

GMSB 194 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.

[00:00:29] **Antony W.:** Hey, it's Antony Whitaker here and welcome to today's episode of the Grow My Salon Business podcast. Today's episode is part two of what's involved with opening a new salon. Now my guest is Australian hairdresser, Daniel Di Iorio, who has been a business for just over 11 years, but is now relocating and opening a new salon. Now the idea is simply to follow the journey, the highs and the lows of getting a new salon venture off the ground and him sharing the lessons he's learning along the way. Now, if you didn't see or listen to the first podcast, it was episode 179 of the Grow My Salon Business podcast, and that aired on the 14th of February of this year. So here we are three or four months later and we're going to check in with Daniel to get an update on what's been going on since we last spoke. So Daniel, welcome back. I, haven't had any time to talk to you to sort of debrief what's been going on. So I'm in the dark as much as all of our listeners, but I know that a lot of people are looking forward to the updates on this, particular episode. So, over to you what's been happening and uh, I'm just going to bounce my questions off. the things that you tell me, what's been going on since we last spoke, at the end of January, beginning of February.

[00:01:46] **Daniel D.:** Yeah, how you going? An Antony, good to be back here and really looking forward to having this conversation with you because yeah, as you said, we haven't had a chance to speak and normally during our sessions, we're bouncing off each other and we're up to date. But you, you hit the nail on the head there in your intro about lessons being learnt and, I re-listened to the podcast myself and just found it funny how everything we spoke about back in January. And the time of events that were supposed to unfold are just not unfolding according to the time of events that we discussed. And the biggest thing that I've been, I suppose, learning and reminding myself is that control what you can control and stop stressing about things that are out of my control. And I suppose when you're moving into a new location, I mean, I think construction, anyone in Australia will definitely be understanding this at the moment, construction industry is having a really hard time, so the whole shopping center itself has been completely delayed. and the ramifications on my end have been huge, but I just keep trying to tell myself what's meant to be is meant to be and just keep expressing gratitude for the things that we have.

[00:02:58] **Daniel D.:** And at the moment, I still have, a healthy team. And a healthy environment to work in and a workplace, up until a certain date that I've had to negotiate terms to make sure it's still there for me. So really grateful about that. And I'm grateful that I'm not in a difficult financial position so I can afford to prolong, or wait, I suppose, for the building to be ready. But as it stands right now, yeah, it's all about controlling what I can control and the actual progress of the whole place has been quite heavily delayed at this point.

[00:03:29] **Antony W.:** Right. so, well this is, this is certainly going to be interesting, Can I just say right off the bat, that's very big of you to be so, what's the word? Well put it this way, I would be pulling my hair out. I would be, I would be screaming and ranting and raving, you know? Well, maybe not, but you, you get the idea. You are being very calm about this. I'm sure you've had moments where maybe you haven't been, so calm, but I, I ta I take my hat off you, to you for, you know, demonstrating that sort of approach to it about controlling the controllables.

[00:04:03] **Daniel D.:** Well, you see, the thing is I'm still working in a workplace and managing this project at the same time, so we're working in a time post covid. I'm a business owner who still has a fully booked out column because we still need to make our ends meet, plus I'm doing everything I can to have the right cash flow to get in there. So, I'm working a stacked column. I've recently grown my team, so I'm working a stacked education column for the new recruitments in the team. I'm also working in real time in a place that I know I don't want to be in anymore, but it's still my place of work until the new place is ready. So I have a responsibility to lead by example, and I know when things go wrong in my column and I start acting like a banana. Banana, things start happening in the salon and this is way out of my control. The worst thing I can do is just bring that into my workplace. No different to bringing your shit from work home and bringing that into your place of home. It's just one of those things that I have to remain calm. It's a great example to my team to understand that no matter how big. A stressful project may be that there was always going to be a lighter side to it, and it is much harder to do than it is to say, of course, but I just think these lessons are happening to me because it's shaping me for a better future. And whatever the future may bring, I'm going to be have, you know, thicker skin or leather skin for it when it does come. So it's teaching me a lot of composure and a lot of patience, more than I thought I ever had. So it's, you know what I really mean? It's what an opportunity to be able to try and do this really. That's how I look at it.

[00:05:46] **Antony W.:** Okay. Well, I'm going to be, I'm making some notes as we talk. and basically those notes are, what are the lessons that, that you're learning? so the first one, right off the bat, was about, you need to be flexible with your timelines. If you are thinking you are going to open a new salon like you are, dates aren't necessarily set in stone that there's stuff that happens in the world, which is going to throw those dates that. Of course that are beyond your control now, so that was the first thing I wrote down. And, and then, you know, I put down as a sort of a sub-note to that was control the controllables, and, and to ask yourself, what can you learn from it? That's a really good management lesson. Full stop. And, uh, then the fourth one is composure and patience. which is also all good lessons, you know that they're important now. Like you, I listened before I jumped on this call with you this morning when I was walking the dog this morning. I listened to our first episode and there was one thing that stood out to me that you've sort of brought up already, and that was that your landlord was, Going to give you some sort of a kickback based on you achieving all the timelines, and if you achieve those timelines, they'd be going to make a kickback's the wrong [00:07:00] word, a contribution.

[00:07:01] **Daniel D.:** Yep.

[00:07:02] **Antony W.:** For you getting set up. Now when I heard you talking about that in the last podcast, this morning when I was re-listening to it, I didn't think to myself because I had no idea whether you were running on time or behind or whatever. I didn't think to myself at the time, oh, I wonder if that works two ways. So that's what I'm going to ask you right off the bat. Have they turned around to you and said, Daniel, we know that you are meant to open on this date. You're meant to have access to the site on this date, but because of a, B, C, um, we are running behind. Um, and so therefore Daniel, we're going to give you X dollars. Now I'm laughing cause I'm sure it probably hasn't worked like that, but I just need to know for sure. Has there been any sort of, uh, accommodation to help you? Because obviously your position is your occupying another premises on a, are you on a month by month lease there at the moment?

[00:07:51] **Daniel D.:** Yeah, so I, I will go month to month if we roll past June 30. So I had already secured that to pre that. Things weren't going to go to plan, didn't think I'd need to use it, but at this stage it does look like I may have to use at least one month of that, which. Back to being earlier about being grateful, very grateful for my advisors at that time to be able to set that up for myself and be able to provide the workplace in terms of what is going to happen with my new landlords and new premises. at this stage, I actually haven't given them any form of a dollar, so I haven't paid anything. They don't owe me anything. As such, everything is sort of triggered from the moment that they allow us to enter that premises. Once we enter that premises, we have 28 days to fit out. So the best thing that I've got going for at the moment, I suppose some people, like my wife would call it O C D, but it's like I've got everything organized to the nut. Like right down to the point, my brothers, my shop fitter, everything is already made sitting in the factory ready to go because I don't want to jeopardize that contribution if we do have 28 days to go. I don't want to find myself in a position like the rest of the world is dealing with in construction. Thankfully, we've had the finances to get things ready. We are working on a timeline that as soon as my new landlords, Woolworth say, Hey, you can go in on this date to start your fit out. You've got 28 days to tick all these boxes to get your contribution. We're going to be in the best shape possible to walk in there, get it done, and then yes, the contribution will still remain the same.

[00:09:23] **Antony W.:** Okay, good. So have you learned anything about contracts, meaning, You are dealing with a big, international company that your contract is with. So there's a tendency for the little guy i e yourself to go, well, the contract is what it is. There's nothing that I could possibly do about it. And in fact, I'm just going to read through however many pages of it there are, and I'm sure there's multiple pages and I'm sure it's written in legalese, uh, and I'm sure that maybe you haven't necessarily or didn't necessarily go through and understand the implication of every clause in there. So now that things aren't working out, I suppose what I'm asking you, is there anything that you're saying to yourself, oh my gosh, I wish I knew that at the time. I wish I'd read that at the time. I wish I'd understood that better at the time. Any lessons along that area?

[00:10:14] **Daniel D.:** Not since we've had our challenges and delays, but I do remember a particular feeling that was new to me during this, uh, negotiation process when I sat down with my solicitor or my legal representative to go through the contract.

And I do remember. I couldn't even describe the feeling to you right now, but I do remember, uh, let's just say a version of unease where it became quite clear that I was the little guy and I was entering a contract with a really big guy, and there was a lot of elements in there, as you said, written in legalese that. Have enough to make you shake in your boots. A lot of it revolves around if you don't do this, this is the repercussion. If you don't do this, this is the repercussion and they don't exist in my current contract, to the extent of which Woolworths would want to cover their own asses to stay alive. So I can't say that there was any lessons recently, but I think the biggest lesson I did learn, I actually flipped it into a motivator to think. If you want to be big and you want to scale, you need to be with big people and scale, and these are the risk elements that you have to be involved with, and they have to be your motives and your reminders and provided that you get it right. I did find that there were opportunities within the co contract that if you proved yourself an asset to these people, opportunities to expand and grow beyond your belief.

[00:11:44] **Daniel D.:** Were going to be available. So the lesson for me was, I suppose I'm feeding a version of hunger and ego that I didn't know I had by entering this opportunity, and now I'm seeing it in a bigger scope to think, okay, the risk is bigger, but it's only because the reward can be bigger. And I think the bottom line is they've done the research to say, Hey, put your shop here. These people are going to walk past, we know you should be making this many dollars and cents because of the opportunity we provide. Get it wrong. This is the repercussions, but if you get it right here is what we can show you. So I don't know if that's a lesson, but that's definitely the feelings that I felt and the motives that I've got from it.

[00:12:26] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Good. Okay. Alright, so, back to you. Tell us what else has been happening? the build out has been delayed so that, so that's the first thing off the bat. Last time it, we don't, we didn't really anticipate that. So the build out's been delayed. There's obviously, uh, knock ons with that you had a little bit of a plan B and that your lease on your existing salon, you knew that you had a buffer of you, you could be in there until the beginning of July. do you anticipate that it'll be any longer than July?

[00:12:56] **Daniel D.:** Yeah. At this stage it does look like construction may begin at the end of May. but it's. The, main communication between myself, the builders, and Woolworths even. He too, is at a point where his answers are becoming limited because he's running out of versions of reasons and excuses. he's the main coordinator between 30 odd tenants, so it's at a point where I believe there has been some threats of liquidated damage cost. That some people may be applying. You know, I'm once again grateful. I'm already in business and my main challenges are about keeping my staff up to date with the communication and communicating on a repetitive basis to all of my clients to ensure that there's a smooth transition. But I'm grateful in the sense that I still have my month-to-month lease and my finances were secured in a different way that I don't have to worry. So I think even, it's too hard to say, but their focus from day one. Once the delay was already inevitable was to try and get us into the new financial use. So as a result, Laura and I have tried to configure all of our movements to that open date around the 1st of July. So it has worked in its favors though, to be honest, because, uh, we had two challenges that happened with the interior design. Turned out that when it was time to order our tiles for the floor,

They actually don't make those anymore. And the new ones were going to take 15 weeks. And we didn't have a choice. So we ordered them as soon as possible in the hope that whatever meant to be was meant to be. And we've had nothing but delays.

[00:14:32] **Daniel D.:** And now the tiles are sitting in my garage, which is great. Um, and we also had to have an interior design change, which was really difficult because marketing approved the look of the place. And they approved the look of the place. Back in September, once we had the green light to start to move forward with a C D C application for council, we started moving in all the direction based on the plans. Once the plans got to the engineers, the engineers said, oh, well, sorry. You can't actually do that because of X, Y, and z. So then we had to redesign or come up with an idea within, I think they gave us, at the time was a five day deadline to reconfigure it, get it back to marketing. Marketing, had to get it over to the engineers and then the engineers had to approve it. And at the time, that really sucked because it was going to add, I think we were estimated nearly eight and a half thousand dollars to the build. And, uh, at one point it looked like we were going to have to prove that Woolworths were going to have to fund that part of the problem because it was out of the budget.

[00:15:34] **Daniel D.:** It was approved long before. Thankfully, with the delays, we had some time to negotiate. We had some ways that we could come around, how we could make the improvement to the salon fit out. And then it turns out it actually saved me, uh, 13 or \$14,000, which was fantastic. So, minor changes. Had to be made throughout the delays. So there were some positives because it created less stress for us. but yeah, the delays

[00:16:00] **Antony W.:** A cost saving.

[00:16:01] **Daniel D.:** And cost saving. Yeah, I mean much.

[00:16:04] **Antony W.:** So was that a, a structural thing or a health and safety thing? What was it?

[00:16:09] **Daniel D.:** It was a structural thing. Yeah. So, without going into too much detail, I mean, I know you've seen the images, but I've got two glass walls in my salon. So from the location that we. Put our spa area was, basically we were going to drill, drill the holes directly down, but we couldn't drill through those parts of the concrete slab. And we were just a little bit disappointed because had that have been the problem, we should have been given those plans from day one. And I, I remember saying to Woolworths, I know you didn't build the center for me, but you gave me two glass walls. You gave me 80 square meters. You put two of these beams through the concrete, which only means I can drill in one area. What type of a salon did you think was going to be built in here? So once they sort of seen my frustration, they gave us a little bit more time and we ended up having to build a raised floor, which is very common in a lot of salons, but it was something that we just didn't want. but here we are. We built to raise Salon as a result, it's been able to save us some extra money. We've had to build the floor, of course, but we're going to save some money in some core holes underneath the basin area. and worked out in our favor. And I mean, the design is still pretty, it's just a step. It's a step that we're going to have to step up every

single day at work now. and it could be a trip hazard on a busy day or a trip hazard, uh, for anyone walking into the spa area, but, You know, it is what it is. That's what we had to do, and thankfully it was approved and, and cost saving, as you said.

[00:17:33] **Antony W.:** Yeah. I just want to drop two things in for my audience that are listening first one is when you talk about Woolworths, for anyone who doesn't know, um, they are your landlord and Woolworths in Australia are a, a totally separate entity to Woolworths and the, and the rest of the world, which pretty much doesn't exist anymore. as far as I'm aware. I certainly know in the UK they don't exist anymore and I don't. know, whether they still exist in America or not, although they originally started in the United States. So Woolworths is your landlord. The other thing I wanted to just mention is when you talked about financial year and 1st of July, uh, for people that that don't know and most people won't is that's when the financial year starts in Australia. so that, that's what that is. so could I say that, that maybe a lesson, if it's a lesson, is. Anticipate problems with design, to be flexible to recognize that between health and safety, between structural engineers, all that sort of stuff. There will often be problems. So, I suppose what I'm saying is don't rule them out until it's done. Any anything could happen, like whether it's cost wise or health and safety, they love messing with things as well. that there can be things that you have to be fluid about. So important to have a degree of fluidity with your thinking and, and budgets. In your case, you're lucky that it saved you money. That's fantastic.

[00:18:50] **Daniel D.:** yeah. But I, but I also think at that level too. Especially when you've had a design embedded into your mind and into your heart. You know, just take, just take a deep breath when you hear something you don't want to hear, just take a deep breath. You don't need to create an answer on the spot. You know, 24 hours sleep on it. Wake up, have a fresh discussion in the morning. It's amazing how quickly your perception can change. But I suppose, you know, in the beginning of the meeting we spoke about how calm and, and patient I've become. It hasn't come without all the extra stress and bringing that into the salon floor, but I always just, you know, it's the same as when I hire someone and they're so nervous.

[00:19:31] **Daniel D.:** I said, that's great. It's because you want it. And when I get fired up about something, it's just like, that's a reminder to me that I want this. But yeah, just taking a deep breath and just thinking 24 hours isn't going to change anything. Just take a deep breath, think about it. And then, yeah, you need to be flexible. You just need to be flexible and think, okay, it wasn't going to work like that. Find me a solution, let's work it out. What can we do? And that's what it

[00:19:54] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Good, good. Okay. Alright. so what else has been happening aside from these, you know, [00:20:00] structural delays and design changes you've had to implement? What other problems have you had to deal with? Have you had any, any staffing issues? I mean, I know when we last spoke that, that there was one of the things that I was a little bit taken by surprise with is that you are relocating, uh, I think we worked it out that it was, was 18 Ks, which is about 10 to 12 miles away, and that's a significant transition. for clients to make. It's not one or two miles, it's 10 to 12 miles, you know, 18 Ks and you, you did budgets on 50% of them following you, which I think is a good, I think it's a good number to have done. I don't think I would've anticipated more than that. But then I was also thinking about this. this

morning, is that, you know, in terms of staff commuting time, 10 to 12 miles, um, in the morning, rush hour traffic in the afternoon, rush hour traffic. That can be a considerable amount of time as well. So I, I would be wondering, and perhaps this will be the next [00:21:00] podcast we have when, cause we'll do a third one when you are actually open. so I don't know, July sometimes, and it'll be interesting to see if. How that has impacted on your team with the additional commute time, et cetera.

[00:21:12] **Antony W.:** So any staffing issues that have come out of this that you could sort of directly attribute to, being connected in some way. And they could be good staffing issues or they could be awkward staffing issues. So you know what's happening in that area?

[00:21:25] **Daniel D.:** Yeah, so I'm, I'm pretty lucky in the sense that the direction that we are moving is going to be completely against traffic. So not only do most of my team live in similar distance, apart from the two salons, the other one is going to be completely against traffic, which is a huge bonus. But, I have had some positive. Issues with staff. I've had a recruitment challenge and the recruitment challenge was an abundance of interviews of people who actually wanted to work. And it was great for me because I have a big, first of all, I'm 33, so I think I'm way, I'm, I'm I was going to say way, I'm not, yeah, I'm way too young. I'm way too young to be. In the basket of saying, I don't want to be training any unit apprentices anymore. but I did have this feeling that before I got to Lexington, maybe I needed a senior, maybe I needed to hire a senior. Uh, as we spoke about before, my wife, she's only in two days a week, she does all the bookwork, um, behind, behind the scenes because we've got a little one at home. She was the head colorist. Since she's been at home, I've always thought maybe we need another senior. To come in. So, I began interviewing, we changed our approach on social media to begin to attract people to understand what we could provide for them as a workplace and what that opportunity would bring in the new location, new beginning, new story, new life, new chapter, everything around there. And it started to work. It's, it worked well. I think I had a total of seven interviews and, a few of those were seniors. And, I learned fairly quickly. That's a, I'm way too young to be considering a senior and B, you know, with such a huge emphasis on culture and such a huge emphasis on career path in my salon, I just was so fearful after interviewing these seniors about how quickly that culture could shift.

[00:23:19] **Daniel D.:** And when I spend all my spare time, and I say spare time is in a day that I don't take clients. Training my younger team and training my assets and showing that on Instagram to say that these kids are young enough and they are good enough, and they will look after you when you come in to hire a senior and instantly have to get that, that staff member performing or outperforming the juniors to make sure she's covering her way. Take the opportunities away from the juniors. It just didn't sit well with me. And I was interviewing and coming across with all these different types of personalities and wants and desires, and this is what I can earn and this is what I can do, and so on and so forth. So I just remains patient. And next thing, we had this young girl, 17 walk in said, I want to be a hairdresser. I've always wanted to be a hairdresser. I put her on board, and she's been fantastic. So she's going to begin her apprenticeship at the end of the year cause she's still in year 12 at school. I've told her, you need to finish year 12 for all you know, you'll get carpal tunnel and then you

won't be able to be a hairdresser in three years and you'll wish you did your school certificate.

[00:24:18] **Daniel D.:** I said, you just stay patient. You help us on Saturdays. So they come in as a team assistant for three months. That's three months for us to check on them, them to make sure we're right for them. Two weeks after that I get another call, another girl who's looking for an apprenticeship, and Laura says to me, can we afford that? I said, Well, I haven't done the math, but can we afford to say no? I said now we're at a point where our team is at seven. If we take her on, we're back up to eight. Eight months ago, my team was down to four, which included myself and Laura and things didn't look really good to think that it had completely flipped eight months later, and we had the opportunity to have two more apprentices. So I had this interview. She ticked all the boxes. She came in for her onboarding process, which is quite lengthy. She had it. She had her first day. She's had her second day, and she's been phenomenal. And I said to Laura, so we have one on Fridays now who's only costing me one day a week. I've got one on Saturdays who's costing me one day a week. And I said to Laura, one can start her apprenticeship when she gets to Lexington. The other one can start at the end of the year. And if I just have to work a few extra hours to make those ends meet until we can give these people the career path that they want. That's what we're going to have to do because they're a good problem to have. And I'm, I'm too young to just hire seniors and hope that they're going to make money and not shift my culture. So in all of that process, I think the biggest thing that I've learned to myself is I'm more and more discovering my purpose as much as I love business, and I was about to swear there. Love this industry and I love everything about hair. I'm born to get the best out of people I am. I'm creating a salon and an industry around me where a community, sorry, industry is a poor word. I'm building a community around me where I am building better career paths for juniors. And the two juniors that I've interviewed recently both had two questions that saddened me to the bone.

[00:26:09] **Daniel D.:** The first one was when she came in with her mom, cause she's underage age. I always interview with their parents when they're under 18. I just wanted to know, am I going to get a break? Because all my friends say that in hair dressing you don't get breaks. And I love that question cause yeah, you do get breaks in my salon. But I also remind them that if you are, if you're really good at what you do, sometimes breaks are inevitable. But you can worry about that when you're a senior. When you're a junior, I will urge you to get a break and you will take your break because I tell you to. And sure enough, on her first day, it was like two 30 and I was sick of telling her to have a break. I literally grabbed her and sat her down and said, have your break. She goes, oh, but I can help. I said, you love your job. I get it. Just take a seat, have your break. The second question that came from it was, And she's a little bit older. She's 20, but she said to me, what is it going to look like for me in a year? Because all my friends told me that in hairdressing, all I do is clean and I don't get to do any hair for the first however long. And I've been working on my new employee levels and my career structure, so none of my team have seen it. But I actually took some time to show her and say, this is what your career path will look like here.

[00:27:18] **Daniel D.:** And the only reason why you will continue to clean shelves is because of your lack of ability. To be impressionable upon what your role and your

opportunities are and just seeing their eyes light up and be amazed at how well it has been built as a structure. Just keeps reminding me that that is my purpose. And at as soon as humanly possible, financially, I want to get to a point where I'm completely off the tools and bringing people in and training them. And I, I constantly remind my team in a time where everybody feels like hair dresser don't earn enough. I just want to remind them that I'm here to give you the skills. For you to make better career decisions, whether you work for me forever or you go on here to make something different of yourself. I want to be able to create an environment. Full of happy cultural people who love what we do, who can bring people in as a community, and share how beautiful our industry can be. And then with those skills, they can work for me for life, or they can work for me for five years, or they can go and search for greener grass, but I'm going to give them everything I've got. And because of those recruitment challenges that I've just had in the last few weeks of interviewing seniors, interviewing people who want more money than.

[00:28:33] **Daniel D.:** That I can afford right down to the juniors who expressed concerns as little as breaks and career path. It just reminded myself and Laura that we're on the right path with what we're doing here. We're on the right path with what we're opening here, and if we can stick to our guns, we can begin to create that culture within our salon that hairdressing is a very viable career and you can earn whatever you need to earn doing it, but nothing is more important than earning the satisfaction of mastering your craft.

[00:29:02] **Antony W.:** Okay. So, as a lesson, and I agree with you, I would've employed that person as well

[00:29:08] **Daniel D.:** Yep.

[00:29:09] **Antony W.:** and I would've employed them because you're going to lose one of them now, not, when I say when you're going to lose one of them, you're going to lose one of your eight staff before you open. Um, or as soon as you open, you're going to lose one of them. So I, based on that, it's like, for me, the lesson is always be recruiting and forward slash always be training.

[00:29:32] **Daniel D.:** Yep.

[00:29:33] **Antony W.:** And, I was going to say that the thing I noticed with you on a lot of your social media stuff is there's a lot of training going on, which is great. Uh, so I totally agree with your thinking there. So whether you were opening the new salon or not, I would've probably grabbed that person. But it's a good lesson. Always be recruiting, always be training to develop and control, the culture that you want. So I think there were a lot of good lessons in there. I don't, know if you've had the chance to listen to it yet. I know you do listen to the podcast as well. but the one that came out this week, With, Steph Fox, which is, episode 190. I don't know if you've had a chance to listen to that yet, but that is very much talking about what you just talked about with. Selling the dream to people about this is, you know, marketing, who you are as a brand, as a business, and what the opportunities are that, a hair dressing career presents. So, if you haven't listened to it, I highly recommend that Stephanie

Fox, episode 190 and that also brings me to another thing I wanted to talk about with the new salon and the new salon. I know you are not having a front desk and we touched on that in our last podcast episode, but since you and I have spoken about that, I don't know again if you've listened to this one, but I had on episode 186, a lady called Jen LeBlanc and she is the sort of champion of going desk-less. Did you get a chance to listen to that?

[00:31:00] **Daniel D.:** I did definitely.

[00:31:01] **Antony W.:** Great. Okay. So a lot of good tips in there about why you should and how to make it work. I, one of the things I particularly loved that she said was, how. The staff, when they reach a certain level, all get given an Apple watch. So, using tech to notify them, you're in the middle of a blow dryer or a haircut or color, whatever, and your alarm goes off your next clients and sort of thing. It's like using tech to solve a lot of those problems. I thought were, was great. So are you still, have you made any changes. In terms of the experience that you're anticipating with the new salon, since we last spoke, you know, like for example, going deskless.

[00:31:43] **Daniel D.:** So we have been shifting the way we train as a team, so we train as a team once a month. And I've been slowly or soft launching, I suppose some of the changes. so we've, we've built an eight steps of salon success. So each of those steps is something that we embody every single part of our service. And I've been breaking them down into training and beginning to introduce them in our current location. And some of those revolve around reception. Some of those revolve around saying goodbye to people and there are some challenges around that because I suppose in one way, a, I have to lead by example. So I've been doing it for the longest to break those habits. It's definitely the hardest for me. In fact, the other day I answered the phone the old way and I'm just, I was grateful that no one was at the salon and how do that because we're just trying to emphasize a better language on the phone.

[00:32:37] **Daniel D.:** Right. So those changes have been introduced, And working slowly. The actual biggest change that I did, that I brought in Salon Scale as a stock management tool, about 10 months ago. But we actually from February moving forward, we brought in Salon Scale as a price, servicing tool as well. So now we break our services up into two portions, which is service plus product fee. and that was one of our biggest change because that sort of, Revolved around our service menu and it had to change the way we communicate about what we do and really got my team to understand that we are a classic age old style trade. We are service per minute, per labor per person, and getting our service menu to s service menu to flip around and get them to understand that the title of what you are doing for that person. For argument's sake, quarter head of foils isn't a quarter head of foils. It's what can you do for that person in 45 minutes? Whatever it says on their receipt is irrelevant. If they show you they want something there and you know you can do it in 45 minutes, you're charging for your time, but now charging for your service aspect and adding the product fee is helping us. And excuse the French, cut the bullshit. We're telling you exactly what it takes to run our business

[00:33:55] **Daniel D.:** Now this is what it costs me per minute to have my time. I'm going to do everything I can to be on time for you. We're going to do everything we

can to give you the result you want in the time available. And this is what it's going to cost us in overheads. And right now with the raising interest rates and economy challenges and everything else that's going on, what a time to be transparent. What a time to say this is what it actually costs us and it removes the whole. Not that I ever think that my clients ever thought that, but it removes the whole, oh, these guys must be making millions, \$500 for a full head of foils. Like, where's all that going? Well, now it's, this is what the hourly rate is and this is what it's costing us in product. And somewhere in between there, we're able to make our margin. And it's also teaching my staff a better level of communication on the. Honesty side of things, which is one of our key pillars throughout the salon. It's about being honest and it's just cutting the bullshit, telling you exactly what it's going to take. But it's also helping the training model because then I may, I'm teaching my team in time and teaching my team to not look at the book and say, okay, Susie, welcome. Yeah, beautiful. So I've got you in for a quarter, head foils, and you just go in and smack out a tea line. No, no, no. I've got you here for 45 minutes today.

[00:35:07] **Daniel D.:** Susie, how can I help you? What can we do for you? So that has been one of many major shifts that we've been implementing into training. The next big thing that we are going to train on is how we are going to do chairside checkout. So I'm just waiting for our point of sale company to update an element on the cloud part of the server. And it actually revolves around salon scale. It doesn't actually carry over. On the cloud version. So once I get them to update that for us, then the next thing that we're going to train on is, deskless checkout, or at the chair chairside checkout. and be able to say goodbye to people at the chair. So yeah.

[00:35:45] **Antony W.:** Okay. So we we're going to have to wrap up shortly, but there's two things I wanted to touch on one of them was budgets.

[00:35:51] **Daniel D.:** Yep.

[00:35:51] **Antony W.:** because often what happens, whether it's a, you know, a residential thing or a business thing, is you anticipate a certain budget. And when we last spoke, you were estimating 150 K you said originally, but then you said, but it looks like that's already going to go up to 200 K. So how are you tracking in terms of controlling those, uh, budget, costs?

[00:36:15] **Daniel D.:** At this stage, we're still on track to be under 200. I think it's, it's coming up to about one 90 at the moment. I'm just waiting for one more quote to come back. We've shifted. A certain element, within our signage that was going to be beautiful, but just way too expensive. So once I get that quote back, we should comfortably be about 185, 190, and then, just a, you know, a 10% ad hoc fee there just to make sure that we've missed something, we need to get something, we're short on something and whatnot.

[00:36:45] **Daniel D.:** So we've been quite tight with that. and I alluded to it earlier there with the changes that are happening with the banks and the interest rates and whatnot, thankfully we've secured our loan in a way that even if this business, uh, this build continues to delay, that the bank isn't going to need to come back and take it off

us, reassess us and give us back what we'd be entitled to. So, I think the budget should be fine. Plus salon business is actually doing okay and steady at the moment. So, should we need to go over and it does involve spending more than what we borrowed, then we should be in a good position at the moment.

[00:37:20] **Antony W.:** Right. Okay. It always makes me laugh when you watch those programs. I don't know if you have it in Australia, um, oh gosh what's it? Grand designs, uh, where people, you know, build a new home.

[00:37:32] **Daniel D.:** Yep.

[00:37:33] **Antony W.:** the amount of times people go 30, 40, 50%, sometimes double the budget. and oftentimes, you know, they, they simply don't have the readies for that. so, there's still two things I want to touch on. Uh, they're just another two, one, one of them is sort of connected to what you've just said. Is y you are very lucky in your brother, I believe is a shop fitter. And so, and, and as you've already said, he doesn't do anything for nothing and neither should he, you know, that's his business as well, and I think that that's a always an important thing to do. So there's advantages with working with family, however, there can also be disadvantages working with family. So any lessons that have come from that.

[00:38:17] **Daniel D.:** Yeah, I think, I

[00:38:19] **Antony W.:** Bearing in mind, your bearing in mind, your mom and maybe your brother are even going to listen

[00:38:23] **Daniel D.:** no, you know, like. You know, I mean, I don't know if my brother will listen to this, one of my brothers listened. I don't know if this one will, but I think like without using my brother as an example, I can use my accountant as an example. He'll definitely listen to this. But my accountant is one of my best mates, longtime best mates, and we established really early in our relationship that we just had to make time to call each other as friends as well.

[00:38:47] **Daniel D.:** And I think at the moment when my brother is doing my work for me, uh, he must feel like I'm only calling him. In regards to work related things. So, uh, I think you still have to, if you've got friends or family doing something for you, you still have to remember that you have to make time for the relationship side of it.

[00:39:03] **Daniel D.:** Especially when you are making that investment. But I have to admit, not just because my brother, he's got a very, very keen eye for everything that he's done. And you know, my interior designer did a great job putting it all together. But then there was just elements that my brother said, he said, you know, in that front drawer there, you know, how big's your printer? Is your printer going to fit in that drawer? And I thought, oh shit, no, it's not going to fit in that drawer. So having that access to say, Let's put an extra 50 millimeters there and no worries. That's totally fine. It works out for my brother. Had I have just employed any Joe Blow would've built the cupboard and I would've thought, fuck me. My printer doesn't fit in this drawer. Why doesn't my printer fit? Why didn't anybody think of that? So, you know, I suppose

it's only been positive at this point. Um, but yeah, I think it's just sometimes. You got to be firm from day one. I've got a lot of clients who sit in my chair, and even the builder who's putting it all together for me, sits in my chair.

[00:39:55] **Daniel D.:** He's been in my chair for, you know, eight or nine years now, and I just said, look, I'd love you to have the job. He said, yeah, yeah, yeah, I'll look after you. And I said, no, no, no, you, you charge me what? You charge me. You look after me by saying, if I'm there Tuesday, six o'clock, be there Tuesday, six o'clock. And if you can't make Tuesday six o'clock, don't call me Tuesday six 30, call me Monday and just say, Hey mate, can we shift the day? That's workmanship. And that's worth every cent. And it's lovely to have someone in there who cares, but nothing more important than workmanship and honesty. And that's, that's how you can look after someone just the same, that if your haircuts at four 30, you best believe your coffee will be there, you'll get your hair washed, and I'll be cutting four 40 at the latest. You know what I mean? There's.

[00:40:36] **Antony W.:** Yeah, I, I'm totally with you on that. I think that's a really important thing, regardless, but particularly with a big project like this, I think even more so. Uh, so, so the last thing that I, I wanted to ask you about was the old salon. Um, because as you've said, you know, you've got until July, whatever date, in there, uh, before the lease expires. And, you've talked about the possibility of being able to sell that or offload it to somebody else, fixtures and fittings, et cetera, and the fact that you haven't had a great relationship always with the landlord, um, any, any news in that area as to whether you've been able to sell the salon or, you know, get some of your costs back in terms of the fixtures and fittings? Because as you said in the first one, and I know this, that you've gone and spent 50 grand on a refit on that salon months ago, not even years ago, months ago. so what's the update there?

[00:41:30] **Daniel D.:** in the time that I've had it online with, with the brokers, I've only literally had two and a half people semi-interested. I suppose first of all, it's a challenging economy for someone to come in and, and buy something essentially that has little to no goodwill because. I can't quantify what's left behind. it's hard because the broker is doing his version of a good job. Um, and it appears on the reports that they send me that there's a lot of people interested. But I've only had one actual person come walk through the salon who was just a private investor, uh, who is still semi-interested. But you know, back to point number one, I'm controlling what I can control and what's meant to be is what's meant to be.

[00:42:13] **Daniel D.:** And the next step for me is to be, begin to create some safety nets. So I've already organized the meeting at the end of this month, which is May to, meet with the landlord and meet with the, managing agent to discuss what the salon should look like. If I don't find a buyer when I need to leave. And that way I can begin to determine. What that budget would look like if I need to rip that out and try and sell the items individually. So yeah, the plan is, at this stage, the two and a half people that are interested, I'm not really pushing them. if they come up with an offer, then that's what it's meant to be. And if not, I just need to put some contingencies in place to make sure that I am best prepared for whatever I need to leave behind.

[00:42:56] **Daniel D.:** my other brothers actually in real estate, he seems to think that maybe the landlord. Maybe trying to make a deal with some of the prospective buyers outside of me and say, look, let his lease run out. We'll tell him, leave it as it is and then you can come in here for free. And you know what, if that's the case, it's still going to save me, ripping it out. So it is what it is. And, um, just taking it day by day. I've got two months left on my lease. So, at the moment let's just try and get a concrete date from Woolworths. Once I have a concrete date there, I'm going to flip my approach a little bit here at the salon. I might put it on Gumtree and Marketplace and deal with a whole bunch of time wasters for a month. And if that's what it is, I'll try and sell things individually and clean it up as best as possible. Get my bond back and call it a day, hopefully.

[00:43:42] **Antony W.:** Yeah. So when are you anticipating, the open date for the new salon? what's the latest? I know it's been a fairly flexible thing, but what's the latest thing that you are anticipating?

[00:43:52] **Daniel D.:** I'm going to say probably the safest I could say at this point would be a date in July. I don't know what date, but I'm going to say sometime in July yeah, to be, to be exact. I think I'll know the exact date next Tuesday. We've got a site measurement happening, which is great. We're going out to see the site and measure and. Get excited about it, but I, I dare say that they would've something a little more concrete for me next week, and it would be final from that point, I believe.

[00:44:19] **Antony W.:** Okay. Are there any problems that you are anticipating?

[00:44:24] **Daniel D.:** no, no problems. I just, it's the transition between the two sounds.

[00:44:29] **Antony W.:** Yeah, exactly.

[00:44:30] **Daniel D.:** I, essentially, the way I have it in my mind is I'm going to have about a week and a half of downturn. And in that week and a half, I want to have some r and r for the team, and I want to have like a week retreat. I'm not going to go anywhere, but I am going to do some team building exercises. I want the team to go out and get their hair done at other places and do some mystery shopper exercises. I want to have a day where we take everything out of the salon and I want to have a day where we put everything in the salon. I want to have some days where we can train and some days where we can get some content.

[00:45:00] **Daniel D.:** The biggest problem that I'm going to have, is if it does open in July, I've got my manager, Michelle, getting married. She's off for three weeks and I've got my third year apprentice. Bella going to Europe for three weeks for her 21st. And once again, what's meant to be is meant to be. If they're not there for the grand opening, I'll rein reintroduce them when they come back in. We'll do our marketing photos later. Uh, and that's what it's supposed to be. So it is, no matter what, whether they're there or not, we're going to be booked out because we're already a bi, a busy salon. Plus you're going to have walk-ins. Laura's going to have to pick up some extra days, and we'll make it happen, if that's what it is.

[00:45:38] **Antony W.:** Great. Okay. Well, well, we will, um, talk again and I'm going to aim for August, you know, to make sure you're open. and it'll be interesting to see what's happened, between now and then, because, you know, there's a lot of water to fly under the bridge between now and then. Anything can happen, anything does happen.

[00:45:54] **Antony W.:** and so I, I, first of all, I want to thank you for. Sharing so openly and honestly, you know, everything that's going on, sounds like you've really got things, uh, well and truly under control. not that I would've expected, anything less from you. Um, so well done for that. so listen, we need to wrap up. Whereabouts can people connect with you on, Instagram or any other social media channels

[00:46:18] **Daniel D.:** You know what? I actually, I was really impressed. I've always heard you end your show with that and I didn't know if anybody would actually reach out and I did have a handful of people reaching out. And if you did watch this second episode or listen to this second episode and you have been keeping up, I just wanted to say thank you. You can reach me anytime at uh, Dior 10 underscore salon. That's D for Daniel, double i o R one zero. Underscore salon. I managed that page. Reach out anytime. It was amazing to connect with a few of you and Antony. Amazing to share my story and even more so to share it in real time today. It helped ease the nerves and genuinely turned it into a great conversation. So thank you for having me.

[00:46:56] **Antony W.:** Good. No, my pleasure. I, I think it's very interesting for a lot of people. So, I'll put those links, in the show notes, for today's podcast, uh, and on the Grow My Salon business website. So if you listen to this podcast with Daniel and enjoyed it, 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 app. So Daniel Di lorio, thank you very much for being on this week's episode of the Grow My Salon Business podcast.

[00:47:26] **Daniel D.:** My pleasure, Antony. Thank you.

[00:47:28] **Antony W.:** Cheers mate. Take care.

[00:47:29] **Antony W.:** Thank you for listening to today's podcast. If you'd like to connect with us, you'll find us at growmybusiness.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.