education provider with over 17 locations throughout the Midwest. "There's more emphasis on the guest and meeting their needs. Salons are putting a greater emphasis on specialization, rather than trying to be all things to all people."

Batson explains that schools have traditionally trained their students to work for salons, but the majority are going on to own their own salons today, he says. Additionally, students are taking the less common routes post-graduation, such as getting into education, product sales and providing cosmetic services for the entertainment industry.

### Business smarts

"Traditionally, schools provide technical training, but you should also expect your school to deliver business-building and life skills," says Batson in regard to Regency's wide-ranging programs. "In order to be successful, you have to learn client relationship building and goal setting, in addition to a range of business and financial skills. You may know how to do hair, but [after graduation] you have to do a lot more than that."



Graduates of cosmetology programs learn more than just how to cut hair.