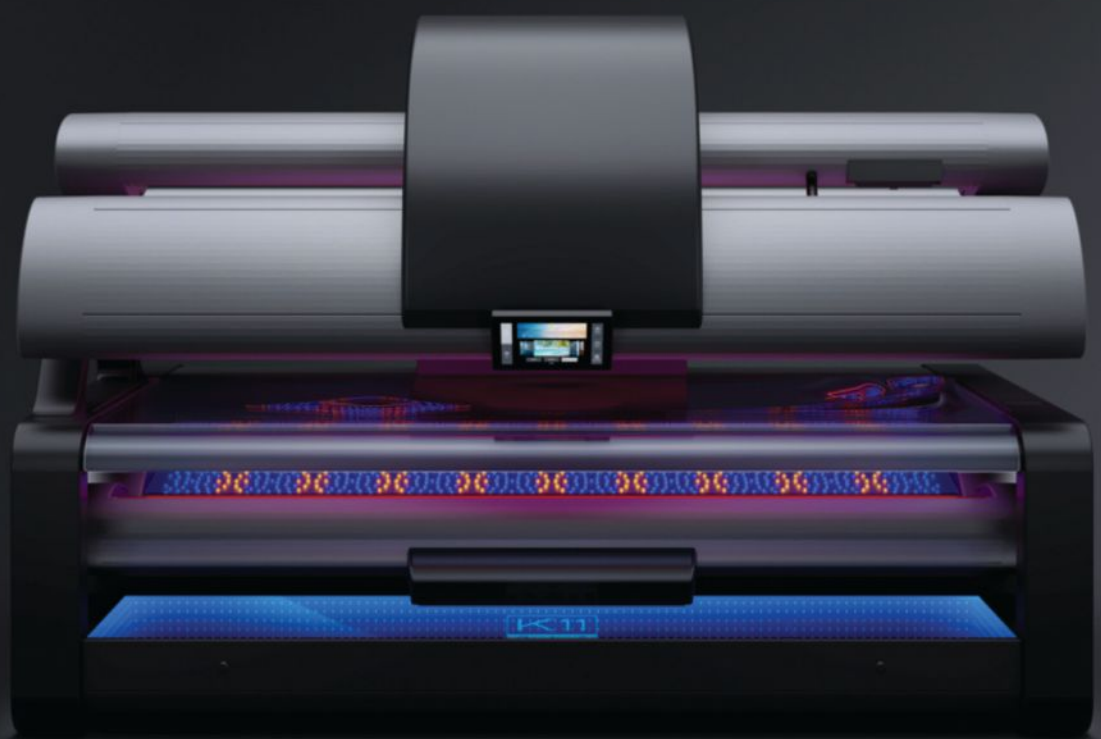


LIGHTING THE WAY



Educating Clients on New Tanning Technology

BY CURT HOLLOWAY

PICTURE a client who has been tanning for fifteen years. She knows what a good session feels like: the warmth, the flush, the faint smell of heat on skin. She knows how her body responds, how long it takes to build color, when she's done enough. She has a system, and it works.

Now put her in an all-LED tanning unit for the first time.

It's quieter. It runs cooler. The light looks different. She's not sweating the way she usually does. By the time she steps out, she's not sure anything happened, and unless someone at your front desk has already explained what to expect, she's probably not coming back for a second session.

Some variation of that scenario is playing out in salons across the country. Not because the technology doesn't work—it does, and in many measurable ways it outperforms what came before—but because the client's frame of reference was built around a completely different experience. LED output changes what tanning feels like and, as any salon owner knows, tanning has always been as much about how it makes people feel as how it makes them look.

Fully LED-based tanning units have been on salon floors for more than a year now. The KBL K11 Air and Elements by Ergoline are up and running in salons across the country, and the performance feedback has been consistently positive. For tanning professionals, the technology is no longer a novelty. For a significant portion of the tanning public, though, it still is, and unfamiliarity left unaddressed is never a good thing.

Which means the most important upgrade in your salon right now isn't the equipment—it's the conversation happening at your front desk. Client education is both a professional responsibility and your most effective sales tool.

The technology is here. The conversation may still need to catch up.

"This isn't your grandmother's tanning bed—it's a whole different way of doing things," says **Bill Pipp, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Tanning Supplies Unlimited**, the U.S. distributor for KBL. "You're going to have to learn to coach and explain to your customers that the new technology has actually changed the tanning process itself. It's not just a change of technology—it's the ability to deliver UVA and UVB at higher irradiance and dosage levels. The new technology increases the output so going a full session isn't always necessary to get the full results."



LED tanning isn't just about power or efficiency—it's about precision. More precise output is good for the industry because it enhances our ability to manage client exposure. And moving forward, that precision will allow us to create increasingly personalized experiences for individual clients.



Charles Lerebours, Executive Director of Sales at JK America, the U.S. distributor for Ergoline, sees LED as an opportunity to rethink how the industry serves clients altogether. "Tanning is a very individual experience. We all have different skin and different tanning levels. How do we create a tanning experience that caters to as many people as possible? We're working on those programs more and more to create a machine that can tan everybody perfectly at every stage of their tanning journey."

THE RESPONSIBILITY COMES FIRST

New technology is obviously great for marketing and sales, but first understand that there is a professional obligation to make sure your customers know what they're getting into. Clients experiencing LED tanning for the first time are stepping into a fundamentally different exposure environment. They need to understand what has changed, and why.

Part of that conversation can even clear up misconceptions that have lingered for years. As **JK Ergoline equipment specialist Terah Shear** shares in an educational video, tanners often still ask whether a session in a tanning bed is equivalent to a couple of hours in the sun. She says it's not, nor is that a useful comparison. Natural sunlight is uncontrolled, constantly varying with time of day, season, location, and cloud cover, delivering a broad unfiltered spectrum all at once. A sunbed is an engineered environment designed to deliver controlled, consistent UV exposure every session. LED takes that control further still. Helping clients understand that distinction gives staff a confident, factual answer to one of the most common questions they hear.

The precise control that LED offers over UVA and UVB output is a genuine advancement in tanning technology, but it's your responsibility to communicate that to your customers so they can maximize results and minimize the risk of overexposure.

For Lerebours, the responsibility extends to the manufacturer level. "For the first time as a UV equipment manufacturer, we have full responsibility over the UV output we offer in the unit," he explains. "Before, we were working in collaboration with lamp manufacturers—two companies sharing the responsibility. Now we are solely in charge of what our equipment delivers."

The manufacturers are building that accountability into the technology. The salon's job is to carry it through to the client.

"Make sure staff members are skilled and knowledgeable enough about the differences between fluorescent and LED," says Pipp. "You really have to understand the technology is different, and that changes the environment you're going to get tan in. They shouldn't expect the same feel. These beds allow us to be much more skin-sensitive while delivering the color clients want, in less time, in a more comfortable environment, without radiant heat."

A NEW EXPERIENCE

The single biggest education challenge with LED tanning isn't the science—it's the feeling. Clients who are used to traditional tanning may step out of the session wondering what happened.

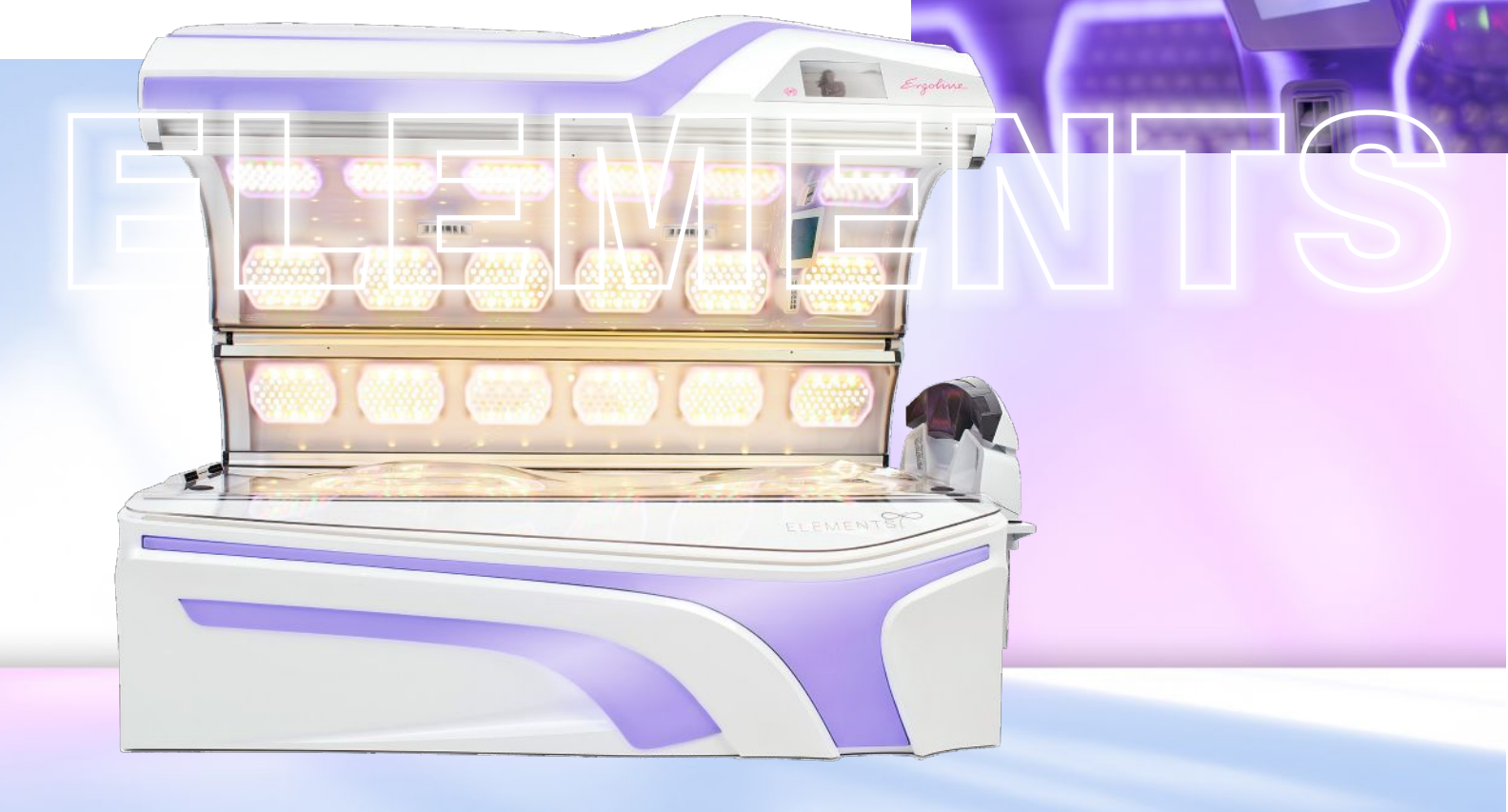
"We need to make sure we are creating a light experience for the user that gives them something visible," says Lerebours. "What we hear is that the tanner is confused by LED because they don't see it the same way, so they think it's not working. We are working as a manufacturer to create a light experience that is pleasant for the tanner, and that's exactly what we've developed with Elements."

Seeing is believing, and feeling is the other side of the equation. Reducing the heat of a tanning session, thus creating a more comfortable experience, reducing sweating, and after-tan odor, is one distinct benefit of LED tanning. But, for most clients, warmth has always meant the session is doing something. That belief is deeply ingrained, but completely false.

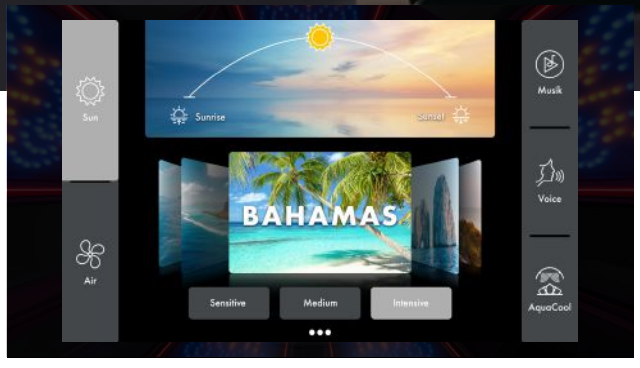
"If they want to be hot, turn off the fans, and they'll get hot," Pipp says. "But that's not what makes you tan. Your staff should have the ability to redirect clients as to why the things they looked for to get a good tan in the past aren't necessary any longer. If you're going in an LED bed, the traditional effects, the feelings you get inside those, aren't going to be the same because they don't need to be. You never need to get hot to be tan. That's the leap we have to make now."

LED systems generate far less radiant heat than conventional lamps while actually increasing UV delivery efficiency. The result is a better









tan in less time, in a cooler, quieter environment. It just doesn't feel like what clients are used to.

"The LED doesn't get as hot as a conventional lamp, and most tanners associate heat with tanning, which we know isn't true at all. It takes quite a bit of training and education from the salon owners to convey this concept. Education is the art of repetition, so it's something we have to keep repeating," Lerebours says.

Newer tanners tend to adapt quickly, unburdened by years of experience with traditional tanning. Long-time clients may need more deliberate coaching, but once they see their results, they'll come around.

"This is a transition that we need to get people to accept. Once they've experienced it, they'll say, 'Wow, I'm getting good color. It's not hot. It's comfortable.' They thought they had to get hot and sweat to tan but now they see that they don't and the outcome is far better," Pipp says.

MORE THAN JUST LEDS

One can hardly discuss the implications of LED tanning without discussing the key innovations that come alongside it. While some of these features have been available for longer than UV LEDs themselves, not every client is familiar with them, and with the latest generation of equipment, LED output, multi-spectrum light, and adjustable output are inseparable parts of the same experience.

On both the KBL K11 Air and the Ergoline Elements, user-controlled settings allow clients to adjust output from sensitive to medium to intensive, shifting not just the intensity but the ratio of wavelengths to create a more customized experience. It's also a practical tool for smoothing the transition from traditional tanning for clients still accustomed to longer sessions on older, lower-output equipment.

"SunControl allows salon owners that face blowback from customers that don't want to pay the full price for full time. It allows them to lower the output so they're getting more skin-sensitive output and still get to go their full time. You want to make sure they're using the SmartControl system so they can enjoy the entire experience," Pipp says. "We've designed ways to eliminate potential dissatisfaction and manage the output to them so it's skin-sensitive, and they still get bronzing, but at an appropriate level based on skin typing and various attributes."

Hybrid tanning—pairing UV output with red light and/or other wavelengths—has been on the market long enough to feel familiar, but it may still be underexplained at the salon level. The science is straightforward: red light stimulates cell activity and improves circulation, supporting melanocyte function and helping skin better absorb UVA and UVB. The result is a more efficient tanning process. For salon owners running hybrid units who have not been actively explaining the red light

component to clients, this is a missed opportunity. While hybrid tanning with LED output is now available and will continue to be more prevalent in the future, incorporating hybrid experiences however possible and educating clients on how it works is advisable.

"You're moving into a more skin-sensitive experience by incorporating red light, so make sure they understand that red light complements the tanning process. That's why we introduced red light into tanning beds—not for what the R11 or other red light therapy equipment does, but for how it helps the tanning process and makes the process more skin-sensitive. Red light helps cells better accept UVA and UVB and allows the unit to be more skin sensitive," Pipp says.

"If you don't have LED equipment at this time, you may want to strongly consider including hybrid lamps along with UVA and UVB."

WHERE IT ALL COMES TOGETHER

The full-LED units from KBL and Ergoline represent the current ceiling of what tanning technology can deliver and the baseline for where the industry is heading. They're the culmination of other recent innovations alongside the big upgrade to all-LED light output. The result is an improved tanning experience, increased tanning power, and markedly enhanced operational efficiency.

The KBL K11 Air combines 2010 UVA LEDs, 552 UVB LEDs, and 4800 Nano Beauty Red Light LEDs. SunFinity LED tanning technology for the body and face gives amazing results for less total operating cost and provides 26 percent more UVA and 33 percent more UVB in the face/neck area than the body. The SunControl feature makes the K11 Air an option for all levels of tanner. As the K11 Air ushers in a new era of tanning performance, it simultaneously introduces an unparalleled level of efficiency. Compared to the KBL P9 extraSun, the K11 Air consumes 76% less power, resulting in significant operational savings for salon owners while the all-LED technology also eliminates the need for costly and time-consuming lamp changes.

The heart of Elements is the innovative Ergoline UV LED technology, perfectly blending UVA and UVB for an exceptional all-over, even, deep and long-lasting tan. The high-quality UV LED technology enables 70% less power consumption and a service life of over 20,000 hours without compromising on tanning results. Thanks to the high reliability of our built-in LED units, replacing "lamps" is now a thing of the past. For an exceptionally beautiful and natural complexion, the sunlight is supplemented with golden Synergy Light. Synergy Light harnesses the combined benefits of red and green light. The Personal SunStyle feature allows clients to customize their experience, from sensitive, to medium, to intensive.

While traditional systems will remain in play for a long time to come, LED tanning is here to stay and is the future of tanning equipment development. Much of the demand for LED units is driven by tanning performance, but there is also an operational case worth making to salon owners still weighing the transition. Traditional fluorescent systems run on a consumable model—routine lamp replacements, inventory management, scheduled downtime. LED systems are engineered for far longer operational lifespans, meaning replacement cycles shrink dramatically, variability from lamp degradation disappears, and maintenance becomes far more predictable. The upfront investment looks different, but the ongoing expense profile is substantially lower.

"This is the future, the same way we use LED lights in our homes today rather than fluorescent," Lerebours says. "It's more efficient and more precise. We're still at the beginning of this product line and understanding how to manage the UVA and UVB ratio and different light spectrums to improve the tanning performance. Reducing the cost of LED technology is a big goal for our company as well."

EDUCATION AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Here's the thing about doing right by your clients: it's also just good business. Clients who understand what LED technology does and why the experience feels different trust their salon, stay on program, and send their friends. The ones who don't understand it may tend to quietly disappear.

If your salon already has LED units on the floor, the immediate work is staff calibration. Every team member should be able to explain the heat and visibility differences confidently, use SunControl or Personal SunStyle to match sessions to needs, and explain how red light complements the UV process. The technology is doing its job. The question is whether your team can translate that into a conversation at the front desk.

"As much as it's a challenge, it's also very simple because we're all familiar with LED technology in our homes. We all have LED lightbulbs that are less hot but still as bright," Lerebours says.

"The new tanner can understand this approach easier because they don't have the historical experience. The historical tanner requires new education. The difficulty is we're not in direct contact with the tanner. We rely on the salon owner and their staff to have those conversations with the customer because they advise the customer on what they should do for their tanning experience."

Remember the fifteen-year tanner from the opening—the one who stepped out of her first LED session unsure anything had happened? Give her a staff member who explained what to expect beforehand, and the story ends differently. She leaves knowing her color will develop, understanding why she didn't sweat, and curious enough to upgrade her membership. That's not a technology story. That's a communication story.

The shift to LED tanning has arrived. The salons that close that gap first—through trained staff, consistent messaging, and a genuine commitment to client education—will be the ones that turn LED technology from a capital investment into a competitive advantage.

As Pipp puts it: "Once they experience the LEDs, it won't take them long to figure it out. And once they do, they're not going back."