

## GMSB 181

[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] Hello, 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 here with us today. My guest on today's podcast is Toronto-based hairdresser, Kristin Rankin, who is a salon owner, but also founder of the Dress Code Project. In today's podcast, we'll discuss what exactly the dress code project is, the impact that it's having, what is suitability, salon pricing, and so much more. So, without further ado, welcome to the show, Kristin Rankin.

[00:01:09] **Kristin R.:** Hey Antony. Thank you so much for having me on the show.

[00:01:12] **Antony W.:** No, I'm really looking forward to having you on the show. I know that my audience are going to get a lot from this particular episode. So, Kristin, before I dive in, I'll do what I do with everybody and that's, I pretty much get people to introduce themselves. So, who is Kristin Rankin? Give us your two-minute backstory.

[00:01:30] **Kristin R.:** For sure. Thank you so much. So, as Antony said, my name is Kristin Rankin. I also like to tell people my pronouns right up front, so I use they them pronouns. And I am also a salon owner in Toronto. I am a partner in the company, Fox and Jane, which is a US-based salon company. And I'm also the founder of an organization called The Dress Code Project. The Dress Code Project is an organization that helps salon owners create gender affirming spaces so that folks can get haircuts that make them look the way they feel.

[00:02:03] **Antony W.:** Good. Fantastic. Great intro. Should I have introduced you using those particular pronouns?

[00:02:10] **Kristin R.:** That's a great question, and no, that's not necessarily up to you to do. I actually really, I have this discussion when I educate people. one of the ways that I like to allow people to know, right off the bat that, I am trained and educated and also aware of what it means to have safer language and be in a, in affirming space is by actually saying, Hey, my name's Kristin and my pronouns are this. And sometimes, depending on the situation, I will even ask people like, Hey, my name's Kristin. My pronouns are this. May I ask what your pronouns are, or do you mind if I ask what your pronouns are? it really kind of just, I like to say it disarms people with a smile. just allows them to feel a bit more comfortable and know that. I get what's going on and you're in a safe space.

[00:02:54] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Got it. Okay. So, I did read, I've been, reading a few things up on you and listening to some other podcasts you'd been in, and I heard at one stage that you said that your pronouns were they, them or she her. But then I also heard you then say, and it doesn't matter if you decide to chop and change from one day to the next, you are quite entitled to. So, it's quite a fluid sort of use of terminology, isn't it? If you feel like today or at the moment you are now, they them and not she/her, then that's okay. And everyone should respect that.

[00:03:26] **Kristin R.:** Yeah, I think there was this like disposition that we used to take, especially I would say within the queer community. We had to identify ourselves as something, a lot people like to call it labelling. And I think for a long time that was, it was a thing, and it, I find it rather annoying and insulting because I have never known any straight identifying person to walk up to somebody and go, Hey, I am so and so, and I'm straight. so for, me having to say to people, I identify this way or that way it's just not necessary. You don't need to know those things to have a conversation with me. And so, and so that was, then when you used to have to say like, I'm gay, I'm a lesbian, I'm bisexual, whatever it is. And now I think what is so beautiful about the queer community especially is that it is so all-encompassing and it is so fluid and it's. It's like a mosaic, like an art piece. Like you might see something one day and see something else the other day when you're looking at that art piece, and it's very similar to that.

[00:04:27] I may identify at one time with, multiple pronouns and I could still do that if I wanted to, and it could not, it doesn't even have to be just two, it could be three. and I could interchange those and use them as I feel, and then I can change my mind, and then I can change my mind again, and I can change my mind back if I want to. I think that's what's so beautiful about it, because it's entirely up to how you feel about yourself.

[00:04:48] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Good. Okay. So, I know before we were recording, I was, telling you that I listened to you on a podcast with, Nina Kovner, and, shout out to Nina, at Passion Squared. And I thoroughly enjoyed everything that you had to say on that podcast that it was very informative, and I made up my mind then that I definitely wanted to get you on. The grow my salon business one, and have a similar, but I'm sure different conversation. So, we've talked about the dress code project, or we've mentioned it. What exactly is it? Because I know it's a, it's a global business now, but or business is probably the wrong term, but I know you have a global footprint with the dress code project, but what exactly is it? Because a lot of people wouldn't have heard of it.

[00:05:29] **Kristin R.:** Yeah, for sure. so, the Dress code project is actually an organization, that. Essentially helps train and educate, folks who work within the salon industry, the pro beauty industry, to help create gender-affirming hair spaces so that, clients in particular who identify within the queer communities can go to hair salons within our organization and get haircuts that are gender affirming. That, as I said in the beginning of this, help them look the way they feel. because, I think, as our industry has unfortunately been very gendered, especially when it comes to pricing services. So, a men's or a women's cut, which can make people that don't identify within that binary feel left out, and I'm not sure where to go.

[00:06:12] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Yeah. Okay. where did the name come from?

[00:06:16] **Kristin R.:** Yeah, funny enough, it's a, so I thought of it because I was brought up in a school where we had to wear uniforms. and, I, for my whole life, as far as I can remember, have always known that I have, I'm queer. and I just hated that I always had to wear a kilt, that was part of my uniform, kilt, blouse, blazer, tie and all of that. And I always just wanted to wear, the men's or the boys' uniform or whatever. And it kind of drove me

crazy that there were uniform, distinctions in that way to begin with. And so I thought the dress code project, like, let's break down that dress code. Like why does it even have to exist? And beauty is part of the fashion world, fashion, beauty, makeup, all of it. It's all in industry within itself. And honestly, that's just kind of where it came from. Those are probably my roots around it.

[00:07:02] **Antony W.** Okay. No, I was intrigued as to, where that term came from?

[00:07:06] **Kristin R.:** Yeah, because, dress code is also almost always gendered, right? There's a and you have to wear this if you're that and you have to wear, it's a lot. So,

[00:07:14] **Antony W.:** Yeah, exactly. So, I mentioned, the podcast that you were on with Nina and there was a particular thing, and I know we spoke about this a little bit before we started recording, and I've been hairdressing for a long time and, I used to teach a lot of people, physical haircuts, so to speak, and I would talk a lot about suitability. and I would talk about face shapes and all sorts of stuff, and if I'm really honest or not, I never really believed it, never believed in it at all. The whole face shape thing. I'd look at it and I'd often try and wonder, well, why does that suit this person better than somebody else? And there was a phrase that you used, and you've already used it a minute ago in the conversation. And as soon as you said it, I thought that is the most perfect definition. Of what suitability is that I've ever heard. And it was your mission, for the Dress code project. and I'm assuming it is still the mission and it was, our mission is to empower and help educate hairstylists and barbers to give people haircuts that help them look. The way they feel. And as soon as I heard that, that you want a haircut that makes you look the way you feel, it was like, that is suitability. That is the best definition that I've ever heard of it. So talk to me about that. How did that become your mission for the dress code project?

[00:08:38] **Kristin R.:** Yeah. Thank you. That's such a thoughtful question and observation, Antony. So, really what it comes from is actually experiencing, something that is called gender dysphoria. Myself as a queer person. and what that is essentially for me. And it can be, there's a basic

definition of it, but can mean a lot of different things to a lot of people. For me, it was never fully feeling the way I physically presented. So in my head, I would see myself a certain way, which often embodied a more masculine presenting physical body. This is literally how I would envision myself. And then of course, when I looked in the mirror, I saw something much different being born Cis female, meaning female at birth.

[00:09:24] **Kristin R.:** And that was so, that's very dysphoric for me. I never felt a connection there and I always wanted to look this way. I imagined myself in my head. And then one day I was just on the internet scrolling through some things, and I saw this. Illustration that someone had done of a perfect, image of what I was talking about. And it was a long mirror and someone was standing in it and the person presented a certain way clearly in real life. And when they looked in the reflection of the mirror, the reflection that they saw was what they saw in their head. And I was like, this is exactly what I'm talking about. This is gender dysphoria. And for me, my whole presentation, my whole identity, revolves around trying to look the way I feel, the way I feel myself, and envision myself in my head. So, presenting more masculine or androgynous, having my, what that means is having my hair a certain way, my clothing, everything that I do. And that really is a breakdown of that statement.

[00:10:28] Look the way you feel. And around that. speaking of the haircuts, like I also agree with you, it never ever made sense to me. And if anything, to be honest with you, I thought it was just such a prejudice way of looking at haircuts because who are we to tell someone you can't have that haircut because of how your face is? I don't know. I just, it's such a gross feeling to me and I've had so many people, say to me and this. Outside of even the dress code project or gender or anything, I carry this through. As I'm also a stylist that is still behind the chair, and I carry this through to my daily work. When I'm behind the chair, I have people saying to me, well, I can't do that because my face is this way and I need my hair to do this. And I'm just like, no, that's just so not true. You can wear any haircut you want and you know I'm going to teach you how to wear it the way you wanna wear it, because that's my job.

[00:11:20] **Antony W.:** Got it. Okay. So with, talking about the dress code project, how big has it become?

[00:11:28] **Kristin R.:** Well, we established in 2017 and we have over, 550 salons in our organization, globally. That is in, in North America, in Europe, and then also in, the UK, or sorry, in Australia. And, it's funny. I would say that we really have flourished and I would say within the salon industry in terms of this subject, we're pretty well known, but we also are a little, we try to get the salons to understand how they have to be before they become part of our organization. So, we don't just let anyone in because, for us and our people that are using our services, which is our directory on our website, It really is about the space being what we call a safer space, not safe space, but a safer space for them to go to. And, that's why it's so important that there's education and training around what gender affirmation means and what it means in the salon industry. So I would say that we're doing fairly well. I mean, I have been on Good Morning America, I've been in Vogue, Italian, Vogue, or Vanity Fair, Natalia Teen Vogue. I've been in a lot of different publications and we just keep moving and trying to, get that message out there.

[00:12:47] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Okay. when the term safer space, what sort of context do you mean safe in?

[00:12:55] **Kristin R.:** Yeah, so, because I can't be, or anyone in my team can't be. All 550 of those salons all of the time, we can absolutely in no way make a bold statement by saying This space is safe. But what we can do is, hey, we vet these, spaces before they even become members. And we hold education, we hold training, we have material that we actually built with a charity in Toronto. That Specializes in, gender identity and diversity. And so we do everything we can to give people the tools to create these spaces for the clients that need it. But we can never say that it's always going to be 100%. Safe. the reason that we won't be there for the reason that, these salons may get new employees that haven't been trained in this or don't know much about it. And so that's why we say safer because we just try to let people know we're doing the best that we possibly can. We're trying to make it as safe as possible, but it's never going to be perfect.

[00:13:53] **Antony W.:** Yeah. I mean, I hadn't thought of this until you started talking about it, and was wondering, do you mean safe, safer in the context of emotionally safe? or in the context of physically safe or potentially both of them.

[00:14:08] **Kristin R.:** Yeah, I would say it's definitely both for for sure. Yeah.

[00:14:12] **Antony W.:** Okay. Now, I hope you're not sick of telling the story, I've heard you tell the story and it's sort of, it was a good start point for me, sort of understanding more of what it was all about. So, could you tell us the story of why, the dress code project exists? How did it come about?

[00:14:28] **Kristin R.:** For sure. I really don't get sick of telling this story because it was just such a moment, and I think it's an important moment. I think it's important for people to hear how it started because it was just so genuine. And also, delicate, and I don't think a lot of people think of this. So hearing this I think maybe can be an aha moment for others. but yeah, I had, I actually opened a salon before I became a partner in Fox and Jane, and it was in, the east end of Toronto, downtown. And which is a very, Toronto, in general, is an incredibly diverse city and the queer community is rather large.

[00:15:02] And my salon was definitely, a space where queer folks could come and feel, celebrated. And, I had a transgender woman sitting in my chair one day. I cut her hair; it was like any other service. And then the next day she'd tweeted to our salon that it was the first time she'd ever been to a hair salon and had a haircut that made her feel like a woman. and you that was super impactful for me because I think as a queer person, you do this thing which we call masking, which is just trying to fit into the heterocentric world in whatever way you can. And I think a lot of trans people, also try to do that for their own safety, to be honest with you.

[00:15:42] And she had also disclosed through our conversation when I was cutting her hair that. She had been out as a trans woman for five years, so that meant that she had either not had a haircut for five years, or she'd been to another salon and been misgendered or discriminated against in some way. And then it made me feel good that I was able to provide that for her and make her feel, like herself. and then it made me feel terrible that our industry was treating people this way. especially people in my community that I identify so much with. So, I just thought somebody needs to do something about this. This really needs to change. And, and I think I thought that maybe that everybody was in my head and heard me say that.

but because I didn't do anything at first and then I realized that no one else heard me say that. So, if I did want to see something happen, I might have to be the one to try to start that. And I really had no idea what I was doing, but I just went with it.

[00:16:41] **Antony W.:** Okay. So how did you start it? Like what was that journey like?

[00:16:44] **Kristin R.:** Yeah. I just thought, I don't even know what this is going to be, but I just, being a stylist in Toronto at that point for. I think it was maybe, I don't know, five or six years already. I thought I, I have some friends here that are other hair salon owners, I'm going to contact them. I contacted people I didn't know but were salon owners in the city and I think I sent out like 25 emails to different salon owners in Toronto. And I started to get some really great responses and, the first response I got was from my dear friend Lisa Berry who owns a salon in Toronto called Klute. And she just wrote back, and she just said two words to me and she was like, fuck yeah. And I was like, okay, I think that we might have something here.

[00:17:25] **Kristin R.:** And that is like, that is exactly how it started. And from there, I think ideas just start rolling through your head and you start to talk to people, and you start to put the talking and the thinking together and you create action do and you know you just do something.

[00:17:41] **Antony W.:** So, what, what do, and you can what actually you do? I mean, there's a lot of organizations that you might belong to and, you end up with a sticker in the front window, whatever it is, to say that you are a safe space, safer space, whatever it is that that, belong to. So, what exactly does the dress code project, what do those salons do that's different? What does it, how does it sort of materialize?

[00:18:08] **Kristin R.:** So, the salons that are in our organization, we call them, DCP member salons. And, we are a not-for-profit. So, the work that we do, it requires, person power. Of course, it wouldn't get done without it. And, so the, what we do is we, let me just step back for a second. So, when I first started this out, I asked people, Hey, do you want to do this? Like, let's try to create these spaces for people in the queer community. I

wasn't even using language like safer spaces at that point. I was really just being very rudimentary about it. And I thought, Hey, can we get this going? And then I started to realize that people were saying yes and they were committing to getting it going. And then there was no further action happening after that. And I thought, what makes people accountable? Well, loving someone makes you accountable to them, but without that money, right? Not only does it make you accountable, it makes the world go around. And I thought, okay, what if we charged a membership fee? Then, we provided some things for them. Money always makes people more accountable, even like, A \$7 pair of sunglasses. If you can't find them, you will look for them because you spent \$7 on them right.

[00:19:16] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Yeah.

[00:19:17] **Kristin R.:** So, we, I, as I said to you a bit earlier, I went to this, I was like, I need to make this legitimate and I need to also understand what I'm doing. So, I went to this charity in Toronto that does the training for diversity and inclusion, and I took their course. And then I worked with some of their managers there to create what we call a gender-affirming space, a guide for hair salons. And we created that, it took us about four and a half months. It's an info guide. It's, got, 25 pages of infographics that, have. basically, married together the diversity and inclusion training that is offered at this charity called the 519 in Toronto. And my knowledge as a hairstylist and. What I did was went through everything I do in a day as a hairstylist when it comes to a hair service, and I talked to them about it and we applied that to their training and together we came up with this manual that we give to, the member salons when they become members of the dress code project. And we do, we have also made a little DCP safer space sticker that they get. and then, we provide, ongoing further training if they want it, which we tr try to highly, highly encourage people to take, and, so that they can really make their spaces as safe as possible. And like I said, all of this, is something we do because we love doing it.

[00:20:37] But it's also something, in full disclosure that we need to charge people for so that we can continue to do it. As most not-for-profits. That's how they run. I have someone who is a coordinator. she takes a salary, I myself do not, because I'm just trying to do this and make sure that it gets done properly.

[00:20:54] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Wow. it's fantastic. I'm sure it's had a far-reaching impact in the lives of lots of people that you don't even necessarily hear about. I saw on your website that there's a partnership now with Pan 10. Pan 10 or Pantene, depending on where you are in the world. talk to us about that,

[00:21:14] **Kristin R.:** Yeah. It was, about two years after I started the dress code project Pantene reached out to me and they said they saw what we were doing, and would we be interested in chatting. And so after a few conversations, I really realized that, A I only wanted to partner with organizations that were being authentic in the message they were trying to deliver in the partnership they were trying to have with us. And B that Pantene was being very authentic, we have now been working together Yeah. For almost four years. And I've worked with the, I started out working with the UK team, but I've also worked with the Canadian and the US team within the Pantene family. And it's been a great partnership because they really, understand their role within our partnership, which is that they're huge. commercially Pantene is one of the biggest, hair companies in the world and they understand they, they can start to use their platform. for, doing good socially, and they really have, they've really stepped up and said to us, how would you see this happening? And what's your advice? And does this feel authentic to you? And are we going in the right direction? And they've been really great with that. and then they've also been able to take this partnership that we have and the message that we're putting out there, and then, getting it out way further than we would've ever been able to do. so, we've been incredibly lucky to have that partnership with them.

[00:22:32] **Antony W.:** Yeah, it was interesting when I saw it. I was like, lots of things went through my head. The first one was authentic, because big, global, Organizations, I think they're, are they a Proctor and Gamble company?

[00:22:45] **Kristin R.:** They are.

[00:22:45] **Antony W.:** They're, The cynic could say, I'm not saying it, but the cynic could sort of say, oh, they're just doing that. it's sort of like when you talk about the environment, lots of people do a bit of greenwashing to

make themselves look green. It's don't know if there's a term for that in terms of, associating, affiliating yourself, whatever with the queer community at a corporate level, whether there's a term for that. But you know, that was the first thing that went through my head. So, it was great to hear you say what you just said then about how supportive and authentic and genuine, that relationship is and that they are really, intrigued as to your thoughts about how it could be done and should be done, and they've really got behind it properly. So, that's very interesting. Yeah.

[00:23:25] **Kristin R.:** Yeah. We're very lucky to have that with them. they, they brought me there the first year after we worked together to their, main headquarters in Switzerland, in Geneva. And, we had this, big, event around it. And they actually said that because of us, they changed their mission statement, which used to be beautiful hair for women, and now it's beautiful hair for everyone.

[00:23:46] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Great. Okay. Alright. So how can, for salon owners listening to this, wherever they are, how can they be part of it?

[00:23:55] **Kristin R.:** They can go to our website, which is [dresscodeproject.com](https://dresscodeproject.com) and if you are a salon owner, there is a. A link that just says, join us and it'll lead you right through how to do that. Exactly, there's a link. There's a link for just hair stylists who want to find out more information, even if you're just a solo salon owner or anything like that. And when you do and you hit that link, it sends us an email and then we have contact with you after that we get the ball rolling that way.

[00:24:22] **Antony W.:** Right. Okay. And is there, what are some of the pushbacks that you get from salons that on the surface go, oh, that'd be great. I'd love to be involved with that. But then when they get a little bit deeper in, it's like, well, perhaps not. Well, what are some of the issues you might come across with it?

[00:24:37] **Kristin R.:** I think for the most part, we've been pretty lucky. like I said, we have over 550 salons and we're continuing to grow. Just before you and I got on this, I saw two more orders come in for memberships and, so it's really great. But I think a lot of folks out there, they don't realize the

why this is an issue within our industry because it's never personally affected them or anyone that they love. so they don't see why they need to change. I think, from another side, like the other side of the coin, if you're looking at it from just a business perspective, as a business person who owns a salon and they actually think they're going to lose money if they change their pricing, oh, if I take that menu and I change it, I'm going to lose money because of this, and that.

[00:25:17] And so we often have those conversations explained to them why they won't lose money, at all. And other than that, I think, it's very funny. We get so much interest around. Partnerships and working with people, especially from pro beauty companies, brands, I just going back to Pantene, we've had so many people on our Instagram account say like, how can you work with a brand like Pantene? They're sold in drugstores and they're not pro-beauty. But I'm going to say this. Pantene is the very first brand that has stepped up to the plate and backed us and put their money where their mouth is, so to speak, and said, Hey, we are going to do this and we're going to support you fully. And we have a lot of conversations with a lot of brands that are so, so interested until they realize that we actually do ask.

[00:26:04] **Kristin R.:** Brands, Hey, we are going to do this work for you. We're going to help you. We're going to train your trainers. We're going to do all of this. We ask you to give us a donation because we are not-for-profit, and this is how we continue to do the work we're doing. And then it is like crickets. You just, you don't hear anything back from them, or you hear all the reasons why they all of a sudden are no longer interested so.

[00:26:24] **Antony W.:** You talking? Are you talking about salons or? You're talking like corporate, sponsors there.

[00:26:31] **Kristin R.:** like I would say, brands, like yeah. like professional beauty brands that work within the, within the industry that our salons purchase and sell within our salons. yeah.

[00:26:42] **Antony W.:** Okay, now you just touched on pricing there and that's a that's sort of a topic in itself because obviously, this opens all of this up. talk to me about the way that you, price, because that's part of the

requirements, so to speak, isn't it, for someone to be a member with the dress code project, whatever the whole pricing issue is something that is, has to be, in line with your thinking.

[00:27:06] **Kristin R.:** Yeah, absolutely. exactly, and now that you've touched on it, the requirements that we do have is that you have, a gender neutral pricing menu. that you understand the language and terminology and that you, have a washroom space that is also gender nonconforming, so that. Anyone can use them, essentially, that you don't have those little male and female, icons on, logos on the doors. But in terms of the pricing menu, for us, as I said to you at the beginning of this, it is really, too. Exclusive to have only a men's and a women's cut because people identify outside of those genders more and have for a long time. So to say you're only going to service men's and women's haircuts means that you're missing like how much of the population there. and it's just not inclusive. So, we started off at my salon, by doing length, not gender. And that's how we price it. So, we have, like let's say a short haircut, a medium haircut, a long haircut, advanced haircut, and the priced that way. we incorporate timing into that. and then we incorporate, a bit of a range.

[00:28:05] And depending on whether you want like a barber cut or a pixie cut, we do use language so that it's familiar to client. So, they can pull from that familiarity. so, they might go, oh, right, okay, barber cut, that's exactly what I'm looking for. Or yeah, pixie cut, I want that, but it's still within that range. I have a friend who uses timing and a lot more people are using both of those concepts. and some people I've seen recently that just simply have haircut. That's it, so really what we always tell people is, get creative. Do it how it makes you feel good and what's comfortable to you, but just don't make a men's and women's cut your baseline.

[00:28:44] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Yeah, I've never understood, I've understood the timing one, and that's how I would do it. I won't, I've never understood the system that you use, short, medium long, because long hair, like maybe quicker. Do you know what I mean? If someone's got just like, long one-length hair, that's going to be quicker to cut to me than your haircut or my haircut or whatever. So, it, it's I'm all for charging for time because, I totally agree. Men's prices, women's prices, it's like, Stone age, conversation. It should never be like that. your expression that you use frequently, you hair

has no gender. You're dead, right? And so, the only justification that you have as a owner for why does this person pay X and this person pay Y can't be based on whether they. a male or female, it has to be, the only justification for it can be based on, well, our men's haircuts, we only allocate 30 minutes for our women's haircuts, we allocate 45 minutes for or an hour. That's the only justification you could ever have for that. But as you've said, it isn't as simple as men and women.

[00:30:01] So it, it is a lot, there's a lot more diversity in the mix than that. So, that's why for me, I would always go for, the time component. So, I was interested to hear that you said a friend of yours. That's exactly how she does it. I would've thought that was easier rather than short, medium, long, I don't know where I'm going with that. It's not a question, it's just an observation.

[00:30:20] Well, what I was going to say was just like in terms of the, pricing and the labelling of the haircuts, I have yet to have someone say to me, Okay, here are two people, two human beings, and one of them is, let's say, born female at birth and the other one is born male at birth, and they have exactly the same length of hair. Same density of hair, same texture of hair. Now tell me why we should charge them differently.

[00:30:49] **Antony W.:** Yeah, it makes absolutely no sense.

[00:30:50] **Kristin R.:** Nobody can give me a real absolute sounding reason as to why that should be the case, yeah. And don't, I don't want to hear that junk about like, well, women take more time on their hair than men do. cause that is absolute bullshit. We all know that. and I think the whole point is just that hair is it is not, about your gender. It's not about, you know what hair is actually more about is your presentation. We call that, your gender expression. that has way more to do with your hair than. What is in between your legs, your sex organs? not that doesn't matter at all, Yeah. Um but how you style your hair and how you look and the clothes you wear and the makeup you may or may not wear, and the accessories that you may or may not wear absolutely has everything to do with your hairstyle and how you style your hair. And those are the things that we need to consider when we are talking to people and helping them find a haircut that works for them. And then also around pricing, unless somebody can

provide anyone, not even just me, with some solid evidence as to why it matters and why we should price it differently. It doesn't make any sense at all. It makes absolutely no sense that there are still salons out there that have men's cut and women's cut on their menu. And if you are a woman and you walk in, you identify as a woman, you walk into the salon and your hair is this length, you get charged \$80, and then another woman walks in and her hair is, down to her waist and she gets charged \$80. That is. Ridiculous and unfair.

[00:32:15] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Or a man walks in with short hair your length and he gets charged 25 bucks or whatever. The only exact justification for it. Is time the only justification ever legal as well now, in a salon situation to be able to say that we charge women this and we charge men that, or people that identify as women and men, this or that is based on the time that can on that can be the only legal justification why you have a different price. Yeah. because that, in many ways it's really what we are doing. When you really. Boil it all down as to what's happening in this industry. You are buying and selling time.

[00:32:56] **Kristin R.:** Absolutely. it's very similar. Yeah. It's very similar to people who say, who come in and they want to get, four inches taken off their hair and hold this hairstyle and someone who comes in and says, I just want to trim. and you're like, well, I still have to do all of the same things, regardless of how much length you take off of your hair. And that's what we charge for. We charge for our knowledge, our time, our education, the care that we put into it. Like that's what we charge for. It goes along with also, discrimination around hair texture. Right? if you're going to charge by time, you better know what you're doing and you better be able to do it fairly to folks that have different hair textures. So, if you are going to give a curly haircut to someone, you should be able to deliver that curly hair cut in the same amount of time as you do with someone else. regardless of their hair texture, where whether their hair texture is incredibly coily or it's a very loose, curl. You have to do that, and you, you need to be able to say, I can provide this same haircut for anyone in those in this one-hour slot, regardless. Yeah, it's a very similar situation.

[00:33:54] **Antony W.:** Yeah. How do you advise a Salon who might be in that situation? Because it's historical, isn't it?

[00:34:00] **Kristin R.:** Right.

[00:34:01] **Antony W.:** I mean, it's happened. It's happened for years and years that men have been charged. X women have been charged Y and there's a big golf in some salons between what those prices are. Yeah. So if you were a salon owner listening to this and you're thinking, yeah, that's definitely what I want to do, like I, I definitely want to bring it in line to it not being based on the sex of the person, in the chair. how do you advise them to make that transition? From male-female pricing to gender-neutral pricing.

[00:34:30] **Kristin R.:** I, will ask 'em a few questions, and most of them, are really to find out where they're comfortable whether it's timing or whether it's, by length, whatever it is. And we'll have some discussions around it, a lot of questions I get or yeah, questions, I guess comments that I get as like, two, making sure that their current clientele will feel comfortable with the change and the impact will be as little as possible. And then the other part is making sure my clients who do identify as female and male. Don't get uncomfortable with this new pricing. And I always say to people, you cannot control how people are going to react to certain things. And so if you are somebody who's trying to better your salon environment by creating more inclusivity and celebrating all types of folks, and someone comes in there who is very heterocentric, or, and has got a problem with that. You have to ask yourself, do I want that kind of clientele in my salon? I think it's rare that it happens, but I've definitely heard it happening and I've heard salon owners use as an excuse, well, my, my clients who do, who are men and women won't like that, but why?

[00:35:35] They shouldn't have any reason. There should be no reason. Offended or upset. You're not doing anything to them. You're not changing a pricing for them. If anything, it's going to be more fair. You don't know how many times I've had hetero people, find out that they're going from a long haircut to a short haircut when they come to the register, I go, Hey, by the way, your new haircut price is going to be this moving forward. And it's often a reduction in price and they're so happy to hear it. Cause they're like, oh my gosh, I'm actually getting charged for the amount of hair that I now have you have to cut.

[00:36:07] **Antony W.:** Yeah, that's the interesting thing that I was just going to ask you about was do you normally advise people in that situation, the salon owner, to be putting the men's prices up or to reducing. The female prices to get them in line? Or is it like, how do you, how do you talk that?

[00:36:23] **Kristin R.:** I just tell them to get rid of 'em all together. They're so, they're like dinosaurs, you like.

[00:36:28] **Antony W.:** So do you do it in one hip?

[00:36:29] **Kristin R.:** Absolutely. Just rip the bandaid off. Okay. Yeah It's just so much easier. it's kind of like people who, they're like, I'm going, I smoke and I don't wanna smoke, so I'm gonna vape and that's gonna be my transition. But then they end up vaping for 10 years, like, let's just take, rip that bandaid right off and why don't we just get you to a menu that's going to work for you long term and is going to be sustainable.

[00:36:49] Okay. That's great. Look, I've been intrigued with this entire discussion. There's so many good points and there's so many good takeaways, and it's sort of one of those things that in X amount of time, whether it's 10 years, 20 years, 30 years, whatever it is, you will look back and you will go. How did anyone ever think that was a good idea? It's sort of like I'll talk to people about, I mean, a totally different subject here, online booking. And I'll have every reason in the world why they want to do online booking. And I'll just say to them, look, in 10 years' time, do you think there'd be more people or less people online booking? And the answer's always, well, of course, there'll be more. So it's like wide wait. Do you know what I mean?

[00:37:31] **Kristin R.:** It's such a good point. Yeah.

[00:37:33] **Antony W.:** You'll look, your people will look back at this and go, what? What a funny old world it was where we

[00:37:38] **Kristin R.:** Absolutely

[00:37:38] **Antony W.:** Was okay to charge women, more than men. For essentially, the same thing.

[00:37:44] **Kristin R.:** Yeah.

[00:37] **Antony W.:** Often in the same amount of time.

[00:37:46] **Kristin R.:** Yeah. So, yeah, I mean, it's just, it's like how, we used to get most of our clients by word of mouth or walk-ins, right. somebody normally would have to physically come into your salon to see, Hey, what's going on there and how can I get an appointment? And now, not only can you book online through our website. You know, but you can also reach out on social media and find us there and essentially make an appointment that way as well. the world is constantly changing, especially with the way technology moves. So, being able to say, I think this is the other thing I try to explain to people is like, generations are really changing and the generations that are below millennial. You know, a millennial and below now are really learning how to spend their money wisely and according to them and their, their morals and the way they see things. And I have heard so many people, and I'm one of those people that I will not spend my money somewhere if I don't think that it's according to my ethics and how I see the world. And I know so many people that have gone onto websites and say, yeah, I immediately saw their price menu was gendered. Closed that website, closed that window and looked for one that wasn't, so I don't even think people realize the business that they are losing as a result.

[00:38:56] **Antony W.** Yeah, exactly. that's a really important thing. I mean, I've got two daughters who are GenZ, GenZ, depending on where you are. and it's interesting the conversations I have with them. I mean, they're 22 and 24. And their conversations around their friends and their fluidity and it's just all so natural and so, unapologetic and so accepting.

[00:39:20] **Kristin R.:** Absolutely.

[00:39:20] **Antony W.:** Which is great. It's got to, it's got to be a good thing.

[00:39:22] **Kristin R.:** Absolutely.

[00:39:22] **Antony W.:** Yeah, so where, whereas people, my age often find this a much harder. Thing to navigate, and they're often frightened of saying the wrong thing, getting something wrong. It was an interesting thing. I heard you say on, or I think I read it that you said, if you are ever in doubt as to what you call someone in terms of the, the gender, they, then she, her, him, he whatever. Just use their name. Yeah, just always use their name and that is the perfect Get outta jail.

[00:39:52] **Kristin R.:** Totally. Yeah. I mean, let's look,

[00:39:54] **Antony W.:** But you can't go wrong.

[00:39:55] **Kristin R.:** You can't, and you look at, so you look at someone's name as another pronoun really. And you know that is their name. So you know they're going to be okay with it. Yeah, exactly.

[00:40:03] **Kristin R.:** And what's really beautiful about our industry is that if you, whether you have booking salon software or you are, a little bit more old school and you use a book, you're going to have that client's name in there for that appointment. So, you will always know what their name is.

[00:40:16] **Antony W.:** Yeah, exactly. Exactly. Okay, well listen, we need to, start wrapping up. Whereabouts can people connect with you on Instagram or other social channels?

[00:40:25] **Kristin R.:** Yeah, for sure. So, we are on Instagram at the dress code project. and if you want to connect with me personally, which I always encourage because I do really like people asking questions, it's the only way that we're going to create change, is I'm at Kristin Rankin. On Instagram.

[00:40:41] **Antony W.:** Okay. And that's as it sounds, k r i s t i n Rankin, r a n k i n.

[00:40:46] **Kristin R.:** That's it.

[00:40:47] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Great. Okay, well, I will put those links, on our website, grow my salon on business.com, on the show notes for today's podcast. And if you're listening to this podcast with Kristen Rankin from the Dress Code Project and you've enjoyed it, do me a favour. Take a screenshot on your phone and share it to your Instagram stories. And don't forget to, subscribe and share this episode with your friends. So, to wrap up, Kristin, thank you so much for being on. This week's episode of the Grow My Salon Business Podcast

[00:41:14] **Kristin R.:** Antony, it was a really a real pleasure. I really enjoyed this conversation. Thank you for the thoughtful questions.

[00:41:19] **Antony W.:** Oh, thank you. Cheers. Thanks.

[00:41:25] 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.