



Finding Practice Clients

One of the hardest aspects of successfully completing your online nail program, and one we hear the most from students is, how to find practice clients to work on.

While working your way through the theoretical portion of your program is of the utmost importance to understanding what it is you should be doing and why, perfecting your practical applications is what will ultimately determine your success as a Nail Professional.

This is the reason we at TAOND, put you through your paces during your program in mastering practical applications. Understanding what you should be doing is great, but until you actual put 'theory into practice' you'll never fully comprehend the full aspects of any service, and your skills as a Nail Professional will suffer.



We all know the only way to get better at something is to practice, practice and practice some more! In the nail industry there is an unsaid rule that **"To become even competent at a particular application service is to have completed 100 sets of the same application"**. Now that's a lot of practice!

So for this very reason we require our students to complete their required practical applications quite a number of times for each service. Our goal is to get your understanding of how an application works, how it works on different clients and what happens to that application in the 2-3 weeks that your practice clients are out of your sight, to a level that will assist you in feeling absolutely comfortable in your skill set. And that takes practice!

Also, getting your application timing down to an acceptable level of even a **"Nail Industry Newbie"** starting out takes several application practice sessions. As you can imagine; no one is going to pay you for your services as a professional if they are sitting at your desk or pedicure chair for over 2 hours.

You'll also need a variety of different clients sitting across from you at your desk in order to have some competence in your skill set. As a Nail Professional you'll never know who will be walking in through your doors and what their service expectations may be, so the more variety of clients you've actually had your hands on during your educational experience, the better you'll feel about dealing with any particular service requests as a professional.

There is another reason for us to push you out of your comfort zone in finding and recruiting models to practice on, which is simple. In order to earn a living as a Nail Professional when you start out, half of what you'll be doing is **"building your client book"** and this is a skill all in itself.

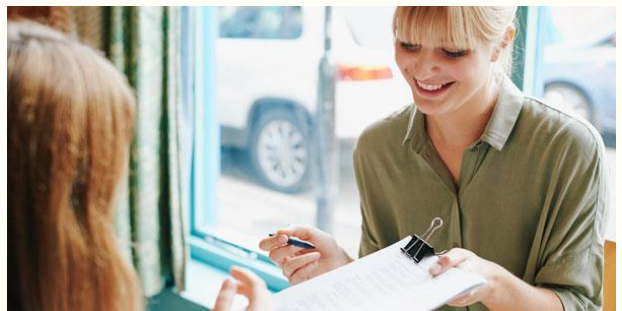
Learning how to market yourself and learning how to recruit clients to practice on is the same skill set as recruiting paying clientele for your business. Unfortunately you can't just hang out your business sign and hope that clients will come through your doors - most failed salon owners learn that lesson quickly. You need to market yourself constantly!

So we've included this article in our **TAOND Program** to give you some tips and hints on how to recruit practice clients in order to complete your practical requirements.

We've also included some tips from some of our successful TAOND students on what they did in order to meet their program requirements so that you can follow some of their guidelines as well.

Let's start with the basics – **Friends and family**. Most of us lucky ones can count on our friends and family members to step up and volunteer their time for us. And some of the even luckier ones don't need to even ask twice! Your friends and family members understand that you are taking a nail program, something that you've wanted to do

for a very long time and is something that you're very passionate about and have no problem volunteering some time to assist your cause!



BTW - don't discount husbands, boyfriends, fathers, sons and male friends! Of course their services count towards your required sheets! Getting practical experience performing nail services on men will open up a whole new world for your professional services once you open your business! Men's professional nail services are growing by leaps and bounds every year in the beauty industry!

And remember, each of your friends and family members have friends and family members and so on and so on! So be sure to ask them to ask their friends and family if they know anyone who may love a FREE service after you've completed their service as well.

A nice "Thank you" gift of a bottle of cuticle oil or a hand cream is a nice referral gesture on your behalf as well. Remember it's all about marketing! Soon, if they love that small gift that you gave them they'll be contacting you to purchase retail items all the time – a no-brainer money maker! (Check out our **TAOND Affiliate Program** on the TAOND website – you could get started making money in retailing nail products with no money down!).

Unfortunately, some of you don't live near enough friends and family to complete all the required practicals in your program, and that's OK! Here are so more tips on recruiting models:

Your co-workers and co-workers of your husband, boyfriend or partner

Teachers at your children's school

Social media - Facebook, Twitter - isn't that what these social media tools were created for?

Bartering services with other businesses

YOURSELF! Do your nails and others will ask!

A final word on Nail Trainers. Yes, we do allow you to complete 25% of your required practical work on a Nail Trainer, especially if you're feeling a little unsure on a particular application, or you want to get your speed up on that particular application before inviting a practice client over (mostly important with acrylic which can be very time consuming at the beginning).



BTW – Can't afford a professional Nail Trainer Hand? Jessica Hall, one of our fabulous TAOND students has posted an amazing article in the TAOND Student Resource Centre "CHAT WITH OTHER STUDENTS" section, on how to make your very own nail trainer hand for only \$5.00!! Look it up if you need some advice on how to create your own hand!

However, we do not allow for you to complete *more than the 25%* of your requirements on the Nail Trainer for the following reasons:

- The Nail Trainer has only 5 fingers, and setting your timing expectations on completing only the 5 practice fingers can throw off your 'real time' finishing.
- The Nail Trainer doesn't bleed when cut, complain about the heat from your filing, have to go to the bathroom in the middle of your service, etc. So though it's great to start out on it isn't necessarily a 'realistic' training experience. We

want you to get your hands on as many 'real ' people as possible in order to get the most out of your educational experience.

Not very often does a Nail Trainer walk into a salon and ask for a nail service. If it did we know you'd think "I got this!" Ha ha ha – just a little TAOND humor there!!

Need more advice?

Here's what just some of our wonderfully successful TAOND students have done in order to meet their program goals. Check out what appeals to you!

"For me, I find as soon as I just offer them a free manicure or pedicure I get them right away. Who wouldn't want to enjoy an hour or even over an hour of sitting in a chair getting pampered? They come out with beautiful looking nails and skin that didn't cost them anything and they also know that they are doing this for a good cause because they are helping you out with your course. Also.....if you are doing this to start your own business I find it is a good way to get your first clientele. If they are satisfied with your work they will come back for your services. That's why it is important to treat your volunteer as though it were a real customer."

JOHANNE C.

"I posted posters explaining my new adventure and that I needed volunteers to support me and to also have some free 'pamper' time. I also went to our local mother and toddler play groups and posted a poster there too. A lot of those moms don't have a lot of spare cash and would love a chance to help while also getting some alone time. Every time I went to the local grocery store, bank, convenience store and even my doctor's office I just somehow slipped my new career choice into the conversation and asked if they were interested in a free service to help me out. I also found doing my own nails and choosing a classic but unique design was like a business card and a conversation starter where I then could ask people if they wanted to have a free session. Social media and networks are the top though! I made a Facebook page about my new career choice and advertised certain dates on my status for Free manicures, pedicures, acrylics, fiberglass and gels! People really responded with Facebook."

BETH-ANN C.

"I actually find it pretty easy to find volunteers. I have been making comments about the program as my Facebook status, and made a mental note of who wrote "I want to get my nails done" type comments under it. So when it came time I called on those people right away, I am also not a shy person and had no problem calling people I knew and basically telling them "I needed them to come over and get a service done". A little bit of a guilt trip never hurts lol.

Third and probably the one that makes all the difference. I haven't charged anyone for anything yet. I can't charge them for a service I can't guarantee. I am sure lowering the prices would help get clients in. I have had 3 clients who refuse to let me do it for free, so instead we bartered services. I did full gel sets on them, and at some point I will use the hairstylist, tattooist, and dog groomer.

Also, since I don't work, and my hubby does, my schedule is pretty flexible. I am able to take clients at 10 am, or 10 pm. so that has helped in scheduling people in."

JODY M.

"There are a few things I've done to get my volunteers:

My number one is as simple as doing my own nails, and once the ladies ask where I get my nails done that's when I start chatting up a storm about what I do =), you are your own walking advertisement, once the ladies know (at least in this area) the word spreads like wildfire lol.

Once I have a potential volunteer I ensure to let them know, that I am still learning and the service may not be perfect, but if anything I do they don't like or doesn't make them feel comfortable I tell them to let me know asap.

Another thing that has also really helped is the use of my social networks, I've posted some of my work and when needed I've also posted the need I had for volunteers.

I've also approached ladies mostly at my church that I know would usually not have time or the money to get anything done, and I tell them that if they can help me as a model, I can help them relax with a treat for the hands =).

I've also used my family members like my niece, my mother and my sister-in-law which are my most faithful models =D

I've also volunteered myself for some fundraising activities for my church in where I do nail art for a cause, I've had a few volunteers come out from that and when I do work on them, they actually leave a donation which is pretty cool.

NANCY M.



So as you can see there are as many different approaches to recruiting practice clients as there are no limits to your imagination!

If you have a unique way that you've been able to recruit practice clients email us your story so we can post it for other fellow TAONDers to learn from!

Best of luck in your recruiting and we can't wait to see your work!

Your team at **TAOND**