

WHICH TYPE OF NAIL TECHNICIAN ARE YOU?

- a. Customer leaves satisfied
- b. Customer leaves happy
- c. Customer leaves **BIG** tip

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Toasting to a long, successful career in the nail industry are (left to right) Joanne Thompson, Robin Stopper Renner, and Doraida Webb.



Giving Back Through Mentoring

Over the past several months, 26-year nail veteran Robin Stopper Renner has donated an impressive 35 hours of time mentoring. "My last three students were long-time clients prior to deciding they wanted to become licensed nail professionals," says Renner, owner of Nails By Robin in Tavares, Fla. One reason she mentors is the hope that the new tech will want to join her salon, but she sees the larger picture as well. "I feel good about the time I invest knowing that, on the whole, I'm making our industry a better place," she says. "Passing on my knowledge and experience with others gives me immeasurable joy and satisfaction."

She works with students before, during, and after school. "Prior to starting school, I focus on proper sanitation, tools and product knowledge, service steps, and proper acrylic consistency." Renner also stresses ergonomics. "It is very important that they form good habits early when it comes to posture and correct limb, hand, and finger placement to avoid repetitive strain injuries."

"Once they start school, we line up real people for the students to practice on. We book our 'hand models' a three-hour appointment when practicing sculptured acrylic. I work one-on-one with the students watching their every move, correcting mistakes immediately." After the students become licensed, she teaches them proper business practices and bookkeeping.

"I was fortunate enough to have a wonderful mentor, Maureen Volpe. Her passion for the nail industry was contagious and I was lucky enough to catch it at a very early age," she says.

One Tech's Take on Tipping

"If you want to be seen as a professional, you've got to conduct yourself like one," says Jill Wright, the owner of Jill Wright Spa for Nails in Bowling Green, Ky. That's the reason she has a strict no-tipping policy; instead she includes the following suggestion on her salon menu: "If you are pleased with your service, then refer all your friends and family to me or purchase the recommended home care products to maintain your desired results."

"If we keep accepting tips, we'll continue to be seen as 'servers' and be treated as servants," says Wright. "Yes, at first it was scary. But I raised my prices beforehand, charged what I was worth, and now I don't feel like I have to hustle for tips. Every client gets the same great treatment and many have told me how much they appreciate the no-tipping policy."

