

# Cassies 2008 Cases

**Brand/Case: Gee Beauty**

**Winner: Retail—Silver  
Best Integrated—Silver**

**Client Credits: Gee Beauty**

Miriam Gee  
Natalie Gee

**Agency Credits: GJP**

Lisa Greenberg  
Trevor Schoenfeld  
Celene Gee

**Crossover Notes:** All winning cases contain lessons that cross over from one case to another. David Rutherford has been identifying these as Crossover Notes since Cassies 1997. The full set for Cassies 2008 can be downloaded from the Case Library section at [www.cassies.ca](http://www.cassies.ca)

- Crossover Note 1. What a Brand Stands For.
- Crossover Note 2. Brand Truths.
- Crossover Note 3. Core Equity versus Price & Promotion.
- Crossover Note 4. Business Strategy dictated by Brand Positioning.
- Crossover Note 5. The Total Brand Experience.

To see creative, go to the Case Library Index and click on the additional links beside the case.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>Business Results Period (Consecutive Months):</b>	<b>September 2005 – July 2008</b>
<b>Start of Advertising/Communication Effort:</b>	<b>September 2005</b>
<b>Base Period for Comparison:</b>	<b>n/a (launch)</b>

### a) Introduction

This is a story about an uncompromising approach to an ideal has created an authentic new category aptly named ‘beauty-on-the-go’.

It’s a demonstration of commitment to managing every detail, to create a brand experience that brings clientele back far more often than anyone would have imagined. Before work in the morning. A movie. A date. Even a hockey game — all because of the desire to look and feel beautiful, and all because Gee Beauty understands how to make you look and feel beautiful. Fast. **Crossover Note 5.**

Unquestionably, a well articulated, conceived and executed brand voice across every product, service, brochure – and throughout the store design - has been a critical factor in Gee Beauty’s business success.

### b) The Essential Challenge

While it’s no longer realistic to spend almost an entire day at a spa once a month, the creators of Gee Beauty sought to modernize traditional grooming by introducing the concept of shorter and more frequent visits to the beauty/skincare studio. Call it “time sensitive beauty on-the-go.”

The challenge was how to translate the idea of making beauty easy, inexpensive and inviting into a brand experience. Based on its size, Gee Beauty needed to do so without the benefit of traditional advertising. It required the brand experience to be the advertising – with customers carrying the message and story beyond the salon.

### c) Business Results

During the business results period, Gee Beauty exceeded its revenue goals by a cumulative 286% over 3 years, and achieved investment payback 2 years sooner than expected. By virtue of its success, Gee Beauty is considering expansion to New York, Los Angeles, Miami and London UK.

Furthermore, Gee Beauty and GJP were awarded a Pencil at the 2008 D&AD Awards – Canada’s first Gold Design Lion at Cannes.

## SITUATION ANALYSIS

### a) Overall Assessment

Miriam Gee and her daughter Natalie started developing the Gee Beauty business plan in 2001. It was based on the premise that a gap existed between the *conventional spa experience* (which takes hours) and the *shopping-mall-make-up stool* (which is sparse; non-personal and nowhere near stylish). Upscale beauty treatments were enjoyed at the expense of speed. And time-sensitive treatment sacrificed comfort, style and quality.

**Crossover Note 2.**

After meticulous planning and an uncompromising commitment to finding the right location, Gee Beauty opened its first salon in August 2005 in Toronto's Rosedale. The location had to meet several criteria – close to the subway, neighbourhood feel, street-level access, small yet efficient space, and most importantly a walk-by clientele looking for a quick beauty fix.

### b) Resulting Business Objectives

Launching in 2005, the business objectives were as follows:

- a. Achieve \$250,000 in revenue year 1
- b. Grow revenue by 15% to 20% per year until 2010
- c. Achieve investment payback by year 3

Most importantly, it was the driving desire of the proprietors to create a new-salon brand experience unparalleled in Toronto. It would be “as easy as getting a coffee.”

During this period, the elements of the retail-marketing environment evolved as the business gained traction. Gee Beauty introduced the new services, products and solutions that its affluent clientele desired. **Crossover Note 4.**

However, pricing, location, packaging and brand voice remained constant. Gee Beauty steadfastly follows a policy to never put its items and services on-sale, and relies primarily on its customers for referral business. **Crossover Note 3.**

### c) Budget Range/Share of Voice

Gee Beauty's primary investment in brand communications was at the store level. All product packaging, brochures, collateral, store design and staff training followed a rigorously applied brand voice. This served in the place of traditional advertising.

## STRATEGY & INSIGHT

For Gee Beauty, the brand drives the business. The insight was simple, yet complex to execute. Its clientele want to feel gorgeous and be treated in a way that made them feel special – fast.

By creating this liberating routine, clients (a vast range of ages of both men and women) feel more inclined to stop by for quick beauty fixes – from a 10 minute Gee Beauty Brow to a 45 minute Oxygen Blast Facial (named ‘Stand Back Give Me Some Air’). Others just pick up the latest accessory or have a quick chat.

In daily life, the target audience is inundated with beauty products and regimes that promise death-defying, almost evangelical results. Gee Beauty’s no-nonsense, ‘this is what you need to do, and why it will give you results’ descriptions gave their clientele a welcome rest from the hyperbolic beauty industry. **Crossover Note 1.**

There were three strategic objectives:

- ☑ Offer its customers a premium service of ‘beauty-on-the-go’
- ☑ Design a chic, modern and inviting brand experience and image
- ☑ Create a brand voice that transcends every touch point

## CREATIVE EXECUTION

Gee Beauty speaks to the client whose time is precious yet wants the highest level of care and attention, in a chic environment, with people who understand their modern lifestyle.

Gee Beauty used an approachable, wry voice that helped explain this new practice in a chic, tongue-in-cheek manner. It involved the following:

- In-store design
- Website
- Packaging
- Brochures & Collateral

Gee Beauty developed a product line and level of service that surpassed the demands of an upscale clientele, delivering the experience in a brand approach that was intellectual, witty and no-nonsense.

In the studio, every touch-point reflected the voice of the brand – from the “hello gorgeous” greeting upon entering, to the “fountain of youth” complimentary water, to the 20 minute ‘Paparazzi’ make-up application.

Each component spoke to the concept of Gee Beauty. “It’s time you were gorgeous” is the introduction to the menu of services, while Brow 911, Classic Quickie,

Complexion Perfection, the Sean Connery and Gee Beauty Calls follow suit as offerings in the cheeky menu.

Whether it's ordering products via telephone or email and having them delivered, or keeping a credit card on-file for faster service, or recalling clients' personal tastes and putting items aside for them – each action reflected the mantra of Gee Beauty.

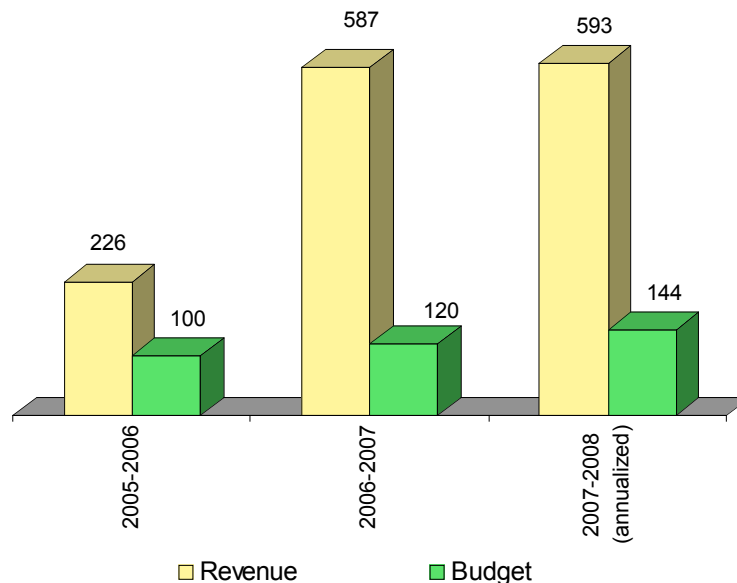
## **MEDIA EXECUTION**

Outside the studio, beautifully designed materials spoke to potential clients. Sleek and luxuriously designed materials such as postcards, beauty accessories and gift packages reinforced quality and service, and made the brand stand out above the competition.

One of the most important advertising vehicles for Gee Beauty is word of mouth, because the Gee Beauty experience leaves two indelible impressions. The first is the emotional feeling when one feels 'beautiful'. The second is the visual impression of how the clientele look to others – gorgeous. In fact, Miriam Gee is often heard saying, "When I'm done with you, you work for me."

## **BUSINESS RESULTS**

The following demonstrates per-year revenue achievement and growth versus the baseline budget set in 2005.



## **CAUSE AND EFFECT BETWEEN ADVERTISING AND RESULTS**

The Gee Beauty brand experience was the key driver in propelling customers to come back week after week; to refer friends, family and colleagues; and to simply stop by for a quick chat.

The bottom line is that the Gee Beauty brand experience was a critical success factor in helping achieve phenomenal revenue growth since its launch in 2005, and investment payback after 1 year.

Gee Beauty is looking forward to the next store launch. In New York perhaps?