

[00:00:00] **Antony W.:** 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.

[00:00:29] **Antony W.:** Hey, it's Antony here and welcome to today's podcast. I often think how there are many people who have a vested interest in the hairdressing industry with the obvious one being the clients and the stylists and colorists that are behind the chair and the salon and school owners, the educators, and all the people that are behind the product brands to name.

[00:00:52] But a few. But then there is also the trade media, and they are involved in many parts of the industry with the obvious one,

[00:01:00] traditionally being publishing magazines. But these days they're also heavily involved across all the digital platforms as well as events, awards, trade shows, and education, as well as many other areas of the industry.

[00:01:14] My guest on today's podcast is Stacey Soble. She is the director of brand Content Strategy for Salon Today Magazine, where she has held numerous roles over the last 26 years. In today's podcast, we'll discuss how the role of the HER and Beauty media has evolved over the last few years. The impact that the internet and social media have had on trade media and. The trends around salon recruitment, marketing, and changes in industry events, and lots more.

[00:01:49] So with that further ado, welcome to the show, Stacey Soble.

[00:01:53] **Stacey S.:** Hello, how are you?

[00:01:55] **Antony W.:** I'm very good.

[00:01:57] **Stacey S.:** A panel together many years ago, but it's been a long time

[00:02:00] since I've seen you.

[00:02:01] **Antony W.:** Exactly. It is a long time. And here we are talking over Zoom. it's amazing how quickly everyone has, you know, embraced this technology and it's, you know, it's gotta be good for the planet as well though, doesn't it? Cuz we're not all hopping on planes

[00:02:13] **Stacey S.:** a lot smaller. Yes.

[00:02:14] **Antony W.:** Yes. exactly. And even though there's a little bit of a time like sometimes with the, with the audio, it's great to have this opportunity to chat with you. so look, Stacey, a lot of my audience, won't know who you are because they're not based in the United States. So can we just start off what I often get my d my guest to sort of introduce themselves and to sort of do their two minute backstory. So, who is Stacy Soble? Give us your sort of two minute backstory of. You know, how you got started in this industry and what you currently do, and and then we'll dig into that.

[00:02:46] **Stacey S.:** Well, I am currently the director of brand Content Strategy with Salon Today. I've been in the same role though for 26 years. It used to be editor in chief back when we were just a magazine, and now we're a media company that

[00:03:00] covers the salon industry and my specialty is Salon business. So, our sister publication is Modern Salon. They do hair techniques and styles and color techniques, and then Salon today focuses on how to build a better business salon business.

[00:03:15] **Antony W.:** Got it. that is the perfect two minute backstory. , , sometimes I have to cut people off. . Okay. So, I often think, you know, I usually, I talk to a lot of hairdressers and hairdressers all over the world will often talk about how much change there is in the world at the moment and how the hairdressing industry is undergoing, you know, so much change. But, you know, when I knew I was gonna talk to you, I was sort of thinking about. The changes that media have gone through. And I mean, I've been in the industry for a long time as well. and when you think about the changes that media and all things that come under that, you know, sort of banner, like if I'd spoken to you, you know, 20 years ago, whatever, we would've just been talking about Salon today as a magazine, but today it

[00:04:00] is a very different world. So can you just talk to us to start with about how trade magazines, I suppose specifically Salon on today, how they've pivoted and how your role, you just said you've been in this for 26 years, you know, how that has grown and evolved and changed over the years and what exactly Salon Today is today because it's a lot more than just the magazine.

[00:04:22] **Stacey S.:** In fact, the magazine part is probably becoming the smallest part of what we do. and I, you know, when I went to school, I got my degree in journalism and I spec. Specialized in magazine journalism and you know, now that's shrinking. But we are doing, you know, a lot more digitally. a website. We do email newsletters. We do a show like this. We do a lot of, we also act like an agency, so we do a lot of, sometimes companies hires to do sponsored content. So we write the content for them cause they don't have writers. We're in social media, I just took on another brand called Barbering Today. So that's a whole different world

[00:05:00] of barbers. I'm still learning that very slowly. it's hard. but a lot of it is social media driven. So we're playing in those spaces too. And that's stuff, you know, we didn't get trained on that. And nobody did because they didn't have classes like that in school when I went to school. So it's, this is all stuff you have to teach yourself on the job and

[00:05:21] **Antony W.:** Exactly.

[00:05:21] **Stacey S.:** Except that's challenging.

[00:05:22] **Antony W.:** Yeah, it is. And I'm the social media thing in particular, it is, you know, by the time you do a class on it, the class is out of date. It is just changing so rapidly. So quickly.

[00:05:33] **Stacey S.:** Are you think conquered one of them and there's a new, there's something, oh, now we need to learn TikTok or we've gotta, yeah, we've gotta. That's

something else. And it's a whole new game, so,

[00:05:42] **Antony W.:** yeah, exactly. I was just talking to someone, a salon owner, a coaching client, and we were talking about a rail that he was doing for recruitment purposes. and then I said to him, and he is only young, you know, he's a lot younger than me, he's, I dunno, 30 or something. and I said, and now you gotta make sure you get that on TikTok as well. And he.

[00:06:00] Crumbled and put his head in his hands, . And it was, he was like, are you joking? Really? I've gotta do TikTok as well. And I'm like, yeah. it's like, you know, when we talk about Facebook for the last, I don't know, five years, people will often say, Facebook's for old people. Well now they're even starting to say their Instagram is for old people. And if you wanna be really the, on the nail you have got to be embracing TikTok because quick TikTok has evolved dramatically, and it's not just about doing silly dancers and pointing at things. it has really, you know, upped the game in terms of that platform. And, it's a hugely successful platform. So, yet, one to that I'm, to master, to put it mildly, we're working on it every you know, we work on it too. And it's it's hard to communicate business concepts in a way, in a video format sometimes. So,

[00:06:47] yeah, but it's also, it's a great discipline though, isn't it? I, you know, I'm a bit of a, I can be a bit of a waffler and you know, that's who I am sometimes, but when you have that discipline,

[00:07:00] This has gotta be 30 seconds or less, and you've gotta say something that has a beginning, middle, and an end and 30 seconds. It's a great discipline to really focus your messaging, isn't it? You know? and I'm not saying no words enjoy having to do that, but it does bring a lot of focus to what you're about. you mentioned how the magazine side of it has become, you know, nowhere near as significant to part of the business is what it is, what it was. do you foresee a day where there won't be a printed magazine?

[00:07:30] **Stacey S.:** Oh, I think we're, I think we're getting to that personally I'd like to hold that out as long as possible, but we we're going down to two issues next year.

[00:07:39] **Antony W.:** Wow.

[00:07:40] **Stacey S.:** So I think, yeah. And so we're looking at what can we do in a digital format that's different. We're doing a lot, which is called experiential content. So it's a story that when you open up on the website, it moves, it has video, it has graphs that morph and change. So it has a lot more interaction.

[00:07:57] **Antony W.:** Yeah.

[00:07:57] we can do polls through it and things like

[00:08:00] that. So we're looking at creating content like that online that is more interactive, than that will take the place of, well, we know we'll still be talking about the same topics. We'll just be talking about them through a different vehicle.

[00:08:11] **Antony W.:** Sure. So, okay, so two issues that, how many issues are you at the moment a year?

[00:08:17] **Stacey S.:** Four.

[00:08:18] **Antony W.:** Right. Okay. So that is a big, I mean, you used to be 12. Yeah.

[00:08:22] **Stacey S.:** Yep.

[00:08:23] **Antony W.:** Down to four.

[00:08:24] **Stacey S.:** Used to be 12,

[00:08:24] **Antony W.:** then down to two. Okay. Wow. Okay. So that really, I

[00:08:28] **Stacey S.:** think that's been over, over about 12 years. I think we went down to nine issues about 10 years ago and then six and.

[00:08:35] **Antony W.:** Yeah Okay.

[00:08:36] **Stacey S.:** It's been slow, but yeah.

[00:08:38] **Antony W.:** So is it young hairdressers that have lost interest in magazines? I mean, I still love getting a magazine. I still love a magazine. I still love getting my highlighter. I still love ripping pages out. I, I still love, you know, taking a magazine with me when I'm on the train so they've got something to read or whatever. is it a demographic thing? The young audience today simply

[00:09:00] don't want magazines.

[00:09:00] **Stacey S.** I don't think it's just a demographic. I think it's a time. It has to do with the time that people put into consuming media and how they do it, and they're doing it mostly now through their phones or their iPads rather than, you know, a tangible thing that they hold. I think our industry has held out longer than a lot of others because of the fashion magazines and people are still in that world. . And the interesting thing is when people want you to cover them and they want a feature, they want it in print.

[00:09:28] **Stacey S.:** But the advertisers don't always, they wanna a, they wanna reach people in other ways. So people still respect that credibility of the print publication. But it is, we have to have the sponsorship dollars at the same time. So, and they're finding. More value in, in going at people through social media, through our paid programs that are digital. So,

[00:09:52] **Antony W.:** yeah. Okay. it's interesting. I mean, I haven't been, you know, active behind the chair in a salon for, you know, 20 years

[00:10:00] now. but when I look back 20 years ago, hairdress wanted to get their work in print, ,

[00:10:05] **Stacey S.:** and they still do.

[00:10:06] **Antony W.:** They still do. Right. Okay. Social media has dramatically changed that whole landscape because now anyone can get their work out there. And I suppose what I'm leading to is saying that I often wonder were the young hairdressers today, Are not that bothered about getting it in magazines, although you've just said that's not the case, that

they're not that bothered about getting it in magazines, they're not that bothered even about winning awards necessarily because they're, what do you call it, their endorsement. Is in the form of getting more likes and more followers and, you know, more views and more engagement on social media. I mean, talk to us about that. is that your sort of, you know, gut feeling as well? Not,

[00:10:51] **Stacey S.:** yes. I don't think that the person who's always an Insta star is maybe the best stylist to go to in town.

[00:10:58] **Antony W.:** Yeah.

[00:10:59] .but there

[00:11:00] **Stacey S.:** is a skill to being famous on social media and, but the, I think what's really valuable, at least for my audience who are owners, is how do you turn that into money in the salon? You know, you can have a great page and you can have lots of followers, but if they're not clients and they're not coming in and they're purchasing your services, you've gotta transition that into making money. Or you're, or you work for a brand, you know, a brand or a brand.

[00:11:28] **Antony W.:** Yeah, I think a lot of people, you know, again, if we went back five, 10 years ago, there was a lot more vanity metrics about how many followers I've got, how many likes I've got, et cetera, how many fans, you know, whereas now people have sort of, they, they're less into that vanity metric of having all these different followers and are more interested in

[00:11:47] **Stacey S.:** who's following you. Yes. That's what's important.

[00:11:49] **Antony W.:** Exactly. and are they engaging and are they potential clients and are they spending money and then. and if you're really focused like that, if you're behind the chair, the reality is, That

[00:12:00] you can have a really strong business with three or 400 people that are actively engaged with you on social media as opposed to thinking you've gotta have half a million or something. So, yeah. now another thing I wanted to talk about, and that's part of that evolution of the media magazine sort of side of things, is that there's now. A lot more events that, magazines and the media are very much involved with. I know you have an event, which we were talking about before we started recording, data-driven conference. Talk to us about that because a lot of people won't know what that is. It's a young event. even in the US it's a young event. most people outside the US wouldn't have heard of it, but it's a fascinating event. I think there's a lot of, you know, great ideas and they're great takeaways for salons anywhere?

[00:12:49] **Stacey S.:** Well, it's about seven year old, seven years old now. It's very unique in the fact that we are focusing on the data. That helps owner identify, helping people

[00:13:00] understand the data that drives their salon and how to harvest that to make your decisions, your business decisions. So it revolves around some key metrics like average ticket, productivity, client counts, client retention, and so we, a lot of the content is around driving those statistics in your business and making them better, making your high, your

average ticket higher, getting more clients in the door, retaining your staff. but we also harvest information from a competition we do, that's a salon business competition called the 200

[00:13:37] **Stacey S.:** So it, a lot of it is about data and statistics that give us their information on their revenue and things that are going on in their business, but they also write essays about. Some of the challenges they're facing and what they're doing to, so a lot of our content has driven around that. So it changes every year based on the challenges that people are facing this salon. But most of the speakers are

[00:14:00] other salon owners, or companies. Some of our technology companies have speakers that address some of those issues. And you think data, you think it can be kind of dry and dull, but it's really addressing those topics. But, doing it through a data viewpoint. So you know, you can judge your own business and say, okay, this salon's doing this much on average ticket, where am I on that scale? So it's kind of identifying where are you weak, where can you improve, where are you strong? What can you share to help other people? So it's a big sharing of other ideas from other salon owners.

[00:14:39] **Antony W.:** Okay. and I think that is something, you know, with the focus on data that is so badly needed, because one of the things that I've noticed in the industry all over the world is that getting reliable data, getting accurate, reliable data from salon owners, no matter where you are, is often fairly vague.

[00:15:00] And, you know, as you sort of alluded to, I think it was before we were recording, you know, as an industry, we've not always been that quick on the uptake with technology. and even when salons have become computerized, you know, front desk point of sale systems, unfortunately there's still a fairly high percentage often that basically use it as a glorified cash register. And so, understanding the metrics, understanding the data that sits behind all that is, is important. So yeah, I, I think that's a, I think that's a fantastic conference. I hadn't been to it yet myself, but I, I do wanna get to that one day. So, With the conference this year, I know you are back into a live situation. , what have you

[00:15:41] **Stacey S.:** we're we have been for the last two years.

[00:15:43] **Antony W.:** Oh, the last two years. Okay. Yeah, so, so post Covid, I, I always got the feeling that before Covid that events were changing anyway. Regardless of whether that was like an event that was like an industry show like I S S E or Long Beach or

[00:16:00] whatever, that event seemed to be a bit lost. People were sort of trying to reimagine them, and then Covid came along and it reimaged them for us and. Sort of looking at what's happening now in the industry. All over the world, people are sort of tentatively getting back in. They're putting a toe in the water for the event thing. But you know, as we said at the beginning of this, we've got very used to being online. We've got very used to jumping on a Zoom call and you know, the internet's been a game changer. And I think Covid has really accelerated a lot of these trends and, you know, made it possible for people to realize, well, actually I can't afford to go or can't afford the time to go, but I'm very happy, doing it online because that's what I had to do when Covid was happening. So, so talk to us about that. What sort of trend do you see happening, in terms of, you know, events in the salon industry at the moment? .

[00:16:55] **Stacey S.:** Well, and we saw that we did do a virtual data driven the year in

[00:17:00] 2020. And then the fall of 2021, we did a small live event and then, last year we did one and we, you know, we planned for the audience capacity of what we had pre pandemic. And we sold out a month before. We've never sold out of a conference before. So we kind of were seeing the opposite. We were seeing that people were kind of hungry to get together, maybe not at a big trade show, but at a show where they're actually networking with their peers and spending time sharing ideas with them. So we also brought the salon today, 200 awards into that event. So that also made it that much richer and that audience, you know, we didn't set out to create that social format for them. It's become that over the years they've become friends with, you know, people enter that year after year, they've begin friends with each other. They've formed their own network groups,they support one another now. And it's a big idea sharing forum. So,

[00:18:00] we married those two things together and we sold out of both the Salon Today 200 award program and data driven last year.

[00:18:06] **Antony W.:** Fantastic.

[00:18:07] **Stacey S.:** You know about six

[00:18:08] **Antony W.:** yeah.

[00:18:10] **Stacey S.:** We've got a bigger space this year. we're also doing it in Nashville, which in US is a, you know, the country

[00:18:17] music hall thing.

[00:18:19] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Yeah.

[00:18:20] **Stacey S.:** And it's a very live, energetic city and I think sometimes choosing the city is also just as important as what the content is you're putting on stage.

[00:18:29] **Antony W.:** Sure. Yeah. Yeah. Well, I don't know of other events that have been in Nashville, so, it sounds like a great place to have it. so is it the social thing that people are wanting to get together more than to go to a trade show? To buy stuff or go to learn stuff? Is it more about that I need to see?

[00:18:46] **Stacey S.:** Yeah, I think

[00:18:47] **Antony W.:** with my people,

[00:18:48] **Stacey S.:** I think it's that combined with getting real information that's gonna help you. Do your job better, run your business more strongly? I think it's the combination of

[00:19:00] those two things, but obviously the networking was a big part of it. I mean, we're seeing, you know, numbers that things like serious Business and Intercoiffure., those are going up as well, but that networking component is really important.

[00:19:14] **Antony W.:** Okay. That's, that, that is interesting. Alright. you mentioned before, Salon Today, top 200 salons, and I know that is a big, you know, part of what you personally are heavily involved in. Talk to us about what that means for our, non US audience who

won't know what it is.

[00:19:32] **Stacey S.:** Yeah, it's, it's been, when we do have. Salons from out of the country that, that enter and are honored. But it is, a salon business competition, it has changed a lot through the years. When we first started, it was strictly about growth. So we're, we are measuring growth sales from one year to the next and that percentage of growth and how well they did. then we had the recession in 2008. We kind of had to change the competition, because for anybody to experience any

[00:20:00] growth that year would've been great. So we started looking at best business practices. So we have competition there. We have 10 different best business practices from environmental sustainability to client retention, technology, philanthropy, employee education, salon culture, salon leadership. I don't know that I'm gonna get all 10 off the top of my head, but those are the different categories.

[00:20:24] **Antony W.:** Yeah.

[00:20:25] **Stacey S.:** So we still look at growth, but we look at those two. You can enter either

[00:20:28] **Stacey S.:** because also as a slog gets bigger, when they get in the multimillion dollar growth sales categories, it's hard to drive that percentage exponentially. So,

[00:20:38] **Antony W.:** yeah,

[00:20:39] **Stacey S.:** you know, 1% is a good growth as supposed to some of these salons are hitting 20% growth, but they're small, so

[00:20:46] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Yeah.

[00:20:46] **Stacey S.:** It's easy to, when you're small, so we're looking at, we're looking at all those other things that all add up to be a strong business, and we're looking at those different categories.

[00:20:56] **Antony W.:** Yeah.

[00:20:57] **Stacey S.:** And then we did have to change, of course, we had to change that during the

[00:21:00] pandemic because at least in the United States, different states were closed for different lengths of time. So it wasn't a, it wasn't an even playing field. We couldn't look at gross sales, because Frans and California were closed for nine months, and salons in Georgia were closed in six weeks. It wasn't fair. So to judge on that.

[00:21:17] **Antony W.:** Yeah, of course.

[00:21:17] **Stacey S.:** So, then we were just kind of looking at, recovery, pandemic recovery and what were the ideas that were coming out of that. So every year the competition has changed based on what is happening in the world. So,

[00:21:31] **Antony W.:** go ahead.

[00:21:31] **Stacey S.:** This year we asked our essay question was about what unique challenges are you facing these days and how are you overcoming. So that was the essay, the big essay question.

[00:21:41] **Antony W.:** Okay. So, so what were some of the trends? Gimme some examples of what came out of that.

[00:21:47] **Stacey S.:** Yeah, we're still seeing, at least in the United States and Canada, client retention is the biggest one. Recruitment and retention, hanging on to your team members. . . and I don't think that's probably

[00:22:00] different around the world. Definitely. I mean, a lot of businesses are having that same struggle.

[00:22:03] **Antony W.:** Definitely.

[00:22:04] **Stacey S.:** but we're also seeing some unique things like schedule flexibility, you know, team because. Staff have kind of the upper hand now, they're demanding things that they've wanted for a long time, like flexibility in their schedule.

[00:22:17] **Stacey S.:** And so owners are looking at going to three day weekends, or not forcing every stylist to work on a Saturday, which used to be the thing, which is also kind of matching the way that the world has changed. Now a lot more people work from home they have a little more flexibility in their schedules. Like I, I can get my hair done on a Wednesday afternoon. Whereas before I used to want, always want a Saturday appointment or an evening appointment. So, that's changing. but then owners have to kind of understand, you can't lean so far that you're giving away the profitability in your business.

[00:22:52] **Antony W.:** Yeah.

[00:22:52] **Stacey S.:** You can't just close on Saturday because nobody wants to work on Saturday, because that's still, and it could be in your

[00:23:00] community, this still the desired day that clients want the.

[00:23:03] **Antony W.:** Yeah.

[00:23:04] **Stacey S.:** So those are the two trends right now. And then burnout is probably mental wellness and burnout is the other thing we're seeing salons trying to address with their team members. Their team members are burned out. they're struggling with mental wellness and a lot of salons are finding unique ways to bring, we had, we've done some stories about some salons that have brought, you know, a counselor in, once a month and just, Paid for open appointments, you know, they're there for a couple hours. You can book appointment to talk about anything, any mental issues you need to talk about or any personal struggles you need to talk about. But salons are looking at unique ways of providing those services for their people.

[00:23:45] **Antony W.:** That's fantastic. and what about the, recruitment side of things? Because Yes. That, that is a global issue. what sort of innovative things have you seen that people have been coming up with to get around? ,

[00:23:56] **Stacey S.:** well, you actually touched on it earlier. it's changed

[00:24:00] from, you know, class. Putting a classified ad in now doesn't work so much in your community. It's about using your social media to talk about the culture in your salon and why it's a desirable place to work. So you're not just, you're not just using your social media to market to potential clients. You're using it to market to potential salon members and, you know, putting together a, some clever fun video with your staff and why they love to work there. Interviewing each one of them with a quote about what, why it's so great to work there and putting that together in a video format. And we've had salons that have done that have turned to social media and gotten, you know, 12 new resumes in the door where they were not getting anything through traditional advertising.

[00:24:47] **Antony W.:** Wow.

[00:24:48] **Stacey S.:** Then, you know, we have a lot of, I'm sure you have them too, like sites like Indeed, those are still

[00:24:55] **Antony W.:** Yeah.

[00:24:55] **Stacey S.:** places to post jobs and, but there are some salon specific ones now too. and kind of

[00:25:00] focusing on those and, but it's really, instead of creating, instead of salon telling the world what they want and the quality of the thing you need. You need to now talk about why you wanna be a place people wanna work.

[00:25:15] **Antony W.:** Right? Ok.

[00:25:16] **Stacey S.:** You're really marketing to them. Instead of just throwing out a job and saying, this is what we want. We want someone that wants to work these days and has these skills. Now you need to talk about why you're a place that people wanna work.

[00:25:27] **Antony W.:** Yeah, there was a, I wish I had knew who'd said it. I heard it on another podcast. Someone said it and they said something, as soon as they said it, it was like, that's just the perfect, you know, way to describe this. They said, as a salon owner, I used to advertise for staff. . He said, now I have to recruit staff, and I thought, yeah, that is essentially, that was what they said. You know, you used to advertise and you get someone walking the door. Now you get advertised till your head falls off, nothing's gonna happen. You have to actively recruit people. and it's coming at it from a

[00:26:00] different mindset because, You know, as you said, you know, the employee is, you know, going well, when I use the word employee in inverted commas, you know, they, they have the upper hand, so to speak about, well, there's a shortage of people and I don't wanna work like that anymore. I wanna work like this. So if you are not gonna accommodate that, then you know, I'll go elsewhere. So there is this, you know, flexibility happening. But when I often ask salon owners about flexibility, and I say, because that is the buzzword now, I think of if you had to have one word that, you know, described what Gen Z or what hairdressers want today, you know, that sits behind why there is so many salon suites and booth renters, et cetera, et cetera.

[00:26:46] The word that comes up consistently is flexibility, flexibility and control. I want

more flexibility. I want more control. I want more autonomy. But when you dig in and try and get them to really define well, what does that mean by

[00:27:00] flexibility? It really seems to just always comes down to, I wanna choose the hours that I work and the days that I work. Do you see anything that is more innovative that addresses that flexibility issue? And all the salons that put submissions in for the, you know, salon top 200.. ?

[00:27:23] **Stacey S.:** Well, I don't think split shifting is a new concept. It's been around for a few years, but the, we're seeing a lot more people getting more inventive about that. You know, looking at that chair as how many hours is that chair booked? It doesn't matter who's actually the person behind the chair. so, you know, if somebody wants somebody's better at mornings and someone's better at afternoons, can they share that share? and You as a salon owner are trying to look at every available hour that you need to book and how to get them booked, and that's the way you need to do it. But some of the really innovative things that we're seeing, and I've only seen a few

[00:28:00] salons do it and I don't know how well it would work in every market is,they're like prime bookings. So the time that are really popular, maybe a Friday afternoon or Saturday, they're charging the client more for those appointments

[00:28:13] than for the appointments on Tuesdays. So it's the same service, it could be the same technician, but that, that, that particular hour is more valuable in the salon.. So I, and that's the kind of thing that you have to use data and technology to find out. Cuz every salon's different in every market is different. So figuring out what are those valuable hours and how can you shift the clients that are, you know, first someone that works a 40 hour work week. It might be worth it to me to pay more to come in on Saturday or Sunday. But for someone who has a flexible schedule, works from home or just has more flexibility in their schedule. They're happy, you know, on the Tuesday morning. So that's one of the things that we're seeing

[00:29:00] that's, valuable. But then coming back to the flexibility for the staff members, we're seeing salons that are doing three day work weekends. So you're the salon, the stylists are working 10 hour days instead of eight hour days.. And I think that depends on the state and when you can, when, where you can do that and when you can do that.

[00:29:17] **Stacey S.:** but they're willing to do that and then have a three day weekend. Yeah. And that weekend might be Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, but they're looking at that. Sure. So that's some of the other things was scheduling.

[00:29:29] **Antony W.:** Yeah, it was interesting. I talked to someone on the podcast, of three or four months ago now, and I think she was in Illinois, but in a small town like population, 8,000 people or something, you know, so it wasn't a big, you know, metropolis and. She was doing that idea,and here's an example. The hairdressing industry often think of things and go, oh my gosh, you couldn't do that. You know, the primetime pricing. But that's what Uber is. That's what every hotel in the

[00:30:00] world is. That's what airlines are. You know, you pay for primetime, you know, like school holidays and Christmas, et cetera. The price of flights, everything goes up, you know, five o'clock in the afternoon Uber's gonna cost you a lot more than it's gonna cost you at say,

10 or 11 o'clock in the morning. So there's nothing wrong with thinking like that, but it's interesting. When I was talking to this lady in, I think she was in Illinois, on the podcast, she gave me an example of how after Covid, they were so busy that they put a, an email out to their clients saying, look, we're gonna open Monday.

[00:30:35] but it is at, double price. So it's a hundred percent loading and they sold out like that. So it's interesting, so many hairdressers are frightened at putting their prices up. They're frightened of thinking like this and the client, they just want it done, they want the convenience. And what might be a lot of money for us as hairdressers isn't necessarily seen as a lot of money for the client. They're

[00:31:00] happy to pay it, to get in and, you know, get what they want when they want it, so to speak. So, yeah, some very interesting lessons there. when we, I mean that is very much a marketing thing. I wanted to dig into that a little bit with the, stamp the salon today. so I didn't realize it was called that stamp stood for. Salon today, annual marketing program. I dunno what I thought it stood for. I just didn't realize it stood for anything, you know, I just thought it was a great name. So the initiatives that you feature, In, you know, that people send in, these are some of our latest marketing initiatives. again, I think I said it to you before we were recording that. I always see some brilliant ideas in there, and they come from all over the country. Oftentimes small salons, not always, you know, a salon, a big metropolis. Any particular, you know, trends that you've seen that the, your, you thought were particularly inspiring?

[00:31:52] **Stacey S.:** Yeah, well this year we saw, a lot, our biggest entry was for, employee recruitment and it kind of doves tails

[00:32:00] what we were talking about with the challenges earlier. You know, it used to last year we covered a lot of like, how did salon's market about the pandemic and their, how are they reopening procedures and their safety precautions? So that was kind of a trend last year. And this year the trend is really marketing pieces. To take to career fairs or, just to get out there to even to give to your staff to give out. And then we had one salon that actually did a brochure for, social media training for their own staff. So it was like tips on one side and things that we want you to always include when you do a post and they, it came with a class. but they're doing a marketing piece around that was strictly just for their staff.

[00:32:42] So, There, there's a lot more internal marketing than there has been previously. It's been, so it's been very interesting. But we cover a lot of categories, so we cover , you know, digital marketing. So it's, we judge blogs, we judge websites, we judge social media posts, social media

[00:33:00] campaigns, like all over ca you know, like campaigns that are involved with a big brand sponsor and how you adapt that for your salon. So we have an, and then we have kind of another category, and every year there are things in there that are new that we haven't even thought of as a category that were interesting. So. I think one of my favorite stamp ideas was that one little, kind of talking about the salon, you were talking about that one little tiny, small town, I think this was somewhere in Pennsylvania, and they bought a Starbucks gift card. and they posted on social media with the barcode and they said, you know, we wanna thank our clients, so use this and then PA pass it on. So they were actually holding up their phone with a social media, posted the barcode for the gift card, and they

would buy their clients a coffee. And then it was kind of an honor system. They weren't supposed to buy more than one coffee for themselves. , they treated a number of their clients that way as a reward. And it was a social

[00:34:00] media post, but I thought that was brilliant.

[00:34:02] **Antony W.:** Yeah, very clever. How many did they do you know?

[00:34:06] **Stacey S.:** I think it was like \$150 gift card, and they probably had, 70 people use it. But it was kind of the goodwill that generated and it got people talking about it in town. And then one year we had another owner that did a treasure hunt in. So he'd post clues. It's like how can you use social media to really not just talk at your audience, but engage them to participate in something that's fun.

[00:34:29] **Antony W.:** Yeah.

[00:34:29] **Stacey S.:** So, there he would hide things around town and post a clue and people were going all over looking for it. but it was getting a lot of engagement on his social media pages and a lot of looks cuz people were waiting for the next clue and it was just fun.

[00:34:43] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Good. That's great. Very clever. Okay. What about, business models? are you seeing any, I know this is not particularly your remit, but doing all this stuff with stamp and, data driven, et cetera. You know, over the last 10 years, the sort of salad

[00:35:00] sweet thing has just exploded. , what are you seeing in terms of that and trends? Are you seeing that just continuing? Has it plateaued? Are you seeing new business models come about?

[00:35:11] **Stacey S.:** I'd say we're seeing it morph. obviously the suites are still growing, but we are seeing something, we're seeing a lot of salons doing something that's called a hybrid.

[00:35:20] **Stacey S.:** So, I, we have one salon that we, that's in the 200 a lot that has one commission based salon and two doors down. They have a rental thing. So basically their employees kind of worked through that system when they've kind of maxed their capacity in the commission based salon and they really want that independence instead of losing them to a suite . They're transitioning them over to their own solo operations, and then they still get the benefit of the education for the, that the commission based law brings in. Those artists can still come over from the solo booths

[00:36:00] and part, get the benefit of that.

[00:36:01] **Antony W.:** Okay.

[00:36:02] **Stacey S.:** And the benefit of the overall marketing and technology and things like that. So we're seeing these kind of hybrid concepts that are that was one where they're independent, but we're seeing them in the same salon too. Yeah. So there are salons that have a mix of commission based stylists and solo artists. And you know, each has different benefits and opportunities, and it's figuring out who works in which situation the best, and meeting both of those.

[00:36:31] **Antony W.:** Yeah.

[00:36:32] **Stacey S.:** I think it's challenging as an owner, that's a really challenging business to run.

[00:36:35] Without a doubt. Yeah. Yeah. Cause you have, yeah. You end up with two different sets of rules. There's different cult, you know, there's different rules depending on who you are, an employee or, you know, a renter. what about, cooperatives or shared ownership things? Do you see any of those sort of things happening? .

[00:36:56] **Stacey S.:** Yeah. We actually had a session on this at data driven last year and it

[00:37:00] basically the, it was succession planning, what to do with your salon when you're ready to step down.

[00:37:05] **Antony W.:** Yeah.

[00:37:05] **Stacey S.:** But we had a lot of different models from simply finding another owner to buy it, to identifying people on your team who would like to be part owners and helping groom them over a MA matter of years to get to that point where they can buy a salon. So there's a salon in Pennsylvania called Lords and Ladies that has seven or eight different well-established businesses, and that owner has now turned this into, you know, a franchisee opportunity for his employees where they have each of those is now owned by a former employee of one of the salons, and they're gonna continue to grow that way. So, we're seeing a lot of interesting things of part ownership, you know, stock options for employees and these

[00:38:00] different interesting hybrid art ownership arrangements.

[00:38:03] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Well there are interesting ways of trying to lock people in. You know, I've done some podcasts, with different people who have got that sort of model in their business. And so it's giving people a slice of the pie, and it locks them in. and again, it's one of those things that it's not a, it's not a new business model. I mean, accountancy firms and architectural firms and legal firms have done that forever by making people partners. And it seems to me that it is, Something that's well worth looking into, you know? and I know that there are plenty of salons out there that are doing that, and I'm just wondering if you were getting the feeling that was, you know, becoming more prevalent or not, doesn't sound like it necessarily is.

[00:38:43] **Stacey S.:** Well, we're seeing, we're doing more stories about it. I don't know if that people are just more interested in learning about it or it's actually, we're seeing more examples of it, but we're certainly seeing more people willing to talk about, and that's part of it too. Sometimes people weren't willing

[00:39:00] to talk about it. They wanted to see if it was gonna be successful before they publicly talked about it, and that's the same thing with the hybrid. I know a couple salons that are trying that hybrid thing, but they're not ready to talk about it in a story yet.

[00:39:15] **Antony W.:** So yeah, sure. Okay. you and I have both got children, who are Gen Z in the workforce, you know, 20 somethings, I'm not sure if yours are Gen Z. They might have just escaped the other out there, but it might be just the other.

[00:39:27] **Stacey S.:** I have one Gen Z and one that's a why..

[00:39:30] **Antony W.:** Right. Okay. So what I want to ask you about, cuz it's interesting that I have, you know, gen Z children in the workforce, they do question, they are questioning. The way things are, do you know what I mean? Like, if I went back, I don't know, 10, 20 years or whatever, you just took every opportunity. You worked for free, you worked for nothing, you worked late night and there was that feeling of you pay your dues. and this generation. And so now that you're a parent looking at kids that are that age, you maybe look

[00:40:00] at it in a different way. I mean, I always say to my daughter, I say, okay, well that's up to your generation now to, to change that and still enable the business to work and be profitable. do you know what I mean? Because you've gotta, you've always gotta find that balance. I suppose what I was gonna ask you is ,what Are you seeing about Gen Z specifically and the demands and the initiatives that they're creating in the workplace. You mentioned, for example, before that one about the salons that were bringing in a counselor to talk about mental health. Can you imagine 10, 15 years ago, if you'd have suggested that people would've looked at you like you had two heads. Whereas now it's like, oh yeah, that's a great idea. You know, a along with, yeah, you don't have to work Saturdays, that's fine as well, you know? are you seeing any other particular things about Gen Z that, are positive for the industry? We grapple with them, but ultimately they're positive.

[00:40:57]**Stacey S.:** I think that we're seeing a lot.

[00:41:00] and it all goes in hand to this whole recruitment thing again. But we're seeing a lot of that, generation wants to work for a company that they're proud to be associated with, that stands for something that is maybe environmentally sustainable. And they can say, I work for Salon that supports this, but we are, we're seeing that with a, . I don't know if they have Green Circle.

[00:41:22] **Antony W.:** Yeah.

[00:41:22] **Stacey S.:** Around the world. But here we have Green Circle and that's a, yeah, we do a lot with them, but it's becoming a recruiting badge of pride to be able to say, I'm an environment sustainable salon this is what we're doing this, or here's the philanthropies we support and that you're gonna be a part of.

[00:41:38] **Antony W.:** Yeah

[00:41:38] **Stacey S.:** They want kind about, they're willing to give up some of that money to be associated with an organization they're proud of. . they want something that has a strong culture, they wanna have a feeling that they belong. but they're willing to work for that.

[00:41:51] **Antony W.:** Yeah.

[00:41:51] **Stacey S.:** I think they're willing to work hard for that.

[00:41:54] **Antony W.:** Yeah.

[00:41:54] so it's finding those people that are your tribe and bringing them in and

[00:42:00] feeding them. But they also wanna know how they're doing. You know, they want a lot of feedback. How are they doing in their jobs? Let me know when I'm doing something well. , you know, let them know when they have some opportunity or improvement in places

they want that feedback.

[00:42:13] **Stacey S.:** So that's important as well. Yes. Which as an owner, that's a hard, and it's a harder job to do, you know, you have to be a leader. , but they want that.

[00:42:21] **Antony W.:** Yeah, they do they want leadership, don't they? Yeah. and that's very interesting. the whole things you brought up in about the environment and philanthropy and et cetera, they want to know that they're part of an organization that cares at a deeper level. So, okay. is just one, one thing I did wanted to ask you before we start to wrap up is that when you look outside, the US market, and I dunno how often you get the opportunity to do that. Do you see anything outside the US market, the hair and beauty market ,outside of, America and you think, gosh, it'd be good if we did more of that.

[00:42:57] **Stacey S.:** I've had a couple of opportunity, you know, I've had a few

[00:43:00] opportunities where I've gotten to see inside a little bit more. I was one of the judges for forests, fund

[00:43:06] **Antony W.:** Oh yeah.

[00:43:06] **Stacey S.:** That they did recently where they granted people money for things. So I was reading business ideas and plans for people. you know, I think particularly in the UK there are a lot of demands for benefits that you all pay for staff members that are not required in the US. I think we're getting further along in that where people. For a long time, salon staff members didn't get traditional medical benefits. So, there are a lot of requirements now where they ha they do have to provide things, but then there are also a lot of salons that are trying to do that better. But that's something I've always admired about salons in other countries that they're able to do that. And how do you know, there's not a lot of profitable, the profitability margin on a small businesses could be very small, so it's, you know, how do you create that opportunity .

[00:43:55] **Antony W.:** Well, it, it's, I used to wonder that as well. And it's simply a matter of the commissions

[00:44:00] are smaller, so Yes. Out outside of the US and I weren't sure where you were gonna go with that question. but outside of the US, Europe, UK, Australia, There's just a lot more legislation about what you have to give people. It's not even a conversation in terms of holiday pay, dental, medical, you know, sick leave, et cetera, et cetera. But it's not a case of that it into the profit. It's that the profit is hopefully still there, but the percentages that you pay people are smaller. in terms of the direct commission, because you've, you know, they have to be smaller to accommodate all these other add-ons that you have to, that to, that you have to give to people. yeah, exactly. Okay. last thing then. What future opportunities or challenges do you see for the industry?

[00:44:52] **Stacey S.:** I think opportunities are still going to be that client in your this, that loyal client you have coming to your salon. Are you

[00:45:00] meeting all of their beauty needs?

[00:45:01] and are you know, are you doing it smartly? you know, we were talking about earlier about anecdotes and I have very few eyelashes. They're very small. I used to get lash

extensions. But because of the job that I'm in, I happen to talk to the technician a lot about her job and what she does and what she doesn't like to do and what she does like to do. So she's literally gluing these eyelash extensions onto my eyelashes one by one, and this takes several hours. And she's talking about, you know, the salon just brought in a new service to, to lock in color and protect it. And it's like a \$30 add-on to your, I. . She's like, I don't wanna push, like these people are coming in, they're spending a lot for color service. I don't wanna try to sell them another \$30 something. And I said, you're looking at it the wrong way. I said, I'm literally paying you to glue individual lashes on my eyes. . And like, don't think, don't look at my pocketbook through the view of your

[00:46:00] own. Think about, you know, what does that client need? If she's already paying \$150 to come in and get great. To have \$30 to make it look great until she comes in the next time. Yeah. And not lose the color that you don't think that's worth it. You need to sell that as an insurance policy.

[00:46:17] **Antony W.:** Exactly.

[00:46:18] **Stacey S.:** Now, this is an insurance policy for your color. It's gonna help you look, so I think that our, and I do think that this has been a positive from the pandemic. We were talking about raising prices earlier. It has forced people to raise price. , but it's something we should have been doing and a lot of people like you and myself have tried to coach people that you're not charging the value that you're worth.

[00:46:40] **Stacey S.:** And I think the pandemic did help people realize how valuable they were to their clients and now you need to start charging people for it.

[00:46:50] **Antony W.:** Yeah.

[00:46:50] and just realizing that client that comes, there are other things that are worth it to her to pay for. Just don't short side

[00:47:00] yourself, you know?

[00:47:00] **Antony W.:** Exactly.

[00:47:01] **Stacey S.:** Lot of things.

[00:47:02] **Antony W.:** Just out of interest, did she know who you were?

[00:47:06] **Stacey S.:** Oh yeah, she knew who I was.

[00:47:07] **Antony W.:** Oh, she knew. That's why we, right. Ok. Yeah. That's unbelievable. Okay, well it is believable what happens all the time. alright.

[00:47:14] **Stacey S.:** Don't write, I don't write off my salon services, but I could because we business the whole time, so

[00:47:20] **Antony W.:** Yeah, exactly.

[00:47:22] **Stacey S.:** My Opportunity to see inside the salon. And, you know, I, it's, I'm fortunate that I'm able to enjoy that en environment while I'm there, that I'm writing about every day, you know?

[00:47:35] **Antony W.:** Yeah.

[00:47:35] **Stacey S.:** And really pick their brains.

[00:47:36] **Antony W.:** Yeah, exactly. I love being a client. I, you know, go to client different salons all the time and it's such a great insight. In fact, it's one of those things I always tell salon owners that it's often the best, you know, investment they can make is to be a client elsewhere, regularly go to different salons because it's great to know what it feels like to be a client, you know, and get good service and sometimes not get good service

[00:48:00] and look at where the opportunities are. Oh my gosh. If that person had just mentioned, as you just said, that example, you know, about a, an extra service that would lock in your color, that you would love that because it's your frustration and you wouldn't mind paying the extra 30 bucks as long as it was, you know, done. So. Yeah, good point.

[00:48:17] **Stacey S.:** But she doesn't wanna talk about it to me cuz she doesn't wanna, she doesn't wanna push another thing on me to spend money on, so.

[00:48:24] **Antony W.:** Exactly. Yeah.

[00:48:25] **Stacey S.:** Gotta think about it from your client. You know, your client's perspective.

[00:48:29] **Antony W.:** Exactly

[00:48:30] **Stacey S.:** not your own.

[00:48:31] **Antony W.:** Okay. Well, on that note, we need to, wrap up. Where can people connect with you on Instagram or social media channels or websites? Where would you like to direct people?

[00:48:41] well, Salon Today has, all those things. So you can follow us on Salon today, but you can also reach out to me. I'm also old school. I love email. So I'm at Stacey, s t a c e y. S o b l e. Bob, B o b l t.com. but you can also reach out through

[00:49:00] Salon Today's Facebook page or Instagram. And we don't have a TikTok yet, but we're gonna get there. But we have LinkedIn, so.

[00:49:07] **Antony W.:** Okay.

[00:49:07] **Stacey S.:** All those things.

[00:49:08] **Antony W.:** Cool. Okay, now I will put those, I will put all those addresses on the show notes for today's podcast. I know I said to you before we recording, I said that sometimes we speak the same language, but sometimes we'll say little things that, you know, people that are in the UK , Australia, whatever, won't know what she means by that. So, I'm gonna tell you something now, people in the Australia, in Australia, in the UK now think that your name is Stacey, period. Because they, we don't use that word. In that context period is full stop. We say full stop. So I know when I'm in America, I say, full stop. They go, what? I go full stop. You know, Stacey, full stop, like Soble. Like, okay, they use, they don't use that word, period in that context. So, so there you go. You've learned something as well. So,

[00:49:54] **Stacey S.:** that's interesting. I did not know that. So,

[00:49:57] **Antony W.:** I got called out,

[00:49:58] I wouldn't know what you meant if you

[00:50:00] said that to me.

[00:50:01] **Antony W.:** Okay. No, exactly. Yeah. Yeah. It's. Stop. It's like comma, full stop. You know, whereas your comma period, like, no dunno what she means. Okay. Well, if you're listening to this podcast with Stacey Soble and enjoying it, then do me a favor, take a screenshot on your phone and share it to your Instagram stories and don't forget to subscribe and leave us a rating and review on the Apple Podcast app. So to wrap up, Stacey, thank you for being on this week's Grow My Salon On Business podcast. It's been really good having this opportunity to get

[00:50:32] **Stacey S.:** your welcome

[00:50:33] **Antony W.:** overview. Cheers.

[00:50:35] **Stacey S.:** And I do want people to know that on Salon Today. I would say.com Would you say pull stop com?

[00:50:40] no. You see we'd go Yes. Salon Today.com. yeah

[00:50:44] **Stacey S.:** .com.

[00:50:45] **Antony W.:** So, yeah. Got it.

[00:50:46] we do have, you know, you can sign up for a complimenting your email newsletter and we do have our issues, digital additions of our issues online that are free to look at. So

[00:50:56] **Antony W.:** perfect.

[00:50:56] **Stacey S.:** Direct people to look there.

[00:50:57] **Antony W.:** Good. Fantastic. Okay. Thanks

[00:51:00] Stacey.

[00:51:01] **Stacey S.:** Thank you so much. Love being on the show.

[00:51:03] **Antony W.:** Thanks.