

## 8 reasons why online education makes sense By Kacy Rindal

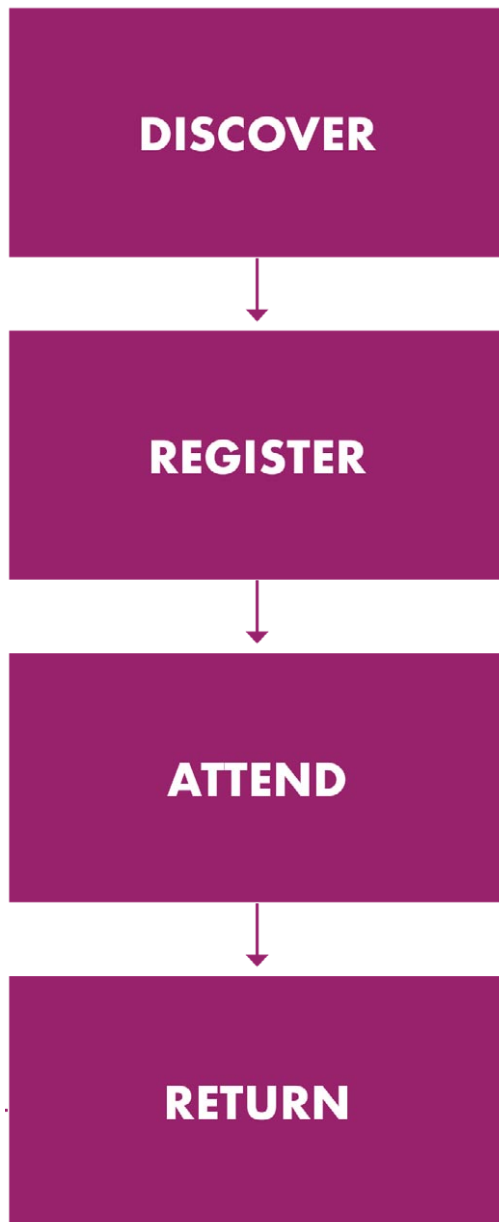
Online education is the way of the future—and with the COVID-19 pandemic, the future is NOW. If salon owners, multi-unit salon and spa companies, distributors and brands knew how straightforward, cost-effective and time-efficient it is to get an online education program up and running, they'd be ready to go right away. In fact, in some cases, it's truly as easy as pressing "record."

At iBeAuthentic, we get customers up and running with online education quickly—from single classes to programs to a full curriculum. We start with recommendations on video equipment, production and learning management software, then continue advising you on format, timing and frequency. That way, you can keep DSCs, salon owners and managers, stylists, nail technicians, estheticians and makeup artists connected with digital classes when it's impossible to meet in person. From product knowledge to new techniques to business knowledge, we've got it covered.

Some students might find that they learn differently in an online environment, provided they get ample resources and communication before, during and after each course. After building hundreds of programs for our business partners, these are the eight most important considerations we've learned when building on online education program.

### 1. Provide education all year, any time.

The flexibility of online education is its biggest advantage. Stylists and other beauty pros can access the education 24/7/365 at their convenience—between clients, while they're waiting to pick up the kids or even at 2 a.m. when it's quiet. That means that learning can happen in their own time, whenever it's most convenient for them. Location counts, too. Some people feel more comfortable in their living room; some prefer to be at the salon with easy access to their tools, products and mannequins.



*Using an online education platform, iBeAuthentic creates new avenues for its customers to market and sell their courses and other educational content. This path depicts the steps a student takes online to attend a class, which is valuable behavior we can track and target to cause repeat business, whether they complete the loop or not.*

Another advantage is that online education can be offered in multiple formats to match every lifestyle. Hands-on courses will take place in the privacy of their own space without students feeling rushed or judged. Business development classes will be created in an audio file for attendees to listen to at their convenience. You can even build pre-requisites to ensure that students have the understanding, skills and supplies to benefit from advanced programs.

**2. Go digital with handouts.** Nobody needs another piece of paper. One of the best things about virtual education is that it's paperless—because all of the resources are also digital. Most learning management software enables file sharing in each class to attach PDFs, PowerPoints and branded printouts (think swatch charts for stylists to post on their walls in the back room).

That means that program hosts will not need to invest in a print budget. By offering digital tool kits, recaps and expanded charts following a class, your ability to provide beauty professionals or DSCs with all of their education will be almost effortless. Plus, going digital means that companies can change up their literature every six months—or sooner—if the program material needs to be updated with new products and trends. In fact, we've even seen brands create QR codes for one-touch access to documentation.

### 3. Digital education budgets save money.

Gone are the days of chasing down educators to have them submit expenses after a class. With digital education, travel and accommodation costs will decrease dramatically, and you can reward your educators by paying them for their expertise and knowledge, as opposed to for their time.

Having educators teach from home, their own salon or their distributor's classroom will also allow them to pursue more varied teaching opportunities. They'll need to record the class only once, instead of traveling and teaching the same course over and over in multiple territories. Everyone wins. As a result,

education departments can spend more of their energy on providing classes, and educators can devote more time to creating quality, diverse content and then interacting—digitally, of course—with students to support them before, during or after the program.

**4. Materials are consistent and on brand.**

The dreaded words for any educator are “flip chart.” Every educator has created a flip chart as a teaching aid, then has tried to get the chart—and the markers—to the next class intact. With every chart comes the limitations of the educator’s artistic ability, the potential for the educator to “freelance” with the words he or she uses and the reliance on the educator’s handwriting. Plus, with every class comes the possibility of losing or tearing a page, resulting in the stylist recreating the same pages over and over again.

With digital education, those challenges are gone. Technology and resources take presentation materials—and consistency—to the next level. The company’s marketing, sales and education departments can co-create the presentation, double-checking details and ensuring that every important point is covered. By adding graphics and branded elements, brands, distributors and multi-unit salons and spas can create professional presentations and materials that build loyalty with their students—and ensure consistency of messaging, no matter who teaches the program. Plus, as an added benefit, these digital presentations never get lost or damaged and are always backed up.

**5. Rewind. Play back.** One of the biggest advantages of digital education is that recipients can watch and engage whenever and however works best for them. They can rewind and replay the presentation to ensure they have a clear understanding once they’re putting the details into practice in the salon or spa. With a digital playback, you have it all in the palm of your hand.

**6. Tracking class attendance equals more in-depth engagement.** We’re not just talking about taking roll call. The distributors and

brands we work with can track analytics on each class with learning management software, including when users stop watching the video and when they’re the most engaged.

You’re also able to track each student individually, serve them emails on evaluations and upcoming education announcements, and monitor what other classes they’ve taken.



*Online education is more likely to be accessed and retained, because the on-demand format allows students to learn at their own pace, without distractions. Image courtesy of Milbon.*

Gathering email lists is an essential component of your digital education program, since they allow you to engage more deeply and retarget campaigns on other platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, LinkedIn, etc.

**7. Encourage career advancement.** When beauty professionals become independent (in a salon suite or as a booth renter), they have less assistance with organizing their continuing education, including when classes are available. Hence, they often look for alternative means of education. Of course, nothing will replace in-person classes. However, for the beauty industry to thrive, it’s essential to recognize that everyone has different learning styles, just as they have different ways of doing business.

With travel at a minimum because of safety, budgets and time, most education will be online for the foreseeable future. It’s critical that brands, distributors and multi-unit salons and spas make that available.

Before the COVID-19 crisis, our partners found that stylists appreciated and took advantage of multiple educational avenues

(both online and in-person courses), as it advanced their careers on their terms. Because of economics and time, the scales will continue to tip toward digital.

**8. You have the content, we have the know-how.** Beyond the technical know-how it takes to get digital education started, your educators will need to learn new teaching and engagement techniques to help them hold their students’ attention digitally. We encourage them to share their personality through their teaching, and encourage their students to connect during the class in even more ways, whether that’s submitting a question digitally, working through extra materials like a magazine, printout or quiz or even bringing their own materials or mannequin to share with the class.

We will walk you through how to tailor the class for an online demographic while addressing the fundamentals of your traditional program. It’s a win-win for everyone.

You market your brand through education, becoming your customers’ true partner in building their businesses on their terms.

*Leave the work to us. To schedule a consultation on how to set up a learning management system, contact Digital Content Manager Kacy Rindal (krindal@ibeauthentic.com), who leads the learning management software project, or Digital Media Lead Erin Noha (enoha@ibeauthentic.com), who co-authored this article in partnership with iBeAuthentic and Beauty Industry Report.*



Kacy Rindal

*For additional information, visit [ibeauthentic.com](http://ibeauthentic.com).*

*iBeAuthentic is a digital marketing company that increases the business of beauty distributors and brands through meaningful, personalized digital marketing. For additional information, visit [ibeauthentic.com](http://ibeauthentic.com).*