

# MIRROR TALKERS STUDY REPORT 2022



Most of us use too  
much shampoo  
and shampoo too  
often.

This report summarises findings from a year-long pilot study exploring the effectiveness of mirror talkers, small messages on salon mirrors that aim to spark conversations between hairdressers and their clients around sustainable hair care practices.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Results from the pilot study suggest that the key benefits of mirror talkers are in encouraging conversations between stylists and clients around sustainable hair care practices.**

Preliminary results indicate that such conversations prompted by the mirror talkers led to positive impacts on clients' behavioural intentions relating to sustainable hair care. Further research would be needed to determine the extent to which such conversations affect actual client behaviour over the long term.

The study found that the employment of mirror talkers can support more sustainable use of water and energy in salons and can also boost sales of water- and energy-saving products, such as leave-in conditioner and dry shampoo.

Additional benefits from the associated training materials are in empowering hairdressers with the knowledge to positively influence their clients' practices. It was also suggested that mirror talkers can boost the reputation of the hair and beauty industry as well as the professional identity of hairdressers.

Hairdressers suggested that the effectiveness of Mirror Talkers can be further improved by extending the range of training materials and making Mirror Talkers more eye-catching.

# INTRODUCTION

***“Hairdressers talk to more people than any other profession and so are in a great position to talk to their clients about sustainable haircare. Running hot water is one of the most energy intensive activities we do in our homes, so simple tips such as shampooing less often or just once rather than rinse and repeat can save lots of water and energy and also improve hair condition for those who routinely over-wash.”***

**- Professor Baden**

Denise Baden is Professor of Sustainable Business at the University of Southampton. Her prior research focused on how to engage hairdressers in pro-environmental behaviours, ways to embed sustainability in hairdressing curriculums, and sustainable solutions for the hair and beauty sector. All this research informs the current study.

The Mirror Talkers study was partly funded by UKRI and Green Salon Collective and supported by L’Oréal, Wella, Aveda and Toni & Guy. It was a 12-month pilot study to explore ways to reduce individual consumer carbon and water footprints related to hair care routines. In particular, it looked at the effectiveness of mirror talkers - small messages on hairdresser mirrors - for engaging clients in conversations around sustainable hair care.



## RESEARCHERS

### **Principal investigator**

Denise Baden, Professor of Sustainable Business, University of Southampton

### **Research assistant**

Stephanie Hodgson, Head of Research, Green Salon Collective

# PARTICIPANTS

Anne Veck, Oxford | Barnes & Bray, London | Beau Hairdressing, Bridport | Bifolco & Matty, Langley | Bliss Hair Therapy, Birmingham | Cognito Hair, London | Crawford Hair, Milton Keynes | En Route, Wakefield | Geddes, Ladywell and Mayfair | Gina Conway, Fulham, Wimbledon, Notting Hill, Dorset and Hampshire | Hunter Collective, Farringdon and Spitalfields | Karine Jackson, London | Masters of Craft, Leeds | OBI Salon, Ireland | Olive Training, Warminster | Q Cut, Richmond | Redz Hairstylists, Beccles and Bungay | Stephenson College, Leicestershire | Twelve Hair Design, Southampton

# METHOD

Participating salons were sent a selection of mirror talkers of their choosing along with supporting educational material. Some salons participated in live training sessions while other relied on the written and video material. Several weeks elapsed whilst salons displayed their mirror talkers and hairdressers engaged in conversations with their clients around sustainable hair care practices as and when the opportunities arose. Both hairdressers and clients were encouraged to fill out respective surveys to share their experiences. Later, salon owners were asked to fill out a survey and some opted to give interviews. Survey and interview data were collected, transcribed and analysed by the research team. Additional interview material was gathered during a dissemination event a few months later.

# DATA

**Client surveys:** 64 respondents, 59 analysed

**Hairdresser surveys:** 37 respondents, 30 analysed

**Salon owner surveys:** 9 respondents, 8 analysed

**Salon owner interviews:** 6, fully transcribed

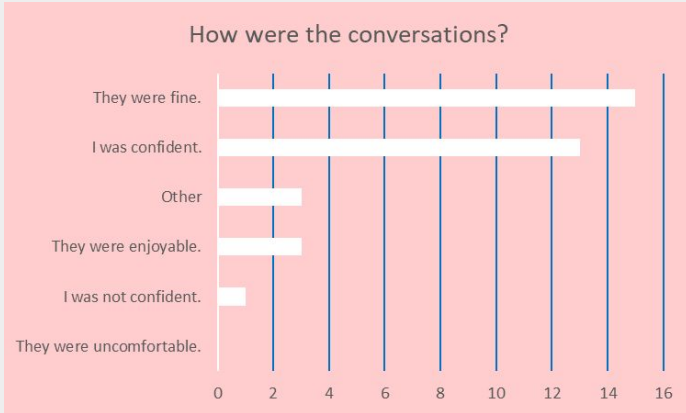
**Client interviews:** 1, fully transcribed



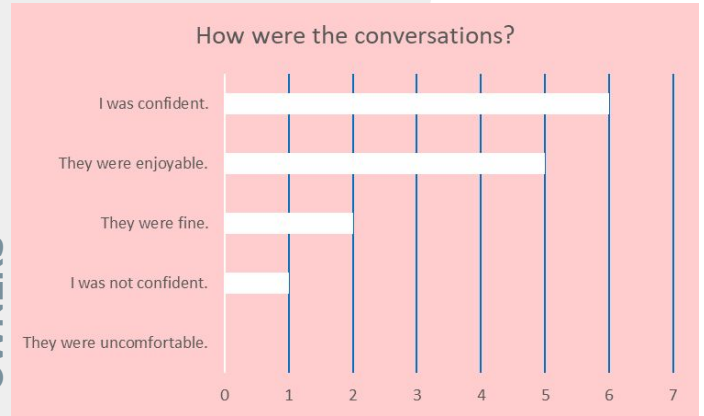
# FINDINGS: *surveys*

Most hairdressers and owners said the conversations were **enjoyable or fine** and that they were **confident** having them.

HAIRDRESSERS

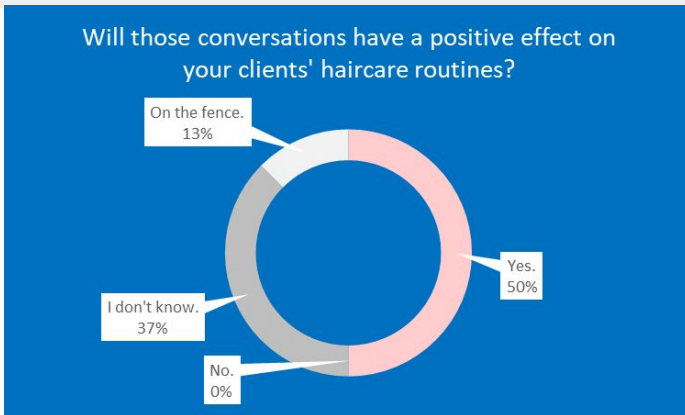


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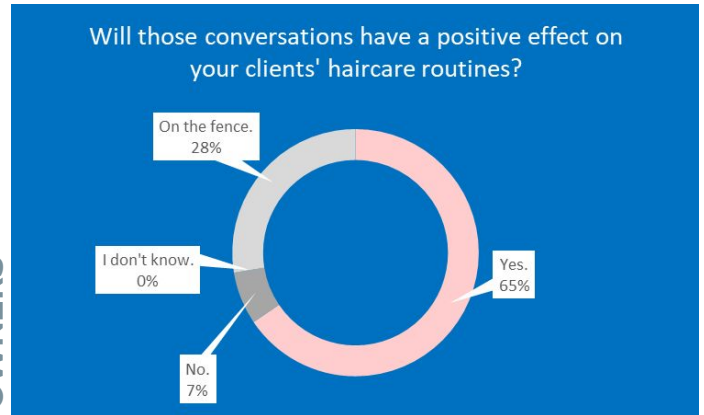


Most hairdressers and owners believed they would have a **positive effect** on their clients' hair care routines.

HAIRDRESSERS

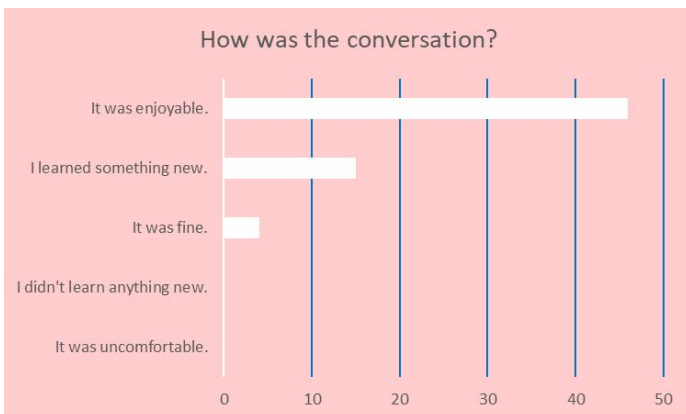


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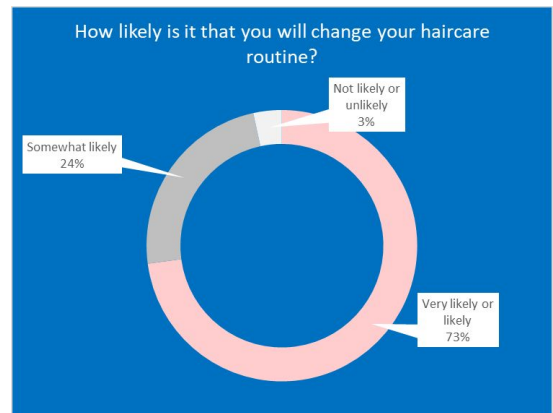


73% of clients said it was **very likely or likely** they would change their hair care routines. And nearly all clients seemed to **enjoy** the conversations and/ or **learn** something from them.

CLIENTS



CLIENTS



## FINDINGS: *interviews*

**Appearance.** All salon owner interviewees said MTs should be more eye-catching in one way or another. Half said they effectively become invisible after a while.

**Effectiveness.** General feedback from interviewees around the effectiveness of MTs was largely positive. Most reported that the conversations arising from MTs were 'easy', 'enjoyable', 'comfortable' and/or 'productive'.

All interviews led to a better understanding of how certain MTs could be more effective. For example, all but one said MTs were effective when the topic was relevant, particularly the one relating to running hot water and energy usage. Several reported that MTs were more effective when they were linked to personal gain and when they contained questions.

**Training.** All interviewees agreed that in order for MTs to be effective they must come with good, up-to-date supporting material. It was suggested that this material should be digestible and bite-sized for it to be absorbed by hairdressers and then their clients.

One salon owner said that the very act of training their staff on MTs and the related topics sparked motivation in hairdressers to engage their clients in conversations about sustainable hair care practices. Some salon owners said hairdresser confidence could impact how effective MTs were and that training would be useful to make hairdressers more confident.

**Additional benefits.** Almost all interviewees reported that MTs helped to boost the sale of certain products, in particular, dry shampoo, shampoo bars and leave-in conditioner.

Another significant additional benefit, mentioned in one interview and one salon owner survey, was that the **MTs supported more sustainable use of water and energy in salons.**

## NEXT



**Improving MTs.** The findings from the study suggest that MTs should be more eye-catching. The research team will enlist the help of graphic designers and a focus group to further develop the design of MTs. Brands will also be approached to co-design new co-branded MTs for specific markets.

**MT training videos.** The findings also suggest that new, up-to-date training videos would boost the effectiveness of MTs. These videos may also boost awareness of the concepts they embody and onboard more salons and hairdressers to start having conversations with their clients around sustainable hair care practices.

**MT training material.** All QR links created for the study will be adapted into training material which will include the above-mentioned videos. These pages will be made freely available to everyone.

## CONTACTS

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