

Who is on your external team?

Hello and welcome to todays episode of the Grow My Salon Business podcast I am your host Antony Whitaker and as usual its great to have you here with us today, whether this is your first time or you're a regular listener thank you for joining us on the Grow My Salon Business podcast.

So today it is just me so it's not going to be a long episode but it is an important episode because it's something that frequently comes up in conversation. So let's just jump straight in and get on it....

If you want to build a business, you can't do it alone.

You need the help and support of other people with other specialist 'skillsets'.

You and your business don't exist in isolation, and despite how talented, adaptable and hardworking you are, even you can only do so much.

So for the purpose of this podcast I am going to assume that growth is important to you.

And because of that, you reach a point where you need to start thinking about the people on your external team.

Because if growth is the goal, then building the right external team is just as important as the people on your internal team...

So what do I mean by that? Well the internal team is those people that work in the salon and are generally providing hair and beauty services.

Whereas your external team are not hair and beauty professionals.

Instead, they bring different skill sets, that are essential to the business success.

For example; If we are talking about the FINANCIAL side of your business, there are external people such as...

A Bookkeeper
Accountant or CPA
Financial advisor
Maybe a relationship with your banker

Then there will be times where you need LEGAL advice and representation so you need to have a

Legal advisor, lawyer, solicitor, attorney, whatever

Then in the operations, MANAGEMENT and general administration side of things you need to consider...

A personal assistant or an administrator...

They might come into the salon or into the office or perhaps they are a Virtual Assistant

Perhaps you have a relationship with an HR company

Perhaps you work with a recruitment agency

or maybe a Payroll Company to look after your wages

There might be an Insurance broker to meet your essential insurance needs

Hopefully If you're smart you'll belong to one of the professional organisations that represents employers

Then depending on what it is you do in this industry, there are many people who work as educators or sometimes editorial or session stylists then perhaps you might have an agent

Then other people might have a Business Coach they work with periodically

Some of you might have an outsourced call centre that handle all your salon bookings rather than doing it within the salon at the reception desk

Others will work with a training company to provide all the training within their team

Then there is the MARKETING side of things so you need to consider a...

Graphic designer

Then maybe, depending on how big your business becomes you might want to work with a branding agency or someone who looks after your marketing.

I'd imagine most of you have a website and in most cases will need outside expertise to handle that

Some of you will work with an S.E.O, company

or perhaps a Social media marketing agency,

Many of you will have a point of sale system so will have whoever provides that and they support they offer

Or yo have an external IT specialist that looks after all your IT needs

You have someone that comes in to do your salon merchandising

Then there is the salon FACILITIES meaning the physical space that you work in so you might have a...

Cleaning company that you engage

or yo might just have a maintenance and handyman that comes to do all those odd jobs.

Then of course there's those positions like an

Electrician

Plumber

Realtor

Building or property manager...

Then there is the PRODUCT component to your business so you need to consider who is your...

Manufacturer or distributor

Who calls on you, the sales rep

or technician

See what I mean! I don't know how many positions I have rattled off, maybe 15, maybe 20. Obviously you don't start with all those people in place, but as you and your business grows, you will find, that in varying degrees you need to have a team of external experts that you can rely on...

Some of them you will work with on a day to day basis others only once or twice a year...

Depending on the size of your business you can potentially end up having quite a few external providers that you work closely with.

And they too are essentially part of your team, and so finding the right people for the right jobs, who fit your budget, are reliable and deliver the expertise that you and your business need is a really important step... So you need to be intentional about developing that team as they have a really important role in the success of your business.

Now obviously the bigger the business the more important that team becomes and the more integrated they become into the workings of your business.

But even if it's just you working by yourself at the very least you will need the services of an accountant to do your taxes ...and you've probably had someone design a logo.

And at the beginning I know it's often tempting to be spinning lots of plates yourself and get scrappy and do it yourself or getting friends and family to do an assortment of things either free or at a very discounted rate...

But when you get serious about your business, you need an expert in specialist areas, and just like your clients probably shouldn't do their own colour, or cut their own hair, you probably shouldn't pretend to be a graphic designer or an accountant or a website builder...

And so there'll be a point where you really do need to take your business to the next level.

So I am going to pick 6 out of that list I have rattled off and focus on why you need them because these are probably the most important members of your external team...

And I would argue that, to whatever degree, you need to have them in place [in some shape or form] from day 1

First is the role of an accountant.

I don't care if you are a business unit of 1 or 100.

You need a professional to do your taxes and to ensure that you are legally compliant. Otherwise you are getting off on the wrong foot from the getgo .

And as a bare minimum that's what they should do for you.

But a good accountant can help you to take your business to another level. And just like you have good hairdressers and not so good hairdressers it's the same with accountants.

There are 'not' a lot of hairdressers that love numbers and spread sheets and analysing the data in their business.

So the reason they need an accountant is because accountants love that stuff. The reason that you feel often intimidated and overwhelmed by it is because you don't always understand what the numbers are telling them.

So for me, I want and need an accountant that has 'the heart of a teacher'.

Because if they don't, or won't teach me what I need to know, then they are the wrong accountant for me.

Now, I don't mean that I want them to teach me to be an accountant or teach me to do all my accounts, but what I do mean is that I need to understand everything that is going on in my business from a financial perspective and I expect them to be able to advise me and explain anything I don't understand no matter how many times I ask! And believe me I will ask fairly consistently because it's important and I have always wanted to drill down and have a deeper knowledge of what's going on at that level.

Next is the bookkeeper

Before we move onto the bookkeeper, I just want to say on that last point, if you're not prepared to drill down and understand what's going on in your business at that financial level you shouldn't be in business right from the get go as it has disaster written all over it.

So let's move on and address the bookkeeper. Now a bookkeeper is not an accountant.

And in most cases, with the right software and a little training you could probably do your bookkeeping in preparation for giving it to the accountant.

And I am not saying you don't do that as it can get you closer to the beating heart of your business and really focussed on the numbers.

But as long as you understand what is being done with the books, and you can dip in and out of it when ever you need to, then I am going to suggest that you are better to get someone else to do your books because the right person will do it better, and faster, which will free you up to do one of the many other tasks that only you can and should address.

One thing I will say is that the bookkeeper and accountant need to work well together.

Sometimes the accountant may have a bookkeeper in house, other times they may have an agency that they work with and recommend.

But either-way there needs to be a working relationship and an understanding between them.

Next has to be legal advice.

Now I am not talking about a friends uncle, or a next door neighbour or a client who offered to help.

I'm talking about someone who is a professional lawyer, attorney, solicitor who you have a professional relationship with, for when, and if you need them. Hopefully you won't need them very often but when you do need them they're an important person to have on your team.

Whether that's for reading your lease agreement, or handling litigation with an unhappy client or staff member, or for drawing up a contract with a building contractor.

Whatever it is, you are in business so you need someone in your corner who you can rely on to deal with the legalities that being in business entails.

And that leads me into..

Being a member of a professional organisation for salon owners.

To be honest it's beyond me why anyone in business in the hairdressing industry isn't a member of one of the professional organisations that represent employers.

Whether it's organisations such as the Professional Beauty Association in the US, or The Australian Hairdressing Council in Australia or the National Hairdressing and Beauty Federation in the UK. ...And I know there are others in those countries and in most other countries.

But belonging to an organisation like that to me is just essential and being in business isn't always easy, and employment law is complex and governments are frequently updating legislation ...And ignorance is no excuse.

So again if you are in business then for a nominal fee then you have all manner of support and some times legal advice at the end of the phone. So being part of a professional organisation for salon r is a must from day 1. If you use them properly and they are any good then you will more than get back the value or whatever the fee is to be a member.

The next on my list of external team members would be things that come under the general term 'marketing'...

Probably starting with a 'Graphic designer.'... Now like everything 'graphic designers' can vary dramatically in the services they offer and the skills that they have.

A lot of them know a little about marketing, but when it comes to marketing they probably don't know any more than what you do.

And you definitely understand your clients and this industry better than they do.

So having a good relationship with a graphic designer who takes the time to understand your needs, and who your target market are, is a really important step in developing your brand identity.

I'm lucky in that I have a great graphic designer, who hand in hand working with a website developer, and a branding specialist have worked with us on relaunching our brand.

The easiest way to understand the importance of what I am saying is to probably check out our website @growmysalonbusiness.com to see what I mean.

What's important here is that it captures our business as a brand and the products and services that we offer, and to do that successfully really does require a level of expertise that one person on their own doesn't have.

It takes time and it's not cheap, but if you're building a business then developing all your branding and messaging is an important step as you get bigger.

Now when you just start off and maybe it's a business unit of just one or just you and one other person then you do have to get a bit scrappy with this and it has to grow as your business and cash flow does, but when the time comes to do that I highly recommend you take the next step.

As your team and your business grows for the owner there also becomes a sense of overwhelm with the avalanche of things that can loosely be categorised under the term 'administration'

Whether you outsource work to a Virtual Assistant or employ a personal office assistant or office administrator that can work closely with you, you need someone.

Either way having someone who is focused on admin and not on clients and hair is a welcome step that unblocks a bottle neck that allows you to get more done and be more organised in less time.

So again I'd highly recommend, maybe you start off with someone for a couple of hours a day a week or a couple of days a week...they grow into being that full time person. Different stages with my business I've had full-time people, I've had virtual assistants in different countries, i've had people who do a couple of hours, I've had people on call just for when I need them. In today's world it's incredibly important to have that support and that support is out there and very accessible.

So we need to start wrapping this episode up...they are the 6 key most important that I think you need to have on your external team.

Next week we have another great guest on the show...

So if you don't already subscribe to the podcast do so on your favourite podcasting app so that you never miss an episode.

I just want to remind you that we have many free resources on our website from our weekly podcast to the 'Two Minute salon manager' videos as well as our paid for resources, whether its books, 1-1 coaching or our online courses.

And relative to todays podcast there are a couple of resources that I want to point you towards... first of all is my books...

Grow 2 Management, Grow 3 Team a lot of what we have discussed comes from content covered in those 2 books... and...

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I will put those links in the show notes for todays podcast on our website.

Don't forget to subscribe and leave us a rating and review on the Apple Podcast App!

So to wrap up, thank you for listening to this weeks episode of the Grow My salon business podcast...

I look forward to having you join us again next week where we have another great guest...

Until then stay safe...