

A photograph of three diverse women in a modern setting. One woman with long dark hair stands in the background, smiling. Two women are seated in the foreground; one is holding a smartphone and the other is holding a tablet. They are all looking at their devices and appear to be collaborating. The woman on the left is wearing a black leather jacket, and the woman on the right is wearing a light-colored jacket and white-rimmed glasses.

Better Together: People and AI Power the Future of Client Experience

(And Why You Can't Afford to Have One Without the Other)

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Entering the New Era of Client Experience

The beauty and self-care industry has evolved. What used to start with scheduled books and long waits in the lobby for a slot to open up has become a world of instant self-scheduling and automated reminder texts. And when clients have so many options for where they get their injectables, hair, nails, and everything else done, it's only natural that their expectations are higher than ever.

But self-care clients also want personalized, human service. They want to spend their money and their time at a business that runs like a well-oiled machine and treats them like a cherished friend. Maybe that sounds like a contradiction — but it doesn't have to be.

The solution for self-care businesses that want to give their clients the best of both worlds isn't a matter of replacing the person with AI; it's a matter of using automation to get all the other junk out of the way so the person can focus on providing the best possible client experience.

What does that look like? Read on to learn how to get there.



The Human Touch: Where People Shine



It's no secret: Clients have a one-of-a-kind connection with their self-care service providers. Many clients even share personal details they wouldn't discuss with close friends or family members. The skills, creativity, and intuition providers bring with them make your services work for every client. No AI will ever replace the way a professional can account for an endless number of variables: client needs, preferences, product availability, remaining time in the appointment, and so on. AI can do a lot, but it will never spot the subtle changes in body language that indicate whether a client is truly too scared to try a new service or just needs a little reassurance before they can discover a new favorite.

Here's an example of how that human touch can make an irreplaceable difference:

Leah's feeling stuck in a rut, or more specifically, stuck in a hairstyle. As she sinks into the salon chair, she admits to Trina, her stylist, that she's been rocking the same look ever since her last big breakup. She's tired of the 'do, but admits she may have a bit of an attachment issue going on. She's worried about making a big change.

Trina asks Leah what her favorite part of her current cut is and what she could live without. Trina gives Leah's hair an experimental tousle, getting a feel for the texture, and notes how a little trim here and some new product there could give the played-out cut a fresh look without verging into #MentyB territory. By the end of the appointment, Leah's feeling more confident about her hair than she has in years — and is excited to come back for another session with Trina next month.

The AI Advantage: Where Technology Takes Over

Notice anything missing from that last example? Maybe a distinct lack of human beings sweating over complicated schedules, fretting over how to reach clients who dropped off the face of the earth, frantically searching through docs to find a fix in the middle of a rush, that sort of thing?

That's because AI is way better at handling all those complex little details than humans. We're not talking "medspa androids with hypodermic syringes for fingers" sci-fi speculation here, just the real technology that's making a real difference for self-care businesses right now. Here's what we mean:

Seamless booking and scheduling:

Scheduling sounds simple enough — until you introduce add-ons, on-site resources, and a growing staff. Thankfully, computers are really good at comparing many variables at once. Give them a list of requirements and possibilities, and they can find you one golden slot that works best for everybody. Combined with a seamless self-booking experience, your AI-powered scheduling starts to run itself.

On-brand marketing without the time sink:

Marketing is essential, but how do you do it well without a) breaking your budget on an expensive agency or b) abandoning any hope of ever sleeping again? Let tech sweat the details, so you can run the show and enjoy the benefits. Marketing suites with AI-powered subject lines and email copy get your campaigns from templates to final drafts fast. They even spin up custom imagery so you get all the style points without the studio budget.

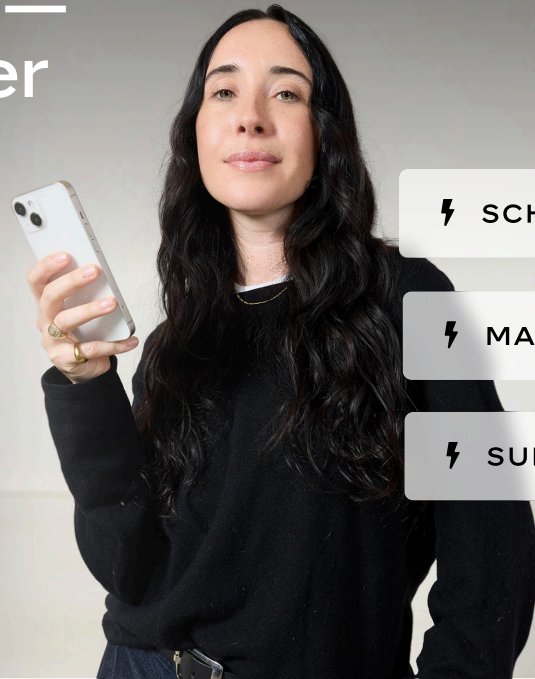
Instant answers & support:

You shouldn't have to wait for support reps to sign on to get the answers you need — and your clients shouldn't either. AI-powered support agents trained on your platform's in-depth documentation, as well as the details of your business, can help you, your team, and your clients find what they need, fast. Combine that capacity with an auto-responder for after-hours messages that require a human touch, and your bases are officially covered.

Data-driven efficiency:

Data is the lifeblood of modern businesses, but you shouldn't have to be (or hire) a data scientist to make it work for you. With AI that runs on the data you already trust, inside the workflows you already use, you get an instant head start on productivity. That means better insights, faster and more efficient operations that build better client experiences and a stronger bottom line.

Why We Need Both— Not One or the Other



We've talked about how people are critical to the client experience, and how AI is playing a growing role in self-care operations. But what happens if you try to do one without the other?

People Without AI

If you've been in business for a while, you already know what this looks like. Self-care businesses can still offer great services to their clients with no automation, but that's only if everything goes right — and unfortunately, there's a lot that can go wrong.

Clunky, manual booking processes leave providers rushing to catch up one hour and twiddling their thumbs the next. Missed follow-up calls mean more no-shows with no time to fill the sudden opening. Marketing only happens when you can spare the headspace, and the inevitable gaps start counting against your bottom line.

This model is steeped in the kind of personal touch that makes the difference, but inefficiencies are preventing it from reaching its full potential.

AI Without People

But what if you automated everything? We'll assume humans still carry out some essential tasks (as terrifying as it is to picture roving Mani-Pedi-Bot 3000s, we'll leave that to the next season of Black Mirror), but their interactions with clients are as streamlined and automated as possible.

The whole business runs with minimal delays and maximal margins. Yet it's cold and transactional. Instead of getting a memorable experience that clients want to tell their friends and family about, they just get... services. There's no nuance, no relationship, and no trust. They could keep coming to your business, but if one opens up closer to where they live or work, why would they bother making the trip?

It's a well-oiled machine, but what that machine creates isn't especially memorable.

People and AI Together

Great people and effective AI implementations are not mutually exclusive concepts. In fact, many self-care businesses are seeing how the two work together to shore up weaknesses, augment strengths, and build better experiences at every stage of the client journey. Let's walk through one last example.

A new client finds your business's Instagram account and books directly from the app. They fill in details about what they're looking for. Next week, an automated message reminds them that they have an appointment tomorrow. They walk through the front door, and their provider is ready to greet them and ask follow-up questions based on the intake form.

The appointment goes without a hitch, and the client sets up another appointment with the same provider on their way out. In two weeks, they get another notification for their upcoming session, and the cycle begins anew.



Building a Balanced Client Experience Model

Putting experienced people and adaptable AI together helps self-care businesses unleash their full potential. Finding the right balance for your own business will take some careful research and adjustment over time, but here are three proven pillars to build on:

Front-end human touch:

The sooner you can get a client in front of a human provider, the sooner they can start building a one-on-one relationship with your brand that keeps them coming back. Consultations are an ideal place to make this first impression, but you can get the ball rolling beforehand with messaging between staff and clients to answer questions and customize the consult.

Back-end AI efficiency:

The back end of your business is where AI acts as a true force multiplier. Let intelligent algorithms sweat all the details of scheduling so your desk staff can dedicate all their attention to leveling up your client experience. Meanwhile, rely on marketing automation to reach out to clients at key moments in their journey and receive instant support. It all adds up to less wasted time and more opportunity to knock clients' socks off.

Consistency across touchpoints:

The touchdown pass. The handoff between chef and server. No matter how good each part of the process is, it's only as good as the transition from one appointment to the next. Using one unified platform that combines your scheduling, client profiles, and other common tools of the trade with in-depth AI capabilities ensures that nothing falls through the cracks and that each part of the business makes the biggest impact possible.

This is where Boulevard's holistic approach stands out. AI is built into the workflows you already use and trust, so you don't have to turn your systems on their head to get a big boost from automation. With Boulevard, AI isn't just a buzzword — it's a practical, deeply integrated set of tools ready to help your self-care business do what it does best, only better.

Boulevard AI + Hudson Hawk **Make More Moments Possible**



Hudson Hawk Barber & Shop was founded in 2013 to bring an elevated yet accessible barbershop experience to the Midwest. It expanded rapidly over the next decade, and it quickly became clear that its old process for scheduling wasn't up to the task of managing appointments across a dozen locations.

The team made the switch to Boulevard and hasn't looked back since. Boulevard's intuitive self-booking process starts the process off right, taking in new and returning clients with a simple workflow that frees up receptionists to focus on the clients in the room. But for Hudson Hawk, the biggest game changer was how it helped book more appointments.

"Precision Scheduling is huge for us," Brad Hashagen, Chief Financial Officer at Hudson Hawk, told us. "It does a great job of filling in slots. We book every 15 minutes, and it helps keep those gaps filled without having a receptionist manually take care of each one."

More filled slots means more happy clients — and with Precision Scheduling automatically targeting sweet spots to minimize downtime for providers, it also means more happy barbers. The AI-powered upgrade gave CFO Brad plenty of reasons to be happy, too, with a 57% decrease in revenue-draining no-shows after implementing Boulevard.

How to Get Started

You've committed to building a better self-care business that combines human talent and connection with efficient automation. Now you just need to know where to begin. Here's our recommendation for how and where to start your business's evolution.

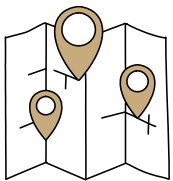


Part 1: Evaluate

Before you decide how to change your business, you need a strong grasp of where it stands right now. Concentrate your evaluation on two main areas:

Where is the **uniquely human touch** that your business provides the strongest? To quantify this, look for common threads that stand out in client reviews and other data: if any desk staff are commonly called out as going above and beyond, if any service providers have an especially reliable rotation of regulars, and so on.

Find your **efficiency gaps**. These are the little rough spots that make processes run slower than they should, or where things tend to go off the rails when things get busy or people just forget. The best way to find them is to talk to staff across different roles and levels. These gaps are the places you should look first for automation.



Part 2: Map

Next, map out the client journey from initial exposure to your brand, to first appointment, to becoming one of your loyal regulars. How can you develop processes for both the people and the AI automations in your business that enhance this journey? For instance, if clients who haven't been back for a while only get outreach when you have time to catch up, could automated marketing give you more consistent results while freeing up your schedule?



Part 3: Enable, don't replace

It's tempting to imagine the business that "runs itself" — the ultimate in cost savings and efficiency. But then we get back to that "AI Without People" problem we talked about earlier. So think about the business that runs better, instead.

How many more clients could you get in front of your talented team if they automatically fit into the perfect schedule slots? How much more time could your front desk staff spend making your self-care business an inviting place to be if they didn't have to spend so much time on logistics and working the phone?

Automation may make some tasks no longer necessary, but that doesn't mean the people who perform them aren't. It's just an opportunity to make a more direct impact on clients through other tasks that AI can't do.

Leaving Clients Wanting More

A great client experience makes people want to come back. Delivering these kinds of experiences reliably is what turns first-timers into lifelong brand advocates. And reliability is one of the hallmarks of automation — set it up and watch it go. Combine that solid baseline of support with the potential for greatness in every member of your team, and you know what comes next.

We've seen over the years that, when people and AI work together in the self-care industry, you don't just meet client expectations. You surpass them. And build relationships that help your brand not just survive, but thrive.

At Boulevard, we're ready to help you build that perfect balance.



About Boulevard

Boulevard offers the fastest-growing client experience platform for appointment-based, self-care businesses.

From initial booking to final payment, Boulevard's modern, easy-to-use platform empowers you and your staff to deliver personable, enjoyable experiences that keep clients coming back. Founded in LA in 2016, Boulevard has earned the trust of thousands of salons and medspas across the nation by delivering simple yet powerful technology and the best-in-class support they deserve.

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*Average impact T+90 days after switching to Boulevard. These are estimated results based on aggregated customer data, results are not guaranteed. Please keep in mind that actual results may differ based on a number of factors, including market, client base, geography.

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