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Professional Beauty Federation of California

PBFC helps shape policy and regulations spanning a range of issues, including licensure, cosmetology school curricula and product ingredients.

WHILE THE BROADER MISSION OF the Professional Beauty Federation of California is to raise the professionalism of the industry statewide, its best work is actually done on an individual basis, serving the many salon owners, school operators, manufacturers, distributors and retailers who contact its offices weekly for assistance or advice. Take one salon owner, for example, who was facing \$15,000 in fines for a single inspection due

to issue monetary sanctions for violations. They can only issue citations that are reviewed by in-house enforcement experts taking into account factors such as past record, seriousness of violations and paperwork in process. But this type of one-on-one counseling and representation is just the tip of the iceberg. By protecting the safety of consumers, the PBFC aims to raise the professional bar within the industry while protecting the livelihoods of business owners.

PBFC aims to raise the professional bar WITHIN THE INDUSTRY WHILE protecting THE livelihoods of BEAUTY INDUSTRY business owners.

in part to a paperwork snafu. That \$15,000 fee would have nearly wiped out the salon, reducing the size of the beauty industry by yet another California business. Instead, with the PBFC's influence, the entire inspection process was overhauled and the fees the owner faced were significantly reduced. That's not to say that the PBFC is anti-fine, because it is quite the contrary. "We support stiff fines to ensure the safety of our customers," says Fred Jones, PBFC legal counsel. The problem was the inspection process itself, where a single inspection could result in fines of \$10,000 or more and cause the shutdown of a legitimate beauty business.

Now, thanks to the government relations work of the PBFC and the diligent work of the California State Board of Barbering and Cosmetology, field inspectors no longer have the power

HISTORY

This idea of an industry watchdog and lobbyist all rolled into one is a relatively new one. Until 1999, when Robert Gross, owner, president and CEO of Southern California-based Salon Success Academies, and Ted D. Nelson, chairman of Anaheim, California-based Opal Concepts, partnered with Alexander Irving of Oceanside, California-based Esche & Alexander Public Relations to create a nonpartisan industry organization, all that existed were splintered factions sparring over their own industry segments. With all the infighting, little was ever accomplished. As Jones recalls, "Our industry was adrift and our issues were buried [away] from policy makers' consciousness. Nobody was speaking with a clear and unified voice for the world of beauty."

Gross, Nelson and Irving envisioned a unified voice for the industry,

representing all of its many segments equally and earning the respect and ear of Sacramento, California, legislators and administration officials. The trio approached many beauty segment leaders, asking for participation and assistance. They received outstanding response and support from beauty industry notables who collectively represented a true cross section of companies.

There were skeptics at the outset, but the naysayers have all been quiet as the PBFC has demonstrated a knack for getting things done. "When we get behind an issue, we know we have the support of the industry," says Jones.

PROGRESS MADE

Since its inception, the PBFC's goal has been to improve the quality of products and services provided to California's consumers while supporting the continued expansion of the entire industry. To that end, some of its initiatives have focused on reducing barriers to entry within the industry as well as retaining current businesses. To do that, the PBFC first had to lobby to replace the former bureau structure—that was run by civil servants—with a board structure led by pro beauty industry veterans. Mission accomplished. The new board reports on its achievements regularly to both the legislature and the industry, rather than every three years as was done in the past. The shift from bureau to board structure also resulted in new marching orders: Instead of exclusively focusing on regulations and fines, the PBFC works to further the industry's growth and stature.

At the urging of the PBFC, the state board voted unanimously to remove onerous regulations placed on the externship law that limited salons' use of stylists-in-training similar to interships in other industries. With these



Fred Jones, PBFC legal counsel

barriers lifted, beauty students benefit from additional training and on-the-job experience, and salons have access to qualified junior workers. Another barrier to entering the California beauty industry was eradicated when Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law out-of-state cosmetology license reciprocity, which the PBFC originated. Rather than preventing qualified beauty professionals from relocating to California, the PBFC sought to encourage it. The new law allows licensed out-of-state cosmetologists with comparable licensing hours and clean work records to obtain a California cosmetology license immediately, rather than having to wait six months. In the past, the lengthy waiting period resulted in many talented stylists, nail techs and colorists being forced into new lines of work to make ends meet. "The industry always needs talented professionals," says Irving, PBFC board member. "We're encouraging 'out-of-staters' to contribute to



(From left) State & Consumer Services Secretary Rosario Marin, Assemblyman John Benoit, Director of Consumer Affairs Carrie Lopez and PBFC Chairman Ted D. Nelson at a PBFC Welcome to Our World event.

California's beauty industry and economy." Likewise, graduating cosmetology students no longer have to wait as long as nine months to take written and practical exams. In the past, with such a lengthy waiting period, many graduates left the industry to earn a living wage elsewhere or illegally worked underground. Today, most exams can be scheduled within the legally mandated 10-day period, and industry abandonment is lessening.

It takes to get licensed and what it takes to succeed in a modern salon," explains Jones.

To get a handle on the burgeoning booth rental sector, the PBFC sponsored a new law that requires all working licensees to identify themselves as an employer, an employee or a booth renter. The goal of the legislation is to remind employers of their legal and ethical responsibilities to those who work with them, whether

"IT IS our mission not to serve any company or industry segment more than another. WE ARE A NEUTRAL GROUP."

With the PBFC leading the way, curricula for all license categories have been thoroughly reviewed and updated. Cosmetology, esthetics and nail curricula have been rewritten, removing detailed micromanagement of mandated hours. Now schools can work more closely with modern salons in developing relevant education that keeps pace with new trends and techniques. To complement the reforms already made, the PBFC is working with the state board and Department of Consumer Affairs to adopt the up-to-date National-Interstate Council of Boards of Cosmetology exam as California's state standard. "We don't want students to pay \$16,000 and have to learn two tracks—what

they are employees or independent contractors. "We are not anti-booth renters, but we are [against] people breaking the law. Because if you're skirting the Internal Revenue Service, you're probably skirting safety rules too, and that's dangerous for all of us," explains Jones.

W.O.W.

Part of the PBFC's success can be attributed to what has become its signature event held each spring in Sacramento: Welcome to Our World—popularly known as W.O.W.—provides legislators and regulators with up-close and personal exposure to the beauty industry. What began in 2001 as a lobbying occasion with a dozen or so

legislators dropping by for a haircut and nail buff has grown into a major beauty event.

This year, set up in a tent on the south steps of the State Capitol building, more than 40 W.O.W. volunteers and sponsors provided complimentary upper-body massages, manicures, haircuts and makeup consultations to more than 250 state policy makers and regulators. The eighth annual Spa on the Steps of the State Capitol held in April 2008 brought legislators, staffers and agency heads together with leading providers of spa/salon services for discussions about major issues needing attention within the industry. For the PBFC, one sure sign of its success is the industry's interest in participating. "We have no shortage of volunteers at W.O.W.," says Irving. For a growing organization, interest on behalf of its constituents may be an even more

important indicator [of its relevance] than that of its legislative counterparts. Next year's event is already scheduled for April 27.

INSIDE THE PBFC

Some industry participants have been suspicious of the PBFC's motives, says Irving, due in part to how previous boards and bureaus operated within the industry. But the PBFC is different, he asserts. "There is no hidden agenda. Our board meetings are open, and people come and become informed about what our organization does." "There are no closed-door meetings," says Nelson, chairman of the PBFC board. Nor is there segment favoritism, Irving affirms. "It's our mission not to serve any company or industry segment more than another. We are an independent, neutral group."



Above: This year's W.O.W.: Spa On the Steps event was held in a tent on the south steps of the State Capitol. Below: A W.O.W. event in full swing.



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The organization's only ongoing issue is funding. "We have large and small companies that send us checks regularly," says Jones. Their support covers 60% of the annual budget. The only paid staffer is Jones, supported by a board consisting solely of volunteers. The remainder of any funds raised goes directly to the PBFC's work.

THE PBFC TODAY

"We are recognized as a valid, credible, important voice in Sacramento," says Nelson. "When legislators are presented with a bill, they know who to reach out to for input while they're still forming an opinion." Echoes Gross, co-founder and vice chairman of the PBFC, "We are the trusted go-to organization for California legislators and administration officials when they need current and accurate information on beauty industry matters. Earning that trust has been hard won. The PBFC has been at it for nearly a decade, making sure legislators and regulators receive the accurate, quality input that makes for good laws and regulations that are consistent with industry standards and needs."

Contrast that with the organization's early days when getting a return phone call from a legislator was an accomplishment in itself. Today, by getting to know legislators, demonstrating the federation's value and becoming a regular fixture in information hearings concerning bills, the PBFC plays an important role in beauty industry legislation and regulations that are passed for the good of its members and the residents of the state of California.

Over the last decade, "the organization hasn't changed its purpose," says Gross. "What has changed is the level of support it has achieved. But there's still a lot more we can do." Even so, Irving concludes, "We measure our success by our achievements. And we're getting the job done. We are successful!"

Professional Beauty Federation of California

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THE ARTIST'S WAY

RUSK's Da Vinci Brush Collection design was created by artisan Sam Leonardi who hand-crafted, sculpted and sanded samples of the paddle brushes, contouring the handles for a stylist's perfect grip. The brushes are ergonomically designed and combine sophisticated functionality with performance and aesthetics, even including pointed tips for sectioning and parting. Nylon pin bristles are used for thick and wavy hair textures, and nylon and boar bristles are used for styling normal hair types. Each brush is infused with ionic properties to reduce static and enhance sheen. Call 800. use.rusk or visit rusk.com.



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