

NETWEBMEDIA AI SERIES · 14 INDUSTRIES

AI and Beauty & Wellness

Salons, barbershops, spas, nail studios and aesthetics clinics: fill the book, cut no-shows and keep clients coming back with AI.

SALONS

BARBERSHOPS

SPAS

NAIL STUDIOS

AESTHETICS

First edition · September 2026

Book 11 of 14 · netwebmedia.com

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About this series

Fourteen books, one question: what does AI actually change for a business like yours? Each book is written for one industry — its customers, its tools, its rules — so you can act on it this month, not someday. Buy one, or get all fourteen in the bundle.

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Published by NetWebMedia · www.netwebmedia.com · WhatsApp +1 (442) 385-4585 · English and Spanish editions

Every statistic in this book carries a numbered reference to a named, dated source in the Sources section. Benchmarks are medians or averages from other businesses as published by those sources — not predictions of your results.

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Start here

This book is for the people who actually run beauty and wellness businesses: the stylist who rents a chair and books herself between clients, the barbershop with four chairs and a phone that rings while everyone's hands are busy, the nail studio that lives on Instagram DMs, the day spa whose front desk closes at six while clients try to book at ten, the lash and brow studio, the med spa with a nurse injector and a stack of intake forms. If you sell appointments, your calendar is your inventory, and this is written for you.

It is not a book about the future of AI. It is a book about the next thirty days. Every chapter ends in something you can do this week, and every number in it comes from a named, dated source you can check in the Sources section.

Here is what you get. Chapter 1 shows where your peers already are, with the 2025 and 2026 adoption data for small businesses and the benchmark numbers for salons, barbershops, spas and med spas. Chapter 2 explains, in plain English, the five jobs AI can do in a beauty business and the ones it cannot. Chapter 3 is about your clients: how they now ask ChatGPT and Google's AI answers before they search your name, and what they expect once they find you. Chapter 4 ranks the ten use cases that pay back fastest. Chapter 5 gives you a tool stack with real September 2026 prices, in three budgets. Chapter 6 covers the rules: HIPAA for med spas, the FTC's review rule, texting consent, biometric laws and Chile's new data-protection regime. Chapter 7 is the 30-day plan. Chapter 8 is for readers in Chile and the rest of Latin America.

You can read it front to back in about forty minutes. If you are short on time, read Chapter 4 and Chapter 7 and come back for the rest.

● Beauty, wellness and AI in 2026 — four numbers to know

71%

of salon and spa regulars have abandoned a booking because nobody answered or the system was hard to use

45%

of consumers now use AI tools to find local businesses, up from 6% a year earlier

77%

of US small and mid-size businesses say they use AI regularly

14%

of small businesses have fully integrated AI into core operations

Sources: Zenoti, 2025 (vendor survey); BrightLocal, 2026; Intuit QuickBooks, 2026; Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Voices, 2026

The pattern those four numbers describe is the whole story of this book. Clients are trying to book and giving up. They are asking AI where to go. Almost every small business says it uses AI, and very few have put it to work on the front desk, where the bookings are lost. The owner who closes that gap takes clients from the shop down the street that did not.

1. Why AI matters for beauty and wellness now

A big, fragmented market with fewer new faces

Beauty is one of the largest small-business categories in the United States. IBISWorld counted 1,059,771 hair salon businesses in 2025, up 0.8% on the year and growing 2.6% a year since 2020.¹ The Bureau of Labor Statistics counts 670,800 barber, hairstylist and cosmetologist jobs in 2025 and projects 7% growth to 2035, "much faster than average"; 80% of barbers and 48% of hairdressers and cosmetologists are self-employed.² The medical-spa segment alone is over \$17 billion in revenue and adding more than \$1 billion a year.³

This is a micro-business niche: one person, or one owner with a handful of chairs, doing the service, the marketing, the booking and the books. Zenoti's benchmark of businesses on its platform puts average annual revenue at \$459,949 for salons, \$258,379 for barbershops, \$775,812 for nail salons, \$1,035,229 for med spas and \$1,320,716 for membership spas.⁴

The number to worry about is not revenue. Industry revenue grew 2% in 2024 (5% for multi-location operators), but new-guest visits fell 9%, and barbershops saw new-guest visits fall 17% in 2025; existing-guest visits rose 2% and membership sales rose 20–24%.⁴⁵ Growth is coming from the clients you already have, not from walk-ins. That makes retention, rebooking and being found by a shrinking pool of new clients the three jobs that matter, and all three are jobs AI does well.

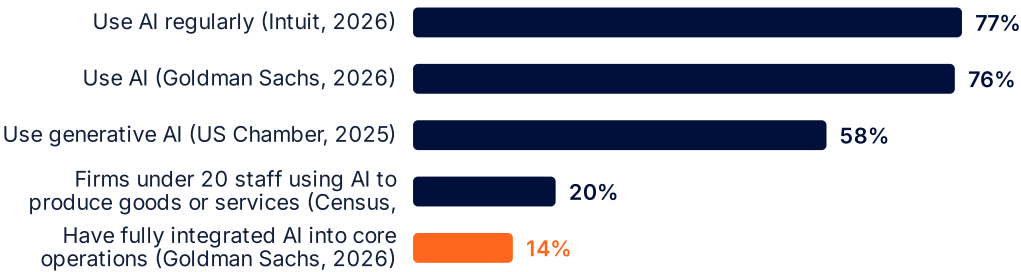
Key number: 71% of salon and spa regulars have abandoned a booking attempt because they could not reach someone or the online system was hard to use.⁶ Every one of those was a client who wanted to pay you. An AI receptionist and a booking link that works at 10 pm are the cheapest fixes in this book.

Where your peers are

Beauty-specific adoption surveys are scarce, but the small-business numbers apply directly to a niche where most operators are self-employed. Intuit's 2026 AI Impact Report, built on 34,000 SMB owners and anonymised data from 5.3 million QuickBooks businesses, found 77% of US small and mid-size businesses use AI regularly; 78% say it improved productivity (up from 46% in July 2024), 43% credit it with revenue gains against 2% reporting declines, 29% report lower costs against 17% higher, and 27% report shorter workdays.⁷ The US Chamber of Commerce puts generative-AI use at 58% of small businesses, up from 40% in 2024 and 23% in 2023.⁸

What they use it for is the front desk and the marketing: the top small-business AI uses are marketing (43%), customer service (36%), admin (33%), data processing (32%) and bookkeeping (29%).⁹ That is a salon owner's Sunday-night to-do list.

● **Small businesses and AI: saying you use it vs. building it into the business**



Sources: Intuit QuickBooks, 2026; Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Voices, 2026; US Chamber of Commerce, 2025; US Census Bureau, 2026

The gap between using and integrating

Look at the bottom two bars. The US Census Bureau's Business Trends and Outlook Survey asks a stricter question — do you use AI to produce goods or services — and finds fewer than 20% of firms with under 20 employees say yes (19.8% in May 2026), against 32% of firms with 100–249 staff and 37% with 250 or more.¹⁰ Goldman Sachs' survey of 1,256 small-business owners found 76% use AI but only 14% have fully integrated it into core operations; 93% of users report a positive impact and 73% say they need more training and implementation help.¹¹ Typing a caption into ChatGPT and running a front desk on AI are very different things.

The beauty-specific evidence, thin as it is, points the same way. Zenoti reports that locations with high adoption of its AI phone concierge grew sales 4% in 2025, against 1% for non-users.⁴ That is vendor data about the vendor's own product, so treat it as a signal, not a promise.