

# Beauty Changes Lives: Join the cause now!

Cosmetology careers have long been conveyed negatively or outright ignored when it comes to presenting viable professional choices to young people. However, those in the professional salon industry know that a career in beauty and wellness can be very rewarding from both the aspects of helping people feel better about themselves and earning a great living. To build greater awareness of the wonderful opportunities afforded by a career in beauty or wellness, last year, the **American Association of Cosmetology Schools (AACCS)** created **Beauty Changes Lives**, a new marketing initiative designed to share the inside stories of successful beauty professionals with consumers who might be considering beauty as a career option, as well as their parents and guidance counselors, who have influence over those decisions. Beauty Changes Lives also brought New York City salon owner and influential stylist to the stars, **Ted Gibson**, on board to help communicate that important message. **Beauty Industry Report (BIR)** recently sat down with **Lynelle Lynch**, president of **Bellus Academy**, at her Poway, CA, campus 30 minutes from downtown San Diego, and **Jim Cox**, executive director of AACCS, to learn more.

**BIR: What are the primary messages that you would like to share with BIR's readers?**

**Jim Cox (JC):** We want to inform your readers about AACCS's new initiative, Beauty Changes Lives, and share our vision and ideas for how others in the professional beauty industry can get involved with our activities.

**BIR: Tell me about your background.**

**JC:** I've been executive director of AACCS for 12 years. My background is in private postsecondary education, having owned and operated schools since 1976.

**Lynelle Lynch (LL):** I took over my husband's three beauty schools in 2005 after his partner who had been running them passed away. I immediately saw the disconnect between the training in the schools and the professional services offered in the industry and began a path to revolutionize beauty education. The Bellus Academy is recognized as

a premier school, offering 17 advanced programs. Our school and students have won national recognition and awards from **Modern Salon**, the **International Sassoon** competition and the **Wella Trend Vision** competition.

**BIR: Give our readers a history of AACCS.**

**JC:** AACCS was founded in 1924 to represent the privately-owned cosmetology schools in the country. Today, we have 1,050 member institutions and 175 associate members. The mission of AACCS is to advocate excellence in education and our Big Audacious Goal is to promote the professions of beauty and wellness as premier careers of choice.

**BIR: I understand AACCS took a survey to measure the perception of the career that prompted the Beauty Changes Lives initiative. What did the survey show?**

**LL:** The survey compared the careers in beauty and wellness to careers in culinary arts, IT, health care and graphic design. We found that many see beauty and wellness careers as deficient in vital factors, such as consistent income and benefits. Young women want fulfilling, enjoyable careers. Nearly all consider steady income, work environment and insurance extremely important factors. Creativity, variety, flexibility and entrepreneurship are more often considered of moderate importance. It is possible to improve attitudes toward beauty and wellness. That last point generated our interest in pursuing the Beauty Changes Lives initiative. After survey participants were informed of the benefits of the careers, their perception was improved!!!

**BIR: What is Beauty Changes Lives?**

**JC:** Beauty Changes Lives is a non-profit organization focused on raising awareness of careers in the beauty and wellness industry, and the tremendous opportunities those careers present. We will also be raising funds for our scholarship programs to benefit new students entering the beauty industry, as well as advanced education programs for licensed beauty professionals. In addition, our fundraising efforts will go to our philanthropic efforts, including the fight against domestic violence, which is the primary cause adopted by the AACCS Board of Directors.

**BIR: Why was Beauty Changes Lives created?**

**LL:** The opportunity presented itself at the AACCS Annual Convention to rent a large theater and with a very small committee made up of **Jan Arnold**, **Stephen Moody**, **Bonnie Bonadeo**, Jim and myself, we created the Beauty Changes Lives event with Ted Gibson as our keynote. The audience was very supportive, and it became apparent that we had an opportunity to utilize the name and the momentum to build the initiative.

**BIR: Who is involved in Beauty Changes Lives? What roles do they play and how do they contribute?**

**LL:** Our goal is to have all professionals, manufacturers, schools and the industry support Beauty Changes Lives. In the future, we see local chapters producing fundraising events to share the exciting careers afforded only to those who have graduated from beauty school.

**BIR: What has Beauty Changes Lives accomplished so far?**

**JC:** The Beauty Changes Lives event in Phoenix and the national endorsement of **Ted Gibson**. We have also been marketing and selling collateral materials to our member schools designed to promote the career fields of beauty and wellness.

**BIR: Please tell me more about the endorsement of Ted Gibson.**

**LL:** Ted has ascended to a celebrity stylist and is an amazing example of how Beauty Changes Lives. We have captured Ted's image to use in collateral, banners, TV spots and in many other media that schools, salons and manufacturers can use to share the message.

**BIR: Lynelle, what is your role in making the Beauty Changes Lives initiative successful?**

**LL:** The first initiative has been to create tools for schools to use in recruiting and retaining students. The video of the kick-off event is an amazing marketing tool that I have used in orientation, on our website and in the classroom. We have developed a Beauty Changes Lives website to capture other professional success stories and also to allow prospective students to find an AACCS school near them. In addition, we have shown schools how to use the collateral through webinars and

at the conventions. AACS has a public relations committee, including professional publicists who work with our PR consultant, to create pitch ideas and work to further the Beauty Changes Lives website and the BCL social media on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

**BIR: How does beauty make a difference?**

**LL:** Professionals in the beauty industry make a significant difference in their clients' lives by making them feel and look beautiful. It is the time our clients relax and unwind when they visit our salon and spa. We also make a difference in the professionals' lives, as the career provides numerous benefits, including flexibility and financial rewards. The most important gift we give our students is confidence and pride in their career and that is how we make a difference every day. In addition, our AACS member schools are actively participating in the fight against domestic abuse by training their students to know the signs of domestic abuse and to reach their clients in a personal way to refer them to get assistance. That is a very dramatic way we are helping change lives.

**BIR: What are some of the charitable efforts your organization spearheads?**

**JC:** Our primary cause has been combating domestic violence, but we support several other charitable efforts of our members, including **Susan G. Koman, National Missing and Exploited Children** and others.

**BIR: I understand you are working with a new program called Dollars for Donations. How does that partnership generate funds?**

**JC:** Dollars for Donations is a fundraising program developed by **Priority Payment Systems**, a large credit card processing company. It has a revenue sharing program in which the company donates a percentage of its customers' fees to the charity or organization of their choice.

**BIR: How does that work?**

**LL:** Simply change the credit card processing company that you use to the Priority Payment system, and 25% of its fee is donated every month. Dollars for Donations provides you with a monthly statement that shows the contribution that is made on your behalf.

**BIR: Whom are you trying to reach through Beauty Changes Lives?**

**JC:** The salon and spa industry—

manufacturers, beauty schools and the public.

**BIR: What is the message you want to communicate to the industry?**

**LL:** JOIN THE CAUSE! To fulfill our mission of branding the careers of beauty and wellness as premier careers, all companies and individuals can participate. Identify a product where a percentage of the proceeds goes to Beauty Changes Lives; add the logo to all ads or create a campaign to share the message. Log onto the Beauty Changes Lives website and become a Facebook fan—tell your story. You

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can also add the Beauty Changes Lives video to your website or buy the collateral and give buttons to your team to wear. Mention Beauty Changes Lives in all activities and have it become a center piece of conversation. Utilize

the Beauty Changes Lives video in all trainings to share the passion for the industry. I challenge the industry to become creative and support the cause!

**JC:** One of the key messages is that Beauty Changes Lives can promote a universal message to the general public that will benefit the entire professional beauty industry.

**BIR: What are the specific initiatives you are using to reach each of those target markets?**

**LL:** Currently, we are arranging personal meetings with vendors and through the large professional and school conventions. We will have a presence at the **International Beauty Show** in New York City in March with the **BeCause** launch event—Beauty Changes Lives is the event's dedicated charity! In addition, **America's Beauty Show** in Chicago is providing Beauty Changes Lives with 1 ½ hours on the Center Stage to share how to become involved.

**BIR: What else do you have planned for 2011?**

**JC:** We want to have two large initiatives that all salons and spas can participate in to raise funds and brand Beauty Changes Lives.

**BIR: What's an example?**

**LL:** Tell your story on your company's website and sign up for Dollars for Donations to start contributing today. Another important initiative is to add the Beauty Changes Lives message into your company by adding the logo and sharing your personal and company stories too.

**BIR: Where can BIR's readers learn more?**

**JC:** We have two websites—[www.beautyschools.org](http://www.beautyschools.org) and [www.beautychangeslives.org](http://www.beautychangeslives.org).

**BIR: Any final thoughts?**

**LL:** Thank you for the opportunity to share this story with your readers. I hope that you will compel and challenge them to incorporate Beauty Changes Lives into their companies.

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