



| CASE STUDY |

SALONS & BARBERS BRING BEAUTY BACK DOWNTOWN

DOWNTOWN BELLEFONTAINE, OHIO

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In days gone by, a trip to the beauty salon was an event. Ladies met downtown, dressed for lunch and leisure and enjoyed conscientious services in a space created just for them. Then came the strip mall years when beauty shifted with the big box stores to a focus on affordability and speed. The shopping center days are over. Salons are coming back downtown, and we couldn't be happier. Here's why:

At Small Nation, we think beauty salons are a crucial component of the downtown success formula.

Beauty salons might look like the place for your monthly cut and color on the outside, but they're really so much more. For downtown areas in small towns, community beauty salons are one of the key drivers of animation and foot traffic in retail areas.

Like restaurants, beauty salons bring a consistent stream of customers to the area for appointment from morning through the evening hours. In a mood for relaxation and self care, a large number of salon customers will visit at least one other retail store in the area before or after their appointment and many will have a meal with a friend before returning home. One service supports numerous other businesses, and that's good for everyone involved.



“ Since the late 1800s, beauty salons have been bringing women downtown every single day. The beauty service industry is a rock to downtown areas.”
*Jason Duff, Founder & CEO
Small Nation*

COMBINING SERVICE WITH RETAIL

Small Nation tenant The Poppy Seed (110 West Columbus Avenue) saw this trend and decide to create a business that offers the best of both worlds. Small Nation partnered with business owner Breanne Comer in the development of the interior so she could realize her dream of combining personalized salon services with an upscale boutique. The Small Nation team worked with Breanne through a design build process to transform an empty jewelry store building into her salon boutique. We helped her create the structure and perform the \$160,000 renovation as she planned her services and product lines. The update of the 110 West Columbus Avenue building took 6 months to complete from concept to completion.

Today, the street frontage of The Poppy Seed opens to a uniquely curated mix of women's handmade jewelry, leather handbags and wallets, shoes, hats, apparel, greet-



| SMALL BUSINESS. BIG IMPACT. |

Salons are so important to the success of downtown areas that Small Nation has invested time, ideas and money into creating strong salon presence in Bellefontaine.

Why? Salons animate a space. They bring regular traffic to an area from morning through evening. And they make everything beautiful to boot. Good business. Good feelings. Good for everyone.





Working together with ideas, financing and ongoing support has allowed these small businesses to thrive.

ing cards and even small gifts. The back part of the space features a small, elegantly styled salon. The Poppy Seed's unique blend of beauty and retail has made it one of the most popular stops for Bellefontaine shoppers.

ANCHORING A MICRO DISTRICT

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Brandi Madison had been working as a stylist at Hairloom, a local Salon, for several years when she learned that her current boss was ready to move on. She had always wanted the freedom of being her own boss, and in 2020, she got the chance. She purchased the business, renamed it UndertoneBeauty Bar, and expanded it to a full suite of beauty services at 125 Columbus Avenue.

Brandi worked with Small Nation and Revival Design Group on the renovation and updating of her space, and now has ten very busy stylists using a booth rent model at her space.

The success of Undertone and some life changes led Brandi to begin planning her future. She set a personal goal of owning multiple salons, and in 2022, the opportunity to open a second salon location presented itself. Brandi took over what was previously The Lock Shop, at 130 S Main Street.

Undertone on Main (130 S Main Street) has a different model, offering expanded services for hair, nails and skin. Offering the most unique range of services in the downtown area, Undertone on Main team offers expert cuts, a full

range of color services, spa manicure and pedicures as well as waxing.

Undertone isn't only important to downtown, they also serve as one of the anchors in Main Street Marketplace, Small Nation's "mini Main Street" project that serves as a launching place for many of Bellefontaine's downtown businesses. Undertone on Main's consistent stream of appointments helps to bring a steady stream of visitors through the Marketplace so new business concepts can be seen and recognized.

A PROFITABLE MODEL

For developers and building owners in small towns, a beauty salon may not be the first business that comes to mind when strategizing about tenant mix, but it is definitely one worth considering.

Although the business requires a fairly significant capital investment in equipment and infrastructure such as manicure chairs plumbing and hair sinks, it is offset by the potential for multi-unit rental income within a single structure.

A large number of stylists typically work independently, renting their chair space each month from the salon owner with all overhead resources shared. Other models are commission based, and still others might allow multiple independent stylists to rent chair space directly from the building owner.

A salon space with multiple chairs and a carefully designed interior space that supports the self care brand, if placed strategically in a downtown downtown location can not only be profitable for stylists and owners, but the community as a whole.

SMALL NATION develops places, spaces and dreams for small towns and small town entrepreneurs across the country.

**SMALL
NATION**

We're here to show the world that small town and small business success is not only possible, but profitable. For everyone.