

Antony ([00:02](#)):

Welcome to the Grow My Salon Business podcast, where we focus on the business side of hairdressing. I'm your host, Antony Whitaker, and I'll be talking to thought leaders in the hairdressing industry, discussing insightful, provocative, and inspiring ideas that matter. So get ready to learn, get ready to be challenged, get ready to be inspired, and most importantly, get ready to grow your salon business.

Antony ([00:31](#)):

And welcome to today's episode of the Grow My Salon Business podcast. I'm your host Antony Whitaker, and it's great to have you join me here today. There are many salon owners out there that decide to make the journey from one salon to two or more salons only to then go back to one. Obviously, there's many reasons why that might happen, but they do often have certain things in common. My guest on today's podcast is a salon owner who has made that journey, and his story could be the story of many others. His name is Simon Matthews from the Simon John Salon in the uk. And in today's episode, Simon shares his journey and the lessons learned along the way. In today's podcast, we discuss why bigger doesn't automatically mean better. How his salon has adopted a four day work week and the benefits of building one successful salon business rather than spreading yourself across multiple locations. So without further ado, welcome to the show, Simon.

Simon ([01:34](#)):

Hi, Antony. How are you? Good to see you again.

Antony ([01:35](#)):

I'm very good. It's good to see you again as well. And it's great to have this opportunity to have you on the podcast. We go back a little way so I know a little bit about your background, but our listeners won't be familiar with who you are or most of them won't be. So just a brief introduction. Who is Simon Matthews? Give us your, you know, sort of 30 second backstory.

Simon ([01:57](#)):

Well, I've been in the hairdressing industry for 40 years. I started when I was 16. I'm 56 now. Still love hairdressing still. Love being behind the chair. Still love that connection with the clients. We have a salon that's Simon John Hair Limited that we opened 33 years ago back in 1989. And that's probably about seven, eight miles outside of Birmingham in the West Midlands in the uk. And it's a suburban area quite an affluent area called Sutton Coalfield.

Antony ([02:29](#)):

Great. Okay. All right. That's a good introduction. So 33 years ago, did you say you opened your first salon?

Simon ([02:37](#)):

19, 18? Yeah, just, we just celebrated 34 years back in February.

Antony ([02:41](#)):

Good, good. Okay. So there's some, some serious wisdom and experience there, which I know you are very happy for me to get you to share with our audience. So the journey that many a young hairdresser makes, they're working for someone else and they decided they're gonna go out and open their own

salon. What was that beginning for you like? Okay, I know it's a long time ago, 1989 is a long time ago. But, but what was the dream then? What were you sort of envisaging that your journey was gonna be into salon ownership?

Simon ([03:19](#)):

Well, well, like everybody, I started working in the hairdressing industry when I was 16. I opened up my own salon when I was 22, having worked for three or four different hairdressing salons and really different types of hairdressing salons. I worked with some incredibly talented hairdressers and at 22 I kind of wanted to stretch out on my own and go and open up our own business, my own business. I've got an idea on how I wanted that business to be and how I wanted to look. And I've got an idea on the business model that I wanted to kind of follow over the next, well, what is it, 33 years now?

Antony ([04:02](#)):

Yeah. Okay. So when you got the first sale ongoing and, you know, you started to build it up a bit, opportunities started to come along and you thought, you know, I'm going to do more, I'm gonna make this bigger than what it is. What was the sort of vision that you had, you know, before you went on to expand? Cuz I know that you opened another salon eventually. How long was it before you opened the second salon?

Simon ([04:27](#)):

Well, as I say, we opened up the first time in '89, and that became hugely successful. So it was only a small salon. It was only a small shop really. So we decided to kind of a second salon, a second opportunity came just behind where we were on the high street which had parking and had the opportunity eventually of owning it ourselves. So we took we took this over and that again, we started to outgrow that and then probably say about 10 years after opening that first salon, we decided to break out. I've got great staff, Antony, and that's the thing. I've got really good staff at the time, and I felt if, if I didn't stretch ourselves to stretch the business, I felt that I may lose one or two members of these these good, good staff members. So we looked for a second site so that I could promote and make certain people managers and get them running it and replicating what we've got at salon one.

Antony ([05:36](#)):

Okay. And so you opened the second location, you know, you expand, you promote some people, put people in other positions, appoint people as managers. Then you opened the third one. Was it, how long was it between the second and the third?

Simon ([05:51](#)):

It was five years after opening the second one we decided to to open up a third one again, opportunities arose. You see my business model after opening the first one went from just having, I was 22 once we, we had a bit of fun to start with. You know, we were socializing incredibly after work all together. And but I realized that I needed to kind of take this a little bit more seriously. And that's when we opened the second salon and the third salon. Now I wanted at the time to open up 7, 8, 9 salons all within an area or within touching distance of each other. Sutton Coldfield where I work is built up of little suburbs around Sutton Coldfield. And I thought, well, if I could have one salon on each high street of all the areas that make up Sutton Coldfield, I thought we could do really well. And then it's not too far away from each of them to connect with each other. You can move staff, you can move stock, you can have the buying ability, and if we could make, I dunno, 20, 30, 40,000 outta each, it's a healthy, healthy living.

Antony (07:12):

Right. Okay. So that was a vision, that was a big dream. And I know we are condensing, you know, 20 plus years here into a short, you know, period of time in terms of the conversation. What, what was the challenge in making that work? Because I know you successfully got to three salons. I remember you were actually looking at a fourth one at some point.

Simon (07:33):

That's right. Yeah, we were,

Antony (07:36):

But what were the challenges that you faced with that? Because a lot of, because that business model you've just described sounds, that sounds like a very reasonable business model, you know being within close proximity to each other, being in a regional area you know, small salons and in multiple small towns that you can, you know, easily get to each of them. It sounds like a reasonable assumption that you've made, but, and I won't say it didn't work because I know that varying degrees it did work. But what was some of the challenge that you started to experience then with putting that vision into place? Because a lot of people I talked to, they wanna expand. I go, I've got one and it's working well, I want two, I want three, I want four. I've got the midas touch. Nothing can go wrong. And yet obviously we know that, you know, it's not necessarily about having the midas touch and things can go wrong. So from someone who's been there and done it, share with us what some of the challenges and frustrations were that you had with that journey.

Simon (08:42):

So salon number one, let's call it the main salon, the salon that that I opened back in 89 when I was a fresh faced 22 year old. That that was our main salon that was the salon that really kind of was where the success was built from. But then opening up a second salon and a third salon and that salon one is built on the atmosphere or the ambiance or what I've created. I dunno, I'm sure other hairdressers, you know, I, I sit myself on the station next to the desk and I see the clients coming in and I say, Hello, Mrs. Jones, or Hello Mrs. Smith, and how are you? And how's your husband? etc.

Simon (09:29):

So it is all about, that was all about me. And my staff replicated that kind of personal touch. The problem is when you go to two is that you are kind of dividing your time 50:50. So when Mrs. Smith or Mrs. Jones come in the door and Simon's not there it's not the, it's never the same. The welcome's not the same. So then when you go to three salons and you've gotta, it's so difficult. What I found so difficult was to replicate what we had, the atmosphere that we created in Salon one, to create them in Salon two, and then in Salon three. And that was a big hurdle. That was, that became very, very difficult. I also, and you and I probably laugh about this because you used to bang onto me, you've gotta move from behind the chair.

Simon (10:30):

You've gotta get out from behind the chair. You should, you can't be doing five days a week and run two salons or three. But I liked being behind it. Yeah. I liked seeing my clients. I liked that client's interaction. I found that, I remember when I was been out in a bar or restaurant, a lady came over to me and she said, Oh, hello, your Simon, aren't you? Yeah, yeah, yeah. That Simon John. Yeah. Yeah. I come to your salon too. I didn't know this lady. You know, you become, I, I don't know, you become, I, it was just a

case of, Oh, I hope you enjoyed going there. Who do you see? And, and I'm making it up as we go along. So that personal interaction was never really a problem for me. I like that. I like that personal interaction with my clients. Those are the two things that really, really kind of hit home. And dividing your time is very, very difficult. You've got to have a really good team around you.

Antony ([11:31](#)):

Yeah. And you've touched on a few interesting things here, and that you love being behind the chair, that's a really important component to this. I mean, every second hairdresser I talk to who is a salon owner will say to me, I wanna work less behind the chair. I wanna extricate from myself from doing clients. I wanna work on the business, not in the business for all sorts of different reasons. Sometimes it's because they're bored, we're doing here that they no longer want to be that guy or girl behind the chair. And it, it's not a case of it being right or wrong, it's just different for different people. You use the word atmosphere. You said it was difficult to replicate the atmosphere. What do you mean by that? Because I wrote down culture with a question mark next to it.

Antony ([12:20](#)):

I wrote down productivity with a with a question mark next to it. And culture's this sort of all pervasive term, which is used as it sorts of encompasses a lot of different things. And you know, there's so much tied up in this because you had one salon that was going really well because you were there, you were the culture, you were the system, so to speak. Everything went through Simon. And when you opened a second salon, as you said, you are no longer there. So this sort of soul of the business isn't always present. Especially, and not just the soul of the business, but the, the systems and the productivity that happens in the business when the owner is present, unless you've turned it into something that's replicable systems and standards and got a manager and another sell on to do the same stuff, then it simply doesn't work. When you talk about atmosphere, is that what you're meaning that it wasn't, it was also talking about productivity and standards.

Simon ([13:33](#)):

Okay, so I'll go back, I was thinking about this earlier last last night, actually. I'll go back to when I started hair dressing at 16. I worked in a salon. What a phenomenal atmosphere that it, so I had, I didn't wanna be a hairdresser. To me, I had no intention of being a hairdresser. My mom sent me out to get a job, and I got a job in a salon. But the social, the social side of that salon was incredible. We were all out, went out together, and, and I loved it. And that's why I decided I wanted to be a hairdresser. Later on through my, before I opened up my salon, I went to work for another guy who was heavily into his competition. He was British champion and etc, on competitions, but his salon was kind of a little bit starchy, a little bit old fashioned, and you couldn't talk to a client next to you et cetera, et cetera.

Simon ([14:24](#)):

What I wanted to do, I wanted to create a, a business that had a little bit of both. It was, I wanted the ultra professionalism. I wanted the, the exceptional customer service, but I wanted to create that little bit of party atmosphere as well. And and we did that. And that's what we were, you know, when you came to Simon John on a Friday afternoon, you'd probably have a glass of prosecco and you're getting ready to go out for the weekend. And everybody's singing and dancing and it was just, it was fantastic days. Once you go to salon two, you lose a little bit of that because you know, you are not there all the time. And I certainly can't be there on a Friday afternoon. I have to, I have to make money and behind my own chair and work for and work to put money into the business. So it's very, very difficult to

replicate. One of my old receptionists said to me it's like a club. This is your business is like a club. You are a member of the club when you come here. And I think that's a great term, and that, but to replicate that for Salon two or salon three is incredibly difficult.

Antony ([15:35](#)):

Yeah. So it is atmosphere that is the word. It's not, it's more at culture, atmosphere is part of the culture, But I totally get what you mean when you talk about that atmosphere in there. Yeah, it's interesting.

Simon ([15:49](#)):

Yeah. But, the thing was that everybody knew everybody. Yeah. So your Friday afternoon clients would come in and talk to the other Friday afternoon clients because they recognized them. And that's what I'm saying is that yeah, it became almost like a like a club that took. We were fortunate enough everybody wanted to come to, but obviously when you go to salon two and salon three, it's incredibly, almost impossible to to replicate that. Yeah. So you have to kinda work on the basics and try and get the basics right. Of customer service and you know, what the client wants.

Antony ([16:28](#)):

Okay. So let me reverse engineer a question into that. What is the key to expanding successfully? I'm not saying you didn't, you weren't successful in your expansion at times. You definitely were, But like any salon business, you had challenges as well. So if you were talking to, you know, the 25 year old version of Simon and you were gonna say to give him some advice about, okay, if you are gonna expand and you want it to be successful, these are the lessons that I'm bringing back to you to tell you you need to do these things. What would those lessons be? What's the key to successful expansion?

Simon ([17:10](#)):

Know, your numbers. I think first of all, Antony, when I first started working with yourself probably some 20 years ago I didn't know my numbers. I think you taught me that. And, so now, crikey, I think I'm pretty savvy on it. I think, being able to create a brand as in a brand that's replica, you can replicate between one salon and two Salons, and three salon and putting the people in the right places as well. Putting managers, putting the right managers in. It's not always the best hairdresser, for example.

Antony ([17:51](#)):

No.

Simon ([17:53](#)):

You have to kinda weigh up and try and work out who are the best people to replicate what we've created here. And I think that's, that, those are the two or three things that I would try and say, branding is a big thing, but knowing your numbers is the or, that's what you've gotta know.

Antony ([18:18](#)):

Yeah.

Simon ([18:19](#)):

Profit margins. Yeah. Any systems know your systems.

Antony ([18:24](#)):

Yeah. Systems. And you touched on people, having the right people in place. And at times, you had great managers at times. But without the right managers to replace you in a salon, you are never gonna replicate that culture, that atmosphere, that energy, that productivity that happens when you're there.

Simon ([18:44](#)):

That fair to say? So I know it sounds, I know it sounds the most basic of basic things, but we got young staff. Everybody was young and and socializing and going out there, there was a big culture in that when we first opened it. But just things like stupid things like we all answer the telephone exactly the same. Well, that wasn't there before. And that's a system that we put in place. Now everybody answers the phone exactly the same way. Everybody welcomes the client in exactly the same way. Everybody serves their teas and coffees cappuccinos, lattes, espressos all in the same way. So those are the things that, those are the systems that you put in place that you have to have in place, You know, don't even think about it without them. Cause it won't work.

Antony ([19:35](#)):

Okay. So, you know, 25 years goes on, whatever, you've got three salons by this time, varying degrees of success at different times. And then you decide to reassess the vision. You know, what was, what was that point? So you had, you've got three salons, you were thinking about a fourth one. I know you even looked at one.

Simon ([19:59](#)):

Well, we actually made an offer on, I actually made an offer on the fourth salon, which would've been the biggest one with of a fourth salon business. And it got turned down. I made an offer on a Friday afternoon, and then there were issues with the building. Anyway, I, I don't need to go into that. We literally got turned down at last minute, one Friday afternoon. Then I had the weekend to think about it. And I thought, this isn't right. But the salon three was, we had for five or six years. And it was good. It was okay. It was we made a bit of money on it, but not enough anywhere near enough to kind of for me to be committing the amount of time that I needed to spend on it to, to make it as profitable as I wanted it to be as all I wanted it to be.

Simon ([20:49](#)):

So there was a problem with the lease. I could have moved, but, you know, I just thought we we're better off taking the great staff that we got, putting them back into the two salons we've always had. And I don't whether other hairdressers do. And the same problem we have problem with we build, we build up a client, we build up a stylist, and that stylist builds up good figures, and then they go, they go to, they open, they go and rent the chair, or they go to some competitor down the road that pays 'em a little bit more money. So we, we've always had that, you know, like anybody, we've always had that issue. And you kind of get exasperated by it because, you know, he's spent two years investing in this stylist and you know, all of a sudden you're making good money on her or him, and then they decide that they're going elsewhere. So that, that's a frustration. So what we did was we decided, you know, the lease on this on salon three wasn't working. So let's bring it down to the two salons. And we did. And it was, and it was fine. It was, everything was great. And of course, I've got senior staff, then I've got senior staff working for Salon two because I've bought senior staff over in Salon three. Everything's great. Everything's rosy in the garden.

Antony ([22:11](#)):

Okay. And now you've got one salon. So what was the catalyst to go, Do you know what, we've got two, the second one's working well, but I wanna turn it into one. What was the, what was the change that brought that on?

Simon ([22:26](#)):

We had like everything. We had, we went through Covid and we were closed for 6, 8 months, I think it was. I can't remember. And I thought, what I'm gonna do, I'm gonna spend that time on doing it. But our original salon, you know, it's been there 30 years. It needs a new floor, it needs new windows, it needs new doors, It needed a lot of money spending on it. So perfect time. So we, I actually enjoyed Covid cause I, actually went in and worked on it myself. It was great.

Antony ([23:02](#)):

Right hang on, you're missing out a major step here, for the years that I'd known you, you'd said, One day I'm gonna get a chance to buy the building. And so that chance came along, did it before Covid and you bought that building?

Simon ([23:16](#)):

Yeah. That became, that came along. Yeah, that came along. Before Covid, we bought the property from the freeholder about five years ago. Yeah. Now, so yeah, the opportunity arose unfortunately, the last, the previous owner had passed away and his wife offered me the the opportunity of buying the business. Unfortunately, I do her hair, so that does help. Yeah. but she offered me the opportunity to buy the property, which obviously we grabbed it with both hands. So that now is our property. And my, the rental, it's my pension, Antony. It's my future. It secures everything, if that makes sense.

Antony ([24:02](#)):

Oh, totally. I mean, I you know, I speak to so many salon owners who have a situation like yours, and I say to them, Look, if you ever get a chance to buy the real estate, do yourself a favour. Buy the real estate. Because and everyone I know who's done it all says to me, Oh my God, it's the best thing I've ever done. I've now secured my future. I've now effectively, you know, put my pension plan in place because even if I retire and sell the business, I still own the building. So someone else is gonna be, you know, paying me a passive income. And obviously, for some people, it's never gonna be possible to buy the premises for all sorts of reasons. I mean, you know, sometimes they're in a shopping mall, or they're in the middle of the downtown area.

Antony ([24:45](#)):

So you're not gonna own the real estate. But there's always advantages and disadvantages for different sorts of business models and different locations. And that is a real advantage. And I don't wanna just gloss over that cuz I think it's a really important, you know, part of your journey, isn't it? That, you know, you had that opportunity to buy Salon one that you refer to. And so it was Covid, was it that made you close the second one? I thought you'd already made a decision to close the second one and expand the first one because you did end up expanding it. Expanding it, didn't you?

Simon ([25:19](#)):

Yeah, we yes, we, did expand it and we put a beauty pod on there and, but it was there was two lockdowns in Covid. So on the second lockdown, we decided, you know what, we're gonna do the floor, we're gonna do the windows, We're gonna spend a lot, all these things that you couldn't do while you were possibly working. So we did that and it looked fantastic and all I wanted to do was, I just wanted to be there and work there. And eventually I just thought, do you know, I spoke to my wife and we've got three boys. And I wanted to spend some time with my family and and I really kind without the pressures of, of two, three salons. So we decided to close the second salon and put everybody into the one salon and and make that work for us. And I have to say, it's the best thing I've ever done as far as far as home life and and personal life the opportunities to be able to give me.

Antony ([26:31](#)):

Yeah. So were you able to get out of the second salon easily? Was it at the end of its lease or...

Simon ([26:37](#)):

Was a little bit of a lease but yeah, there was 12 months of a lease left on it. It did cost us a little bit. We had to pay off the lease. And but because we were coming outta Covid, yeah, it was a little bit easier to do. Cause there was a lots of businesses around us that were coming outta the lease. We didn't close it cause it wasn't profitable. We closed it because of past or lifestyle. I just wanted a different, I wanted something different in my life and I wanted, and being at home with my family and it kinda showed me that really cause pointed me in the right direction.

Antony ([27:12](#)):

Yeah. Good, good. So, what's the vision now for the business, for the future, for the next, I'm gonna put a number on it, 10 years of your working life before you decide it to retire? Well, whatever the number's gonna happen. Putting 10 out there.

Simon ([27:26](#)):

I don't wanna, I don't want, I'm 56. I don't wanna retire at 66. Okay. Say, as I say, I really, I really enjoy work. I don't, I never get out of bed in the morning, think, and I've gotta go to work. I get out bed in the morning thinking, great, I'm gonna work. Yeah. I, I enjoy it.

Antony ([27:42](#)):

Yeah. Okay. So I don't wanna put the words in your mouth, but are you saying that you've now got one salon that is generating more revenue and making more profit with less headache than what you were getting outta three salons?

Simon ([27:59](#)):

Hundred percent. Yeah. 100%.

Antony ([28:01](#)):

There are lots of people that are listening to this that need to hear that again. Yeah, because, and, hey, listen, I also would say to you that at one point in my career I expanded too quick and I had to consolidate because of exactly that lesson. And I see so many young salon owners who think they've got the midas touch because the business is going well and they think, I can open a second one and a third one and everything's gonna go fantastic. And hey, sometimes it does. And that's what I wanted to talk

about, you know, before when I said, what, is the secret to successful expansion? And it is about systems and culture and putting the right people in place, but for many people it can be the wrong thing to do. And they're actually better off to have one salon try and buy the real estate if they can, and to make that one salon their work of art, so to speak. Which, which is what you've done, you know? So, so tell me,

Simon ([29:00](#)):

I would say, just on that, I would say that without opening the second and and third salon, you know, you learn so much through your journey on that. Yeah. That now coming back to one I think you know, it's a really good experience. I don't, I wouldn't change it for the world.

Antony ([29:24](#)):

Yeah. Okay. So I know you've made some significant changes for how you run the business now in terms of opening hours, opening days, different shifts, all that sort of stuff. Talk to us about that because I know that that's also something that's had a huge impact on your business.

Simon ([29:44](#)):

So obviously we are closing salon two now, so I've got three or four really good hairdressers who work on at Salon two. I've also got one of the girls who was on maternity leave. So hence that's why I was spreading myself so thin between the two salons. So I spoke to one of my girls, one of my members of staff who is my manager, and I spoke to my receptionist as well, who's been with me for 15, 16 years. We sat down and we had a meeting and we decided to open seven days a week. Cause it was the only way we could work. So out now open seven days a week. But we're also open late nights. We're open till 8 o'clock. The only way we could do that is, and is what my manager suggested to me, and it did take me a little bit of time to kind of get my head around it and, think about it, but for the staff to go four days a week, but they do 4 long days.

Simon ([30:41](#)):

So they start, for example they start at nine o'clock in the morning and they finish at eight o'clock at night some days. And they work on a, almost like a road tour. It's almost like a shift plan. So they, some work Sundays, but they don't work Saturdays. Some work til six o'clock on a Friday night, but some work til four o'clock on a Tuesday. So it works on a complete shift pattern. And we found that's been, we've found that's been absolutely, it's worked really well for us. So we've got 10 stylists, 10 or 11 stylists. So the other thing is that you haven't got 10 stylists all working in the salon together. So you've got four or five stylists working on a Tuesday or, three stylists working on a Monday. But then on a Saturday you've got six or seven stylists you've got, we're just building up on a Sunday at the moment. So we've got three three/ four stylists working on a Sunday. So you are able to do that and you're able to to work that round and really kind of capitalize on your busy periods and then be able to kind of, you know, have a skeleton staff on your, what, would be deemed as your quieter days.

Antony ([32:09](#)):

Right.

Simon ([32:10](#)):

Okay. And that's how, Well,

Antony ([32:11](#)):

So, do you have like a, you can do this shift, this shift or this shift? Or is it a case of a totally customized shift to suit the individual?

Simon ([32:28](#)):

It's a little bit of both. If I, if I'm gonna be honest, there is a rota that we kind of work to we don't wanna kind of break that up too much. But for example, only last week I've got one of my staff coming back from maternity leave and she could only do, because of childcare, she could only do two days a week. So Sundays and Wednesdays, well that made us over overstaffed on a Wednesday. So I've just, we've just literally sat down and we've worked it out and, and just moved one of the starters to the Tuesday as opposed to a Wednesday. But because they're getting three days off, they don't mind, They, they will adjust and that, and that works really, really well. You know, I can't, honestly, I was, at first I was a doubter but now I would recommend anybody to have a look at it.

Simon ([33:26](#)):

If you can do it, definitely do it. Because you got happier staff. We haven't lost a member, we haven't lost a member of staff for two years. We haven't lost a stylist for two years. That's fantastic. That's, well, it's great because you can, you can then invest into the, into your staff. You can invest in training, you can invest in giving them new clients. And you know, you know that they're gonna be, they're gonna be with the company for, you know, hopefully for, for a long time to come. So they look after those clients. One of our biggest things was staff leaving and taking their clients with them. I'm sure everybody comes up against that, but we don't seem to have that problem anymore because they enjoy working four days a week. They know it's four long days, but they get three days off.

Antony ([34:18](#)):

Yeah. Three days off in a row, or not necessarily.

Simon ([34:21](#)):

No. we break it up. They, we give every member a staff two days off in a row and then they get a third day, which is a single day. So, Yeah. We, we give everybody two days off. Yeah. We've got one stylist who gets Fridays and Saturdays off. Right. How good's that.

Antony ([34:36](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Okay. So you said they're open til eight o'clock? It's open to eight o'clock every night.

Simon ([34:45](#)):

Eight o'clock three nights a week. And then Fridays is six. Saturdays we only do til five, but yeah, three nights a week. Okay. So, and we got, we're we're available for the client who finishes work and wants to come and get a bailage or a foils or, or a root colour. Okay. We're available

Antony ([35:07](#)):

And what about Sunday? What are the hours there?

Simon ([35:10](#)):

Well, we restricted a little bit on Sundays in the UK cuz you know, we open at 10 and we have to finish at four. So those are the hours that we do.

Antony ([35:20](#)):

Right. Okay. Now I know also that you've changed the way you are paying people, the commission structure. Explain to us how you are doing that now, because I think that's interesting as well, which some salon owners could benefit from. So tell us what you're doing there.

Simon ([35:39](#)):

Well, like everybody, we sit down and we work out a target based on the stylist turnover and what we feel that they should be taking within a week's work to last salon. And we might base it on whether they say 1500 pound a week or, 2000 pound a week or, whatever it might be. So I was looking at that, and I was saying that a lot of the problems are that we we pay a basic plus a commission. Now we pay 20% commission, but that's after we take the taxes off for them. So it used to be 40%, but now we take the tax off and, and, and do it at 20%. So what happens is that if you get a stylist that goes on holiday for a week there, one week before they go away, is incredibly busy and they're commission is absolutely inflated.

Simon ([36:32](#)):

They go away for a week and they come back and then rammed out again because they haven't been in for a week for a work. And and their commission's inflated. There's no even ground. So one week you're paying a lot, the next week you're paying a lot. Two weeks time you're paying a lot. And then that middle week, they could have a quiet week or they could have two days off, or they could be off sick or they could be on holiday or the salon could be quiet. So there's no even balance to it. So I looked at it and I, I was having a beer after work one night with my friend and I was explaining to him, and he said I can't, I can't believe you pay weekly on it. Usually you pay monthly.

Simon ([37:19](#)):

No, we, we've always paid weekly. And I went away and I thought, blimey, I've got to go to monthly. And so when we set up the four day a week, we changed that commissions and I said, you know, if you're gonna do four days a week, you've gotta be productive for a hundred percent of your time, otherwise it doesn't work. And we are going, your target is gonna be set over the month rather than over a weekly target. And so it evens itself out. So if the staff drop off for a week, it's still an even keel. It's still an even amount. You're not paying inflation inflated commissions one week, then nothing the next, inflated commissions the next. So it works so much better for us. But apart anything as well is that I've gotta work out commissions once a month.

Antony ([38:11](#)):

Exactly. So you pay once a, you pay a wage every week, like a minimum fixed?

Simon ([38:18](#)):

No, we pay four weekly. We pay four weekly

Antony ([38:21](#)):

And commission. So you pay commission four weekly and the wage, So everything is monthly now. Yeah. Right. Oh, okay. I thought you meant you were paying the wages weekly, but then you'd pay the commission monthly?

Simon ([38:35](#)):

No, we were paying the, we were working out the commissions weekly, but paying everybody over four weeks.

Antony ([38:44](#)):

I see. So now it's a target based on a month.

Simon ([38:46](#)):

Yeah, right. As opposed to commission targets based on a week.

Antony ([38:49](#)):

Got it. Got it. Okay. I understand that. All right. Okay. what about you as the owner? Now you are open seven days a week I dunno how many hours a week the salon on is open. How's that impacted on you with the amount of hours that you have to be in the salon on?

Simon ([39:08](#)):

Well, I work, I finish it four o'clock on a Tuesday, so it's quite nice to take my boys to football or cricket coaching on a Tuesday night. And I work on a, I work on a Saturday morning. I start at eight o'clock on a Saturday morning and I finish at at 12 o'clock. The salon is too busy to house me anyway, cuz we have five or six stylist, seven, eight stylists working on a Saturday. So there's no point. All I'm gonna do is just clog up the system. So I just do mornings where I see a few regular clients of mine on a Saturday morning. I go home on Saturday lunchtime and and I take my three teenage boys to football and to cricket and I do all the things that, that Antony that I've never been able to do before. Being a busy salon owner I obviously enjoy that and I enjoy being part of their lives a little bit more. It's fabulous. It makes it, that makes the whole thing a little bit worthwhile.

Antony ([40:17](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. No, sounds great. Sounds great. Better work life balance with family. You own the building, so you put your pension fund in place. The business is more profitable, easy to manage, easy to control the culture, the atmosphere. So, you know, win, win all round there. Righto. Well listen, we need to start wrapping up. So whereabouts can people connect with you on Instagram or other social channels?

Simon ([40:41](#)):

So we've got Instagram is our main main channel, which is, we do have TikTok. Hello. I'm 56, so I'm not great on Tik Tok as you can imagine. We've got Simon John Hair Limited as our Instagram and also our Facebook page. I'm more Facebook being my age group and my staff do the Instagram and the TikTok page, but it's Simon John Hall, Limited,

Antony ([41:10](#)):

Limited or abbreviated

Simon ([41:11](#)):

Abbreviated Ltd

Antony ([41:13](#)):

Ltd. So Simon John Hair, Ltd. And just so that everyone's aware, his name is Simon Matthews, not Simon John. But that's a story for another day. So I'll put those links on our website, Grow My Salon Business thank you. And in the show notes for today's podcast. So if you listen to this podcast with Simon Matthews and enjoyed it, do me a favour, take a screenshot on your phone, share it to your Instagram stories. And while you're doing that, don't forget to subscribe and leave us a rating and review on the Apple Podcast app. So to wrap up, thank you Simon for being on this week's episode of the Grow My Salon Business podcast.

Simon ([41:55](#)):

Always happy to help Antony and if it helps people in any way that's great that we've shared it and great to see you again.

Antony ([42:03](#)):

Good talking to you. Thanks Simon

Simon ([42:05](#)):

Cheers. Take care.

Antony ([42:07](#)):

Thank you for listening to today's podcast. If you'd like to connect with us, you'll find us at Grow My Salon business.com or on Facebook and Instagram at Grow My Salon Business. And if you enjoyed tuning into our podcast, make sure that you subscribe, like, and share it with your friends. Until next time, this is Antony Whitaker wishing you continued success.