

# Aveda Embraces 4MAT as a Common Language of Learning

Aveda is a manufacturer and distributor of environmentally-conscious beauty products distributed internationally through high-end salons and spas. Aveda's customers represent the top 20% of salons and spas-businesses that cater to clients who want incredible service provided by service professionals with the highest level of technical skill.

As part of the professional beauty industry, Aveda deals with cyclical change as a constant. New hairstyles, new spa treatments and new products are created every day. The ability to train quickly and effectively is a key strategic issue.

Aveda delivers education and training through a complex web of distribution. The Aveda network includes privately-owned and Aveda-owned distributors that serve over 4500 privately-owned, high-end salons and spas. Aveda delivers training and education to a market of over 27,000 hair and skincare professionals that service clients in salons and spa. The training content includes product knowledge, technical skills, customer service, retail skills and business-building systems. Training content must reach every single professional, touching every guest, in every salon/spa.

## Why 4MAT?

The challenge facing Aveda is similar to the challenge facing many companies. How do you facilitate learning in a fast and effective manner?

Aveda aligned with 4MAT to address several critical education/training issues:

- The need to provide subject-matter experts with tools and training that enabled them to deliver engaging and effective learning experiences

- The desire to create a common language regarding training methodology that eliminated variation across multiple training design and delivery channels

- The desire to create a substantial point of difference, through education, for the Aveda brand.

## The Strategy

### Phase I: Basic Education Subject Matter Experts Become Engaging Educators

We began the process by working with the Aveda education team to determine the critical points in the delivery system that would generate the greatest results.

We identified the Aveda Institutes, a growing network of over 40 schools that train up-and-coming hair and skin professionals for a career in the beauty industry, as the point of contact that would generate the greatest result. The Institutes are the first experience a salon professional has with the Aveda network. As such, the quality of the educational experience greatly influences their perception of the quality of the Aveda brand.

The Aveda Institute curriculum extends up to one year and provides the learner with all the required courses to prepare for state licensure. Content includes technical skill, consultation skills, and business-building skills.

The training faculty of Aveda Institutes consists of a network of over 240 industry professionals with expertise in either hairstyling or spa. The typical Institute educator has several years of experience in a salon or spa and little to no experience teaching or training. These educators are faced with the task of figuring out how to share what they know in a compelling, organized fashion that appeals to every learner.

To give the educators the skill they need to be effective trainers, we developed a customized, industry-specific training for Aveda Institute educators in partnership with the Aveda Education team. The program includes a 3-day 4MAT training curriculum, with industry-specific content and examples. We also worked with the Aveda Education team to design a 4MAT-based, 10-module educator training curriculum with content that includes technical skills, presentation skills, policies and procedures and corporate culture.

Once the educators became fluent in 4MAT language, they were better able to collaborate on training design. Aveda implemented the 4Mation software which allows all 40+ Institutes to share training designs in a web-based format.

Educators in any Institute can search a database of training designs published by other educators across the country and download for use, with all the necessary materials including powerpoint and word documents, attached.

The impact has been immediate and substantial. The educator/trainers report increased confidence in their ability to reach all learners.

### **Phase II: Consistency and Sustainable Implementation strategy**

Phase II of the process focused on creating consistency across all channels. We also focused on developing a strategy to ensure that the program could be sustained long-term through in-house training staff. To address the need for consistency across training delivery channels, we offered a 3-day 4MAT training for all educators/trainers that conduct training with their customers. To ensure sustainability, we have certified a team of Aveda trainers as 4MAT Coaches. These Aveda 4MAT coaches provide ongoing training for all newly-hired educators/trainers in the Aveda network. They also participate in annual 4MAT Coach Gatherings to stay up-to-date on all 4MAT innovation.

### **Phase III: Sharing 4MAT with Aveda Customers**

Aveda's corporate university, The Aveda Business College, delivers business education to its network of salons and spas. In this program, Aveda shares the 4MAT technology with salon and spa owners and managers. The program includes how to use 4MAT to lead and coach, as well as, how to design simple, effective staff meetings.

### **Conclusion**

By aligning the training methodology of distributors, trainers and customers, Aveda has established a common language for learning that accelerates the speed of delivery. Virginia Meyer, Vice President of Education for Aveda, shares: *"Through 4MAT, we now have a common language for the communication and delivery of information. Our Institute educators have a framework for organizing information and delivering it a manner that reaches every style of learner. 4MAT has helped us deepen our ability to connect important information to the learner in a way that is meaningful to them. Understanding how people like to learn has transformed the way we teach - and that has made all the difference."*