



# Mind Your Own Business

“Mind Your Own Business” by Celeste Geary  
and  
Other Contributions by the Sisterlocks Training Team

## I. INTRODUCTION

It's not too soon to begin planning how you will market and run your Sisterlocks practice. Here is where you will be guided through a whole range of topics. We encourage to give them some serious thought,.



**What goals have you set for your business?**

**They may include the following:**

- Supplementing your income? (i.e. income from more than one source)
- Gaining more economic flexibility? (i.e. expanding your role to more than 'employee')
- Being able to quit your "Day Job" altogether?
- Other? (You might have a different motivation.)

### READ ON!

We've outlined some **BUSINESS BASICS** to start you thinking about the challenges and opportunities you may face as you develop your Sisterlocks practice.

## II. BUSINESS BASICS



### BUSINESS LICENSE:

**FIRST ...** Find out whether you need a business license where you live.

Also find out the following:

- Who issues business licenses? (City, county or state government offices)
- What is the cost of the license?
- How often will you need to renew, if at all?
- NOTE: Consider applying for a "Consulting" license before starting your Sisterlocks business.

**This process can seem intimidating at first.**

So many of us are not all that comfortable thinking of ourselves as 'business owners!' Well, it's time to change that view.



### LOCATION:

**Where will your business be physically located?**

- Living Room corner
- Family Room
- Remodeled section/room of the house or garage
- Salon/office space outside of the home
- Mobile (Will you travel to your clients?)

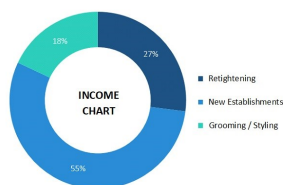
**Ask yourself, "What are the 'Pros' and 'Cons' of each of these?"**

Do you already know where you will carry out your business? Do you have any long-term goals that you will need to plan for?

**III. FINANCES****CONSIDER YOUR EXPENSES**

Below is a list of some common items that Consultants report they have claimed as business deductions on their income tax forms. Check with your financial advisor to see how many of these items might pertain to how YOU plan to run your Sisterlocks practice.

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>HOME-BASED</b>	<b>RETAIL SPACE</b>	<b>TRAVELING SERVICE</b>
Salon (work space) Equipment	*	*	*
Salon (work space) Furniture	*	*	*
% of Computer Equipment	*	*	*
% of Internet Service	*	*	*
% of Cable Service	*	*	
% of Phone/Device (Equipment & Monthly Bills)	*	*	*
Chair/Stool (clients and yourself)	*	*	*
Floor Mat	*	*	*
Support (Comfortable) Shoes	*	*	*
Supplies	*	*	*
Locking Tools	*	*	*
Cleansing agents	*	*	*
Towels	*	*	*
Reading Materials for your clients, Etc.	*	*	
Products (for clients & resale)	*	*	*



## YOUR INCOME

### How Do You Create & Sustain It?

Read on for some *great* practical advice!

Your initial Sisterlocks Package is a nice “jolt” to your income. However, the steady money which sustains your business lies in your return customers. Customers will return for ...

- Retightenings
- Groomings
- Hair care/maintenance tips/consultations
- Styling sessions
- Make a profit by ordering and selling Sisterlocks products. They are some of the best on the market and can be used for all hair types. It helps to know your product line. You will also notice a difference in your clients’ hair.
- Begin by offering your Sisterlocks Package at an “Introductory Rate.” After you’ve become more proficient, raise that rate.
- **Continue to offer occasional "Specials."**



## HANDLING MONEY

1. Always know how much money you have and how much money you need.
  2. Maintain a separate bank account for your business AND a separate savings account for money designated for taxes. (Bank and/or online banking app )Never spend more than you currently have in your business account.
- Make weekly deposits into your business accounts.
    - 75% of your weekly gross earnings goes to your business checking account
    - 25% of your weekly gross earnings goes to your business savings account for taxes.
    - ALL of the money you earn from your business should go into these accounts.
  - Pay yourself weekly, just as if you were an employee. Decide on a “Salary” for yourself and pay only that amount to yourself each week.
  - Pay for all business expenses ONLY from your Business account.
  - Never spend more than you currently have in your business account.
  - Always keep a minimum balance in your account for emergencies (i.e. \$0100-\$500) and never let your account balance drop below that amount.



## USING CREDIT CARDS

### Common sense tips:

- Designate one card ONLY for business expenses.
- Do not use your business credit card for any other types of purchases & do not use any other cards for business.
- Get a business credit card with a fairly low credit line initially. (\$1,000.00-\$2,000.00) You can increase that limit as your business needs grow.
- When/if you have reached your credit limit, STOP CHARGING and do not use any other cards.



**KEEPING RECEIPTS**  
It's a "Management" thing

**Organizing your receipts can be a real problem. (... but it doesn't have to be!)**

Keeping track of business receipts is very important because they will save you money at tax time.

- Whether hard copies, e-receipts or scanned copies, keep all receipts for purchases in a safe location. (i.e. drawer, envelope, pouch, folder, etc.)
- Issue your clients receipts for ALL client purchases and/or services. (Hard copies or e-receipts. Always make them out for the exact amount of each service that you offer.
- Tag the receipts/e-receipts that are for specific types of deductible items:
  - Mileage to and from all business-related activities
  - Transportation costs; Air Fares, Train, Gas, etc.
  - Travel-related meals
  - Work related clothing, smocks, "Locking Shoes"
  - Supplies & Equipment
  - Marketing Items / Fees for online marketing platforms / Copy/Printing expenses

**IV. MARKETING**  
**WORD OF MOUTH**

This can be your BEST marketing tool. The majority of people who go to the Sisterlocks Web Site do so after coming into contact with a Sisterlocks wearer or someone who knows a Sisterlocks wearer. Why not try this strategy: Do a few well-chosen establishments at a VERY low price, just to get your work out there. That strategy has the potential to both multiply your exposure, AND create a team of happy clients who also become your marketing agents.



If you are a Sisterlocks (OR natural hair) wearer, AND your hair always looks Fabulous, you will draw the right kind of attention and potentially, create business for yourself. As a cultural group, we demand a lot from each other. We have to "see for our selves," question and touch. Show off your locks and invite questions. You might even want to carry hand sanitizer so you can allow the option for (the right) people to actually touch your hair.

You may not think of yourself as a marketing specialist, but if you think about it, you probably already have some great ideas for how to get the word out.

We would like to add a few suggestions here

ITEM	Your Time	Little Money	Some Money	FREE
Create a Logo			*	
Word of Mouth				*
YOU! (Hair beautiful; Carry cards; Show up!)	*	*		
Web Page	*		*	
Social Media Posting	*			*
Local Publications	*	*		
Business Cards/Flyers (Post & Hand out)	*		*	



**WEB PRESENCE - Sisterlocks Web Registry**

Hundreds of potential clients visit the official Sisterlocks website every day. Maintain your presence on our official web registries by keeping your status "Active" and keeping

your contact information accurate and up-to-date. This is the best way to let potential clients know that you are a properly-trained, 'legitimate' practitioner of Sisterlocks.

You can get to the registries from the [Sisterlocks Home Page](http://www.sisterlocks.com). (www.sisterlocks.com) Just click on "Finding a Consultant." You can also reach the registries from our [Information Center](http://infocenter.sisterlocks.com/information-center-home.html).

(http://infocenter.sisterlocks.com/information-center-home.html) The "Finding a Consultant" page there explains the differences between Certified Consultants and Approved or regular Trainees.

- If you have a web page, create links back to the Sisterlocks site (www.sisterlocks.com) so that potential clients can expose themselves to official information on a wide range of topics. This will help expand their confidence in you as their Consultant.
- If you post on social media, back up your comments with references to material on the Sisterlocks website. You may even want to include links, for example, to pages in our Information Center. (http://infocenter.sisterlocks.com/information-center-home.html)



**WEB PRESENCE - Web Page**

You might decide that having a web page dedicated to your Sisterlocks practice is a good idea. However, in today's online world it might not be absolutely necessary. Here are some Pro's and Con's to consider:. (NOTE: Sisterlocks Media Guidelines apply in all cases.):

PROS	CONS
Many potential clients search for services online, and your page can be tagged to show up in their searches.	Web pages have to be kept updated in order to be useful. You will either need to invest your own time, or pay someone for this service.
A beautiful, well-designed web page can be a powerful tool in attracting attention to your Sisterlocks practice	Unless you have web design skills, you will need to pay someone to design your site and give it a 'look' that best reflects your business



**WEB PRESENCE - Social Media /Postings**

Many of us are already quite active within the social media universe. The challenge is to discover how social media activity can be a positive asset to your business.

- For example, you never want to post anything that goes against the terms of the Trademark Agreement that you signed.
- Also, you should never post any specific content that illustrate aspects of the Sisterlocks techniques. (i.e. photos, videos, technical descriptions, etc.)
- When you see such content posted by others, please report this to the Home Office.

PROS	CONS
Potential for reaching lots and lots of people.	So many people are using social media that potential clients are in a 'sea of information.'
A cost-free way to delivering good information about yourself and your services.	Others may be delivering not-so-good information and potential clients may not be able to tell the difference.

### PROVEN TO WORK



You will find that a good percent of your potential clients do NOT use either websites or social media platforms as their primary way of searching for Sisterlocks practitioners. Here are several avenues for reaching this demographic:

- Create a LOGO that can act as your professional signature.
- Business Cards – Purchase these or produce them yourself on your computer. Many people simply like something placed into their hand.
- Flyers – Post them on college campuses, on workplace information boards, at outdoor vending events, etc.
- Local Publications – Church Bulletins, Local Newspapers, etc. (Many of these have online editions as well where they also sell advertising space.)
- Your Local Chamber of Commerce or, if you have one, your local Black Chamber of Commerce.
- Be open to suggestions from clients. They can spark new marketing ideas.

### V. TECHNIQUE

If developing a long-term customer base is one of your goals, you will want to establish your Sisterlocks practice so that clients feel they can rely on your sound technique and the services you offer that meet their needs. Your pricing should always give clients the feeling that they are getting their money's worth!

### YOUR TECHNIQUE



No matter how much you market your business, if your technique is not up to par, you will lose business. Keep your technique crisp by keeping these tips in mind:

- Review your class materials regularly.
- Refresh regularly: Make every attempt to take a refresher course - online or face-to-face - as you continue to develop your skills.
- Learn to be equally proficient with both tools.
- Try sectioning, parting and locking an entire mannequin head. (Practice, Practice, Practice!) This will improve your speed.
- Focus on *accurate technique*. When you're starting out, it's okay to be a little slow in your technique. Remember, "FASTER" DOES NOT ALWAYS MEAN "BETTER".
- Practice uniformity and consistency and make certain you do the job correctly. Your speed and confidence will come sooner if you practice.
- Always use the same procedures each time you lock a new customer's hair and each time you retighten.
- Time Yourself!! As you become more accomplished in your technique, your speed will automatically increase. Improve your speed by setting realistic, yet challenging goals.

## VI. YOUR SERVICES

What Are Your Services? Make sure to introduce all prospective clients to your full range of services right from the beginning because you want them to have a good idea of what it takes to maintain beautiful Sisterlocks over time.



### BASELINE SERVICES:

- The Sisterlocks Package
  - Consultation
  - Locking Session
  - Follow-Up Appointment (This is the 1st Retightening)
  - Regular Retightenings
  - Grooming & Repair Sessions
- Lock Cutting &/or Trimming
- Trouble-Shooting Consultations (Schedule these sessions when the client has not been to a consultant for 4 or more months.)
- Assessment Consultations (Schedule these when you need to determine if you will accept a client who has been maintained by a different Consultant.)

### PRICING

Make your prices Affordable, but consider your over-head when setting your prices. **Charge by the hour for ongoing services (i.e. Retightenings, Groomings, Assessment Consultations, etc.)** This is the most fair, most transparent way to charge. Only the Sisterlocks Package of 3 visits should carry a package price. (See below.)

Here are some questions you will want to ask:

- Do you work at home or at an outside/retail location? Rates for rented spaces will generally be higher than in-home costs.
- Do your clients come to you or do you travel to your clients? Traveling takes more time and costs more in gas and wear on your vehicle, etc. As a result you might need to charge more.
- Will your introductory pricing be lower than your eventual pricing? If so, you may want to run "Introductory Specials" rather than listing lower prices as your regular pricing in the beginning.

### Package Pricing & Normal Hourly Rates

**PRICE  
IS WHAT YOU PAY  
VALUE  
IS WHAT YOU GET**

#### Sisterlocks Package - How it works:

Your initial income from doing Sisterlocks will normally be from Package Price payments you receive from establishments.

The Package Price covers 3 visits:

1. **Consultation** - Price is normally equivalent to your hourly rate for 1 to 1.5 hours. Collect funds when service is delivered. Then deduct the amount collected for Consultation from the total package price.
2. **Locking Session** - Balance of total Package Price is paid at this appointment
3. **Follow-up Appointment** - This 1st retightening has been pre-paid as part of the total package price. **DO NOT CHARGE AN ADDITIONAL FEE FOR THIS FOLLOW-UP.**



## Sisterlocks Package Breakdown

How should you charge for the Sisterlocks Package? Your hourly income for establishments can vary greatly depending on how fast you work. Here are some examples. (YOU set your actual pricing)

Sisterlocks Package Price	Deduct price for CONSULTATION (PAID UP FRONT)	HOW LONG IT TAKES FOR ESTABLISHMENT	THIS IS YOUR AVERAGE HOURLY INCOME
\$500	-\$25	30 hrs.	\$15.83/hr. (Beginners)
\$500	-\$25	15 hrs.	\$31.66 (Experienced)
\$600	-\$25	30 hrs.	\$19.17 (Beginners)
\$600	-\$25	15 hrs.	\$38.34 (Experienced)
\$700	-\$25	30 hrs.	\$22.50 (Beginners)
\$700	-\$25	15 hrs.	\$45.00 (Experienced)

### Regular Retightenings

Ongoing Retightening Sessions (and all other maintenance services) are charged at an hourly rate. This is the fairest, most transparent way to charge for your services. Do not tack on additional charges for length, head size, etc. Always be clear about what your rate is for the different services you offer.

### Grooming & Repair Sessions

Charge at least \$5 more per hour for these services. They require more focus on your part, as well as more involved techniques.

### Lock Cutting/Trimming

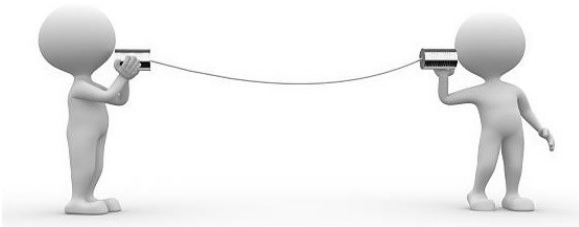
This is not the same as cutting in the way a stylist would do. Consultants may need to clip hair strands at the tips of the locks when doing an establishment when there is not enough Density at the tips to start the locking process. Or, they may need to shorten certain locks because of uneven hair growth or bunching. Charge at least \$5 more per hour for these services. They require more focus on your part, as well as more involved techniques.

### Troubleshooting Consultation

In-depth Consultations usually last from 1-1.5 hours. Charge as appropriate and at least \$5 more per hour higher than your normal hourly rate. Consider prep time and post-consult analysis or feedback, if any.

### Assessment Consultation

This type of consultation can be as short as 15 minutes. Charge accordingly, or make complimentary



### VII. COMMUNICATION

Keeping the lines of communication open assures that your marketing efforts will not go unnoticed. By staying in touch with the Home Office and with each other, you will increase your Sisterlocks network and increase your business size as well.

- Keep the Home Office updated with your current information and status. (i.e. Address, Phone Numbers, E-Mail, Not Currently taking customers, Taking customers again, Name change, Newly married, etc.)
- Look into having a Home Office-sponsored training in your local area. These trainings create/increase support groups for you.
- Communicate with each other as well as with the Home Office. Your support for one another is invaluable.
- Keep in mind that you will reach a maximum number of clients you can effectively service. There is no need for unhealthy competition because there are plenty of willing and ready potential clients to go around.
- It really is okay to refer a potential or current client to another consultant if that referral will benefit the client. Whenever you refer someone, give the other consultant a courtesy call if at all possible.
- Only refer individuals when you can vouch for the quality of their work and their work ethic. If you do not have first-hand knowledge, refer the potential client to the web registries.
- Working together at Trade Show Booths, Open House events, Fairs, etc. is an excellent way to bond as consultants and create a great support base for yourselves and your clients.



### VIII. TRUST & RESPECT

- Treat your clients with respect and they will respond positively. If clients feel they can trust you and that you have their well-being at heart, they will be extremely loyal. THIS IS A FORM OF MARKETING THAT WORKS EVERY TIME.
- As a Sisterlocks Consultant, you are not only a hair care specialist. You are a listener, counselor, advisor, personal associate and more to your clients.
- Your relationship with each client is unique and you should respect this client/consultant bond. Any personal information you receive should remain only between you and your client.

# NOTES