

# Carly Harrington: Startup ZeroG launches app for salon industry

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Imagine being able, from the convenience of your phone, to tour a salon before booking your appointment.

What if you could consult directly with stylists by sending them your style questions before walking in the salon?

Love your look? Upload a photo for others to see.

Those are among the features of a new app geared toward the salon industry and developed by Knoxville startup ZeroG Software.

Frank's Barbershop is the first to take advantage of this new format, which will be available in iTunes and Google Play stores.

"We love building apps to build people's brands. It's about the experience," ZeroG founder Jeff Bronson said. "This is much richer in terms of experience but simple to use."

The idea resulted from the collaboration of several industry stakeholders including the Visage Group, z11 Communications and Vance Publishing, which owns trade magazines Modern Salon and Salon Today.

It allows for scheduling of appointments and the ability to keep their customers informed. It is also fully integrated with the major salon business software providers.

Meanwhile, consumers can take a tour, see available services and specials, make appointments, get appointment reminders, call the salon concierge directly, see reviews and engage through social media. The plan is to market and customize it to salons across the country.

But for Bronson it represents the beginning of a new app development company that will work hand-in-hand with his other business, Innovative Consulting Group, a full-service consulting and software development firm that recently underwent a rebranding and established a new focus on the Knoxville market.

While ZeroG was founded earlier this year (Frank's Barbershop will be its first app to launch), ICG has been around for 11 years building its client base and team of independent contractors across North America. It offers a range of services built around providing cost-effective business and IT services.

Some of its largest customers are in manufacturing and distribution, but Bronson said ICG works with any size company that has goals it wants to meet. He'd like to "make a bigger splash" in IT in Knoxville.

Over the last couple of years, Bronson has been honing his app development skills working in partnership with a programmer in North Carolina. But Bronson said he wanted to step out from the shadow and start ZeroG.

"I thought this is something we need to bring to Knoxville. It fits in with the growth plan we have," he said. "I really wanted to own it, build it and do it. So here we are."

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