

Consider this Case

Bumble and Bumble Exceed Expectations with School for Stylists

Hair care companies everywhere spend a bundle on ads in trendy fashion magazines and in television advertising campaigns. But one niche player, Bumble and bumble (B&b), has a different strategy—they provide their customers (salon owners) with in-salon workshops. As an added service, they offer hair care lessons and business education to salon owners and stylists through Bumble and bumble University, its self-styled center for the craft, culture, and commerce of hairdressing.

Eli Halliwell, senior operating officer for Bumble, prefers taking the company's message to salons and stylists, empowering them with knowledge. His goal is to

make them knowledgeable, passionate, raving fans of their brand. Foregoing a large advertising budget, B&b seeks to work with only the narrow band of the best salons in the industry to create a very deep, integrated relationship.

Bumble & bumble University (Bb.U.) delivers a curriculum that is "extremely exciting, challenging, and inspiring," according to Jack Ray, a Raleigh salon owner. "It's a real honor to be working with the same people that are behind the scenes of the fashion shows in Milan, Paris, and New York."⁹

"We contrast that to everyone else in the industry, which we see as 'inch-deep and mile-wide'; they have

very little relationship because they use distributors and they have a very broad set of clients," says Mr. Halliwell.

Probes

1. How does Bumble and bumble illustrate the principle of A-plus information?
2. How can this approach be a win-win for customers and company alike?
3. What possible applications can you think of for similar businesses?