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Referral and Direct Mail Campaign for Licensed Professionals

Two trackable new account acquisition programs

Prepared for

Client name withheld

A professional-only beauty supply wholesaler (details withheld)

Prepared by Hunley Media | August 19, 2026

Executive Summary

Your store has one advantage no digital vendor can match: your customer universe is finite, licensed, and knowable. You do not sell to the public. You sell to licensed cosmetologists and barbers, and every one of them holds a license tied to a name and a mailing address. There is no need to rent broad audiences or blanket a geography with impressions hoping a stylist walks through it. We can put an offer directly in the hands of every licensed professional in the metro market, and we can count exactly how many of them walk in and open an account.

This proposal replaces spray and pray impressions with two plans that work the same closed audience from opposite ends. Plan A is a referral handbill dropped into every customer's bag, turning the professionals already in the store into a recruiting force for roughly $1,600 in fixed cost. Plan B is a three wave direct mail campaign to a purchased list of every licensed beauty professional in the metro market, reaching the ones who have never walked in. Both are anchored by hard offers, tracked at the register, and supported by a professional photo refresh of your Google Business Profile. The underlying idea is the same in both: the giveaway buys the first visit, the credit buys the second, and the habit is what the campaign is actually purchasing. This is not a postcard campaign or a coupon program; it is buying the first two visits cheaply enough that a percentage of licensed professionals become habitual customers.

Plan A runs on roughly **$1,600** in fixed cost. Plan B is a defined one time investment of roughly **$10,800 to $12,100**, most of it postage, printing, and an offer reserve that is only spent when a new account actually opens. Neither involves a retainer, a six month contract, or an automatic renewal, and the only decision needed today is Plan A: the Plan B numbers get firmed up for free while the handbill produces its first results.

The Situation: Why the Other Two Proposals Miss

You received two proposals. Both sell reach. Neither solves your actual problem, which is targeting a closed professional audience and proving results.

Proposal 1: Paid social, organic social, and mobile display ($5,000 per month)

- **Meta advertising with broad geographic targeting** delivers your ad to the general public in your service area. Your buyers are a fraction of one percent of that audience. You would pay to show wholesale offers to people who legally cannot buy from you.
- **150,000 mobile display ads per month across 50,000+ apps** is a volume number, not a targeting claim. Banner ads inside mobile games do not open wholesale accounts.
- **At $5,000 per month, a year costs $60,000** with reporting built around impressions and clicks, not new accounts.

Proposal 2: Branding and awareness package ($1,167 per month, six month minimum)

- **About 97,000 Meta impressions per month at $12 per thousand.** Impressions are the input, not the outcome. The contract explicitly disclaims any performance guarantee and states that performance is not valid grounds for termination.
- **Six month minimum with automatic renewal**, cancellation honored only by written letter mailed to out of state, plus an audience expansion clause that lets the vendor widen or remove your targeting

to hit its own impression quota. That clause converts your targeted campaign into an untargeted one at their discretion.

The geofencing problem, stated plainly

The appeal of geofencing is the idea of hitting competitors' locations with your ads. In practice, location targeting at this grain resolves through a mix of coarse signals, and in the weakest cases falls back to cell tower triangulation across an area far larger than a building. Everyone moving through that zone gets served: commuters, delivery drivers, customers of the businesses next door. The overwhelming majority of that traffic is not a licensed professional. And when someone does open an account, there is no reliable way to attribute it to the ad. You would be paying for waste you cannot see and results you cannot measure. Direct mail to a licensee list inverts both problems: near zero waste going out, and hard attribution coming back.

The Strategy: Concentrate Force

Instead of spreading a budget thin across the whole metro population, we concentrate the entire effort on the only people who matter: the few thousand licensed cosmetologists and barbers within driving distance of the store. Every dollar lands on a qualified buyer. Every response is countable. A small, focused campaign aimed at exactly the right people will outproduce a large, diffuse one aimed at everyone.

Four principles govern the plan:

1. **Target the license, not the location.** The license roster is the audience. Mail goes to the professional's home address, where it gets opened.
2. **Lead with a hard offer.** Awareness does not move product. A free product bundle tied to a new account does.
3. **Track at the register.** The postcard is the tracking mechanism. Redemption requires the card or its code, so every result is counted.
4. **Buy the second visit, not just the first.** The offer is structured in two halves on purpose. One visit is a transaction; two visits is the start of a habit, and a habit is the only thing in this campaign with compounding value.

Creative and Assets (Shared by Both Plans)

Photography

Will Simpson of Moments of Excellence (moe-photos.com) will shoot the store, shelves, product, and team for **~$1,200**. His branding portfolio is at momentsofexcellence.pixieset.com. The images serve double duty: they carry the postcards and they refresh the Google Business Profile, which is the first thing a stylist sees when they search the store name after receiving a card.

Design

Robert with Hunley Media will design the postcard and handbill for **~$150** each, invoiced by Robert directly. One master design with per wave headline and code variants.

Google Business Profile refresh

Direct mail drives search. When the card lands, the next step for most recipients is typing the store name into Google. The profile needs to close that loop: current photos from the shoot, correct hours, the licensed professionals only positioning stated clearly, and the offer mentioned in a Google post. This is included in the program at no vendor cost; it is setup work, not a subscription.

Plan A: The Referral Handbill

The starting point, and the cheapest customer acquisition the store will ever run. Instead of buying a list to reach strangers, this turns every existing customer into the distribution channel. The people already walking out of the store know other licensed professionals; that is the entire trade. A referral card puts an incentive on that relationship and makes it trackable.

How it works

1. A handbill is printed using the new photos, carrying a referral version of the offer, and one goes into the bag of every customer who buys in the store.
2. The customer writes their name, license number, and phone number in the marked spots and hands the card to a friend in the trade.
3. The friend brings the card in, opens a new account, and spends $50. On that first purchase they receive a **free liter of shampoo and conditioner**, plus **$25 placed on account for their next visit**.
4. The referrer gets **$25 added to their account** when the card is redeemed.
5. **The moment a card is redeemed, someone from the store calls the referrer.** They are thanked for the referral, told the $25 is on their account, and invited to come back in, spend it, and pick up more handbills. Two minutes on the phone, and it does three things at once: the referrer gets proof the program is real, they now have money pulling them back into the store quickly, and they leave the call re armed to refer again.
6. The new account holder starts getting handbills in their bag too, so every conversion seeds the next round. That is the viral loop.

Why it works

- Distribution is free. No postage, no list. The card rides in a bag that was already leaving the store.
- The license number on the card does three jobs: it confirms the referrer is a real pro, it kills coupon abuse, and it gives you a perfect record of who referred whom. Both credits land on named accounts, so tracking is automatic.
- A referral arrives with something no ad can buy: a colleague's personal recommendation. The referrer is spending their own credibility on it.
- Both $25 credits pull a future visit. The referrer comes back to spend theirs, the new account holder comes back to spend theirs. Every redemption manufactures two return trips, which is the same habit engine Plan B is built on.
- The thank you call closes the loop. Most referral programs die because the referrer never finds out whether it worked. The call is the confirmation, the reward notification, and the re engagement touch in one, and it costs nothing but two minutes at the counter phone. Referrers who get the call become repeat referrers; the best ones will effectively become an unpaid outside sales force.

Plan A cost

Line item	Vendor	Estimated cost
Photography (shared with Plan B if both run; full cost if standalone)	Will Simpson, Moments of Excellence	~$1,200
Handbill design (invoiced directly by designer)	Robert with Hunley Media	~$150
Printing, ~5,000 handbills, gang run	Local print or Mail King USA	~$200 to $350
Redemption reserve per new account: liter duo at wholesale plus two $25 credits at wholesale cost, roughly $40 to $50 true cost each	In house stock	Scales with results

Standalone fixed cost: roughly $1,550 to $1,700. Run alongside the Plan B mail campaign, the photos are already paid for and the incremental cost is about $350 to $500 in design and printing. Every dollar beyond that is redemption cost, which only exists when a new account opens.

Plan A launches first regardless. It costs about a seventh of the mail campaign, it starts working the day the handbills arrive, and its redemption numbers tell you how well the offer converts before any postage is spent. Plan B then pours new professionals into the top of the same loop: every account the mail opens starts receiving handbills in their bag.

Plan B: Direct Mail to the License List

The handbill works the store's existing traffic. Plan B reaches the professionals who have never walked in: a three wave postcard campaign to a purchased list of every licensed cosmetologist and barber in the metro market, carrying the same style of offer, tracked the same way at the register.

The Audience and the List

Source: Complete Medical Lists, Cosmetologists and Beauty Professionals file (completemedicallists.com). The file carries **~20K statewide records** spanning cosmetologists, barbers, estheticians, manicurists, and hairdressers, deliverable with a 95 percent deliverability guarantee, NCOA processed, and selectable by county, zip, or zip radius.

We will pull the core county plus the surrounding counties (three adjacent counties, and optionally the cross-state side of the metro). Based on the metro's share of state population, expect roughly **4,000 to 5,500 records**. We will get an exact free count before ordering. Planning figure below assumes 4,500. The 3,000 name minimum is comfortably cleared.

List pricing (published rates)

- Base postal file: $60 per thousand. Geography select (county / zip radius): $5 per thousand. File delivery by email: $25 flat. Key coding for wave tracking: $2 per thousand.
- Single use, 4,500 names: approximately $320 to $350.

List due diligence before ordering

Plan B is only as good as the file, so the free count call also settles six questions in writing: what the 95 percent deliverability guarantee actually covers; how recently the license sourced records were updated; whether the file can be deduped by household; whether the usage license permits matchback analysis, not just mailing; whether out-of-state licensees are available under the same file for the cross-state side of the metro; and, most important, whether we can suppress your existing customers before mailing. Sending an open a new account offer to a loyal current customer risks irritating your best people, and every suppressed name saves three pieces of postage. You will provide the current customer list for suppression; it never leaves your control beyond that use.

- **Recommended: unlimited one year usage** at two times base plus selects and delivery, approximately $600 to $650 for 4,500 names. Since the campaign mails the same list three times, the unlimited license is cheaper than paying per use and leaves room for a fourth mailing or a holiday drop at no additional list cost.

The Offer

Free professional shampoo and conditioner set on the first visit, plus $50 placed on account or issued as a gift card for the next visit, when a licensed professional opens a new account and spends $60.

Why this works:

- It is concrete and it is big. A free duo plus $50 of store credit is a headline a working stylist reads twice. Percent off coupons blur together; this does not.
- The $60 minimum qualifies the buyer and starts a real basket. The duo costs wholesale, and the $50 credit costs only the wholesale cost of whatever it is spent on, roughly half its face value. True cost per redemption lands around $35 to $45 against a new recurring wholesale account.
- **The $50 is issued as account credit or a gift card, redeemable on the next visit. This is the whole point of the offer.** Getting a stylist in the door once is hard. Getting them in a second time is still hard, but easier, and much easier when they know free money is sitting on their account waiting for them. After two visits, the habit has started forming: they know the layout, they know the staff, and the store is now part of their routine. The duo buys the first visit; the credit buys the second; the habit is what the campaign is actually purchasing. If the second basket exceeds the $50 credit, as is likely for a working professional restocking supplies, the credit becomes a discount against revenue that would not have existed otherwise rather than a pure giveaway.
- It filters for the right behavior. The prize is not the giveaway; it is a licensed professional who has now been in the store twice in a month. That is where a supply relationship comes from, and it is worth far more than the cost of the duo and the credit combined.
- Why the credit is $50 here and $25 in Plan A: both plans spend roughly the same total subsidy per new account, a duo plus $50. Plan A splits the $50 and gives half to the introducer, because a referral arrives with a colleague's trust and needs less incentive on the recipient. A postcard from a stranger carries no trust, so the full $50 goes to the prospect. Same budget, allocated to where the persuasion is needed.

Redemption mechanics: the recipient must bring the postcard or present the printed offer code. Each wave carries its own code (WAVE1, WAVE2, WAVE3 or similar), so you know not just how many responded but which touch converted them. Final offer wording, product selection for the duo, and any exclusions are yours to approve before design.

Campaign Structure: Three Waves

Direct mail response compounds with repetition. Most people do not act on the first touch; they act when the third card lands the week they happen to be annoyed with their current supplier. Three waves to the same list, roughly three weeks apart, is the standard cadence and the reason we buy the unlimited use license.

Wave	Message angle	In home target	Code
Wave 1	Introduction plus the offer. New face of the store, what a pro account gets you, free duo plus $50 credit.	Week 1	Code A
Wave 2	Proof and urgency. Photos of the store and shelves, what neighbors have claimed, offer restated.	Week 4	Code B
Wave 3	Last call. Deadline framing on the offer, simple map, store hours, phone number.	Week 7	Code C

Same core design across all three waves for recognition, with the headline and code swapped per wave. That keeps design cost at one card plus minor revisions.

Production and Mailing

Printer and mail house: Mail King USA (mailkingusa.com), a bulk direct mail provider with strong reviews and a meet or beat price guarantee. Planning rate for a jumbo postcard, printed and mailed with postage, is approximately **$0.55 per piece** at this volume. We will confirm with a firm quote; their guarantee gives us leverage if anyone quotes lower.

Volume: 4,500 pieces per wave, three waves, approximately 13,500 pieces total.

Plan B cost

Line item	Vendor	Estimated cost
Licensed professional mailing list, metro, unlimited 1 year use, key coded	Complete Medical Lists	$600 to $650
Photography: store, product, team; images licensed for print and web	Will Simpson, Moments of Excellence	~$1,200
Postcard design, one master with three wave variants (invoiced directly by designer)	Robert with Hunley Media	~$150
Print and mail, ~13,500 jumbo postcards across three waves, postage included	Mail King USA	~$7,425
Offer redemption reserve: duo plus $50 store credit, both at wholesale cost, roughly $35 to $45 true cost each (est. 40 to 60 redemptions)	In house stock	$1,400 to $2,700
Strategy, coordination, and Google Business	Hunley Media	$0

Line item	Vendor	Estimated cost
Profile refresh (no charge)		

Total estimated program cost: $10,775 to $12,125, spent once over roughly ten weeks, and the redemption reserve is only spent when a new account actually opens. For comparison, Proposal 1 costs $5,000 every month and Proposal 2 locks in $7,002 over its six month minimum for impressions alone. This program costs a little over two months of Proposal 1 and produces a countable number of new wholesale accounts plus a photo library and a refreshed Google profile you keep.

Co-op dollars: a way to cut this cost further

Before any money is spent, ask the corporate parent side and your key shampoo and conditioner brands about co-op advertising funds. Manufacturer co-op programs commonly reimburse a share of local advertising that features their brand, and a direct mail campaign is exactly the kind of documented, receipt backed spend co-op programs are built for.

- The natural fit: whichever brand supplies the free duo gets featured on the card. That gives the brand a clean case to fund part of the mailer, the giveaway product itself, or both.
- Direct mail is easy to substantiate for co-op claims: a printed sample, the mail house invoice, and the postage receipt are the standard proof package.
- Any approved co-op reimbursement directly reduces acquisition cost, and brand supplied giveaway inventory reduces it further. Have this conversation with your rep before the design is finalized, since co-op programs usually require brand logo placement and pre-approval of the creative, and get the actual program rules in writing in week 1.

Tracking and What Success Looks Like

Both plans report the same way, at the register, with no dashboard.

- **Primary metric: new accounts opened** with a wave code (Plan B) or a referrer name and license number (Plan A) attached.
- **Secondary: first visit revenue** against the offer minimums, the share of new accounts that return to redeem their credit, referrals per referrer, and 90 day repeat rate.
- **Matchback:** at the end of the campaign, compare the new account roster against the mailing list to catch responders who came in without the card.

Scenarios, not predictions

Rather than promise a response rate, here is the Plan B math at three acquisition rates on 4,500 mailed professionals, using the full program budget including the reusable assets (photos, list license, Google profile):

Acquisition rate	New accounts	Cost per acquired account (full budget)
0.5%	~23	~$470 to $530
1.0%	~45	~$240 to $270
2.0%	~90	~$120 to $135

Whether any of those numbers is good depends on one figure only you can supply: **what a new, retained professional account is worth over 12 months.** To turn this into a real decision, we need three numbers from you at kickoff: average 12 month revenue of a new account, gross margin, and 12 month retention. Multiply those together and you have the expected 12 month gross profit of an acquired account. From there, you decide what share of that profit you are willing to spend to acquire the customer, and that sets your allowable cost per account. Then the table above stops being an argument and becomes a comparison against your own number. And every account the handbill produces lowers the blended cost further, since Plan A's fixed cost is a rounding error.

Timeline

Plan A is live as soon as handbills are printed, around the end of week 2. The schedule below carries both plans.

Week	Milestone
Week 1	Free list count and firm quotes confirmed. Offer wording and duo product approved. Photo shoot scheduled.
Week 2	Photo shoot completed. Handbill and postcard designs finalized. Handbills printed and going into bags by end of week. List ordered and delivered.
Week 3	Wave 1 mails. Google Business Profile refreshed with new photos and offer post. Register staff briefed on codes.
Week 6	Wave 2 mails. Wave 1 and handbill redemptions reviewed.
Week 9	Wave 3 mails.
Week 12	Final tally: redemptions by wave, matchback against list, cost per new account, and a recommendation on whether a fourth drop (already covered by the list license) is warranted.

Next Steps: A Staged Decision

You do not have to approve $12,000 today. The only decision on the table right now is Plan A.

1. **Approve Plan A: roughly $1,600.** Book Will for the shoot, hand Robert the brief, print the handbills. Live within two weeks.
2. **Authorize the free Plan B homework.** Hunley Media requests the count and due diligence answers from Complete Medical Lists and a firm per piece quote from Mail King USA. Costs nothing and commits nothing. You pull the existing customer list for suppression and the three account economics numbers.
3. Ask your corporate rep and top shampoo brands about co-op funds and brand supplied product for the giveaway, before creative is finalized.
4. **Decide Plan B when the facts are in:** firm quotes, the list count, co-op answers, your account economics, and the first weeks of handbill redemptions showing how the offer converts. If the numbers say go, wave 1 is in mailboxes three weeks later. If they say no, you have spent $1,600, kept the photos and the Google profile, and built a referral engine that keeps running.

Hunley Media's strategy, coordination, and Google Business Profile work are provided at no charge. Every dollar in this proposal goes to the list, the photos, the design, the mail, and the offer itself. No contracts, no retainers, no renewal clauses. If the numbers at the end do not justify continuing, we stop, and you keep the list license, the photos, and the accounts.

Prepared by Hunley Media for a professional beauty supply client (details withheld). All third party prices are published or quoted planning figures and will be confirmed in writing before any order is placed.