

Website & Innovation of the Year

Website : www.Voodou.co.uk

Voodou 

Innovation: **Last Minute Voodou**



Introduction :

In 2012 - Voodoo were delighted to win both; **Best Salon Website** at the British Hairdressing Business Awards and **Best Online Salon** at the Creative Head Awards.

In 2013 - we have an even stronger website that has been developed extensively over the last 12 months and is setting a new standard in its *mobile friendly* design.

- ◆ We would ask that **Voodoo.co.uk** be considered for the *Best Salon Website* award.

But, if you are looking for innovation in the salon we believe that our **Last Minute Voodoo online** promotes system should be considered.

- ◆ We would ask that **Last Minute Voodoo** be considered for the *Salon Innovation* award.

We realise that this approach may differ to others, but we believe that we have the best salon website in the UK **AND** Last Minute Voodoo is a revolutionary tool for our business.

For ease of judging we have split this entry into parts 1 and 2 -

1. Our website **Voodoo.co.uk**
2. Our innovation **Last Minute Voodoo**

1. Salon Website : Voodoo.co.uk

Voodoo is a small chain of 4 salons and barber shops in Liverpool. We have been trading in Liverpool for over 30 years with MD Rob Webb at the helm since the beginning.

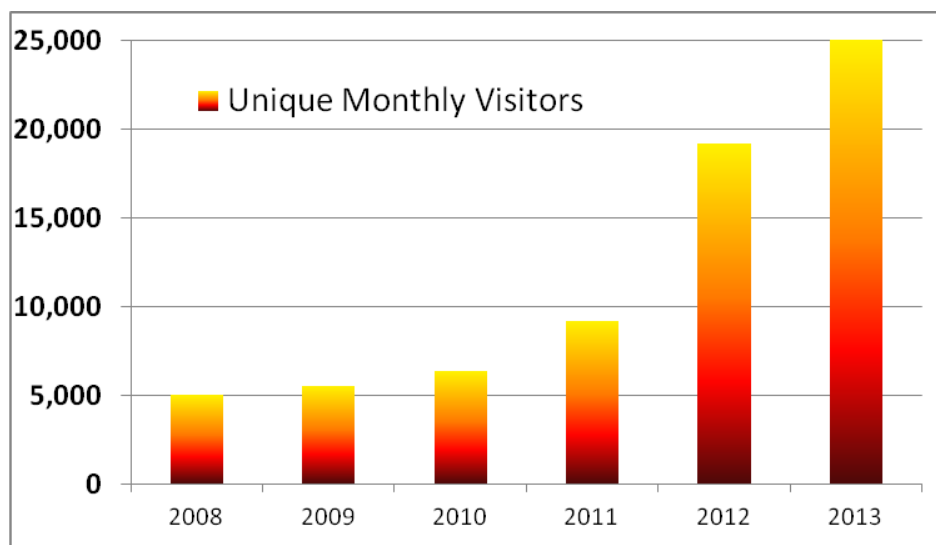
During this time the key to Voodoo's success has been one of continuous innovation. Over 10 years ago, the first salon website was created and since then we have embraced the importance of on-line marketing and placed it at the heart of all of our marketing. We are now developing our 5th generation website and unique visitors to the site average **30,000 a month** which is an incredible achievement.

Last year our incredibly busy and income-generating website was recognised by the UK hairdressing industry – winning both the *Creative Head* “**Best Online Salon**” and the *British Hairdressing Business Award* for “**Best Salon Website**”. At that time we attracted an average of just over 19,000 unique visitors a month.

In 2013 our average monthly visitors has increased by 30% to over 25,000 people.

Voodoo.co.uk is **possibly the busiest salon website in the UK** when related to the number of salons in the group.

This graph shows the incredible growth in web traffic to Voodoo.co.uk since 2008 -



The Voodoo website is at the heart of all of our marketing and, supported by our impressive facebook page, allows us to reach massive numbers of potential clients every day.

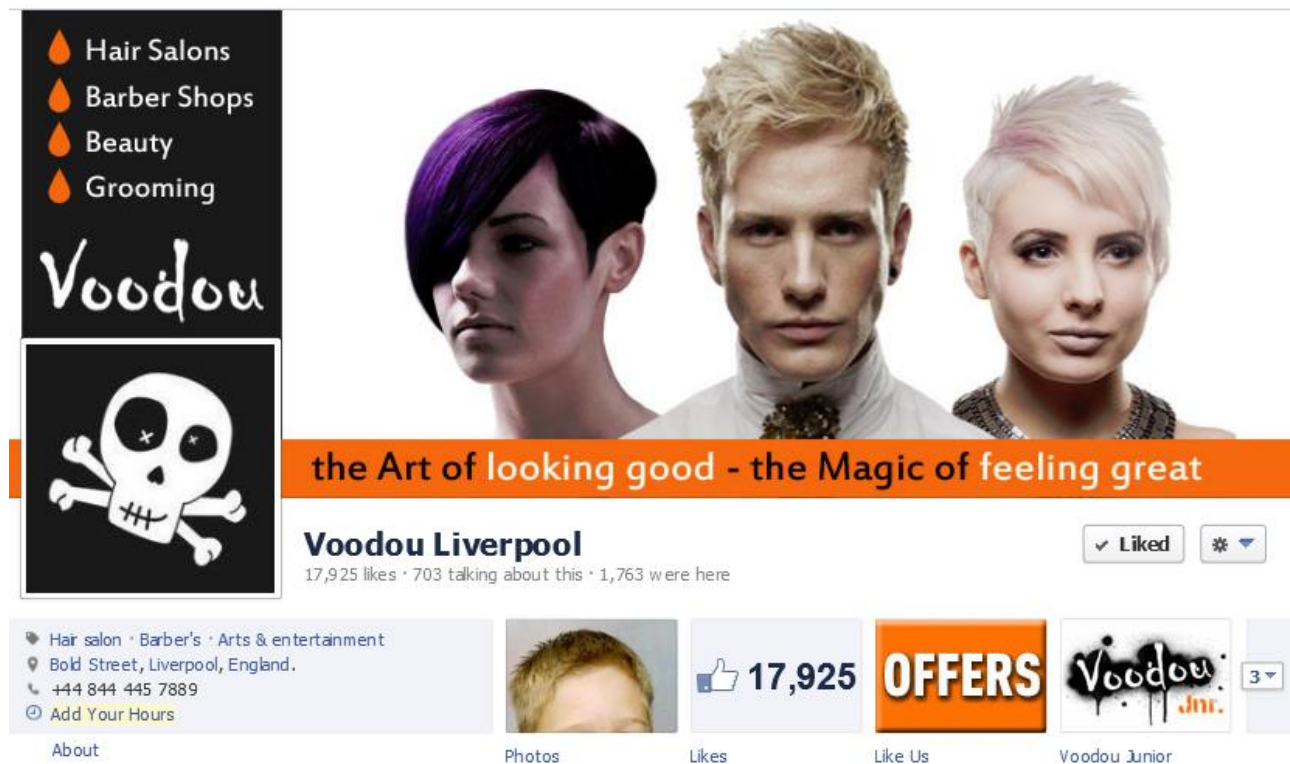
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Facebook :

Four years ago we also identified the importance of social media, particularly facebook, given our target market of 20-35 year old students and young professionals.

We created a Salon Facebook page, developed a comprehensive social media strategy and by 2012 had 14,000 fans.

In 2013 that has **risen by 29% to almost 18,000** – probably one of the most ‘liked’ salons in the world.



The screenshot shows the Facebook profile for Voodoo Liverpool. The cover photo features three models with different hairstyles (purple, blonde, and pink) and the tagline "the Art of looking good - the Magic of feeling great". The profile picture is a skull with a crossbones. The page shows 17,925 likes and 703 talking about this. Navigation tabs include About, Photos, Likes, Like Us, and Voodoo Junior.

Our facebook page at www.facebook.com/Voodoo

When judging a salon's website we believe it is vital that their social media profile is also taken into account as the two are now so heavily inter-related.

- ◆ **30,000** web visitors a month
- ◆ **18,000** facebook fans
- ◆ **3,000** Twitter followers

These impressive numbers means we can create a new offer and reach a massive audience very quickly and at no cost to the salon.

Voodoo Virgins :

Although we have run many online campaigns in the last 12 months, *Voodoo Virgins* demonstrates how effective our website and facebook page can be - turning online visitors and fans into paying clients.

The campaign started 1st January 2013 with a “50% off” downloadable voucher on the website. This was also heavily promoted on our facebook page.

By the middle of June 2013 **1,038 Virgin Vouchers** had been downloaded producing **over £29,000** of income to the salons.



The growth of Mobiles :

2 years ago we recognised that mobile phone and tablets were being used by more and more of our web visitors.

◆ In May 2013 the percentage of mobile visitors (including tablets) was **48%**.

When we first started to plan our “mobile presence” Voodoo (like many others) got caught-up in the hype over *mobile apps*. It seemed that everyone was selling salon apps and we considered investing heavily in that option.

But, an app has to be first downloaded from the Apple Store or Google Play, and we soon realised that what we most wanted to offer was our entire website for all visitors - but formatted for any screen size.

The most valuable web visitors are the ones *new* to Voodoo and will have found us through a google search or facebook posts. These people are NOT going to download an app to see the best of our website.

So, with the help of Salon Guru, the salon website specialists, we designed and created the 2013 version of Voodoo.co.uk.

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The new website (launched in April) is totally fluid. This means the site automatically recognises the browser and screen size of the visitors and instantly adjusts the display to suit. This *responsive design* means not just resizing the elements, but shuffling them on the page and rearranging the layout.

We also “hide” the less important elements from the mobile screen to give a simpler and more intuitive mobile website.

We invite you to visit **Voodoo.co.uk** on any device and see the *magic* in action.



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So at the forefront of our thoughts, when planning for mobile web users, was to have the best website solution automatically delivered to everyone – not just those that have the time and inclination to get our new “mobile app”.

But, that does not mean mobile apps have no use. For existing clients they can be a new way to contact them with the latest news and offers. So last year we added an app to our website that visitors can download from Apple and Google Play (Android). This app has our entire website linked and allows us to send Push notifications to users.

But, Mobile Apps that have to be downloaded are NOT the solution for visitors to a website on mobile devices - a *fluid* and *responsive* website is the answer.

2. Salon Innovation: Last Minute Voodoo

Last Minute Voodoo is an innovative online system created to address salon downtime.

It has generated over **£30,000** and over **1,000 clients** in the last 12 months.

Out of these 1,096 clients 67% have been **new clients** and 41% have returned for a full priced repeat visit, showing how Last Minute Voodoo is also growing our existing clientele.

The success of Last Minute Voodoo has been down to our award winning website and social media – in particular our Facebook page which now reaches over 17,000 people.

Excellent *search engine optimisation* means that Voodoo is **number 1 in the WORLD** for the phrase “*last minute hairdressing discounts*” on Google – beating sites like Wahanda.

The Challenge :

Our success in keeping in tune and in touch with our clients via our website and facebook page has been against the backdrop of a declining global economy, with the North West of England being particularly affected by the UK recession and subsequent flat-lining economy. The recession has taken its toll on the hairdressing industry, with clients tightening their belts and cutting back on discretionary spending such as hair and beauty treatments.

Furthermore, the last four years have seen an explosion of so-called ‘deal websites’ – for example, Groupon, Wowcher and Living Social to name just a few.



These sites have successfully capitalised on consumers’ growing internet usage and growing appetite for deals with everyone at every social level watching what they spend. Groupon alone operates in over 48 countries, has over 200 million subscribers and is heavily used by consumers in cities across the UK including Liverpool.

Voodoo is approached on a weekly basis by companies such as Groupon and the sales pitch is tempting – who wouldn’t want to guarantee a certain number of clients through the door, particularly on slow days at the beginning of the week? However, after further scrutiny of what’s involved it appears less enticing. The deep discounts required - 50% off or more – coupled with a share of the profits going to the deal company,

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leaves the salon involved breaking even, at best, and at worse, running the campaign at a loss. This may be a justified investment for a new start up salon looking to get their name out there and clients through the door, but for a more established business such as Voodoo, it didn't make any sense as it would squeeze already precious profits and risk devaluing the brand and the services we offer.

Further research only confirmed our own reservations about going down this route. The following is taken from a guest blog on America's CNBC News website:

"Groupon's pitch is brilliant: a merchant pays nothing up front and has no responsibility for crafting or delivering an offer. The company takes care of all that work and actually pays the merchant after the promotion is deployed. (What they avoid explaining) is that 100% of the gross margin is wiped out by the offer and another approximately 25% goes to Groupon for its fee."

"The other problem with Groupon is that the bigger it gets the less it can help small businesses. The theory behind Groupon is a small business can get new potential customers to try them out by offering a really great deal. If the coupon buyers like what they get they might become a regular customer at regular price...But Groupon's growth makes that result unlikely. Once the first e.g. pizza place runs a Groupon, every other independent will do the same and Groupon's targeting algorithm will make sure that the buyer of any one pizza deal will be offered many more. Rather than gaining some new customers for those that offer deals Groupon effectively lowers the price of pizza, haircuts and other services in all its markets...Groupon does not really create more haircuts..it just rearranges who gets those visits and sucks 75% of the value away from the local merchants."

Why 3rd Party Daily Deals are not an option for Voodoo

Daily Deal Financial Model

Directors Cut and Finish normally £52

Discount 50% = £26

Approx 50% goes to Groupon = £13

Leaving just £13 of the original £52 to pay wages, overheads, V.A.T. etc

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The Solution :

In spite of our reservations regarding deal websites, ignoring the growing trend wasn't an option for Voodoo – we had to meet the challenge head on and so looked internally at how we could meet the needs of clients looking for a deal. We already offer great discounts on our services for specific groups of customers such as students or corporates, but these discounts have become the 'norm' and we knew that we had to come up with a stronger offer for those seeking Groupon style deals. The difficulty for us as a business was how to meet this client need without losing control, damaging the brand and eating into profits!

In the end the answer was obvious – with a database 40,000 strong, hits to the website of 30,000 per month and a Facebook page with 17,000 likes and growing, we knew we could get the message out to our clients and potential clients that Voodoo offers discounted deals without the need to go through a 3rd party site and so, Last Minute Voodoo was born.

The Financial Model Last Minute Voodoo

Example

Directors Cut and Finish normally £52

Discount 30% = £36

No Fees to third parties

Leaving £36 of the original £52 to pay wages, overheads, V.A.T. etc

Further Benefits:

- ✓ We control when the discounted appointments are and at what level
- ✓ We aren't overrun with deal appointments
- ✓ We maintain brand integrity
- ✓ We are more likely to attract clients that buy into the Voodoo brand and not just 'deal' shoppers

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How Last Minute Voodoo works :

We have created a page on our website for Last Minute Voodoo – www.voodoo.co.uk/late-deals

Each Friday we review the following week's appointments and identify potential quiet times for each of the four salons.

Bold St. 4 Him

Description	Was	Now	Left	Deal Dates	
Mens Wet Cut with Art Director	£39	£28	4	Wednesday	

Bold St. Colour Centre

Description	Was	Now	Left	Deal Dates	
Ladies cut & finish with a Director	£52	£36	2	Wednesday	
Ladies Cut & Finish with Senior Stylist	£42	£29	8	Wednesday	

Button Street

Description	Was	Now	Left	Deal Dates	
Ladies Cut & Finish with a Director	£49	£34	3	Wednesday	
Mens Wet Cut with a Senior Stylist.	£28	£19	1	Wednesday	

We agree the number of discounted appointments (deals) and the level of stylist and discount to be offered and these are then posted onto the website in salon categories (see above image as an example). On the Last Minute Voodoo page it shows each salon and the deals available.

The Last Minute Voodoo page invites clients to *click* to claim the deal and in a pop-form they are then asked to provide their name, email address and mobile number. Each claim deducts 1 from the number of deals still available.

Once a client has 'claimed' a deal they are sent an automatic "thank you" email with details of their deal.

The email lets clients know that they can ring the salon themselves if they have not been contacted which ensures that we have given each client every possible chance to get themselves booked in for their deal.

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As soon as the salons receive a claimed deal they attempt to contact the client to arrange the appointment. Full pre-payment for the service is required helping us to ensure that we are minimising the number of 'no-shows'.

Just last month, we added a new feature to help our reception teams, a *Last Minute Voodoo desktop app* called **the Claims Manager**. This shows the current status of all active deals and those that have been claimed for a particular salons. It allows the receptionists to update the status to 'booked' or 'cancelled' and also record up to 3 sets of initials of staff members who tried to make contact with that client. This means we can always see which claims are still waiting to be booked-in and need another phone call to the client.

After 3 attempted calls we have a button for "email client" which automatically sends the client an email saying "we have been unable to contact you - please reclaim the Last Minute Voodoo deal".

This new system is also much less time-consuming for the Head Office who were contacting each salon on a daily basis to check progress on calling claimants. As the Claims Manager is *live* all salons and Head Office have an up-to date view on the deals status.

These screenshots show the Claims Manager in action -

For any claims needing action the View Claims button is **Red**. And when you click *view claims* this is the box that drops down -

Late deals

Refresh

Bold St. 4 Him										
Bold St. Colour Centre			Button Street		West Derby Road		Voodoo Dolls and Groom			
Display from	Display to	Days/dates	Description	Was £	Deal £	Quantity	Left	Terms	Technician	
10 May	15 May	Wednesday	Mens Wet Cut with Art Director	39	28	5	4	not with any other offer	Art Director	View Claims
15 May	Chris Allen	c3allen@gmail.com	07949582265	Delete	1st call SM	2nd call EA	3rd call SM	Booked	Send email	

It has the information of the deal and also the claim – with full contact information.

When we ring the client we can then enter the receptionist's initials in the boxes. E.g. -

* 1st call SM * 2nd call EA * 3rd call SM

If the client answers we click the 'booked' button, or if we ring the client and they don't want the appointment we can 'delete' the claim and add one back into the number available.

With four salons and a team of over ten receptionists, one of our biggest problems was getting clients booked in for the deal they'd claimed if they didn't answer after the first phone call. The new system has been fantastic at minimising the number of clients who claim a deal but don't get booked into one of the salons.

How we plan to develop Last Minute Voodoo this year :

We are currently working on an automated pre-payment system via PayPal making the whole process seamless.

Next month we are also planning to integrate Last Minute Voodoo with our new in salon system. This means the deals will be fully managed by Head Office.

As the new salon system includes live appointment pages for each salon on one system, Head Office can call any clients claiming a deal and book them into any salons - at the available times shown.

With the help of the *Claims Manager app* Last Minute Voodoo has improved immensely, but we are excited to see the next stage work even better.

We are also planning to add in an option for clients to receive their claimed notification via text messages instead of email which will work better for some of our clients. This will all run automatically off the new in-salon system where client mobile numbers will be recorded and linked to their Last Minute Voodoo account.

The Marketing Support :

Webpage and SEO

We have worked hard on the webpage Search Engine Optimisation to ensure that anyone searching for hairdressing deals on-line are directed to the Voodoo website. We currently rank **number 1 in the world on Google** for “last minute hairdressing deals” and “last minute hairdressing discounts” beating big sites like Wahanda. As shown below in a screen-grab of Google -

[Late Hairdressing Deals with Last Minute Voodoo](http://www.voodoo.co.uk/late-deals/)

www.voodoo.co.uk/late-deals/

Last Minute Voodoo - late hairdressing, barber and beauty deals every day!
Fantastic discounts, deals, offers and money off at Voodoo Liverpool.

[Haircuts and Hairdressing in London - Wahanda](http://www.wahanda.com/places/...haircuts-and-hairdressing/.../in-london-uk/)

www.wahanda.com/places/...haircuts-and-hairdressing/.../in-london-uk/

Up to 50% off spa days - 5 Star spa days - Afternoon tea and spa offers - See all spa days - Spa Breaks - 50% off spa breaks - Last minute spa breaks - One night ...

[Hair Consulting in London - Wahanda](http://www.wahanda.com/places/treatment-hair-consulting/.../in-london-uk/)

www.wahanda.com/places/treatment-hair-consulting/.../in-london-uk/

20+ items – Hair Consulting in London. Find the best treatments for your ...

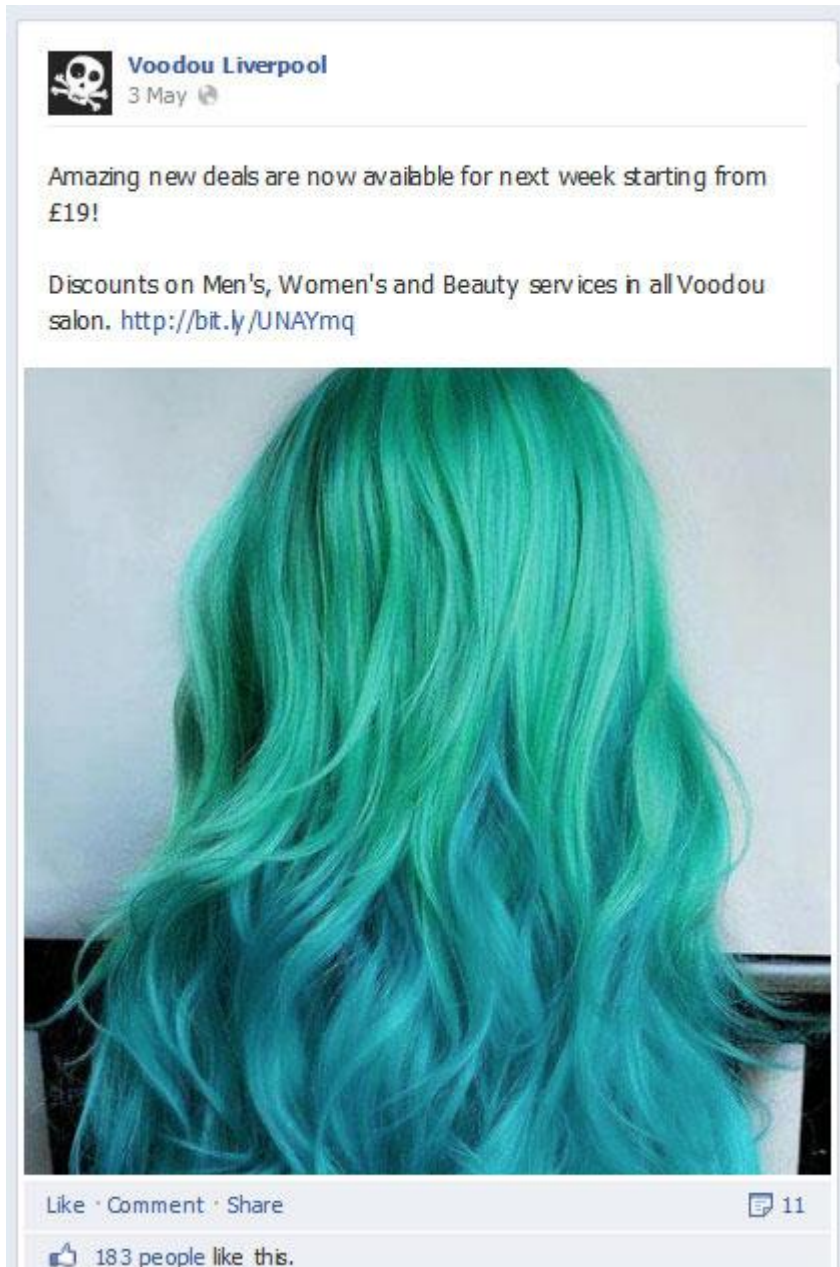
Blooms Hair	Clerkenwell, London, UK	434 reviews
Francesco Picardi Hairdressing	Shoreditch, London, UK	92 reviews

Our excellent search engine rank helps bring an average of over 3,000 people a month to the Last Minute Voodoo webpage

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Facebook

We feature Last Minute Voodoo deals every week on our Facebook page with daily posts. In addition we pay to **boost** the post on a Friday to ensure that it is seen by on average 20,000 people. The cost of a Facebook *boosted post* is typically £40.



Monthly E-mail

Our monthly e-mail goes out to our database of 40,000 clients and Last Minute Voodoo features regularly on this e-newsletter.

The Last Minute Voodoo Results :

Last Minute Voodoo has proved to be an incredible business innovation since it was created and has these very impressive statistics for the past 12 months :

Visitors to the Last Minute Voodoo webpage: average **3,000 people a month**

Total deals claimed: **1,144**

Total money taken in-salon: **£32,845**

Total number of Last Minute Voodoo clients: **1,096** (96% of *claimed* deals were used)

Number of Last Minute Voodoo clients new to the salon: **734** (67% of deals were for new clients)

Number of new salon clients from Last Minute Voodoo who returned for a second full-price appointment: **449** (61% return rate)

From these figures we can see the impact Last Minute Voodoo has had on our salons over the last 12 months. It shows that not only is the innovation **solving our problem quieter days** in the salons but bringing us *new, loyal clients willing to rebook with our stylists*.

Despite the preconception that clients coming into the salon on a Last Minute Deal will not buy retail or upgrade their service, our statistics prove otherwise.

- Average **offered price** of Last Minute deal: **£23.45**
- Average **actual spend** for a Last Minute deal: **£29.97**

Last Minute Voodoo not only fills our stylist's appointments in the quieter days at the start of the week, but also contributes to the expansion of our overall number of clients.

Comparative figures Quarter 1 2013 compared to Quarter 1 2012 -

- ✓ Hairdressing clients: **48% increase**
- ✓ Beauty clients: **44% increase**

Last Minute Voodoo is an incredible business innovation that has generated over **£30,000 in new income** and over **1,000** clients.

It has also attracted many new clients who return for future appointments.