

Imbalie Beauty Academy opens doors into the industry

 By Lauren Hartzenberg

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South African beauty franchise group Imbalie Beauty has become a key player in South Africa's [robust franchising industry](#). The company, which owns salon brands Placecol Skin Care Clinic, Dream Nails Beauty and Perfect 10 Nail & Body Studio, markets and distributes its own in-house and independent health and beauty brands to its distribution network of more than 150 predominantly franchised beauty salons as well as independent salons and selected pharmacies.



In March 2016 Imbalie Beauty expanded its focus to include education and training with the launch of its Imbalie Beauty Academy. The training facility equips students with theoretical and practical knowledge across a range of beauty disciplines, under the watchful eye of experienced mentors. The academy's focus on job preparation and placement also prepares students for job interviews and grants them the opportunity to kick-start their career by gaining employment in one of the group's beauty salons or wellness centres.

In line with the beauty group's core value of female empowerment, Imbalie Beauty Academy has run a number of campaigns offering subsidised programmes to women that hail from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In July last year, the academy, in collaboration with Western Cape Government, launched the Social Makeover Project. The initiative provided 20 underprivileged women from the Cape Flats with skills training, employment and the opportunity to give back to their own community. More recently the company offered 24 disabled women a [12-month fully subsidised learning programme](#) at the academy.

This [#CSIMonth](#), Imbalie Beauty Academy principal Lisa Leibov chatted to us about what inspired the move into training, what skill-sets students are equipped with at the facility, and the company's focus on social upliftment.



Lisa Leibov

Why did Imbalie Beauty decide to expand its focus to education and launch a training academy?

Imbalie Beauty is a franchise group with a footprint across the country. When interviewing prospective candidates for positions within our group, it became clearly evident that we were dealing with a serious skills shortage on the ground - we found ourselves hiring for attitude and training for skill. It was then a natural progression for us to embark on the establishment of our own academy whereby we could instil in our learners not only a fantastic skill-set but a passion for beauty and people.

What skills will students be equipped with upon completion of the training programme?

Imbalie Beauty Academy has a strong focus on beauty therapy courses as we are built on Imbalie Beauty's 30-plus years' of success in the beauty industry. Our learners have the opportunity to leave our academy with both local and international qualifications, opening the doors to a career in beauty around the world and on the seas working on cruise liners.

They will be able to perform a myriad of skin and body treatments including:

- Skincare treatments
- Massage
- Make-up
- Manicures
- Pedicures
- Waxing
- Nail enhancements
- Threading
- Micro blading
- Permanent make-up
- Lash enhancements
- Ethnic hair

As an academy, we are growing our offerings into hair, fitness and retail stylist/image consulting.

Our graduates leave with far more than just skill; our mission is to graduate confident, business-savvy graduates who see themselves as the CEOs of their own businesses. We form a long-term support structure for our students. Our company has a recruitment division offering our graduates preferential deployment into our own footprint of over 150 stores nationwide and we offer business and entrepreneurial training to equip them to run their own businesses.

▣ *What opportunities do you believe the beauty and wellness industry offers graduates?*

It is a very unique industry in that the opportunities are vast, from working in a beauty salon, spa, hotel or nail bar, to working from home as a stay-at-home mom, to owning your own empire even offering mobile solutions. The entrepreneurial opportunities are great. If you can think it...you can make it happen.

Our calibre of beauty therapists in this country is highly sought after so opportunities aboard the cruise liners or overseas are readily available. Qualified graduates can also expand into different directions by becoming educators, brand managers, or being part of product development, working on the ground with spa design, recruitment, salon support, marketing and events.

▣ *Tell us about the Social Makeover Project launched in collaboration with Western Cape Government's Department of Social Development.*

The Social Makeover project was a very special project for Imbalie Beauty. The 20 women who became part of this initiative were recruited from Mitchells Plain and surrounding areas through the Department's Youth Cafes, Skills Transfer Programme and Local Department Offices.

On the 8 July 2016, 20 young women between the ages of 18 and 25 successfully completed a highly intensive nail course with the Imbalie Training Academy. This course combined manicure and pedicure training, gel and acrylic nail enhancements and various hand and foot massage techniques, a skills combination making them highly employable. In addition, these women were mentored the entire time by Farhana Parker who is a social worker by profession, giving them skills of self-empowerment and realisation of their potential and ability to change their own circumstances and lives.



These young women volunteered in their communities during their incubation phase of the training process, where they are required to perfect their skills. In this way they were able to touch lives and give back to their communities, working in old-age homes and facilities for abused women, working on not only the people living there but the care workers themselves who give of themselves all day.

On completion of successful theoretical and practical examinations these incredible women have been offered placements in Imbalie Beauty's salons including Dream Nails, Perfect 10 and Placecol, some have gone on to work in their own communities.

What fascinated me most was how in just a short 10-week period, these women that seemed to have no light in their futures are now being employed and becoming contributing members of society, escaping the poverty-stricken and negative environments from where they came and becoming role models for future generations and other members in their communities.

■ ***How important is social upliftment within the scope of the Imbalie Beauty business?***

One of Imbalie Beauty's core values is the empowerment of women. In fact, in our next project we are taking it one step further and offering 24 disabled women with a passion for the beauty industry the opportunity to enter the industry on a 12-month fully subsidised learning programme with a stipend of R1,500 for transport each month.

It's not just about beauty for us, it's about changing lives one at a time.

Visit Imbalie Beauty Academy's [website](#) to find out more about the courses on offer, and connect with the brand on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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