6 Steps to Creating the Best Possible Client Experience with Boulevard
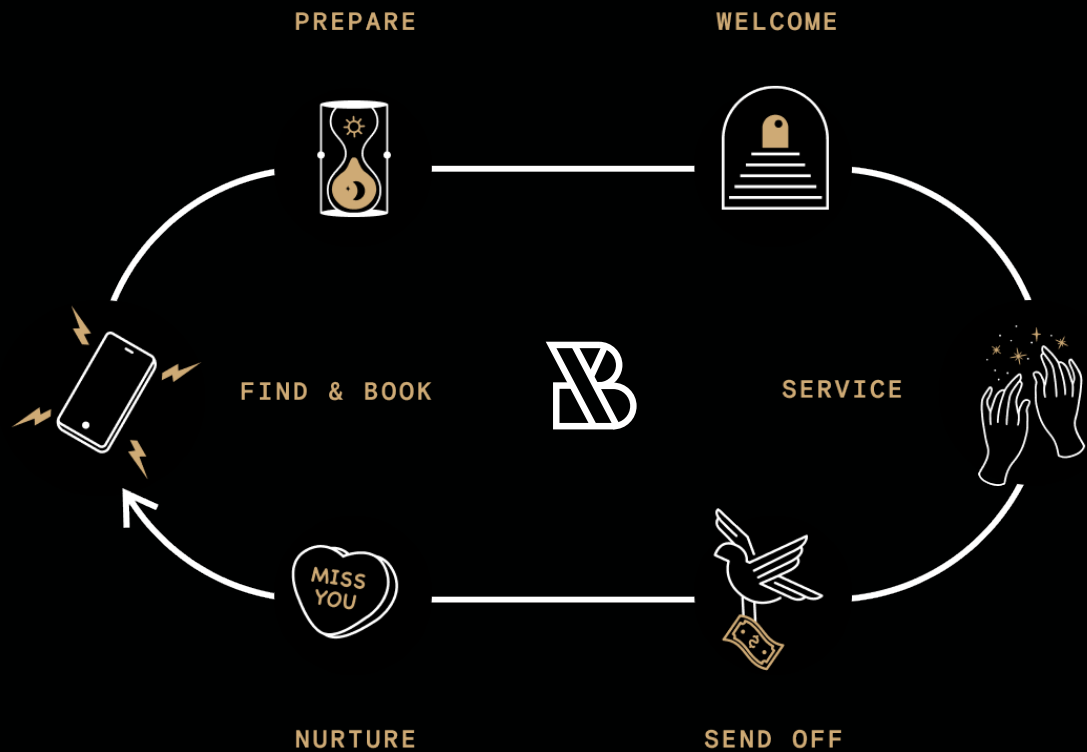
1:30 PM
Susie Hawthorne
Level 2 Stylist

BOOK NOW

Whether you own a salon, spa, or MedSpa, learn how you can improve retention, boost bookings, and build your brand with a Client Experience Platform.

Contents

PREPARE   WELCOME

FIND & BOOK   SERVICE

NURTURE   SEND OFF

MISS YOU

What Makes a Self-Care Client Experience Shine?

The experience each client has with your brand starts long before they walk through the door, whether they're a first-time visitor or a faithful regular. In fact, the client experience can be better understood as a timeline that starts the moment a client hears your name for the first time, continues through their booking, then their appointment, and all the way to the loyalty program that incentivizes their next booking when the cycle begins again.

With *no sign of slowing growth for online bookings*, it's clear that more and more customers will have their first interaction with your brand online. *Four out of five customers* say they would leave a brand (even one they were already loyal to) after three or fewer instances of a poor customer experience, which could be anything from annoying login screens that ask them to somehow recall their hundredth unique password to overly sparse websites that don't help them find open appointments. This could be an anxiety-provoking statistic if your online booking experience is built on confusing software that doesn't reflect your brand's aesthetics and high standards.

But it's not all bad news. If you can give clients a streamlined experience that offers a positive first impression of your brand, it won't take long to grow your bottom line: 57% of consumers are *willing to pay more for simpler experiences*. So how do you give them what they want? Boulevard is an all-in-one client experience and business management platform that's built exclusively to suit the needs of self-care businesses, and we'd be happy to *tell you more* about our features that customers will love.

Before we get into the modern state-of-the-art for self-care client experiences, let's see how we got here.

A Brief History of the Self-Care Client Experience

The modern self-care industry arguably began in 1888 with the opening of the Harper Hairdressing Parlor, a holistic haircare destination founded by *domestic servant turned entrepreneur Martha Matilda Harper*. She developed the modern franchise system three years later by teaching the "Harper Method" to new business owners, with over 500 Harper salons at the height of their popularity. The first day spa would follow two decades later with the *opening of Manhattan's Red Door Salon*.

As you might expect, getting an appointment booked with those early businesses required a little more effort than unlocking your smartphone and picking an opening — and the client experience for self-care businesses would be surprisingly slow to evolve even after horse-drawn carriages ceased to be the preferred method of getting to an appointment.

PRE-1900: WALK-INS WELCOME

The *first commercial telephone exchange* opened in 1878 — just a decade and change before Harper salons started spreading across the nation. Since phones were far from common and sending a telegram to your favorite stylist wasn't terribly practical, your best bet was heading into town to make an appointment in person. You'd pay for the services in cash or by check, the latter of which had seen a *marked increase in use* since the end of the Civil War.

1949-EARLY 2000s: LEAVE A MESSAGE AT THE BEEP

One of the first commercially successful answering machines *debuted in 1949*, costing $200 or about $2,200 in today's currency. While the price for answering machines steadily decreased, the uncertainty about whether anybody would get back to you remained consistent. Also consistent were your payment options, which typically remained limited to cash or check at the counter. If both you and the business were on the cutting edge, *you might bring your credit card*, though the employees would likely still thank you for tipping with cash.

1901-1948: PENCIL ME IN

As telephones became an indispensable part of modern communication, so too did they shape the client experience for self-care businesses. Whoever answered the phone would literally "pencil you in" to the business' schedule (it had to be pencil so they could erase it in case you canceled), and you'd still typically pay by cash or check.

EARLY 2000s-2016: BOOK ONLINE (OR TRY TO)

In the early days of the internet, phones remained dominant. But the world wide web and email quickly began to edge out the telephone as the world's preferred means of communication, and the first "digital appointment book" debuted in the beauty industry in the late '90s. This was followed soon after by the first client-side online booking experiences for truly tech-forward salons — though sadly, these experiences could be finicky and frustrating enough that you'd find yourself longing to speak to an answering machine. Credit card payments had also become common, but tipping was still a sticky point. "How do I add $20 on this card swiper? Oh, well I didn't bring any cash…"

Enter the Client Experience Platform (CXP)

While digital options for doing business abound, many solutions for client experiences in the self-care category are built like freeform Lego sculptures: developers keep tacking on more features as needed without regard for the end-user experience. As the first and only modern client experience platform for self-care services, Boulevard can help your business break free from the graphite-dusted annals of "penciling clients in" without having to settle for software-driven headaches.

Our front-end experience is built to embody your brand aesthetics, with everything your self-care customers need from the beginning (as well as deep customization options if you want to tweak every piece to perfection). **Here's how Boulevard can refine and elevate your client experience.**

Find & Book

The client experience begins the moment a potential customer starts looking for your business. When they land on your website, whether on desktop or mobile, you want as little friction as possible between them and their first (or second or two hundredth) appointment. You want to keep clients on your site, getting excited about your brand and the services and products you offer; you don't want them bouncing from one sign-in to the next. In fact, Boulevard doesn't even require customers to sign in with passwords, eliminating one potential pain point completely.

Though *Boulevard self-booking* presents a simple and approachable experience for clients, it also offers powerful purchasing features such as grouped bookings and recurring memberships. By getting payment info and *any required forms* out of the way as part of the initial self-booking process, your clients can simply look forward to showing up at their appointment time and enjoying themselves. Meanwhile, automated appointment reminders help turn potential no-shows into happy customers.
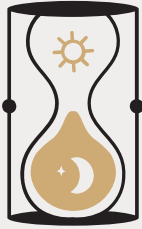
Prepare

Proper preparation is essential to delivering consistent results, and Boulevard is invaluable here, too. We make it easy to set default or custom durations for services, complete with finishing and processing windows, so you're making the most of both employee and client time with each appointment. You can even set preferred staff members for certain tasks, and lay out the best scheduling slots for each member to keep your whole team in the sweet spot.

Once you have each service set, *Boulevard's Precision Scheduling* automatically gets to work optimizing your appointment schedule, so you can make the most of every moment your business is open.

Welcome

You've done the work to make their booking a breeze, so don't drop the ball when it's time for your client to actually walk through the door. The seamless self-check-in tool provided by Boulevard makes it a snap for clients to get right where they need to be without delay (and without needing to wait in line at the front desk), and automatic alerts mean relevant staff will be the first to know their clients are ready and waiting.

Even before your client gets to the front door, *Boulevard Contact Center* enables two-way messaging to make communication quick and easy at every stage of their visit. Clients get faster service that's personalized for them and employees don't have to stare down stressful queues of impatient clients; sounds like a win-win to us.

Service

As they head back to begin their appointment, *Boulevard Client Management* features keep intelligently optimizing every step of the client experience journey. Handy client profiles are perfect for quickly refamiliarizing staff with each customer's particular needs and preferences. They even let staff see past services, purchases, notes, and service-related conversations at a glance, giving them a holistic view of how to best serve each client.

Easy access to social profiles help you keep up to date with your clients' lives beyond your walls, and tag them in a before/after glamour shot if they're up for it. You can even give each client custom tags for easy sorting. (Yes, that includes emojis.)

Send Off

Making sure a "goodbye" is just "for now" means giving clients a smooth and personalized send-off. If they saved their payment information during their initial booking, they're good to go, but if they prefer to pay on-site, *Boulevard Payments* is ready! Pair with *Boulevard Duo*, a sleek and purpose-built EMV reader, for the smoothest (and best looking) possible payment process. Its one-tap tipping feature has even been shown to increase tips for your hardworking staff by 24%.

As they're paying, easy pre-booking ensures clients are already looking forward to their next visit. And don't forget — automatic product suggestions make it easy to point out goodies your client will love to take home to keep looking and feeling their best until next time.

Nurture

As clients get back to their lives between appointments, automated follow-up emails can help collect their invaluable feedback, and even prompt them to leave reviews online. On top of that, *Boulevard Reporting* means the data from each client's visit is ready to sort, visualize, and inform your business plan within moments of their departure.

With metrics in hand, you can start boosting retention right away with *Boulevard's ready-made Loyalty Program app*. Our loyalty suite incentivizes newbies to become regulars through growing point balances and customizable rewards — and it makes sure the client experience keeps rolling every time they pull up the app. Last but not least, a *full email marketing suite* and *promotional offers program* keep your clients engaged with regular updates from your salon, building deeper relationships that keep them coming back.

Take your client experience to the next level with software that was built to intelligently address every step of their journey. *Watch a demo video now* **to see how Boulevard makes the most of your business for clients and staff alike.**
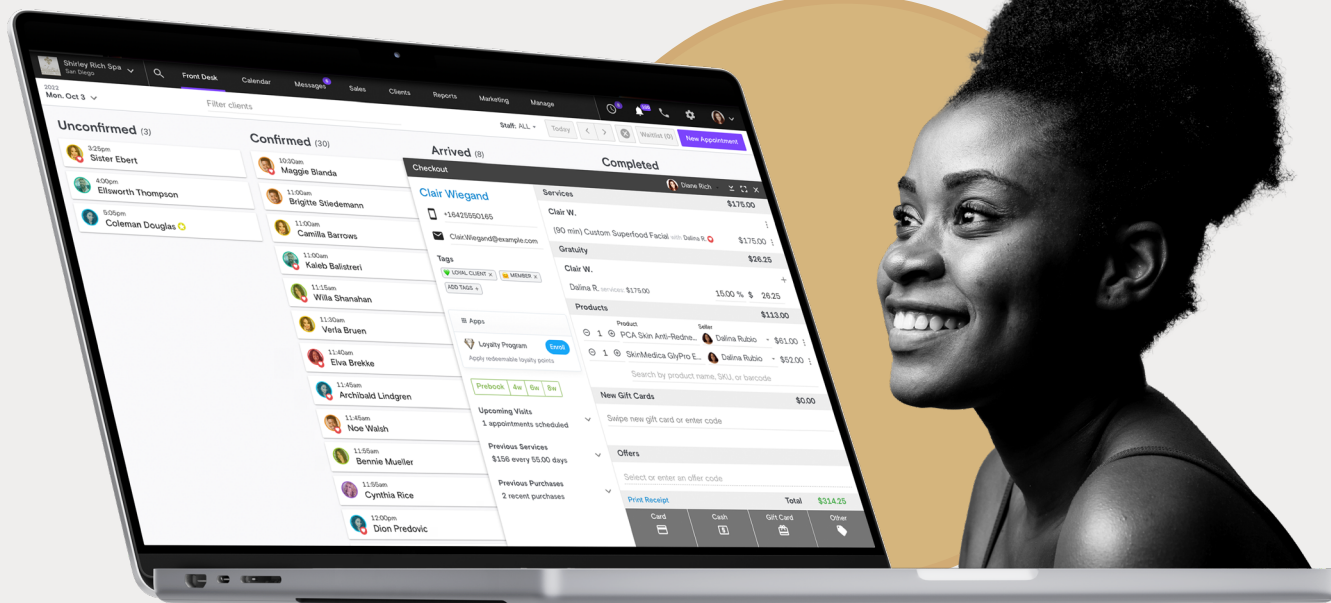
About Boulevard

Boulevard offers the first and only client experience platform purpose-built for appointment-based, self-care businesses.

Boulevard empowers business owners and professionals alike to deliver personable, enjoyable experiences to their clients through online appointment scheduling, messaging, and payments that are simple, elegant, and reliable. A privately held company founded in 2016, Boulevard has earned the trust of thousands of salons and spas across the nation by delivering the world-class technology and genuine, human, personable service they deserve.

Self-care businesses powered by Boulevard typically enjoy:

16%
MORE SERVICES BOOKED

71%
FEWER NO-SHOWS & LATE CANCELS

18%
MORE RETAIL VALUE

24%
MORE GRATUITY FROM CLIENTS

GET A FREE DEMO

* Average impact T+90 days after switching to Boulevard