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How-To Tips from the Golden Globes

curl amor

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Confident Creators

The Rusk Creative Team produces what salons want most: Zen-like consistency enhanced with personal creativity.

By Victoria Wurdinger



How can you get your team to duplicate a signature style without going all cookie-cutter? At Rusk, the Creative Team of 12 has spent years teaching others to recreate—not clone—then add individual touches. Start with an educational foundation and get everyone on board with the system. Then, practice for proficiency.

Method Work

“Being able to show others how to consistently recreate a look requires a strong foundation, so you can break down a cut into steps anyone can duplicate,” notes **Marcus Caillet**, a Creative Team member who co-owns Bran-Dia’s in Baltimore, Maryland. “Once you master the method, individuals can adjust the looks, building weight or dropping it out, adding or subtracting volume, accommodating curl with less texturizing or using a fringe for personalization.”

When a team acts as a well-oiled machine, members can stop any cut half-way through and have another member take right over. (A good salon exercise to try.) The advantages to that, says team member **Naz Kupelian**,

owner of a eponymous salon in Lexington, Massachusetts, are that you can confidently refer across the country or allow clients closer to home to choose any stylist in your salon.

Smart Systems

At Rusk, stylist associates traverse seven skill-building levels before they’re proficient enough in designing, teaching, showmanship and creativity to be considered for the top tier team, which develops a yearly collection by consensus. Members can form mini teams among themselves or go solo to present ideas for the others to vote on. Then, a trend is selected and its creators break it down into teachable steps, using Rusk principals.

Kupelian, **Maria Guasta** and **Angela Greenland** developed the 2011 “Global Inspiration” collection, and Kupelian says the looks, which are “sophisticated yet edgy,” can all be created with three triangular sections.

Once the collection is worked out, the Creative Team creates a photo shoot for teaching other Rusk associates. Each level passes learning onto the next—senior master to master and so forth. The norm

is for about 10 associates to gather, learn the looks, duplicate them on mannequins and then on models. Naturally, individual creativity plays to geography.

Sherri Jessee, who owns Sherri’s Hair Salon in Bristol, Virginia, often travels to support Rusk’s strong international presence, and explains that Rusk’s education, cutting and coloring strategies adapt to any market. “In India, everyone had Level 2 or 3 color, so we had to formulate differently with 4.8 and 5.8 demipermanent glazes. Most women wear their hair longer, so we adapted the cuts to the culture.”

Team Approach

When it comes to team building in the salon, Caillet encourages professionals to “share” rather than “teach” or “preach.” “The difference is in the attitude of making others successful. Help stylists build on strengths, then pair them with others who have different strong suits.”

Jessee adds that leading by example is a must for team development: “Aim high and be consistent; just remember that the client matters most.”



In addition to collaborating on collections and on platform for Rusk, the Creative Team contributes regularly to and is featured in *STYLE SOURCE* Magazine for salons and their clients. See the current issue online at stylesource.com.