

How Charles Ifergan Salon Leveraged Client Tracking to Boost Employee Retention

Locations: Chicago, IL; Deerfield, IL; Oakbrook Terrace, IL
Boulevard customer since 2021

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Introduction

Charles Ifergan opened his first salon in 1973 with a simple vision: “To bring the *je ne sais quoi* that defines sexy, French hair to American women.” Half a century later, Charles Ifergan Salon has three locations in and around Chicago, and its founder’s work has been featured in numerous fashion editorials, as well as on the Oprah Winfrey Show and Good Morning America. Meanwhile, the business has become a family affair, with Charles’ son Philippe Ifergan taking the reins as the salon’s general manager.

Charles Ifergan Salon’s “effortless, sensual, and discreetly daring looks” are crafted by a departmentalized team that separates styling and color services, allowing specialists to hone their craft and focus on what they do best. This unique approach, while successful for clients, led to scheduling challenges that the salon’s previous software couldn’t keep up with. In June 2021, Charles Ifergan Salon made the switch to Boulevard and discovered how its wide range of intuitive features could be used to further serve clients while rewarding employees for their stellar work.

Challenge

Managing three busy salons while keeping clients and staff alike happy is no easy task, and Philippe realized the salon’s previous software just couldn’t keep up with the business’s specific needs. Among these shortcomings, “I think one of the biggest was that we did not have a central database,” Philippe said in an interview. This made it difficult to keep track of client data across multiple locations, which impacted the salon’s ability to schedule efficiently. These personalized details help self-care businesses more accurately predict appointment lengths, as well as allow stylists to hit the ground running once the appointment kicks off.

“Because we’re departmentalized, timing for us is of the utmost importance. If someone within the color department falls behind, it can create a massive hold-up for everybody else,” he noted as an example.

When employee's schedules are optimized, their earning potential increases over the course of the day, thus increasing retention. Charles Ifergan Salon prides itself – some staffers have been with the company for decades. Philippe credits this “amazing team” as one of the key reasons for the salon's longevity and success, and wanted to further encourage long-term retention by maximizing employees' time and incentivizing stellar work beyond the standard commission structure that many self-care businesses offer. However, creating such an employee loyalty program would require more advanced technology than the salon had in use prior to 2021.

Solution

Two years ago, Charles Ifergan Salon made the switch to Boulevard. Among the key features of the platform, Precision Scheduling™ and Custom Timing and Pricing were especially appealing to the Ifergan team due to their unique scheduling needs. Boulevard's Precision Scheduling™ technology aids clients in the self-booking process by intelligently fitting services into ideal time slots, allowing for the kind of scheduling optimization Philippe was seeking. Because this feature centralizes data for multi-location businesses, Philippe is now able to manage the entire Ifergan empire from a single location.

This improved operations in a number of ways:

- **Faster payroll processing:** Before Boulevard, Philippe said that processing payroll could take eight hours or even longer.
- **Customizable reports:** Every salon's reporting needs are different, so Philippe worked with the Boulevard team to find the ideal solution. “It's made things a lot easier,” he said of the “collaborative effort.”
- **More intelligent booking:** According to Philippe, being able to schedule appointments by processing time has been a big help when it comes to facilitating the salon's departmentalized services. “That makes us even better at what we do,” he commented.
- **Top-tier customer service:** Philippe stressed that the Boulevard team was always available to troubleshoot and work through any questions he had.
- **A centralized database:** One of the salon's biggest pain points before the switch to Boulevard was the lack of centralized client information. Now, Philippe said, “Within Boulevard, we have that central database that allows us to manage all of our contacts across the organization.”
- **Intuitive, web-based interface:** Philippe called the software “easy to use” and praised the fact that Boulevard's solutions are cloud-based, making them easier to access from anywhere.

Perhaps the most impressive feat Philippe was able to accomplish with Boulevard technology was leveraging the Client Tracking feature to create a comprehensive employee loyalty program. Here are just a few ways he implemented these rewards:

- **Using assigned/reassign tags to guarantee 320 new clients per staff member:** Not only does this make stylists more confident about the work experience, it also provides insight into staff-acquired clients versus business-acquired ones.
- **Converting service and product sales to flight miles:** By providing unique incentives that team members can use in their personal lives, Charles Ifergan Salon shows that it values work/life balance and encourages experiences outside of the salon.
- **Punctuality bonuses:** Because poor punctuality affects staff performance, business performance, and the client experience, Philippe utilized the timeclock feature to incentivize employees to take control of their schedules, rewarding them with extra percentage points on their annual retail bonuses.
- **Referral-type reporting:** By tracking the origins of new clients and whether they found the salon through websites, marketing platforms, word of mouth, or staff recommendations, Philippe and his team were able to maximize their marketing investments and refine employee initiatives based on these results.



“The way we run our business, prioritizing employee retention and high-quality client experiences, requires a lot of administrative work. Boulevard helped us solve our scheduling issues, saved hours of time on payroll, and we're just scratching the surface of all of the features this platform has to offer.”

- Philippe Ifergan, General Manager at Charles Ifergan Salon