



Education in the Hair Loss Industry

Pushing the Frontiers of Technology

By Elvira Amankwa, CMP

The Internet, or “the Net” in short, is a huge, global network of computers, with which we browse the World Wide Web. It has become our most powerful information, communication, entertainment and business resource.

Many existing communication platforms, such as telephone, music, film and television have been redefined by the Net. In order to survive and preserve meaning in the 21st century, the print publishing industry (newspapers, magazines, books) have adapted to website technology and morphed into web news feeds, blogs and e-book readers. The Net also added new facets to human interaction. Internet forums and online discussion groups now lend support and give advice for just about any life scenario. Social networking takes human relationship building online. E-mailing and instant messaging increases efficiency in communication. From shopping for deals to checking the weather, from paying bills to investing in stocks, from cheering on our favorite sports team to watching the world news unfold - we resort to the Net and it's sheer unlimited resources for many of our daily activities. Even some of life's most complex decisions, such as finding a soul mate, are nowadays facilitated, yes, you guessed it, by the Net, with 21st century matchmaking (aka online dating) now being a multi-billion Dollar industry.

The most fascinating aspect of the Net is probably its lack of central administration, which allows for organic growth. It is estimated that more than 2.2 billion people – nearly a third of the Earth's population – use the services of the Net. And as global connectivity increases, so does Internet growth.

It's no surprise therefore, that the world of education is also embracing the Net. Some of the country's leading learning institutions such as Stanford, Harvard and MIT, are creating learning environments that mirror today's life – individuals and communities connected through the World Wide Web – and now offer online learning solutions. Traditional (or residential) learning, often anchored in ancient traditions that date back to the middle ages, is being softly, but surely nudged into the 21st century. “Lectures came about several

hundred years ago when there was one copy of the book, and the only person who had it was the professor. The only way to convey the content was for the professor to stand

at the front of the room and read the book. One would hope that we had better capabilities these days.” [*Daphne Koller, Co-Founder of Coursera, Stanford's revolutionary online education initiative*]

And we surely do! Consider this: “The costs of getting a college degree have been rising faster than those of health care, so the need to provide low-cost, quality higher education is more acute than ever. At the same time, in a knowledge economy, getting a higher-education degree is more vital than ever. And thanks to the spread of high-speed wireless technology, high-speed Internet, smartphones, Facebook, the cloud and tablet computers, the world has gone from connected to hyper-connected in just seven years. Finally, a generation that has grown up on these technologies

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is increasingly comfortable learning and interacting with professors through online platforms". *[Thomas L. Friedman, Journalist, Author, Columnist, The New York Times]*

So how does this relate to our industry, the hair loss industry, you might ask? Well, many of our industry veterans ended up behind the chair more by chance than by pursuit. Quite a number took the route into the business via a cosmetology license and developed their skills to become a hair loss professional more or less on their own. Others grew up in the business and followed the natural line of succession, taking over the business from a parent. Some saw a valuable investment opportunity and acquired a hair loss studio as a profitable addition to their portfolio.

Whatever the case might be, to really be successful in this very unique industry of ours, specialized skills and knowledge are needed more than ever. Industry-specific, quality education has not been easily accessible in the past. A lot of "looking someone over the shoulder" and "learning by trial and error". Regional manufacturer conferences here and there, and face-to-face training classes on a more local level filled a void and helped to educate the industry. But what about an industry-wide standard and comprehensive classes, ranging from basic technical skills (bonding, blending, cutting, perming, coloring, styling) to more advanced techniques? How about working with innovative, heat-resistant fibers, such as Biolon®? What about teaching modules, providing real business insights and sharp sales skills for the busy studio owner who is looking for concrete answers to pressing questions? What about the owner/manager who cannot afford to be away from his/her studio for several days in a row? How about those with tight travel and expense budgets? And let's not forget the technician who would like to better him/herself after hours and learn more about a specific problem area where they are lacking.

With increased accessibility, increased connectivity and increased technology all over the world, New Image Labs Corporation developed New Image University (NIU) in 2010, the industry's only online educational resource. *"We saw an emerging trend in online education years ago, and decided to launch NIU to provide affordable quality education to members of the hair loss industry. Today, with budget and travel restraints, this trend is an established fact and the demand for convenient online training for professional advancement is*

ever increasing," states Tony Sciara, President of New Image Labs Corporation.

Currently, the NIU library of tutorials geared towards hair loss specialists encompasses over twenty class titles and New Image recently solidified its commitment to industry education by expanding its online educational efforts. Significant resources have been allocated to produce more cutting-edge tutorials to help studio owners and hair loss technicians all over the world to simply be the best at what they do. No less than eleven new easy-to-follow classes will be available at NIU in October 2012. With direct email access to Resident Hair Experts plus a dedicated Facebook page, NIU is a vibrant community of hair loss professionals who are interested in taking their skills up a notch. *"It's this growing demand for great online industry education which encouraged us to invest in the production of additional cutting-edge class titles. We are excited to make them available very soon to hair loss professionals everywhere to help them have a leg up, boost their skills and increase their business,"* shares Tony Sciara.

But for New Image pioneering the industry's online technology wave, does not stop here. A completely redesigned NIU website will enhance the online learning experience. An enlarged course will offer Biolon® Online Certification and the corporate website is being completely revamped not only to accommodate 21st century technology, but also the growing demand from busy managers and owners to place their orders online in a convenient and secure environment, which translates into significant cost and time savings for them. There also will be a new blog "HairChatter", slated to launch in October 2012. Hair matters here, with a focus on "hairy" topics, such as hair disorders, successfully living with hair loss, women with hair loss, late breaking hair loss solutions, etc.



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So how about all those aspiring, enterprising, motivated hair loss professionals out there? Those of you who have “grown up on technology and are increasingly comfortable learning and interacting with professors through online platforms”? How about you, the hair loss professional who knows that a degree equals opportunity and that education is not only the great equalizer, but also the great distinguisher and crucial for success? “YAFIYGI” - You Asked For It You Got It. Soon you will be “SICL” – Sitting In Chair Laughing! A “New Image Certified Hair Loss Specialist” or a degree in “Hair Loss Solutions” might not be light years away, but right at your fingertips, as we continue to push the frontiers of the online industry technology revolution. So stay tuned! Right now, you might be :-/ (skeptical). But those who know how to ride the technology wave, will benefit from it and will be – at the end of the day - happy, very happy :-)))

New Image Laboratories is a leading hair products distributor located in West Palm Beach Florida. For more information, call 1-800-359-4247.