

ZAZEN TAX

Pricing Treatments for Profit

The menu ranked by what the chair actually earns: loaded minutes, product, the room, and the per-hour column that reorders everything.

Eight chapters, one worked menu, and every figure checkable on the free tools.

zazentax.com

Contents

The worked menu is The Copper Comb's: a £52 cut earning £30.08 an hour, a £96 colour earning £13.87, a £5.50 chair-hour and an £18.06 loaded stylist hour. The book is the method behind those four numbers, then the moves they unlock.

- 1 The menu is a portfolio
- 2 The loaded hour
- 3 The chair-hour
- 4 Margin per treatment, margin per hour
- 5 The colour problem
- 6 Repricing without losing the room
- 7 The diary as a pricing tool
- 8 The worked price list

1 The menu is a portfolio

A salon menu is a portfolio of products sharing one scarce asset: chair-hours. Pricing it by gut ranks the portfolio by sentiment.

The Copper Comb's surprise is the hub's flagship finding: the £96 colour, the premium product, earns £13.87 an hour; the £52 cut earns £30.08. The expensive treatment is the worse use of the chair, and no one can see that on the price list. Only the per-hour column shows it.

Nothing in this book says drop colour. It says know the number, then choose: reprice, re-time, restaff or accept, deliberately.

2 The loaded hour

The stylist hour costs £18.06, not £14: holiday accrual, employer NIC and pension load every wage by roughly 29 per cent.

Holiday adds 12.07 per cent before anything else: 5.6 weeks of paid leave spread across the working year. Employer NIC takes 15 per cent above its threshold, the pension its 3 per cent above the qualifying band. The Salon Staff Cost and Commission Calculator runs any rate; every price in this book stands on that number.

Commission models change who carries quiet weeks, not the load. And the wage floors, £12.71, £10.85 and £8.00 from 1 April 2026, sit under every model, checked weekly against hours actually worked.

3 The chair-hour

The room charges for itself by the hour: £1,650 of weekly overheads across six chairs and fifty open hours is £5.50 per chair-hour.

Rent, rates, utilities, insurance and software belong to every treatment in proportion to the minutes it occupies. A 45-minute cut carries £4.13 of room; a 105-minute colour carries £9.63. Ignoring the chair-hour is how long treatments hide their true cost.

The number also prices the empty chair: an unbooked hour costs £5.50 before a single wage, which is the arithmetic behind the no-show chapter and the utilisation tracker.

4 Margin per treatment, margin per hour

Each treatment: take ex VAT, less product, less loaded minutes, less the chair share. Then divide by the hours, because the hours are what you sell.

The treatment	Margin	Per hour
Cut and finish, £52, 45 min	£22.56	£30.08

The treatment	Margin	Per hour
Full colour, £96, 105 min	£24.26	£13.87

The colour makes MORE margin per ticket and less than half per hour: both true, and per hour decides, because the chair could have sold two cuts in the colour's slot. The Treatment Price and Margin Calculator runs any treatment; the workbook ranks the whole menu.

5 The colour problem

Colour is the industry's premium story and its quietest margin leak: long minutes, real product, and usage that drifts.

The £14.50 product standard is only honest if the cupboard agrees: the worked week uses £655 across 42 services, £15.60 each, £46 a week of mixed-and-binned bowls that becomes £2,400 a year. Weigh, measure, count weekly in the Stock and Colour Usage Tracker, and the standard becomes true.

Then fix the economics deliberately: price the time properly, build colour menus around assisted work so a junior carries part of the minutes, and let the per-hour column judge the result.

6 Repricing without losing the room

Prices move clients less than salons fear and margins more than menus show. The craft is moving them deliberately.

Reprice from the per-hour ranking, not across the board: the underpriced long treatments first, the strong performers left alone. Round to price points, announce with notice, and never apologise in writing for charging what the chair costs.

A worked example: moving the colour from £96 to £110 lifts its per-hour from £13.87 to £20.53 at the same minutes and product. Lose even one client in ten and the chair still earns more, because the freed slots sell cuts at £30.08.

7 The diary as a pricing tool

The diary is where pricing meets reality: utilisation says whether prices are too low, too high, or pointed at the wrong treatments.

The worked room runs 80 per cent booked and 75 per cent billed across 120 available hours. Full weeks with thin margins mean prices are low; empty weeks with strong margins mean marketing, not discounting. The gap between booked and billed is the no-show chapter: £345 a week, £17,940 a year, deposits and reminders first.

Peak-time pricing is honest portfolio management: Saturday chair-hours are scarcer, and a modest peak premium moves flexible clients to Tuesdays, which is two wins priced as one.

8 The worked price list

The method, run start to finish on the worked menu, ready to repeat on yours.

Load the hours: £14 becomes £18.06. Charge the room: £5.50 a chair-hour. Cost each treatment: minutes, product, the two rates. Rank by per-hour. Reprice the bottom of the ranking first, re-time where minutes are the problem, restaff where a junior can carry part, and rerun the ranking each quarter.

The tools hold the whole method: the calculator for one treatment, the workbook for the menu, the tracker for the cupboard, the diary tools for the hours. A menu rebuilt this way usually finds several hundred pounds a week that was always there, priced away by sentiment.

Where to go next

Rank your menu by margin per hour this week: the workbook does it in an evening. The bottom three rows are your repricing list, and January is the natural moment.

Every calculator and workbook mentioned in this book is free on zarentax.com, with no email form. They use the same figures, the same conventions and the same worked salon as the chapters here.

Zaren Tax

Accountants for salons and clinics. If you would rather someone ran the numbers with you, that is what we are for.

zarentax.com/contact

General information, not advice for your circumstances. Rates and thresholds are 2026/27 for the UK and change from time to time.