

# Manpower Update Report

## Beauty Care and Hairdressing Industries

# 2023



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Beauty Care and Hairdressing Training Board (BHTB) would like to express its gratitude to the members of the focus group for their valuable time and insights on the manpower situation of the beauty care and hairdressing industries. Special thanks go to CPJobs and CTgoodjobs which shared the database of job vacancies. The views of the focus group and Members of BHTB, and information from major recruitment websites formed an integral part of this update report.



## Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1 - 2</b>
Background	
Objectives	
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>3 - 4</b>
Overview	
Focus Group Meeting	
Desk Research	
Data Analysis	
Limitations	
<b>Findings</b>	<b>5 - 15</b>
Economic and Social Factors Affecting the Development of Beauty Care and Hairdressing Industries	
Latest Development Trends of the Beauty Care and Hairdressing Industries	
Future Manpower Demand	
Training Needs	
Challenges in Recruitment and Staff Retention	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>16 - 18</b>
Promote business digitalisation, reallocate manpower to assign specialised responsibilities for important projects	
Enhance the professional status of the industries and encourage the development of cross-sectoral projects	
Cultivate young people's interest in the industries through early exposure	
Provide more support to retain new young employees and attract middle-aged people to rejoin the workplace	
Address the training needs of the industries in a flexible way	
Internship – from School to Work	

# Introduction

## Background

The Beauty Care and Hairdressing Training Board (BHTB) under the Vocational Training Council (VTC) is appointed by the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. According to its terms of reference, the BHTB is responsible

for determining the manpower demand of the industries, assessing whether the manpower supply matches manpower demand, and recommending to the VTC the development of vocational and professional education and training (VPET) facilities to meet the assessed training needs.

One full manpower survey is conducted every four years and is supplemented by two manpower updates. The BHTB completed its latest manpower survey in 2020 while two manpower updates would be conducted in 2022 and 2023.

The 2023 manpower update report consists of:

- i. a focus group meeting was conducted to collect the views of industry experts on the latest developments in the industries, manpower and training needs, recruitment difficulties, and measures to tackle the challenges of industries face; and
- ii. desk research to capture recruitment information as well as analyse job advertisements.

## Objectives

The objectives of the manpower update report are as follows:

- (i) to examine the latest trends and developments in the industries;
- (ii) to explore the job market and training needs;
- (iii) to identify challenges in recruiting and retaining talent; and
- (iv) to recommend measures to meet the manpower and training needs.



# Methodology

## Overview

With reference to the 2020 full manpower survey of the beauty and hairdressing industries, this update report aims to provide qualitative descriptions of the recent development of the industries through focus group meeting and interviews, supplemented by making reference to some quantitative data of recruitment advertisements from desk research.

Two interviews were also conducted on 9 August and 20 September 2023 with two industry experts who were not available to attend the aforementioned focus group meeting. Additionally, an online interview with a hair-cutting expert was conducted on 4 September 2023 to gain further insights into manpower development in this respective field. The opinions of all aforementioned experts were taken into consideration and incorporated into this report.

## Focus Group Meeting

The theme of this focus group meeting is the latest manpower development of “beauty care and hairdressing industries”. Through consulting experts of relevant sectors, it was intended to collect the views of the latest trends and developments of the manpower, training needs and recruitment challenges of the industries, etc. The focus group members are representatives from the following sectors:

- (i) Beauty care, Spa and healthcare centres
- (ii) Beauty care and hairdressing retail companies
- (iii) Beauty care and hairdressing wholesales companies
- (iv) Hairdressing salons, scalp care center, speedy haircut salons / barbershops

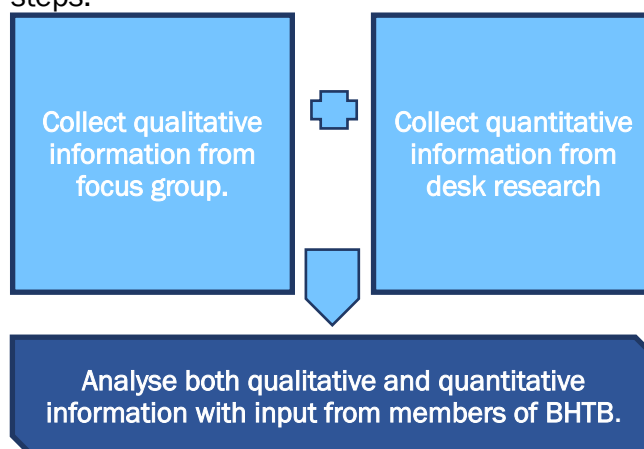
The focus group meeting was conducted on 29 August 2023 and moderated by Secretariat staff of the BHTB, who guided members towards an in-depth discussion on the topics set out by the Working Party on Manpower Survey of BHTB. The discussion at the meeting was transcribed to facilitate the analysis.

## Desk Research

Manpower information covering the period between September 2022 and August 2023 was collected through desk research. A total of 8,668 recruitment records from these sectors were collected during the research period. Mapping was made with the list of related companies under the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification for the removal of any duplicated records.

## Data Analysis

The analysis consists of the following three steps:



## Limitations

As this is not a comprehensive manpower survey, the findings and recommendations of the focus group meeting are more qualitative in nature and the report focuses mainly on the manpower trends.

In addition, the figures for job advertisements were collected from major recruitment websites and the Labour Department, while other channels, such as headhunting for managerial positions or referral via the social media recruitment platform were not covered. Since the data collected is a snapshot of a particular period without reference to any historical data, this can serve as reference information supplementary to the findings of the focus group meeting.

For the vacancy information among individual sectors, beauty care and hairdressing salons relatively rely less on online channels for recruitment. Therefore, the number of job advertisements in both sectors collected from desk research cannot reflect the entire situation of job vacancies.

# Findings

## Economic and Social Factors Affecting the Development of Beauty Care and Hairdressing Industries

According to the “Economic Report for the First Quarter of 2023<sup>1</sup>” released by the government in May 2023, with the resumption of cross-border travel between Hong Kong and other countries, domestic demand and the tourism industry has been seen as a primary driver for economic growth this year. The government has introduced various initiatives such as the consumer voucher scheme and a series of events under the name “Happy Hong Kong” to provide additional support to local private consumption.

However, the recent economic recovery in Hong Kong has fallen short of expectations. Since the resumption of cross-border travel with the Mainland, there has been a continuous surge in Hong Kong residents’ spending in the Mainland. Referring to the statistics from the Immigration Department in previous years, it is estimated that in July 2023, Hong Kong residents’ consumption in the Mainland reached an amount ranging from HK\$3.2 billion to HK\$4 billion<sup>2</sup>. Owing to the favourable shopping environment, a diverse range of services and products, and affordable prices in the Mainland, body / foot massages and manicure services become one of popular items for Hong Kong people. At the same time, there has been an increasing

demand for traditional hairdressing services among Hong Kong people.

With the Mainland lifting the requirement to fill out the “China Customs’ Health Declaration Form”<sup>3</sup> from 1 November 2023, travel between the two regions has become more convenient. It is believed that more Hong Kong people will continue to travel to the Mainland, making it challenging to keep them in Hong Kong for consumption in the short term. In addition, the pandemic has also changed the lifestyle pattern of Hong Kong people, as they have reduced their frequency of going out at night and consumption.

Besides, economic recovery in the Mainland has slowed down, and the depreciation of the renminbi after the resumption of normal traveller clearance between Hong Kong and the Mainland. Therefore, it will take time for Mainland tourists visiting Hong Kong to recover. Moreover, the convenient transportation between the Mainland and Hong Kong (such as high-speed rail / railway networks) also prompts Mainland tourists to choose not to stay in Hong Kong overnight for consumption. According to a recent survey by the Hong Kong Tourism Board<sup>4</sup>, the travel and spending behaviours of

<sup>1</sup> Source: [Economic Report for the First Quarter of 2023 \(hkeconomy.gov.hk\)](https://hkeconomy.gov.hk)

<sup>2</sup> Source: At Least 4.68 Million People Went North in July with an Estimated Consumption Reaches HK\$ 4 Billion  
Scholars: Difficult to retain Hong Kong people to make consumption in local areas | Hong Kong 01  
[https://www.hk01.com/article/924754?utm\\_source=01articlecopy&utm\\_medium=referral](https://www.hk01.com/article/924754?utm_source=01articlecopy&utm_medium=referral)

<sup>3</sup> Source: Cancel Black Code | John Lee: Hope to Achieve Smoother crowd Management | Starry Lee:  
Tomorrow will be an Iconic Day | Hong Kong 01  
[https://www.hk01.com/article/956749?utm\\_source=01articlecopy&utm\\_medium=referral](https://www.hk01.com/article/956749?utm_source=01articlecopy&utm_medium=referral)

<sup>4</sup> Source: [Nearly 3.6 Million Tourists Visited Hong Kong in July, with a Monthly Increase of over 30% | Hong Kong Tourism Board held an Industry Briefing to Analyse the Latest Situation in Hong Kong's Tourism Industry \(discoverhongkong.com\)](https://discoverhongkong.com)

Mainland visitors have changed, shifting from shopping purposes in Hong Kong to participating in more in-depth and diverse experiences (such as culture, art and exhibition activities and large-scale concerts). All these factors have had a certain impact on domestic consumption in Hong Kong.

The external environment remains challenging. According to the data released by the Census and Statistics Department<sup>5</sup> earlier, the value of total exports and imports of goods decreased by 15.5% and 13.2% respectively over a year earlier in the first half of 2023 (until June). Additionally, the ongoing tightening of monetary policies by major central banks indicate that the financial environment continues to be tight.

In addition to economic factors, there is a continued high emigration rate in Hong Kong, leading to a significant loss of customers in various industries, particularly beauty care salons and hairdressing salons. They are key customer groups with the highest purchasing power, and their consumption amount often becomes the major source of income for their businesses. In view of this, the current economic and social situation of Hong Kong has affected the pace of recovery of the beauty care and hairdressing industries and has presented them with various challenges. Therefore, the industries are cautious towards the future outlook and focus on short-term development.

---

<sup>5</sup> Source: [Census and Statistics Department: Hong Kong External Merchandise Trade \(censtatd.gov.hk\)](https://censtatd.gov.hk)



# Latest Development Trends of the Beauty Care and Hairdressing Industries

## Beauty Care, Spa and Healthcare Centres

---

The pandemic hit this sector hard and many beauty care salons closed down or reduced their branches. In addition to changing careers, some individual beauticians are inclined to rent “co-working spaces”, hoping to continue to provide various beauty care services to their customers. Besides, the significant loss of key customer groups has impacted beauty care salons, requiring them to re-adjust and analyse the needs of other customer groups, especially targeting the younger generation with high purchasing power. They need to design and provide various personalised beauty care services to cater for their needs.

With the increasing public concern for health, there is great potential for the development of beauty healthcare and wellness sectors, especially in the field of beauty healthcare services targeting pain management. More and more beauty care groups are providing one-stop beauty care services. Apart from offering various traditional beauty healthcare massage and wellness services, other services, such as scalp care, prenatal and postpartum care, slimming and weight management (including muscle training) will also be provided. Besides, they also sell health and nutrition food.

As some beauty and wellness services might involve traditional Chinese medicine (e.g., moxibustion, naprapathy, cupping therapy, etc.) or Western medicine, the industries should be cautious while introducing related services to avoid violating the relevant legislation (e.g., “Chinese Medicine Ordinance”, “Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance”, etc.). Besides, the

industries should also be mindful of accurately advertising their products or service offerings (such as the effectiveness of beauty treatments) and avoiding deceptive claims or violating the “Trade Descriptions (Unfair Trade Practices) (Amendment) Ordinance”.

## Product Retail

---

The pandemic has changed the traditional sales model in the industries, and consumers have become accustomed to purchasing various beauty care products / services through shopping websites / e-commerce platforms. Large-scale beauty care chain retailers have also adjusted their operation models accordingly, by reducing the number of physical stores and strengthening their online operations (including expanding online sales channels, establishing online platforms or cross-border e-commerce platforms, etc.)

In addition to a decrease in the number of traditional beauty care product retailers, the market has also witnessed the rise of “drug and cosmetic stores” or individual commercial businesses’ “lifestyle department stores”. They sell a variety of daily necessities, including beauty care, makeup, hair care and styling products. They stand out with a diverse range of products, affordable prices and convenient services, gradually gaining favour among consumers (including Mainland visitors).

In addition, customers have increased their expectations of beauty care or hairdressing products / services. Taking the high purchasing power of young customers group as an example, they will not only get to know the efficacy of products before placing orders but also consider multiple factors

such as the origins of the brands and their reputations.

## Product Wholesale

---

The pandemic has had a serious impact on the import and export of various products in Hong Kong, which has heavily affected the wholesale sector. Some beauty products wholesales companies have sharply decreased. To enhance its competitiveness, they have started to shift towards and develop an online business, but the costs for online sales channels and operations are relatively high, increasing their financial pressure. On the contrary, some product wholesalers emphasise strengthening cooperation and communication with their customers (including beauty care salons and hairdressing salons), providing them with one-stop consulting services to promote sustainable business development and achieve a win-win situation.

## Hairdressing Salons

---

In recent years, similar to the situation in the beauty care industry, there has been a rise in places known as "shared workspaces" (referred to as IG spaces) in the market. Generally, hairdressers / hair colour technicians, in the form of "self-employment", rent space, purchase goods on their own and provide various hairdressing services to their customers. They usually share their hairdressing works on social media platforms to promote and showcase their skills, attracting more customers. With this promotional strategy, some hairdressing practitioners secure considerable income. However, as this operating model heavily relies on social media as a marketing channel, a number of hairdressing representatives question whether the skill level of those hairdressing practitioners have met the recognised standards.

To enhance the competitiveness of the hairdressing industry, the BHTB recommends that the industry should consider optimising the existing process for providing hairdressing services, such as adjusting sharing ratios between hairdressing salons and hairdressers, optimising the operation model and making good use of appointment arrangements to improve time management during service processes. Besides, the industry should also provide standardised on-the-job training for practitioners. This helps unify the skill level of practitioners, solves the problem of the "vicious competition" among hairdressers and enables practitioners to obtain stable income.

## Speedy Haircut Salons

---

In the past decade, a single service known as "speedy haircut" has emerged in Hong Kong. Unlike traditional hairdressing services, customers are able to handle hair washing and drying by themselves, thereby saving time by eliminating some complex procedures. The majority of "speedy haircut salons" operate as chain stores, with a well-established branch network and fixed pricing packages. Therefore, "speedy haircut" has gained significant popularity, particularly among male customers. This customer group generally seeks haircutting in the shortest possible time, with a preference for short hairstyles. Therefore, they tend to choose local speedy haircut services. As such, this independent service provides customers with an additional option and is expected to become more popular.

## Barbershops

---

In recent years, Hong Kong males have paid attention to their own images. The demand for traditional "barbershop" services (including traditional shaving, facial treatment, beard styling, ear cleaning and hair cutting (using electric clippers and scissors techniques) has also been increasing. Meanwhile, with the pursuit of simple hairstyles by the public, new types of

barbershops have emerged in the market. Similar to the practice of speedy haircut salons, they only offer hair cutting as a single service. Their service processes have effectively addressed the issues mentioned earlier regarding the need for optimisation in traditional hairdressing salons. This has allowed customers to experience fast and high-quality hair grooming services.

## Scalp Care Centre

---

People living in the city nowadays face high work pressure, and also deal with other issues such as ageing, genetics and excessive use of hair dyes at the same time. Therefore, both men and women may encounter different hair problems. Common problems include hair loss, poor hair quality that is prone to breakage, thinning, excessive scalp oil secretion, hormonal imbalances and hair / scalp ageing. Therefore, the public is increasingly paying attention to healthy hair and good hair quality, and there is a growing demand for care treatments relating to hair and scalp / hair loss.

In the past, most of these hair and scalp care services were provided by beauty care salons. However, in recent years, an increasing number of hairdressing salons have also added various hair and scalp care services and even opened specialised scalp care centres. The scope of services covers analysing scalp condition, deeply cleaning hair and using appropriate products and equipment for various care treatments to promote hair growth and prevent hair loss. In addition, they also sell suitable homecare products for customers as well. Some hairdressing salon employers said that scalp care services had become one of their main sources of income.

# Future Manpower Demand

The BHTB conducted desk research from September 2022 to August 2023 to collect job advertisements in the beauty care and hairdressing industries. 8,668 recruitment advertisements were recorded. Top recruiting positions are listed in **Table (1)**.

Compared with the job vacancies collected in the 2020 Manpower Survey Report of Beauty Care and Hairdressing Industries, the 2022-23 desk research has a similar result.

**Table (1) : Top Recruiting Positions in the Beauty Care and Hairdressing Industries**

	Top Jobs (Year 2022-23)	Top Vacancies (Year 2020)
Beauty Care	1. Beautician	1. Beautician
	2. Beauty Consultant	2. Beauty Advisor (Counter)
	3. Marketing Executive	3. Body Therapist
	4. Mid-level and Senior-level Personnel (Manager, Supervisor)	4. Beauty Consultant
Hairdressing	1. Hairdresser, Barber	1. Hairdressing Assistant
	2. Hair / Scalp Care Consultant, Hair / Scalp Care Therapist	2. Hairdresser
	3. Shop Operation Manager, Regional Store Manager	3. Perm & Color Technician

**Table (2)** shows that employers in the beauty care and hairdressing industries are eager to recruit professionals with relevant specific skills, general skills and emerging skills of the industries.

In the requirements for industry-specific skills, employers in the beauty care industry require their employees to possess relevant knowledge of beauty and body care as well as beauty healthcare; while employers in the hairdressing industry require their employees to possess knowledge in hair and scalp care, as well as knowledge in perming and colouring.

**Table (2): Hot Skills on Demand**

Professional Trade Specific Skills		Generic Skills	Emerging Skills
Beauty Care	Hairdressing		
1. Beauty Care and Body Care	1. Hair and Scalp Care	1. Sales and Marketing	1. Digital Marketing
2. Beauty Healthcare	2. Perming and colouring	2. Communication / Interpersonal Relationship	2. E-commerce
		3. Customer Services	3. Social Media Marketing



# Training Needs

Based on the development trends in the aforementioned industries coupled with the views from the focus groups, the skill requirements of the beauty and hairdressing industries are as follows:

## Core skills are indispensable

### Beauty healthcare and wellness knowledge and skills

It is anticipated that there will be a prosperous development potential of the beauty healthcare and wellness sector in the future. “Body Therapists” are the key personnel who provide different beauty healthcare and wellness services. Together with other frontline practitioners (such as beauticians, wellness consultants, etc.), they should enrich the core knowledge and skills on beauty healthcare including:

- (i) Mastering aromatherapy treatment, natural beauty care
- (ii) Mastering health massage techniques
- (iii) Understanding the application and effectiveness of health foods and herbal foods
- (iv) Recognising common dietary / nutritional misconceptions in the community
- (v) Analysing customers’ beauty healthcare needs, and dietary requirements
- (vi) Applying nutritional knowledge to develop wellness care plans

Supported by management knowledge, frontline practitioners should be well equipped with the operation of auxiliary devices on beauty healthcare and professional conduct to provide safe and reliable beauty healthcare services.

### Hair and scalp care knowledge and skills

With the increasing emphasis of consumers on hair and scalp care, the demand for related services has significantly increased. Unlike traditional hairdressing services, frontline practitioners (such as Hair Scalp Care Therapists, Scalp Care Consultants / Sales Consultants, Hairdressers, etc.) need to enhance their core knowledge and skills, including:

- (i) Hair and scalp knowledge
- (ii) Application of hair washing and head massage skills
- (iii) Mastery of hair and scalp care methods and procedures
- (iv) Understanding preventive methods for hair-related diseases
- (v) Dealing with general hair and scalp problems
- (vi) Application of hair and scalp care products and the use of related equipment devices

### Perming and colouring knowledge and skills

The hairdressing industry is currently facing the challenge of a shortage of "perm and colour technicians". Therefore, an increasing number of hairdressers need to provide colouring and perming services to their customers. As these services involve applying different chemical products, issues such as how to prevent damage to customers’ hair and its quality have become important issues. The industry advocates that hairdressers should equip themselves with the knowledge and skills on the proper use of different chemical products.

## Video production and digital skills are a must

---

### Video production knowledge and skills

The pandemic has changed customer's consumption patterns and the requirements for products /services. Producing videos on various beauty care / hairdressing services has already become an important promotional trend. It is recommended that the practitioners should strengthen their knowledge and skills in video production. This can help promote the products and services, thus attracting more different types of customers.

### Digital marketing knowledge and skills

With a rising trend of online purchases of various beauty or hair products / services, the industries adopt e-commerce platforms for promotion (including setting up online stores), to increase their sales volumes. Frontline practitioners are encouraged to strengthen their knowledge and skills in digital marketing and social media marketing (especially information dissemination through social media and photography skills, etc.) to address the needs of different customers.

## Soft skills should not be overlooked

---

### Establish and operate personal branding

With the increasing popularity of social media influencers, establishing and operating personal branding has become increasingly important. Personal branding is a marketing means that showcase unique values and reputation as well as combines them with different products and services to

enhance popularity. The focus group encourages frontline practitioners to actively create outstanding personal branding by building up their personal images and shaping their own charisma, enhancing their influence and allowing their personal branding to stand out. This not only brings more customers to the enterprises but also brings extra income and reputation to individuals. Frontline practitioners are advised to master knowledge of personal branding production and management, including good communication and presentation skills, as well as skills in photography, videography, and live streaming.

### Customer service skills

Customer service plays an important role in the beauty care and hairdressing industries. The success of a business often depends on the ability to gain customer support and maintain their loyalty. Key qualities of excellent customer service include sincere and polite interactions with customers, being patient, having professional knowledge, and being able to respond quickly and effectively to customer enquiries while providing appropriate advice and offering personalised solutions based on their preferences. Therefore, the focus group encourages frontline practitioners to strengthen their customer service knowledge and skills.

### Communication / interpersonal skills

Frontline practitioners must possess good communication skills and eloquence for providing good quality services and professional advice to customers. In the long run, good communication skills / interpersonal skills can help establish good relationships with customers. It can also enhance the collaborations and teamwork with colleagues and management in the workplace, resulting in building a strong relationship and team spirit.

# Challenges in recruitment and staff retention

Many employers in the beauty care and hairdressing industries encountered different difficulties in recruitment and staff retention. According to the sharing of the focus group, the main challenges can be summarised as follows:

## Lack of attractiveness of the industries

---

Most of the works in the beauty care and hairdressing industries mainly involve craftsmanship skills and are service-oriented in nature. Therefore, practitioners are often regarded by the public as blue collars. They do not receive the respect they deserve and bear less professional titles. Besides, they have relatively long working hours and are laborious. Meanwhile, in the “services industries”, the traditional concept that “customer is always right” is deep-rooted in society. Frontline practitioners often face situations where they have to deal with unreasonable customer requests. In addition, the younger generation lacks awareness and understanding of the development of beauty care and hairdressing industries, including market prospects, industry requirements, promotion ladder, and career development opportunities.

On the other hand, the business development of some beauty care / hairdressing enterprises may be concentrated in certain districts, which makes it difficult to meet the preferences of some job seekers (including housewives and middle-aged people) who are unwilling to work across districts. Besides, some enterprises fail to provide more flexible working hours, which often limits job seekers to work only during specific periods of time and reduces their options.

As a result, these restrictions and the aforementioned reasons make them feel that the attractiveness of the beauty and hairdressing industries is lacking.

## Work preferences of employees

---

The new generation of young employees places great importance on work-life balance. They prefer working at their own pace and make good use of creativity and technologies to practice independent remote work. They also tend to work as “slashers”, that is to work concurrently in multiple professions and identities rather than only engage in a single occupation. Therefore, they are often unwilling to have long-term employment in the same organisation to acquire industry knowledge and skills. In addition, some employees have different requirements for their careers and positions, including a high-quality working environment, flexible working hours and opportunities for quick promotion.

## Sustained immigration wave, High Turnover rate

---

In recent years, Hong Kong has been facing a continuous wave of immigration. Some Western countries have introduced new immigration measures (for example, Canada has lifted its restrictions on educational qualifications for “Stream B<sup>6</sup>” to attract talents from specific industries). These measures further intensify the problem of labour shortages in Hong Kong.

---

<sup>6</sup> Source: Canada cancels priority processing for Hong Kong permanent residency and student visas, resulting in an increase in application approval time | Hong Kong 01  
[https://www.hk01.com/article/923404?utm\\_source=01articlecopy&utm\\_medium=referral](https://www.hk01.com/article/923404?utm_source=01articlecopy&utm_medium=referral)

Apart from the serious loss of key customer groups, various industries are also facing a severe talent drain after the resumption of normalcy after the pandemic. Particularly in beauty salons, healthcare and spa centres, the competition for talent has increasingly fierce. For example, the entry salaries and benefits for experienced beauticians have seen a significant increase, putting additional financial pressure on small and medium-sized beauty care salons.

---

# RECOMMENDATIONS

To meet the future development of the industries and nurture talents, it is recommended that the Government, training institutions and employers should work together to take the following measures:

## Promote business digitalisation, reallocate manpower to assign specialised responsibilities for important projects

Even though the beauty and hairdressing industries primarily serve daily people's livelihood needs, the industries have accelerated the promotion of digital and information technology applications after the pandemic. Enterprises must restructure their business strategies and promote business digitalisation (for example, adding an online appointment system and customer relationship management system to handle daily operational arrangements, using big data analysis to further understand the preferences of their customers, etc.) and arrange employees to receive training on relevant enterprise digital transformation so that they can deepen their understanding and grasp the latest developments in business digitalisation. The industries can also consider making good use of the funding under the "New Industrialisation and Technology Training Programme" to enable more employees to receive training related to digital transformation / high-end technology.

In the "2023 Policy Address", it is mentioned that the government will establish an inter-departmental "E-commerce Development Task Force" to implement policies assisting Hong Kong's small and medium-sized enterprises in developing e-commerce businesses on the Mainland to promote business digitalisation. In addition, the "Digital Transformation Support Pilot Programme" will be introduced by the end of this year to support and accelerate the

digital transformation of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Due to the serious manpower shortage and other issues in the industries, the focus group suggests that enterprises should reorganise manpower to ensure sufficient support for key projects. This strategy not only helps alleviate the pressure caused by the lack of manpower but also ensures smooth business operations, improving work efficiency and quality.

## Enhance the professional status of the industries and encourage the development of cross-sectoral projects

The industries should consider reshaping the image of industries among young people and relevant stakeholders, enhancing professionalism and maintaining competitiveness. The focus group suggests that industries should keep up with the latest trends and demands by injecting new technologies and introducing high-value cross-sectoral development projects. This can provide young people with more diverse, attractive and challenging career development opportunities. Ultimately, it can attract young people to join the beauty care and hairdressing industries for development.

## Cultivate young people's interest in the industries through early exposure

To ensure that the industries have sufficient



new blood for long-term development, there is a need to cultivate young people's interest in the industries at an earlier stage. The BHTB suggests that the industries consider joining hands with training institutions to develop "Applied Learning Courses<sup>7</sup>" with the elements of beauty care and hairdressing for secondary school students so that they can have earlier exposure to the industries, understand the industry's nature and practical aspects of related jobs.

In the "2022 Policy Address", the government mentioned the launch of the "Business-School Partnership Programme 2.0", which aims to expand collaboration across various industries and enrich the practical abilities and workplace experience of secondary school students. The BHTB encourages industries to ride on this platform to provide more experiential activities for secondary school students so that they can visualise the job satisfaction and prospects of the industries effectively, which will be helpful for them to make wise decisions regarding their career paths in the future.

### Provide more support to retain new young employees and attract middle-aged people to rejoin the workplace

The focus group observed a relatively high turnover rate of new young employees in the industries, likely attributed to their challenges in adapting to the work environment or grasping the practical aspects of the job. To retain talents, employers should provide more support for

newly recruited employees, such as offering better job titles, clear promotion pathways, information on personal career development opportunities, and encouraging peer experience sharing. At the same time, the BHTB also encourages employers to treasure and appreciate their employees as well as recognise their contributions to the enterprises. These efforts will help retain employees.

To maintain the enthusiasm of young employees towards their careers, the industries should also actively explore various solutions, including flexible work arrangements, quality working environments, performance-related bonuses or benefits, and provision of more learning and development opportunities (including assisting them in building their personal branding, thus enabling them to realise self-value and accomplishment). These measures help enhance the job satisfaction of young employees and provide them with opportunities for ongoing development.

Apart from attracting young employees, the "2023 Policy Address" mentions that the government will launch a three-year Re-employment Allowance Pilot Scheme<sup>8</sup> to encourage middle-aged and senior individuals (including housewives) to rejoin to the workplace and promote re-employment. The BHTB suggests that employers should consider offering more flexible work arrangements (such as part-time mode) to attract them to join the beauty care and hairdressing industries, thus enhancing the workforce.

<sup>7</sup> Applied Learning (ApL) courses are elective subjects within the senior secondary curriculum. ApL offers studies with dual emphasis on practice and theory linked to broad professional and vocational fields. A flexible combination of ApL with core subjects, elective subjects and Other Learning Experiences helps provide students with holistic learning. ApL aims to enable students to understand fundamental theories and concepts, develop their beginners' skill set, career-related competencies and generic skills. ApL helps students explore their career aspirations and orientation for lifelong learning. (Source: [Applied Learning-Education Bureau \(edb.gov.hk\)](https://www.edb.gov.hk))

<sup>8</sup> The "Re-employment Allowance Pilot Scheme" targets at elderly and middle-aged persons aged 40 or above who have not been in paid employment for three consecutive months or more. To encourage these persons to rejoin the workforce, those who have worked for six consecutive months will be provided with a maximum allowance of \$10,000, while those who have worked for 12 consecutive months will be given an additional maximum allowance of \$10,000. Some 6 000 persons are expected to be benefitted. (Source: [Police Address | The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address \(policyaddress.gov.hk\)](https://www.policyaddress.gov.hk))

## Address the training needs of the industries in a flexible way

Training institutions should closely keep up with the training needs of the industries and be responsive and flexible in the delivery of training. The training needs of the following aspects mentioned above:

- (i) Beauty healthcare and wellness;
- (ii) Hair and scalp care;
- (iii) Perming and colouring (including the correct use of chemical products), and
- (iv) Digital media and marketing strategy.

Considering the unique operation and the tight manpower situation of the industries, training institutions should exercise the greatest level of flexibility in offering courses. It may prioritise to conduct short-term courses / bite-sized courses / workshops.

In addition, to comply with the aforementioned policies of promoting re-employment, training institutions should consider offering short-term courses / bite-sized courses about the “core knowledge and skills” in the beauty care / hairdressing industries, so that middle-aged job seekers can understand the core business development, for example:

- (i) Basic beauty care
- (ii) Basic hair care knowledge and skills (such as washing hair and assisting with basic perming and colouring)

## Internship - from School to Work

Apart from providing comprehensive training courses, the value of internships in acquiring practical experience is strongly emphasised. Young people are encouraged to embark on early internship or apprenticeship training and gain exposure to diverse areas within industries, facilitating the discovery of their niche and fostering continuous engagement in the field.

In the 2023 Policy Address, it is mentioned that starting from the 2024/25 academic year, the Vocational Training Council (VTC) will provide training allowances for each registered apprentice on a trial basis. VTC will also subsidise graduated apprentices to participate in skills enhancement courses in related industries for three years. The BHTB encourages young people to participate in the Apprenticeship Scheme / VTC Earn and Learn Scheme, allowing them to understand the business models and goals of industries in an earlier stage, enabling them to grasp practical work experiences and also acquire the necessary professional knowledge and skills. Such arrangements will not only help them feel valued and engaged in their work but also contribute to the growth and success of the enterprises.