

GMSB 186 Transcript

[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.

[00:00:30] **Antony W.:** Hello, and welcome to today's episode of the Grow My Salon Business Podcast. I'm your host, Antony Whitaker. And whether you're watching this on YouTube or listening on your favourite podcast app, either way, it's great to have you here with us today. Now, thank you for all the compliments on the podcast. I really appreciate it, and I know my guests do as well, and I would be really grateful. If you left us a review on the Apple Podcast app, it helps other people find us. And I always like to know, obviously what you enjoy most from the show. So, jump on over to the Apple Podcast app and leave us a review. It'd be much appreciated. So, without further ado, I want to introduce my guest today. I haven't met this young lady beforehand, but we've been talking for I don't know. 30th 30 odd minutes or so. And we've got so much to talk about. I've wanted to talk to her for a long time because I think she's got a lot of great stuff to share with Salon Owners everywhere. So, I want to introduce her.

[00:01:29] **Antony W.:** Her name is Jen Le Blanc and Jen is the operations manager and director of marketing at Salonrootz and that's the salon group. There's more than one of them. There are two salons there, at least two that I've know of, and they're based in Medina, Ohio. So in today's podcast, we're going to talk about removing the front desk and the challenges and opportunities that come with it. We're also going to talk about combining both an employee-based business model and a salon suite, business model side by side. And I want to touch on e-commerce if we've got time to do that. And generally, all things that come under marketing and operations and lots more. So with that said, without further ado, welcome to the show, Jen Le Blanc.

[00:02:16] **Jen B:** Antony, thank you for having me.

[00:02:18] **Antony W.:** I'm, in debt to you giving us some time to be here. I wish we'd started recording half an hour ago. There's been so much good stuff.

[00:02:24] **Jen B:** We had some good nuggets there for sure.

[00:02:25] **Antony W.:** Yeah, we did. So anyway, I've been writing down some notes, so, when I'm writing down some notes, it means that there's, you know, lots of good stuff to talk about.

[00:02:32] **Jen B:** Beautiful.

[00:02:32] **Antony W.:** So, Jen, I've introduced a little bit about you, but very consciously, not very much. I like to start off with really getting my guest to introduce themselves. Who is Jen Le Blanc? Give us just two-minute backstory.

[00:02:44] **Jen B:** Absolutely. well, my name is Jen Le Blanc. I am the COO of Salon Rootz and Salon Studios. Like you said, in Medina, Ohio. We are proud to be a Salon Today, 200 salon for the past 12 years, and we are also an 11-time stamp honouree, which is Salon Today's marketing award program. am a data nerd who is in love with the business side of beauty and I love everything hair. And you might be shocked to know that I've never actually been behind the chair. So, it's an honor to be here today. I'm really excited to jam with you.

[00:03:18] **Antony W.:** Good. Okay. So, I'm glad you said that you are not a hairdresser. I wanted to ask you about that in a minute. let me start off with this. what does one of your titles, director of Marketing? Yeah. Oh, did I say it right? Medina or Medina? Medina, correct. Medina. Okay. So, what exactly does the director of marketing do?

[00:03:36] **Jen B:** Yeah, so my role is more of an operations officer. I'm more of like the COO of both salons, which includes director of marketing, which means I'm the executor of all things on our website. I actually am an expert in WordPress. which most salons I think have heard of now. It's a very popular template to build on. I do all of our social media. I do all of our SEO, I do all of our internal brand campaigns and graphic design work. I set our internal marketing calendar for the year. and then as an operations officer, those side of things is more of taking the data. for example, have you ever seen the movie Money? Yes. Okay. And it's the analytics. And you're putting the analytics. So, think of that movie. Yeah. And look at a salon that way. And that's me. Yeah. Great. So, I look at all of the players on the team, regardless of how skilled they are and how could I get the most out of every 15 minutes. for them and for the salon. Okay. And that's my jam. Like I am a numbers, I'm a numbers junkie. I help set budgets. I do all of our inventory, all of our inventory control, all of our purchase orders, so anything that's on the backside of the business. So, the salons that I work for, the owner-operators are still behind the chair.

[00:04:51] **Jen B:** They still love doing hair and prior to me becoming a full-time employee of rootz I was actually a client of one of the owners, Gen Tryon, and I had owned a marketing company at the time. And she had said, you know, how can I get you to do some work for me? And I was like, well, I don't know. Let's do you know, let's start kicking some things out. I very quickly got addicted, Antony. I was like, oh my God, this is awesome. Wow. I love this and I've always loved being in the salon. I love the art aspect of hair. I love that when you come into the salon, you come in feeling one way and you're very likely leaving feeling another way. Hair evokes emotion. Hair is such an identifier for women, for men, for all. Okay. And I really loved being a part of it. and after a year of just kind of playing around with things with one another, I became a full-time employee.

[00:05:43] **Antony W.:** Right. Okay. So, Jen and Sheila, I don't know them, but they own the company. they work full-time behind the chair. Yep. you are an employee of the company. And, and they must. You know, thinking of lots of other salon owners out there. You know, Jen and Sheila must walk in the door every morning with a smile on their face because basically because all the stuff that you just said that you do Yeah. Is like, it's tough. It's hard work. Yeah. And a lot of salon owners find that really challenging and the fact that not only do you do it, but you do it extraordinarily well. and you love it. You love doing it. It's totally what your jam is. So, yeah.

[00:06:17] **Jen B:** totally my jam. I get. On a weekly basis of Yes, how do I find one of you? where do I get, where do I go buy one of you because it's kind of known now, you know that this is kind of how the puzzle fits? And like you said, hairdressers are hairdressers. They love the creativity and the art side of things. They're not necessarily ones that like look at a book and do a financial analysis on it, and where can we get more? they're just not intuitively. They don't want to do that, can they? Yes. Absolutely. You know? Yeah. We teach hairdressers to do that all the time. Okay. But it's not their jam. It's not their favourite thing to do every day. They want their hands and hair. Yeah. And that's why I exist.

[00:07:00] **Jen B:** Yeah, exactly. It's, I heard you saying somewhere, an expression you said was. They think, they often think about the ideas, but the reality is they don't have the time or necessarily the skillset to exercise and implement those ideas. And that's where you come, I'm the implementer,

[00:07:17] **Antony W.:** you know, and I think that's what happens. And a lot of salons, a lot of salon owners, they're always have ideas.

[00:07:22] **Jen B:** dreamer. Okay? Always got to have the dreamer. And you have to have the visionary that wants to paint the picture. Yeah. But you have to have

the executor and I'm the executor, you know? And so for the three of us, Sheila is the dream. Yeah, Jen is more of the realist. Yeah. So you have the dream. She tries to level out the dream a little bit. Yeah, and I'm the one that try to translate it and decide how exactly we're going to execute it, so they both end up happy.

[00:07:50] **Antony W.:** Right. Okay. good. Well, it's obviously working. Yes. So, okay. now I was reading something, it was pre covid, so I'm thinking 2019 or something like that. Okay. 2018 and 2019. And it was, you were being in, I don't know if you were being interviewed, it was an article, you were in this article mm-hmm and you were talking about. The whole idea of salons going deskless. and I don't know if, it's apple, at the Apple store that the first sort of, you know, they were well, well-known business to really change that whole. Idea of having a counter, having a front desk, having a, you know, a point-of-sale place. And, but it appeals to lots of businesses, and it definitely appeals to salons. And I know lots of salons that sort of do it or say they're going to do it or wonder about doing it, but never quiet, you know, make it happen properly.

[00:08:40] **Antony W.:** And in the article I was reading with you, you were absolutely espousing the whole. Going desk-less. And that's why I, you know, that's why we're talking today because I thought I have to talk to Jen Le Blanc at some stage because, you know, as a coach, I talk to a lot of salon owners who want to do that. and hearing someone who's actually done it, doing it and it being really successful is, is gold. know, for them. So, yeah. I know we're going to talk about a lot more than that, but that's the first thing I wanted to ask you about is what made you decide to do that.

[00:09:10] **Jen B:** Yeah, so like every salon leader, manager, owner across the world, I'm sure there is a lot of difficulty when it comes to staffing that position. And at the time, this was right before Covid, I had been doing extensive research for maybe three years because of theoretical, an article I read about a salon in Arizona that went paperless and she went paperless and fully mobile. and her name was Stacy Coronado. She owned 40 volume salon in Phoenix. And I reached out to her and I was like, I'm really intrigued by this. And she's like, best decision ever ask me anything. And I said, so you have no paper, you print? No. we call 'em Travelers, you know, some salons call them. tickets here. essentially, it's just a list of the services. that the guest is going to receive that day. And she said, I did away with all of that. We are completely mobile. We only use our software I said, wow. So, tell me more about that. Okay. And she said, I got rid of the front desk. And I said, just like that, you just got rid of the front desk. She said, yeah, we don't even have a phone at the salon anymore. I said, okay. Now I'm super intrigued, because one of the biggest difficulties we had at Salon Roots is we are a 1900 square foot box. Okay. We are an open floor concept salon.

Okay. Which means. We're naturally loud. It's a very loud, fun, boisterous atmosphere. it's a community you want to be a part of. You want to be in the conversation. Our team members, our artists, are very animated when we would answer the phone. at the desk. It would sound like a zoo in the background. And it was always very challenging to hear. it wasn't the greatest guest experience to be on the phone. Okay? to be on the other end of things. We constantly were apologizing.

[00:11:05] **Jen B:** I'm so sorry. Can you hear me? All of those other little things, so light bulb naturally in my head and I was like, interesting. I hit, took this idea to Jen and Sheila. This was right before. and they said, no way. We are how could you ever go without a phone? How could we ever go without the desk and all of these things? And I said, let me continue to paint this picture for you. Well, during that time, our front desk team was, we've, we had alcohol abuse. We had just couldn't come to work. We had, no matter what we paid them, it was never enough. If we paid them too much, they wanted to own the salon. You know, you, any scenario that you could possibly think of. We travelled. Okay. Well then Covid hit okay. And we had nine weeks here in Ohio where we were home. And during that time, our leadership team got together and we decided to make every major change in the business that we had wanted to make. And we all brought an idea okay. I brought desk list. Sheila bought, brought closed on Fridays, and Jen brought the fact that she wanted to reduce the number of days that her and Sheila were behind the chair because at the time, they were behind the chair four days a week and they wanted more time to be able to grow the artists.

[00:12:25] **Jen B:** We made all of those changes during that shutdown because for once we didn't feel like we were handcuffed to the business and afraid to make the change okay, so we had nine weeks. During those nine weeks we switched softwares. We were a regular millennium user, switched to Meevo two. Yep. Because there was the self-pay feature, which is being able to, pay on your own devices. And because it was during covid, no one wanted to touch anything anyways. Okay. So, when we launched this process, we then decided, okay, well we forgot about the phone. Okay. What's going to happen with the phone? When it was announced that Ohio could reopen salons, we had 175 voicemails in three hours. Okay. We had gone to our team and said, listen, we've done a lot of research. We want to bring this strategy into the salon. We're going to launch this now. And at the time it worked for us, we told them it was a 90 day. and in the states here we had a people maximum that could be in a business based on how many square feet they there were.

[00:13:37] **Jen B:** Yeah. Yeah. So, we said to the team, we can only have eight people in the salon. We've been shut down for nine weeks. We are going, we are

doing, without the front desk support, we're going to operate without it. They were ecstatic. My team was like, because they're frustrated. They watch us train, they watch the door, you know, revolve consistently. I said all of the money that we were paying front desk support staff, we are now putting back into the business, okay, we are now going to pay our associates and our assistants and anybody's support, we're going to be able to pay them more. You're going to get retail commission and we're going to change the evolution of the workflow here in the salon. Okay? They said, sure, let's give it a whirl. We're now three and a half years into it, we are uber successful with it, and we are always continuously working to improve the process. And I have now converted hundreds of salons across the country to this process as well. And it's different for everybody and I think that's really important to say that how we do the process at Roots isn't necessarily the bones of how it would work for X, Y, Z salon in Indianapolis, cause all salons are built and made up a little bit differently. Sure. But overall, the process is successful.

[00:14:58] **Antony W.:** Okay. Let me ask you about some of the problems. Yeah. potential problems. and how did you get over them? I mean, the first one you, you mentioned it, the phones. You know, the phone, the phones are ringing. Like how do you, like, where are the phones now? Are they offsite? Do you have a call center? Like, how does that work?

[00:15:13] **Jen B:** So, when it was announced that Ohio could reopen and we got all those voicemails. We had always had online booking. Okay. Like we had always had it, but it was never used at the proficiency. Yeah. That is used now. . Well, we all kind of looked at each other and I was like, well, I, there's no way I could return 175 voicemails as fast as you are returning your voicemail is as fast as five more voicemails we're being left.

[00:15:37] **Antony W.:** Sure. Yeah.

[00:15:38] **Jen B:** So we created a campaign. No book online, no line. Okay, and we blasted it, text message, email. We had it on our voicemail that essentially said, go ahead and leave a message. We might call you back in four days or create your login and password on our online booking software. You can see all of your future appointments. You can book. Future appointments, so on and so forth. And we.

[00:16:07] **Antony W.:** And you had, you had that in place anyway, pre covid. We had that in place anyway, already was just weren't doing it right. People just, it just wasn't, it was. Second nature just to call. Sure. Yeah. Okay, got it. Yeah. I've always said from a marketing standpoint, we need to be where our clients are

at. , we need to meet them where they're at. So whether that's social media marketing or a marketing campaign around a function within our business, the younger generation does not want to talk on the phone. They want to text. Yeah. They want a dm, they want a book online. We had to tweak some of our processes with the online booking, because I think inherently no guest really knows what they're getting. Okay. They think that they're getting, you know, they're, they a full balayage haircut, for example. Okay. As you know, balayage is a technique. Okay. Balayage is not a finished look. Okay. We have those services on our menu because that's what our guests are going to relate to, but in reality, they're buying time. Okay, so it's more about we sat down with our team and we figured out, well, how much time do you need for an all over color? How much time do you need for a root? Okay. And then because of the booking features within Meevo, and they allow masking, they allow custom booking. If you did get a guest in your chair, that really does take you three and a half hours when that guest goes to make another appointment. you could create that in Meevo so that your, that girl can only book in a three-and-a-half-hour time slot. So there were steps involved for that. Yeah. We were able, in the course of about 9,220 days. We probably received 50 to 60 phone calls a day. Now we received, less than 10, typically. Typically there are days where you might get a few more, but the calls are now forwarded to a cell phone, which if I wasn't recording right now with you, the phone would be in my office. Right now it's at the floor of the salon. It's easy. It works.

[00:18:12] **Antony W.:** And who are those calls? Are they clients wanting to book an appointment?

[00:18:16] **Jen B:** They're usually new. They're usually new clients. Right. That don't know our process yet. Yeah. Because even on our voicemail it does say the best way to make a reservation is to text us at 3 3 0 7 2 1 4 5 4 5 or mm visit us online@salonroots.com, or they're looking to change an appointment and they don't know that they can change their appointment via their online booking profile, or they might be within the timeframe that they need to call in order to make a change. Like let's say you're supposed to visit us today, the way I have our parameters set, you have to call me in order to make that change. If you're had an appointment tomorrow, you could make that change online. Right now

[00:18:53] **Antony W.:** Got it. Okay. I should just mention, Meevo is a big brand in the United States. Yeah. fantastic brand. I love it. it is available for our, European, listeners. It is available in the UK but it's not a big brand here. Unfortunately, it's not available in Australia, New Zealand for a Okay. Audience down there. But, yeah, it is a great, point of sales system. one of the things I wanted to ask you about was, what would you do different if you like, you, you

know, you, you were a bit of a groundbreaker with that, you know, implementing it into your salon. You were very much forced into it By, by Covid. I didn't realize that. I thought you were doing it before Covid.

[00:19:29] **Jen B:** No, I had been, well, I wasn't, I don't want to say we were forced into it. It opened the door.

[00:19:35] **Antony W:** Right. Okay. So yeah.

[00:19:37] **Jen B:** On this process so that I could convince our owners to do what I had been researching for years. Wanting to do. Okay. So we definitely weren't forced into it. It just created an opportunity. For us, we had nothing to lose. Yeah. So because we had nothing to lose. It was a no-brainer.

[00:19:58] **Antony W.:** Yeah. So what does it look like at the front desk now? there is no desk or is there is like, do you have roving concierges with, you know, iPads or something? Yes. Like where is the money held? You know, where does the client get her, put her purse down while she gets her checkbook out and, you know, does that, where does all that happen'

[00:20:17] **Jen B:** The majority of our checkouts happen chairside. Yeah. Okay. So they're, it's chairside checkout. My concierge have iPads we have a self check in kiosk, which is where they're going to check themselves in for their appointment. And all of our team wears smartwatches. Okay? So, they get the notification on their watch when Jen Le Blanc checks in, so on and so forth. our desk, which actually we're converting now that we have proof of concept. Okay, like we're like, we will never go back. You would ask Jen and Sheila now and we'd be like, would you do this again? They were like, yeah, we can't believe we. It took us so long to get there, like we should have. We would've done this five years ago had we known how successful it was going to be. Okay. Right. We have one computer upfront. The rest is. that float on the floor, and there's different places amongst the floor that there's, that, there's an assortment of iPads around the salon. What we have found is that removing the barrier and removing the person directly behind, you know, think of like a medical office or something along that. There's your desk and the person behind, you know, the person behind the glass and you're on the other side of it. There's very little guest engagement that. There's very little personal contact that happens when you take the guest experience of all those processes that happen just at the front, okay? And you spread them out amongst the floor. You are taking the guest experience and you are removing that barrier aspect, and you're removing that immediacy of it. Okay? The other thing with this is that without having the phone readily at the desk, okay most of the time the person on the phone, not most time, all of the time, they don't

care that you could have a line of people in front of you. Okay? And now we're choosing who gets all of my attention. Is it the person in front of me? Is it the person on the phone? Well, if there's no phone and there's no distraction of the phone ringing, when we could avoid that happen. Then my, I'm very present in all of the conversations, whether you're in front of me or whether I'm on the phone. We could be very intentional with our services, and that is the biggest difference. We could be very intentional with our guest experience.

[00:22:33] **Antony W.:** Right. Have you gone cashless as well?

[00:22:37] **Jen B:** No. but cash is not that big of a thing here with us. Yeah. Like we get very few guests that pay with cash, you know, we keep minimum in our drawer, and if they do, then the concierge or assistant or the artist takes it and the cash drawer is up there and it's hidden. Like it's part of, you know, unusual.

[00:22:57] **Antony W.:** Yeah. A little bit like the Apple store. They do actually have lot actually store.

[00:23:03] **Jen B:** Yeah. And actually they were, I went to several Apple stores prior to that, actually was what got my mind going on this process. I love studying other industries. Yeah. And seeing how that, how we look at that innovation and how can we bring it to work in the salon world, salons are inherently the last to want to convert on anything tech related oh yeah. Old habits die hard in the salon world when it becomes technology mean. Think about how long salons were on a paper book before they started those conversions into utilizing software. And if you ask a salon owner now, whether they would want to change color lines or switch software, they would all say they would rather have a blind color line and they don't even get to choose before they would opt to switch their software because they're just not built that way. they just aren't.

[00:23:56] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Yeah. So, you mentioned concierge a couple of times. So, are they the receptionist but they're just not the desk anymore?

[00:24:04] **Jen B:** Yeah, they're version, they are a mobile version of it? Yes.

[00:24:08] **Antony W.:** Okay. So, have you got the same amount of people that you had before?

[00:24:11] **Jen B:** No. No. Not even close. No. So We have a front of the house. Yeah. And the front of the house concierge is focused on the guest retail guest check-in and pre-booking appointments. Yeah. Okay. Yes. By back of the house, concierge is focused on chairside checkout, they're focused on the artist and the

execution of maybe helping with blow dries, helping with bowls, helping with towels, the back of the house function at all times I have two. Pre this process, I likely had two front desk and two on the floor. Okay. Wow. So, this was able to drastically reduce the number of people needed within the business.

[00:24:54] **Antony W:** Yeah. Okay. And in terms of the draw, you know, for whatever we're going to call it, Like, where are we going to put the very few people outside of America use checks Now I know that checks are still quite,

[00:25:06] **Jen B:** It's rare here too. It's rare here too.

[00:25:08] **Antony W:** It's rare in it, right? Yeah. Okay. the whole cash thing, everywhere. since Covid has, I don't know what percentage. Depends what country you're in, but, there's a lot less cash about, but inevitably you still need a draw somewhere. Yep. Do you have one draw or is there multiple places?

[00:25:21] **Jen B:** One. Just one.

[00:25:22] **Antony W:** Right. Okay. All right. I'm intrigued. and the retail side of it, did it in, did it increase the retail or decrease the retail?

[00:25:31] **Jen B:** No, it dramatically increases the retail. And here's why. The guest relationship with the salon is through the artist and through the stylist. Yeah. Okay. There are salons across this country that have a very successful front desk. They have a very successful support team, and they will tell you over and over again like a broken record that is a profit center for their salon, I could not disagree stronger. Okay. Because they're one-off sales of retail product. Don't equate to the hourly salaries that are going out on that. Okay. They've, they don't ever make the salon money. they're a cost to the bottom line. Yeah. When you have a relationship with your artist, and I am with that artist, or their direct assistant the entire time of the visit, the rapport is much stronger. We now are retrieving the retail products for you. We are bagging them for you and bringing them to your, to the station. The chances of you saying no to all three of those retail products, you know, you know the formula. Bring them three. Hopefully they buy two shampoo, conditioner styler, leave in hairspray, shampoo, whatever.

[00:26:46] **Jen B:** The combination is they very likely aren't going to say no to all of them. They're in front of them. Okay. So, creating that bond and in a traditional salon setting with a desk, nine outta 10 hair stylists are running behind. They just are. Okay. We'd like to think that they're more efficient and more timely, but reality then sets in. Yeah. You are then on your own to get up to the desk okay to check out. the chances of me as the guest we're not up there now in

this gray area. Remembering anything we just talked about is 50-50. . Yeah. You might get up there and say, ah, she told me I should get this leave, and I love the smell of it. Oh, what was the name of it? Oh, I don't know. Oh, you know what? She's busy. I'll just get it next time. Well, then that happens repetitively. And you lose retail dollars. Retail is hard enough right now, let alone to leave it to gray space. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Because when you're one-on-one and everybody is mobile it becomes second nature.

[00:27:53] **Antony W.:** Yeah. So, employee costs went down because you have less people in that role.

[00:27:58] **Jen B:** A hundred percent.

[00:28:00] **Antony W.:** You freed up some space. So, in theory, you could put another workstation there.

[00:28:04] **Jen B:** Two.

[00:28:04] **Antony W.:** your two right. your retail sales increased. , what about your, rebooking and stuff? Did that increase, stay about the same, have any impact?

[00:28:13] **Jen B:** All So here in the States, and I don't know in Europe, how you guys book appointments, but it is rare now since returning from Covid, the artists double book. slowed down when they came back okay, so if you're an artist at Salon Roots and you have two and a half hours straight time, for example, okay. what are you doing for that 30 or 45 minutes that your guest is processing? Yeah, they now, for the majority of that time, unless they need to eat, they need to go to the bathroom, they need to go smoke a cigarette, whatever. Yeah. They're sitting next to that guest and they are required to be talking retail and be pre-booking that next appointment and building that relationship. You know, it is really common with our younger generation to not be such, a builder of relationships on a personal level with the guests behind the chair. , I just did a visionary exercise with my team on Friday and three of the seven, I had half the team over. Three of the seven said one of the things that they needed to, in order for them to reach the other side of their goals is they need to come off. and they work strictly on a professional script, which part of that is impressive. Part of that I love, I taught them the script, okay?

[00:29:37] **Jen B:** But your most successful hairdressers know when to turn that script on and know when to be relatable and one of the reasons we did this visionary exercise is I would routinely give my younger staff random pop quizzes

in the back. Tell me, tell me something personal about your last guest. And they would look at me like, what are you talking about? I'm like, tell me a personal fact. Do they have any kids? What do they do for a living? What do they do for fun? family, the Ford concept, family, occupation, recreation, and dreams. That all should be being talked about behind the chair. So, I was getting so frustrated at their lack of ability to retain any of that information because they're building relationships. If I go to any of my master artists right now and I said, tell me something personal about your book today, I'm telling you right now, they can go to all 13 people they see today and they could tell me something about their wi, their husband, their wife, their kids. Who's getting married, who just passed away, all the things. If you go to my younger staff and ask them, well, I would hope that they're getting better, but they didn't care as much. And this puts them in a position to where if I see them in the back room, go sit next to your client. Go pull up a stool.

[00:30:56] **Jen B:** Because unless you can see that they're actively working or doing something else, you need to be building that relationship. Because guess what? Yeah, you jack up their hair next time. They might not care as much because we're friends. I'll come back and I'll let Marissa fix it. If I don't have a personal relationship with you and I, we drop the ball. It's very easy to go to one of the other 50 salons that are in Medina because why not?

[00:31:23] **Antony W.:** Now that, is a generational thing. Yes. And it's a global thing everywhere. It's uhuh. It's like, I mean, I love young people, I love Gen Z. I've got the house full of them. Yeah. yeah. and they're great. but yeah, oftentimes if there's one criticism of what digital has done is it's made people less face to face in terms of being able to look someone in the eye and engage and chat and, you have conversations and

[00:31:50] **Jen B:** be delightful. You know, be yourself. But you know, it's our job to be their day-maker. Yeah. You know, so be their day maker, you know, and that requires more than just, you know, their rebuttal most of the time. Is their hair looked beautiful? Great. But yeah. Are, do they feel like your buddies. and I, I'm not telling you to be best friends with all of them, but you got to be buddies. Yeah. You have to be relatable. You have to build that personal connection. That's topic of what we were going to talk about.

[00:32:23] **Antony W.:** I know it's, well, yeah, Jen, this is, we're already going to have a second pup. I know that. Ok. Because

[00:32:28] **Jen B:** and by the way, I love the generations. I'm like secretly obsessed with studying Gen Z. Gen X and then the up-and-coming Gen A is like

a secret obsession of mine right now because we have to continue to be relevant. Right? I mean, we have to continue to know how to keep them as employees. I mean, we can talk for hours.

[00:32:47] **Antony W.:** Yeah, Exactly but in our industry, it's important. That's one of the great things about our industry, is it enables you I can talk to anybody. Yeah. Like, because I'm a hairdresser because I've been used to standing behind the chair for, you know, 10, 20, 30, 40 years and I can talk to anyone. Yeah. But a lot of other people just don't have that skill and hairdresser. Should be the gift to a lot of those young people to make sure that they don't fall into that trap, because there's a lot of young people that can't hold those conversations and be charming and curious and inquisitive and, you know, engage and, on a personal level, which is important.

[00:33:24] **Jen B:** So, this, sorry. Go ahead.

[00:33:25] **Antony W.:** Well, the one of the things I wrote down, which I'm curious about, you said all the staff have got an Apple watch, so that they know when their client comes in. I have to ask who, who buys the Apple Watch? Do they buy their own?

[00:33:36] **Jen B:** Well, some of 'em had 'em. Some of 'em had 'em, yeah. but now it's part of our level system. Yeah, so when they get to a level three, they can choose a cash bonus or they get the, they could have that, we get 'em to watch. So the majority of them, if they don't have an Apple watch, they have like the droid version of a smart watch. But yeah, it's both. It's both good. And we came up with that with the level system because we want everyone to have one. Yeah. So instead of just buying it for everybody, we created an incentive piece to that puzzle.

[00:34:07] **Antony W.:** Yeah. That's a good way around it. That's a very good way around it. now what else did I want to ask you about? I think I'm done with the front desk thing. I think I've come at that from lots of different angles there. And, I'm sure we could talk about, and as you said, it's different in every salon. Yeah. but I think you've given us a really good overview of all the reasons why you would want to do that and should do that. I know before we started recording, you just happened to drop the, oh, we're closed on Friday, and I'm curious about that. You said at the beginning of Covid that you and the two girls, sorry. The two girls, the two owners, sat down and went, okay, what's on our wish list and, you went desk. One of them went.

[00:34:42] **Jen B:** Cutting hours.

[00:34:43] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Cutting hours. Cutting their own hours? Yes. Correct. Who correct? who was it who said closing on Friday? Where did that come in?

[00:34:49] **Jen B:** Sheila was the one that said, I want to close on Friday.

[00:34:52] **Antony W.:** And she was about closing the salon, not just her not working,

[00:34:56] **Jen B:** correct. Right. Correct. Okay. in Medina, Ohio. So, we, to paint the picture, we are a suburb of Cleveland. Cleveland would be the biggest metropolitan city closest to us, and we're about an hour from Columbus, which is the capital. Okay. Yeah. Got it. Yeah. We're not in a metropolitan area. We're in an upper-echelon suburb. Okay. Yeah. Salons in our area on Fridays were our inherently new staff works because veteran staff isn't working on a Friday. Okay. Especially if they're working on Saturday and just how schedules were naturally built. We always had a much younger staff working on Fridays and it was a very hard day to staff with leadership. Okay. And to be honest, Sheila worked. Sheila worked Friday. Okay. that was her leadership day. The rest of us, we split up Monday through Thursday, but Friday was her day where Jen and I were not there. okay. It was frustrating for her no, no other way to put it. We had low production numbers other than her, like she was always a hundred percent booked out in.

[00:36:02] **Jen B:** I mean, they're both booked out 12, 14, 15 weeks in advance on their own. She always was like, why am I the only one doing hair on Fridays? You know what I mean? Like, why can't we build? And we would do events and we'd have other special things. We would run promos. It was a very hard day to build books. Well, after doing it for 14 years of her working Fridays, we said, okay, she said, I'll want to work Fridays anymore.

[00:36:29] **Jen B:** And we said, okay, well then who's going to be, who's going to be in that leadership role? We have no leadership team on. And she said, how about this? Let's close on Fridays. We'll open on Mondays. Cause Mondays are the typical salon day to be closed. We will take all the hours of Friday and we will set we will spread it out then through Monday, through Thursday, and Saturday.

[00:36:53] **Antony W.:** You're open five days?

[00:36:55] **Jen B:** We're open five days. So, Monday through Thursday, eight to eight, Saturdays during the summer, eight to three Saturdays during holiday, eight

to five. Okay. Right. So we lost no hours because what would happen on Fridays is we were open from nine to six. Well, then we were open from nine to five. Then we were open from nine to four. Then we were open from nine to three, and we kept shrinking the day. Well, then the more we shrunk the day, okay, that wasn't leaving much for a working crowd when you're open from nine to three, okay, there's nobody left. When we presented that to our team, it was like fireworks when out. When I had three interviews last week with, students in cosmetology school looking to onboard when they graduate this May or June when I said we're closed on Fridays, they lit up and they're like, for real? Like, that's real. And I said, yes. I said, here's the deal though. I said, we do education on Fridays. That's now our education day, which by the way, has proven to be a little bit more challenging to get outside educators. So full transparency there, because inherently educator their travel day is usually Sunday. Their class day is typically Monday. So we still make it work, but it just has to be planned out more, further in advance for the educators because not, I mean, we're probably one out of a thousand salons closed on Friday.

[00:38:19] **Antony W:** Yeah. So how many on, how many of those Fridays are like a complete day off and how many of them are Oh, it's a training day. We've got someone coming in.

[00:38:27] **Jen B:** Yeah. at least once a quarter. It's a complete day off at a minimum. Okay. If you are on the floor, it's a complete day off if you are in growing Up Roots, which is our training program. you are there. That's when education happens. We invite the entire team to all the education. Okay. And that's your prerogative. There is other days of education, which is usually once a month or once every two months, where everyone is required because it's an outside educator coming in. It's some kind of brand. It could be product knowledge, something everyone has to be present, but at a minimum. You are, you're, you at least have one Friday offer. There's nothing now they're, it's only, it's not all day education is from 10 to 12, it's two hours. Okay. Yeah. When it's an outside educator, obviously that's going to be more of a thing and it's going to be more of a day, obviously.

[00:39:20] **Antony W:** Sure.

[00:39:20] **Jen B:** But those are planned so far out in advance. So, for all intents and purposes, you're out the door by now. Right. Okay. Now because of this flexibility, there are some interesting things we found because we create flex within our team, which is more important to them than money. That could be a whole other conversation we could have at some point.

[00:39:40] **Jen B:** That's a generational thing as well. All of a sudden, they want to do each other's hair on Fridays. You know, we don't make them work Saturdays and all of a sudden I have half my team that works every Saturday now because I present it you don't have to, but you're booked a hundred percent every Saturday you work. I would rather have you not come in Wednesday morning and don't come in until two and work every Saturday or something along those lines. Why would you remove the day that you're the busiest?

[00:40:11] **Antony W.:** Yeah, well that's, that is exactly my take on it as well. But again, it does depend on the salon and the location of the salon and the sort of target market you're trying to attract. So, yeah, no.

[00:40:20] **Jen B:** We're, we call ourselves like a soccer suburb. We're like a soccer mom suburb. So, Friday nights for us, we're never going to be busy. There are sporting events. People are out with their families. They're at the parade, you know, they're downtown Medina at something. It was never like, I'm going to go get my hair done on a Friday community.

[00:40:39] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Okay. what else am I going to say there? I scribbled notes down. I can hardly read bone writing, it's always a problem. Gets me every time. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. oh, Saturdays. So, so you said to me before, tell me if I've got this right, that they only have to work every second Saturday though, so they get every other. Yes. And so they get every, they have to work every other Saturday. So in theory they get Friday, Saturday, and Sunday off. Yep. every other, yep. Rotation. Yep. And is that all of the team or just the senior team or what?

[00:41:12] **Jen B:** Anybody above a three. A level three. So that is, for us, that's the majority of the team. Mm You know now, if you are a younger artist, and let's say you're in the education program and you need, you know, you're like, Hey, my family's going on a lot of vacations this summer. Is there any way we could build it around some of these every other Saturdays? Well, of course I'm going to say yes. Okay. But I'm going to advise you that it would be, it would, do you serve you well if you put that those hours into other places on the book so that those hours aren't completely lost, especially as you're building a book.

[00:41:52] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Okay. That makes sense. Alright. listen, we have had such a good conversation and I purposefully. I realized straight away that we're, begin to talk so much about the stuff we've talked about that I haven't even got to the big thing that I wanted to talk about which is about the two salons. Yeah. And how the two salons are very different business models. Yeah. And I think that will be intriguing for, a lot of people everywhere. So, are you okay if

we finish this episode? Yeah. And we will do the sequel. Soon and we will make that a separate podcast because a hundred percent that I, I think that in itself, I don't want to rush that cause it is such.

[00:42:31] **Jen B:** That itself is a segment because there's so much there between both models that itself is a segment for sure.

[00:42:37] **Antony W.:** Yeah, exactly. Okay, so, where can people connect with you on Instagram or other social media channels?

[00:42:44] **Jen B:** Absolutely. my Instagram handle is Jen underscore LeBlanc underscore Ohio, or you could find me at, on Instagram 1 24 dot Go. And Salon Rootz is at Salon Rootz and Rootz is with a z.

[00:43:00] **Antony W.:** Great. Okay. Alright, well, I'll put those links on our website, Grow My Salon Business, and in the show notes for today's podcast. And if you've enjoyed listening to this podcast with Jen LeBlanc, then do me a favor, take a screenshot on your phone, share it to your Instagram stories, and don't forget to subscribe and leave us a rating and review on the Apple Podcast. That. So to wrap up this episode, with Jen Le Blanc. Thank you For being so open and honest and, so willing to share everything on this week's Grow My Salon Business Podcast.

[00:43:30] **Jen B:** Antony, it's been a pleasure. Thanks for having me.

[00:43:32] **Antony W.:** Well, look forward to the next one.

[00:43:33] **Jen B:** Absolutely. I'm, I already can't wait.

[00:43:37] **Antony W.:** 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](http://growmy salonbusiness.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.