

Finding the Passion

You've just passed the licensing examination and earned your license. You can now call yourself a barber, cosmetologist, manicurist, esthetician or electrologist. After months, if not years, of hard work, professional success is in sight.

You have every reason to be proud of your accomplishment and optimistic about the future. Your license is the gateway to an exciting field with plenty of opportunities to shine, from being a valuable, skilled employee to owning your own business. People who have developed a career in the beauty industry love what they do; just ask them. In fact, the Board of Barbering and Cosmetology did just that recently on its Facebook page.

"I cannot see myself in any other industry," says Helen, who joined the industry in 1976. "This business is steady, recession proof, and allows women to be self-employed on their own. I love my job!"

The beauty industry's resilience in the face of recession is a point that was recently made in a front page Wall Street Journal story that created quite a buzz within the professional community.

The Journal's story noted that while a survey by the U.S. Bureau of labor statistics found a 4.5 percent decline in jobs between 2007 and 2011, jobs in the beauty industry showed the reverse. Nail care jobs increased 6.7 percent, while barbers and cosmetologist jobs increased 4 percent.

The reason for this trend, according to the Journal is simple: you can't outsource barbering and cosmetology. "You can't send people to (a foreign country) for a haircut," as one New York City stylist told the newspaper.

For other licensees, the ability to work for yourself or set one's own schedule is a very attractive feature of the business.

"I love my job," says Linda, the daughter of a barber who has had her license since 1966. "At times I don't know what I would have done without this career. I make my (own) hours."

Linda also cited her customers as a big plus. They're all "interesting," she says. "All unique."

A growing job market means increased competition, however. According to the Board's Facebook respondents, customer service makes the difference.

"I realize that my job is to serve my guests and their individual needs. I try to determine *exactly* what my guest is looking to get from my service before I begin," says Anesia. She then tailors her approach accordingly.

"If my client just wants a break from stress, she won't care how much I know about a product line, (or) want to hear me go on and on during the facial. Or if they are looking for help, they

won't want me to hold back any information, “she explains. “I try to personalize each facial and really give good old genuine customer service!”

Someone once said: “It's a beautiful thing when a career and a passion come together.” In the beauty industry, it happens every day!