

GMSB 201

[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. Now, before we get into today's episode, I do have a little favor to ask of you, and that is that you take the time to rate and review us on the Apple Podcast app. By doing that, it not only helps other people to find us, but it also motivates me to keep producing great content for you as well as it being a way of saying thank you. To the guests that we bring to you each week, who willingly give up their time to share their experiences and their wisdom with you, the listener. So all you need to do is go to Apple Podcast, search, grow my salon business, and scroll to the bottom of the page, select ratings and reviews, and write us a review, and we would be very appreciative. So with that said, let's get on with today's episode. Now using social media effectively is arguably the number one way to grow your salon business. And so being competent at this point in time, specifically with using Instagram is a skill that you simply can't afford to ignore. Now my guest on today's podcast is Vivienne Johns.

[00:01:37] **Antony W.:** Vivienne is a UK based Instagram expert and on her own admission, Vivienne was late to embrace Instagram, but well, she's certainly made up for lost time and has established herself as a very relatable educator in what is a very fast-moving space. So in today's podcast, we will discuss the ever-changing social media landscape, how people are consuming content today, and how to manage and set guidelines around the salons social and so much more. So without further ado, welcome to the show, Vivienne Johns,

[00:02:15] **Vivienne J.:** Oh, Antony, thank you so much for having me here. I told you before I'm a fan and I've been listening for a long time, so this is a real honor. Thank you.

[00:02:23] **Antony W.:** Good. Well, it's my absolute pleasure. I've been sort of stalking you for a while as well, and, uh, it, it was great when I reached out to you to hear that you, were an avid listener to the podcast, et cetera. Um, and you know, there's not a lot of people I've spoken to about social media, you know, specifically on any of the episodes, and I know that, that you bring a real, uh, a level of expertise, but you also bring a very natural understanding way of getting people to, to embrace it and understand how it works. And obviously we're going to talk about that as we go. But, um, Vivienne, there's going to be a lot of people in my audience who don't know who Vivienne Johns is. So can we start off by, um, getting what I get a lot of my guests to do, which is pretty much to introduce themselves. So give us your two minute backstory. Who is Vivienne Johns?

[00:03:13] **Vivienne J.:** Well, I mean, first and foremost, I am a hairdresser and, um, now turned into a social media coach. Somehow this has happened, and obviously we'll talk about this as we go along, but I'm a hairdresser. I started hairdressing in the nineties. I worked for Toni and Guy and I moved to a little town in the southwest of England. Like we are talking rural, countryside, coastal, not city slicker. And I became a salon owner simply because, Going from a city, working for Toni and Guy, you know, it's all very fancy in the nineties as well. Um, going to this rural location, there just weren't the salons that I wanted to work in. So I became a salon owner very young. I was only 25 and I ran my salon right up until. 2020. So I'd been a salon owner for whatever, whatever that is, 18 years at that point. And I'd been a salon owner through all of the ups and downs and had lots of staff, not very many staff. Uh, I'd seen all the changes happen as years went on as well. And then there was that one change that I chose to ignore, which was social media.

[00:04:30] **Vivienne J.:** Right? I believed that because I had a salon, the most popular salon in our local town, um, that was word of mouth. People didn't use social media. I didn't get clients through social media that I didn't need it. I was so wrong and this was, um, 2018. Right. So I just want to let everybody who's listening know now. Yes, I'm a social media coach now, but I'm not one of those early adopters of social media at all. I was a salon owner just like you. I had 10 stylists. I was, you know, behind the chair just like everybody else. And can I tell you a story about how the moment I, yeah. The moment I realized I needed social media was I had been away on maternity leave. So I'd been away from the salon for eight months and I came back to the salon and I looked around the salon my first day back and I thought, There's no new faces. And that just struck me as bizarre because I thought, surely I've been away for eight months. We must have loads of new clients. So I start, I went straight over to the computer and I looked at the computer and I thought, why have we got no new clients?

[00:05:49] **Vivienne J.:** Why are we getting so few new clients through the door? So I thought, well, it must be because we're getting complaints. No, it must be because we're, you know, knock the rebooking rate's gone down. People aren't rebooking. No rebooking rate was exactly the same. We were losing clients as normal clients, normal shed of clients, you know, moving away, passing away all of those things. But we weren't replacing them with new clients. And I had 10 stylists and we were getting on average, 11 new clients every month. That's not enough. And like I said, I blamed everything. Other than the obvious. And the obvious thing was I wasn't getting in front of the people who were obviously going to other salons, so I wasn't showing people what we were doing. I wasn't using social media. And this was 2018, so very late to the game. And as soon as I realized that, I thought, I'm going to learn how to make this work. I'm not going to let my new clients get, get into, you know, go to the other salons. I need to get in front of them because some, they're get, they're getting taken away from me when they should have been mine. And that's when I threw myself into absolutely everything social media and, and realized I have a talent for it that I didn't even know I had.

[00:07:14] **Antony W.:** Okay, well that is fantastic. And that's, that's what makes you very, very relatable. There's a, there's a quote, I don't know who said it, and I don't even know if I'm going to say it the right way, but it's something like, the best time to plant an oak tree was 25 years ago. The second best time is today, meaning a little bit

like you with social media. The best time to start may have been not 25 years ago cause it didn't exist, but, you know, may have been 10 years ago. But the second best time is today that it, it's never too late to either start or to lift your game and to really focus on it. And I think that's a really important message. As you were talking, I was also thinking about, you know, your accent and where you are from and how you said you are from a small, rural, uh, part of the world. And I just realized that people will know the name of the. Nearest town to you. The nearest town is Penzance, and so everyone would've heard of the Pirates of Penzance. Okay, so Vivienne is near where the Pirates of Penzance is, uh, is based, and I promise you, it is a very long way from London and it is a small, you know, rural town.

[00:08:25] **Antony W.:** And I think that that's another great example of how, here we are in 2023, that, you know, the world has changed dramatically through technology and social media has been one of those things. And you can live in these, ideal little sea seaside villages. In fact, before we were recording, I could hear seagulls in the background, so I should just warn my listeners. If you hear seagulls, it's being picked up on Vivienne's microphone. So, um, anyway, so you didn't even start till 2018. Um, why Instagram? I mean, as being a novice, like what made you go, oh, Instagram's the thing I've got to be on, as opposed to Facebook or maybe some other platform.

[00:09:04] **Vivienne J.:** Yeah. Well, I didn't start on Instagram. I started on Facebook. Um, uh, but I didn't make a success of Facebook. I didn't, I didn't find it the same way that I did Instagram. So I started with Facebook. I thought, you know, I'm going to have to learn how to do this. People had told me, people had said, you know, you should really get a Facebook page. And I was like, oh, a Facebook, we don't need that. We, we don't need that. We're a small salon in a small town. It's word of mouth. You know, there's like 15,000 people in the town that I live in. So y yes, when you are the best salon in town, you do get word of mouth. A lot of it. Of course you do. So I was like, nah. I, um, started using Facebook to start with and then, I don't know what the shift over to Instagram was. In fact, I do know what it was. I've just remembered. I've had a, I'd had a flash memory there I remember. So I had started taking photos and putting them onto Facebook. I wasn't really learning about Facebook.

[00:10:04] **Vivienne J.:** I wasn't really that interested, if I'm honest. I was just doing the, going through the motions and, um, my client showed me a picture that she wanted her hair. She gave me an inspiration picture of a, of a lovely blonde and she handed me her phone and I looked at it and it was a picture that was from my competitor's salon. And I felt instantly offended. I was like, I went down to the dispensary, which is in the basement, a dispensary were you mix up color, I don't know if everyone calls it that. It's was in the basement. And I was going to all the other team members, can you believe she's just shown me a picture from the salon down the road? How rude, how I can't believe. And then I thought, Hang on a minute. Well, we haven't got any pictures on Instagram for her to show us pictures from our salon. So of course she's going to be showing me salon pictures from somebody else's salon if I'm not providing them for her. And it just made me go, hang on a minute.

[00:11:07] **Vivienne J.:** Every single person in my salon right now is sitting there with their phone in their hand. You know when you look around and you go, every client's got their phone in their hand. I am allowing other people, other stylists, other salons to

be in my salon. While I'm provided a service and making cups of tea and, and, you know, working, working really hard to make sure my client stays, but I'm allowing other salons to be in the hands of my clients in my salon and I'm not doing anything about it. And it just made me go, hang on a minute. So that's when I started using Instagram and, and I actually, I does Instagram for me. Clicked because it made me realize that I actually, it's not about just showing pictures. It's not just about like show and tell holding up a picture and going, oh, look at this lovely picture. Everybody, you actually on Instagram can really, really make sure with some kind of clever, uh, engagement methods and hashtags and keywords and captions and everything that you do, you can make sure that those posts that you put on get in front of the right people. And that's when I really understood Instagram.

[00:12:21] **Vivienne J.:** I just went, oh, I can make this really, really work for me and I can get in front of their clients in their salon. So that's when I started to get excited cause I was like, now I can reach out and actually really target new clients and I can find them because I know them. They're the type of people, people who come to my salon, I know how they behave. I know how they behave online. I know the types of other businesses they follow on Instagram, and I can find more people who behave like them online as well. And I can do it all through Instagram. And it's fascinating when you actually figure it all out. And it really made me feel so excited because it became more than just showing a picture or a video it made. It's more than just creating content that's just the, that's just the surface layer, but it's everything you do underneath that, that actually changes. You know that that converts followers into clients because at the end of the day, Followers is just a number. And really what we want to do with Instagram and to make it worthwhile and to make it not a waste of your time and not feel overwhelming, is to make sure that we get them out of Instagram through some sort of, you know, whether it's content, whether it's through your website, but to turn them into a client at the end of it. That's the ultimate goal, and, and I know people, if you follow me on Instagram, you'll see me teaching you how to use Instagram, but there is so much more to it than just how to make a video and just how to take a picture.

[00:13:59] **Antony W.:** Yeah good. Um, as you were talking about that, I started thinking about, well, this question, which is how important is matching your target market to the social media weapon of choice? So, so that it's completely clear to the listener. So, If we were to look at Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, you would probably say that Tik Tok's demographic is between 15, and I'm making this up as we talk here. Just to illustrate the point. I'm going to say it's aimed at people between the or the, or aimed at, it's, it's most dominant users are people between this age of say, 15 and. 25 or, okay. And then I'm going to say that, and this is not based on any fact, this is just sort of common sense to me that I'm making these sort of, you know, broad, uh, distinctions .And the Instagram maybe is more for 25 to 40 and that Facebook is maybe more for you know, 40 upwards just as some very broad brushstrokes. So what I'm asking you about is, for your salon with the target market that you had and or wanted to attract, how, how conscious were you thinking about Instagram in that context? Or do you totally disagree with what I've just said?

[00:15:22] **Vivienne J.:** No, I do, I do agree. I do agree. But what I do find is people will use that as an excuse not to go onto the other apps. So, um, Instagram definitely

for me, and still for me right now, you know, this is where my target audience, this is where other hairdressers are sitting, is within Instagram for me still. But that doesn't mean I don't use Facebook. And that doesn't mean that I don't use TikTok. I do use both of those, but for a salon. So Instagram, possibly right now is going to be, you know, your main source of new clients. Um, people say to me all the time, so I love to take people's excuses away because I had all these excuses too. Like I said, them all, I, so I, I haven't heard an excuse that I haven't used myself. Um, one of them was my clients aren't on Instagram. And, and what I will always say to that is, okay, so no, the clients you already have aren't on Instagram, but your new clients, the potential new clients are, and how are you going to reach them if you refuse to go there?

[00:16:31] **Vivienne J.:** And it's as simple as that. And, and now the same excuse. Now the Facebook user is over on Instagram and they're saying the same thing about TikTok, and it's like, no, okay. Your current client base that you've got right now. Isn't on, isn't on TikTok, but your new clients are. And if we don't think like that about social media, if we keep thinking about, but this is where I get all my clients right now today and have done for the last two years, we're going to get stuck. And my biggest fear, and I'm sure it's the same for lots of people who listened to this, my biggest fear when I was a salon owner was when I moved to the, this small town, I would say to the new clients coming in. Where did you go before? And they'd say, oh, I went to such and such a salon. Oh, it used to be the best salon in town. And my biggest fear was becoming the salon that used to be the best salon in town, you know? And that's when I thought, if I don't move with it, then I'm on a very, very fast path to used to be the best salon in town and I don't want to be that salon. So yes, Facebook users, you probably are getting, if you are spending your time and focusing all your energy into Facebook. Yeah, that would make sense that you are getting all of your clients from there. Cause that's what they, where they are. But your new clients are in Instagram and Instagram news is your new clients are probably in TikTok.

[00:18:02] **Antony W.:** And so when you were, uh, you know, embracing Instagram, I know you no longer have the salon, but was the demographic of clients that the salon attracted changing with it getting younger?

[00:18:15] **Vivienne J.:** It was.

[00:18:16] **Antony W.:** Right. Okay. Based,

[00:18:17] **Vivienne J.:** it absolutely was. We were, we had gone from, you know, mostly an older clientele. Um, myself and Nadine who owned the salon together. We were trained in the nineties. We were trained as cutters. we're actually a dying breed of cutters. There's not that many of us left, is there. And, um, we attracted, uh, an older clientele because of the style of work that we did. Now we had younger team members who really desperately wanted to do balayage and wanted to do the more kind of like maybe vivid colors or anything like that, because we didn't have those clientele. We didn't have that client base because we weren't attracting to them to, to the salon. But once we started using Instagram, it's like you have to put out what you want to get back. So we did start to, the more you do, the more you get. With Instagram. So the more balayages you put out, the more balayages we got booking in. And, and I just

saw it as this kind of like untapped pot of new clients. And when I'd kind of like gone, oh, we've got a really good follower base now in our local town.

[00:19:24] **Vivienne J.:** I'm going to spread this out a little bit further. I'm going to go a bit further with this. And I would continue always, um, widen the net a little bit, kind of try and get ourselves known. I always saw it very much as, uh, um, a campaign. You know, my Instagram was a campaign for brand awareness so people could start to see who we are and get to see us. And if, and. What people do with Instagram and they make the mistake is they just post, they just think that we're, we're posting and then we're just going to, you know, go, um, people call that post and ghost, so we're just going to post. And then that's enough to attract people to us. But it doesn't work that way anymore. Unfortunately. It did used to, back in 2018, you could just post, post, post, post and people would find you. Whereas now we need to do that little bit more. We need to get out of our own profile. We need to get out of our own newsfeed and actually go and find our new clients because they are out there. Um, you mentioned the kind of different age groups inside each app and that, that it, that is still kind of the way it is, but. My mom's age group, so my mom's in her seventies. My mom's age group are all pretty much on Instagram now. They started on Instagram because they wanted to follow us, their kids so they could see pictures of the grandkids.

[00:20:46] **Vivienne J.:** Like my mom is probably my biggest fan on Instagram. I have to say, Anne, please stop commenting. You're not my target audience. She'll comment, comment, things like, oh, you're a great girl. I'm like, mom, stop. I'm a serious business woman, so you know, my mom is there and all of our moms are there to, to see what we're doing because they want to follow us to see the kids and see what we're doing in our business, and, and they love what we do.

[00:21:14] **Antony W.:** But that was what happened with Facebook as well, is that, you know, the moms and the grandmas were getting on Facebook cause they wanted to see what their kids and their grandchildren were doing. You don't want your mom or your grandmother to see what you are doing. So they all drifted from Facebook into Instagram, it's interesting to hear you say that now that, you know, mothers and grandmothers are wanting to see that, so they're now on Instagram. So those kids are going to be drifting more and more than they already are into, uh, TikTok and whatever other, um, whatever other platforms there are out there. I heard of one recently, a new one, I think it's called Lemon eight.

[00:21:50] **Antony W.:** Have you heard that? You

[00:21:51] **Vivienne J.:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

[00:21:52] **Antony W.:** Okay. And that they were saying that

[00:21:53] **Vivienne J.:** really app

[00:21:54] **Antony W.:** Thing.

[00:21:55] **Vivienne J.:** yeah, I think so. It's, it's a slow burner and I would definitely recommend that anybody is, would go and get their username. Definitely go and get your username. Um, it is hard to predict because I'm going to be really honest. I am, even when TikTok came out, I was exactly the same. I went straight into my old habits of, oh no, not another app. I don't need to learn this, do I? Oh, I won't be teaching that because I teach Instagram. Well, how wrong she was,

[00:22:25] **Antony W.:** yeah. Do you, do you repurpose content? I know you, I know Instagram's your thing, but if you had, if you had a salon today, um, well, your existing salon, which you no longer own, would you be saying to them, would you be advising them? Look, you make it for Instagram, but hey, there's no harm in repurposing the same stuff to Facebook or TikTok, or would you be saying, no, don't do that. Just be really focused on instant. What would be your, take on that

[00:22:50] **Vivienne J.:** I would, I would, I'd say repurpose it. I would repurpose it. Um, I would make, let's say it's a video. Let's say it's a video, a before and after video of, you know, big color correction. I would, but I would make it out outside of the app and then I would bring it into Instagram and I would add the text on screen in Instagram. So it feels very native to Instagram. I think about my Instagram audience and what they want to know in Instagram, and I would really think about the kind of the text and the words that I'm using as well as the audio. You know, I think about these, let's just kind of try and understand the differences between the platforms. And this is probably where for me, when I started to understand it, I, I got it a bit more. So Instagram, the first people who will see your content when you post it will be your followers. So Instagram's algorithm tests your content to decide whether it's good or not on a selection of your followers.

[00:23:51] **Vivienne J.:** People who are already quite highly engaged in what you do, they've already hit follow. They love what you do, and it depends on how they interact with it Instagram will deem whether it's good or not enough to show to a wider audience of people who don't follow you. Now Tik Tok's the opposite. TikTok shows your content to a group of people who've never seen you before and decides whether your content's good based on how they interact with it. So the way that you kind of attract the attention on both apps is very different on, on Instagram. We're nurturing followers that we already have. We don't need to introduce ourselves. We know who they are. We know that they're possibly there to be educated. They love that when you tell them all about products to use at home, you give them a step by step on how to apply a hair mask.

[00:24:42] **Vivienne J.:** They love all that. Whereas over on TikTok, they haven't got a clue who you are. You almost need to be a little bit more con, I don't like the word controversial, but I guess con controversy does spark more engagement. But instead of being like, here's how to use a hair mask, we would probably go in at in a way like, here's all the reasons I'd never use a hair mask. So the other way to get people to watch me like, huh, that's different. So it's just different ways of doing it. Same video, but different text on the screen. Different, yeah. So you can repurpose.

[00:25:21] **Antony W.:** yeah, I mean, we're bombarded with so much messaging now that as people are scrolling through, you've got to have a. You got to have a point of difference. So I get why you're saying what you've just said about TikTok with that to

be more, um, uh, yeah, I, I can see why you grappled with the right word. You know, is it being aggressive? Is it being assertive? Is it being more confrontational? It's like, you know, what is it that's going to stop them scrolling and, and pause for seconds before they scroll back on? Um, yeah. One of the things that I, I wanted to ask you about was, I mean, social media is always changing and it's constantly evolving, and that's a good thing. And just last night I was scrolling through, um, Instagram and I stopped on a feed that was about, well, basically it was all about, are you bored with Instagram? And a whole lot of people jumped in all expressing how bored they were with Instagram and that sort of, it didn't shock me.

[00:26:18] **Antony W.:** It didn't surprise me. Um, but what are your thoughts about that is, I mean, obviously, TikTok is a new kid on the block to whatever degree for however long. Um, and you know, Instagram is constantly trying to reinvent, but do you think people, you know, I think there's a lot that goes into this, including Covid and the world that we live in now, and just the, that, you know, we, that's so much our people. Are people getting bored? Do you think with Instagram, with social media, is it reached a, you know, is AI having an impact on it? What, what are your thoughts about all that?

[00:26:56] **Vivienne J.:** So I definitely think, I may think it's natural that people get bored. I definitely think it's natural that people get bored. Um, looking at the hair industry, it's pretty boring. Right. I'm, I'm going to say it, and this is probably the most controversial I get, but it, it's pretty boring right now to see everybody do the same thing over and over and over again. And what I am noticing is happening is, What we're all doing in the hair and beauty industry is we are going onto Instagram and we're scrolling through the newsfeed. And in the news feed we're there. We're looking through the newsfeed desperately trying to find inspiration for content that we could post onto our page and we're in the newsfeed and we're going, right? Oh, I'll go in here and I'll find an idea of what I could do, and we become a bit overwhelmed by it. We start to compare ourselves against everybody in there. We think, oh no, well, my content's not as good as that, and then we kind of might post something right? We'll see something that's doing really well.

[00:28:02] **Vivienne J.:** Normally it will be from a hair influencer creator who's. Not reaching clients. They're not, that's not their main focus. They're not there to try and get clients. They're try, they're, they work in the hair industry, so they're trying to attract hairdressers to their page and then I see what ends up happening is hairdressers start to copy people who aren't reaching out to clients because they see their content do well and they think that's what I'm supposed to do, but it's wrong. It's the wrong audience. Then they feel like they, their clients don't relate to it, react to it like it, they don't get the views because it's not for their clients. When they copied that, that was for other hairdressers and then everybody has started to just keep copying each other and it's become a bit of an echo chamber in inside the newsfeed where we're all just going. That type of content does well, I'll do that and. That's pretty boring. It's pretty boring. And I really do think that yes, people are probably bored of seeing the same thing over and over again. And my advice on that, cause I can't just throw something out there and say, look, everybody's doing this wrong without saying, this is what we should do instead, or could do instead is let's get out of your newsfeed.

[00:29:20] **Vivienne J.:** Okay, so the next time you are looking for inspiration on Instagram and you are thinking, I really would like to try and do something different. Let's get out of the newsfeed, go into the explore page, type into the search bar, whatever it is that you want to kind of post about. Let's say it could be balayage, it could be curly hair, it could be mullets cuts, it could be razor cuts, whatever it is. Go in there, have a look at what's doing well in the explore page. Get out of your newsfeed because the newsfeed is where you are, the follower. In there. So you are the follower of everybody else in there. There's no inspiration for you in there. You need to find new people to look at. Now I spend a lot of time actually going out of the hair industry altogether and looking at fashion and music and um, influencers and creators and seeing what they're doing and trying to look at new content types to kind of maybe inspire the hair industry to say, try this instead, do something different. Because if we're all just copying from that echo chamber of the newsfeed, we're never going to change and it is getting very boring. And if we are bored, can you imagine how bored our clients are?

[00:30:34] **Antony W.:** Interesting. So how are people consuming content today within this, in, within the industry and external to the industry? What, what parts of the Instagram app are, getting the most attention at the moment?

[00:30:49] **Vivienne J.:** Real still. So video content on Instagram is still getting the most attention. It will really depend on your own individual audience really, because everybody's audience is going to behave slightly differently. They'll all be similar. Um, so why I like people to understand with Instagram is because, so you want to know where to post. To get in front of the right people or, or what type of content to post in each place. So let's just say your stories is where you are going to connect with, and I'm talking Instagram. Okay? So stories on Instagram is where you're going to connect with and nurture your existing client base. Do you know, I would love if we could change the word followers to clients because if we could, we would start to think about it so differently because followers is just, means nothing. It doesn't mean anything. But if those people who are your followers are your clients, then we can understand how to nurture them. What do they need to know about us today? So in, um, the UK we're going through a really hot spell. Um, you know, your clients want to know how to put their hair up in a really easy bun that looks okay, even though you know, looks okay in this hot weather.

[00:32:04] **Vivienne J.:** They want to know how to stop their color, their toner coming out. While they're swimming, while they're paddle boarding, like there's so many things that you could do and talk to them about, that's really reactive to what's going on right now. Stories is a great place for that because the people who see that are your followers, they're already your followers. They're your client Base reels is where you're going to reach a whole new audience of people, okay? So when you make video content, you'll get seen by a bigger audience of people who don't already follow you. So let's just say you are going to be going on holiday for two weeks. So you want everybody to know you're on holiday for two weeks and that you won't be replying to any messages. That does not need to be a real or a video because that's completely the wrong audience for that. So videos get seen by people who don't know you, don't already really follow you. It's a new, a non-follower audience there. So things that are,

you know, relate to your client base about, you going on holiday or I don't know, I've just been on this course or stuff that you would talk about with your clients.

[00:33:15] **Vivienne J.:** It's not really necessary there. Instead of use reels a bit like, you know, like an ad or, or a show reel or something that kind of attracts a whole new client base to you. So show off your salon, uh, show off what you do. Um, things like, I find really successful things like if your salon's really difficult to find, you know, a walk up to your salon, they're brilliant. Things like that are brilliant. So you kind of need to think about. Who you're trying to get in front of to decide where you're going to put this piece of content. Because what, what ends up happening is people start to post things that aren't relevant to reels and then nobody interacts. Um, because why would they? And then the algorithm goes, well, clearly this isn't very good content. Let's not show that to any many people the next time. And you're always been measured, every piece of content's been measured to figure out how good your content is. You know, and that's, that's how you can't affect your own reach. So, you know, that's all down to signals, but you can affect your engagement and understanding. So, That you'll get engagement from your clients in stories is a really great way of, of understanding how you can get more engagement by talking to your clients in the right places. Stories posts, clients will see more posts and carousels. Um, and then video content is more kind of the bigger, wider audience

[00:34:51] **Antony W.:** I, I love what you said before about followers, you know, should be called clients, and I think a lot of people, they sort of get sucked into this world of, you know, views and likes and engagements and impressions and, and comments, et cetera. What would you say the number one thing is? So if you're just going to focus on one metric, what would it be? What should it be?

[00:35:14] **Vivienne J.:** I would focus on engagement,

[00:35:16] **Antony W.:** Engagement

[00:35:17] **Vivienne J.:** always, because engagement tells you everything you need to know about how good that piece of content was and whether your clients like it or not. So if they see it and comment on it and like it, share it and save it and tell you, even, you know, dm, you say, oh, that was brilliant. I loved that. Then you know that not only has this piece of content signaled to Instagram algorithm, oh, this is a good piece of content, show it to more people, but your clients actually like it. You know, the people who are you are serving every day. The people who, uh, you want to attract more of what's happening on Instagram, always, and this is, this was for me the bit that I thought, wow, there's so much power in this is.

[00:36:10] **Vivienne J.:** Instagram wants to show your content to more people. It doesn't not want to. It wants to. It really wants you to create good content that it can show to more people because it's in the business of selling space. Attention. Two advertisers, but Instagram itself doesn't create content. It relies on us to do that. So it needs to know that you are creating content that people want to see because it has to have a good app. Otherwise everybody will go over to other apps. So it has to, it wants to show your content to more people. And what it's doing all the time is it, it's creating

a lookalike audience of the followers you already have. So let's say all your clients, Followers are based around your salon. So they're all quite local to you. They fit the age demographic of your ideal customer, your dream client, I would probably say perfect guest. Um, they fit the age demographic of that person. They live local to your salon. Instagram goes, wow, look at this. These this type of person in this location, this age range, this gender loves this type of content. If they like it, well this set, these people who mimic their behavior online will also like it. And that's when you actually start to end up in the explore page, in the explore feed of people who mimic the behavior and are actually very similar to your clients who live locally to your salon. And that's really fascinating to me.

[00:37:43] **Antony W.:** And that's where the real business benefit of it is for salons. I mean, I'll, I'll still talk to people that are hung up on, you know, the number, the amount of followers they've got. And, I have a very different business to a salon owner in that I have a, a global business. You have a global business and you know, you are talking to people in different parts of the country or different parts of the world, but a salon predominantly has a very localized business. And, you don't need tens of thousands of followers. You really need a few hundred tops, that are seriously engaged with your business. That's far better than having that big metric of saying, I've got a hundred thousand followers or 50,000 followers. And, some of them are, you know, they're never going to become clients of your salons. It just becomes a vanity metric, doesn't it?

[00:38:31] **Vivienne J.:** Exactly that. Exactly that. And that's where the engagement rate comes into it. So, you can have a small following, but a high, really high engagement rate, which really signals to out the algorithm, not necessarily to show you, to loads more people, to get loads more followers, but show you to more people who mimic the behavior of those people who really love this content.

[00:38:55] **Antony W.:** Yeah.

[00:38:56] **Vivienne J.:** And that's when you get seen by more people and you. And that's when you get more followers who live in your area and actually DM you and say, I'd really love to be your client. How do I book in with you? That's the more important part of it.

[00:39:10] **Antony W.:** Yeah

[00:39:10] **Vivienne J.:** An engagement rate will do that. So having a better engagement rate.

[00:39:14] **Antony W.:** Yeah. How, um, you know, like, I don't know how long ago, two years ago, whatever, uh, there was a lot of focus on the grid, and making sure your grid was like a work of art and everything had to be, you know, done a certain way. Uh, and that seems to have changed dramatically over the last couple of years. Talk to us about that.

[00:39:34] **Vivienne J.:** Yeah. I mean I loved that I taught that, that was so up my street. I, um, been, and for p people listening, I'm sure you're so similar to me, that that's what I was, I was really into that. My salon was beautiful. I liked everything to look a certain way. Oh yes. The pretty grid was everything to me, and I really struggled to let go of that and have a more messy organic grid. And now people see the pretty grid. And it's actually, I've, I've asked this on my own polls and stories on Instagram, you know, what do you think? And people think it looks really old fashioned.

[00:40:15] **Antony W.:** Really? Okay.

[00:40:16] **Vivienne J.:** Yeah But I still think. There should be an aesthetic vibe that represents you. And you can do that in so many ways. So I, I've been working with the salon recently, um, and the, the salon owner was saying to me, oh, I've been using all the trending audio and I'm doing all of the like, fast edits and I'm doing the before's and after's and I don't know what I'm doing wrong. I just don't get any likes, I don't get, and nobody's, it doesn't get any reach. Doesn't get any views. And I was like, okay, let's, let's think about this for a minute. Tell me about your salon. So she said, oh, oh, we're, we work one-to-one. We work with these beautiful organic products. It's like, I like it to be like a spa. I want it to be really tranquil. I want people to feel like it's, you know, they've taken the world off and they can sit down and relax and, they don't have to think when they're in my salon. And I was like, right, well that doesn't add up to trending audio, fast edits. Doing a dance on TikTok, that doesn't make sense for you. So I was like, okay, let's slow this down. Right. So. In a world where we're scrolls gross grow and people are seeing the same thing happen over and over again. So this is it, isn't it? That's exactly what she was doing. She was copying what she was seeing and rather than thinking about how do I get my own aesthetic into this?

[00:41:41] **Vivienne J.:** So I said, wouldn't it be lovely if when somebody's scrolling through all of that bam, bam, bam in your face, in the newsfeed, that they come across yours and it's slow and it's tranquil and you, you pick a certain type of music that's slow and soft and all the movements are slow and soft and we, we really focus on hands moving and it becomes like visual, A S M R where somebody can go to look and relax and listen to the music. And I was like, and then even, you could even take it a step further and you could use this certain type of music all the time. This really ambient, lovely music. You could have a Spotify playlist that they could actually go to through your. Links in bio and if they wanted to listen to it, then you're kind of bring in more than just social media to somebody,

[00:42:32] **Antony W.:** Yeah.

[00:42:33] **Vivienne J.:** You're creating a vibe.

[00:42:35] **Antony W.:** Yeah, really good

[00:42:36] **Vivienne J.:** Since she's done that, she said she gets more new clients booking in, she gets, she has got more followers. She gets people coming into the salon saying, I love it. I just love when I see your video because it chills me out. So

she sets the tone about who she is and what people are going to get before they even step foot in the salon. And it makes sense.

[00:43:02] **Antony W.:** Well, that goes right back to, you know, if you're starting off in social media, it's like, in Instagram it's like, well, who am I? Like what is the, what is my, what is my voice to the world? Like what is my personality? What is my online persona? Going to be, and then when you start with a blank sheet of paper, you, you can, you give that some thought and, and hopefully, you know, that's helpful, but when you do, like what so many people did, I e they copy other people because they think that's the right thing to do. Uh, as you've just said, it can be be a complete mismatch to actually who your target market is. So how would you guide someone through that process of finding their voice, their authentic voice on Instagram? Well.

[00:43:55] **Vivienne J.:** Well, I mean, it's through lots of different ways really. The first thing I would do is understand who your perfect guest is. Right. So who is, what would you call that, Antony, in your coaching?

[00:44:11] **Antony W.:** Yeah, no, yeah, yeah. I was going to say avatar. I was going to say client avatar or, or just, yeah. Your perfect client or your target market or your ideal demographic. You know who, who is your perfect client. Yeah. I mean, it's all, all the same thing, just different words around it. Yeah.

[00:44:26] **Vivienne J.:** Yeah. So that's how I'd start that. That's where I would start firstly. Um, I didn't do that to start with when I started using Instagram. That kind of came a little bit after when I started to then want to understand how I get the feeling of my salon onto this page, because it's so much more than just holding up pictures for people to just look at and go, oh yeah, nice picture of hair. What I wanted was, I wanted to get that feeling of my salon onto the page, but I needed to make sure that it spoke directly to the people I wanted to come into my salon. So to my perfect guest and. It really benefited me in way more ways than just Instagram, if I'm completely honest, understanding who this person is, because it made me realize that. All the products are for that person. All the drinks menus for that person. The way we would even do a head massage is for that person. You know, my perfect guest here in, in Cornwall was kind of a woman, very similar to me, really. And they wanted plastic free products because that's a big thing. I, in the area I live in, plastic, plastic free is a huge thing.

[00:45:42] **Vivienne J.:** So my perfect guest would 100% choose a business that was plastic free. Now, if I was showing that on Instagram, how was I going to get in front of those people? So I would create a lot of content that was around how we, um, the packaging that was used with our products. Uh, if we did, uh, we used to do things like we'd do a free bottle, refills, that kind of thing. Now, that's not hairdressing, but it's a very important part of our business and it really would make people. Choose us over and above somebody who didn't do those things. So it wasn't hairdressing, but it was all about building up the sights and sounds of our salon on, on Instagram. So I'd understand who they, who it is and who we are as a brand. I, um, do on my course, this is a whole module of one of the hairdressers social club courses is about your brand identity and understanding who you are because they're so different, you know, they're so different and that's fine. Not all salons are the same. Like everybody's got their own unique DNA um, the way I like to describe it for somebody who works behind

the chair cause. We're talking about salons, but let's say we're talking about just one person and who you are behind the chair, your unique brand persona or, um, I call it your behind the chair persona, Right? There's certain things that you will talk about and won't talk about with your clients, right? You know, some people are more than happy to be quite risqué and, and swear and, you know, listen to rock music or whatever, or, or whatever, whatever it is. I don't care. I whatever you do.

[00:47:30] **Antony W.:** You do you. Yeah.

[00:47:31] **Vivienne J.:** But that's, yeah. You do you exactly. In my salon, I wouldn't have done that, but, and that's doesn't make me better or worse or anything. That's just me, right? So, My behind the chair personality was very much about showing products and teaching and helping people understand why this and why that, and really caring. I was always, always looking after people, so that would make sense that is my tone of voice on social media. Now, if I started talking to the camera or sharing things that were perhaps really political or swear swearing or, I don't know, I can't even think what I would've been sharing, but that wouldn't be right for me or my client base because. That's not who I am. So somebody, you have to put out what you want to attract back in. And, and I think it's good to be authentic and be yourself online, because if somebody, then, you know, if I came across or miss Perfect on Instagram, and then when a new client actually is in my chair, I'm swearing and popping outside to have a cigarette or whatever, you know, they're like, hang on a minute, this isn't what

[00:48:40] **Antony W.:** It's not a fit. Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

[00:48:42] **Vivienne J.:** You know? So you, everybody can have their own unique voice and I think everybody should. And, and this is probably where we've gone a bit wrong.

[00:48:50] **Antony W.:** And I think also that it's easier. To be who you are rather than trying to be someone that you're not. it's like, I think it's important to, to be the best version of you possible. Do you know what I mean? Like that's easier and it's authentic.

[00:49:03] **Vivienne J.:** Okay. Well, there, there was something I did want to ask you about, which, uh, is quite an important thing for a lot of salon owners who, um, maybe of a certain age, and who, who are challenged with embracing social media, as a marketing tool. And that is setting guidelines a, around it for staff.

[00:49:24] **Antony W.:** I mean, the salon owner wants their staff to get busy, that they want them to be posting on social, but they want to have a lot of control over it. So what are your thoughts about some of the guidelines around that? I mean, they're constantly moving. I know a lot of salons will have a. You know, they'll have a, like for example, I might start working for you, the salon owner, and you'll say, okay, Antony, here is your Instagram handle. It's Antony at Vivienne Salon. And when you leave Vivienne Salon, then you know that account is closed down, so to speak. So everything you post has to go on that. Um, other people, you know, they have a salon phone and they have a salon account and everyone's got a post to the salon thing and there's no

way you're allowed to post your own accounts and there's all sorts of, you know, conflict in there. So how do you advise salon owners and staff to, to think about that in a positive way that can work for the client and work for the business and work for the individual stylists?

[00:50:25] **Vivienne J.:** Yeah, I mean, you are right that a lot of this has changed and it's going to change more even still, you know, so the way people did do it and, and this is what I used to do in my salon, this worked really, really well for me in my salon. Um, each of my stylists had exactly that, had their own salon page, um, Vivienne at, you know, the hair salon and Antony at the hair salon, and everybody did that and was encouraged to have their own page. And that worked really, really well for us. Everybody had their own little niche that they posted about. It really, really worked really well. But you have to remember that I'm super passionate about social media and training was a huge part of that. So I didn't just expect the team to. Post without having some extensive training and really helping them find their own brand voice and find their own way of taking photographs.

[00:51:21] **Vivienne J.:** So as an example, I had each of the team had different kind of niches. So one was a blonde specialist, one was a copper specialist, one was a balayage specialist, and that worked really, really well for us. So what the blonde specialist would be posting about and talking about was completely different to what me I was a curl expert would be talking about. You know, because our audiences were completely different. But that came to down to training, right? Not everybody has got access to somebody who is super passionate about social media like me. Um, I definitely think that that still works really well, but I think anything to do with social media that you are expecting your team to do, I think. As long as you've got it in contract and in your salon handbook and you've got it written down with some you, you know, terms and best practices and here's what we will do, here's how we take pictures and here's how we do this. I think that's great. Right. But equally, like I said, it has definitely started to change to the point where some salon owners have really taken their hands off, hands off the reins on, you know, really saying, I want you to post like this.

[00:52:40] **Vivienne J.:** I want you to take pictures here. And they have allowed their team to not have the salon name on the page. You not, you know, not be Vivienne the hair salon, Antony at the hair salon. They've allowed them to build their own brand. And I see that being super successful as well. Yes, it comes with risks and fears for the salon owner that. This, the, the stylist is going to become so successful on Instagram and so big and so popular that they're going to up and leave and go self-employed or go freelance or go and work for somebody else. Well, that happened before social media that happened and will continue to happen whether social media exists or not. You can, with your employed teams, you can have contracts and restricted covenants in place, especially around social media. You can have that, but there's no point in trying to have that after the horse is bolted. we need to, you need to get that in, in the beginning, um, and make people, and let people understand that, you know, when you do leave the salon, you know, however you want to put that into your contract.

[00:53:47] **Vivienne J.:** and it'll be different for everybody as well. Um, and then I have other people that I work with who they allow. With the, so there's a function on Instagram called Collaborate. So basically what happens is you, your team member will post to their page and they'll collaborate with the salon page. So it'll end up, their post will end up on your page and their page at the same time. And between you, you share the metrics. So it's a great way of actually never having to post on your salon page again. So one of the, the social media ed, I've got a team of social media educators who go all around UK and Ireland going into salons and teaching. And Sarah, man, one of, one of the educators, does this right with her team. Sarah doesn't post on her salon page. Ever. She doesn't have to do anything to it anymore. The team collaborate and somebody will post, or, or many of them will post every day. So there's constantly content going on to her page and she doesn't have to do anything with it. She's got a real hands-off approach. Obviously she's one of the hairdressers social club educators, so she's taught her team how to take pictures and what to write and what keywords and, and really, you know, coach them on how to do it. But I love that. And she doesn't make them have to have her salon name on the page. She really allows them free reign to be expressive and do as they please, because I suppose a lot of salons are a bit of a melting pot of the people within it.

[00:55:21] **Antony W.:** Yeah, and they're coming more. So as we, you know, diversify more into a world of freelancers, whether you like that or don't like that. But, you know, I was just having conversation with someone just recently and she was saying, look, I've, I'm employing a, a second year or whatever the term was that they had. And, uh, this person is posting all these images onto her own account. Uh, of salon clients and stuff that she's doing within the salon. And she's made it very clear that as soon as she's finished her training, that she's going to go and open her own salon. And this salon owner is Yeah, yeah. It doesn't it? Yeah. That's the other side of it. Of course. Yeah. and so, and so this salon owner is really upset about the fact that, hang on, I'm letting them build their business within my business. And then when it suits them and they feel they've got enough momentum, then they think they're going to take that book of clients, in other words, that social media following the clients and go up the road and open their own salon. And, you know, I can sort of. Understand her feeling, uh, a frustration of that, that she's taken this person from scratch and building her up from nothing and she's upset about the fact that she isn't getting that person to post to the salons page. Instead they're just posting to their own page and building up their own private entity.

[00:56:44] **Antony W.:** My sort of argument for it, I mean, and you can't argue it either way, you know, but I, I sort of say to them, look, if all you're doing is getting people to post to the salons page, then you're sort of preaching to the converted. if you are letting that person post to their own page, which isn't like connected to the salon and other people are looking at it, you are exposing your salon. To a clientele that you don't currently have, and you may not have them forever, but if they know that that person is working in your salon, you are potentially attracting those people into your salon by being exposed to a larger, uh, following that she's got on her own in independent Instagram account. And I, mean, I always sort of talk to people about that and say, look, you have to stop coming from a place of fear because people are going to leave. And in this day and age of social media, it, it's very, very difficult. To stop clients following them. And you can have all sorts of restraints and contracts, et cetera, in

place. Um, but it can take up an awful amount of time, um, you know, trying to defend your business, so to speak. And as I say to them, I always think you're better off to put your time, energy, and financial resources into making your business so good that they won't want to leave. And we all know that eventually, not everyone, but most people will leave and that's just part of their journey.

[00:58:19] **Antony W.:** And that most, not all of those clients are probably going to want to follow them. Now, luckily, some of them are going to leave and they're going to go into state or to another country or to another county. So the clients aren't going to follow them. Some of them are going to leave because they want to have a baby or, you know, their partner has been transferred and so they have to move with them or whatever, you know, so, so there's. It sort of swings in roundabouts with this one as well, so, um, yeah, I was interested to get your, to get your take on that.

[00:58:50] **Vivienne J.:** yeah. The, the only way you could have real control over that. and it's interesting cause I did speak to somebody only last night about, HR and social media and contracts and the only way you can have real control over that page. So let's say even you want to say that your page will be closed down when you leave. Well, unfortunately, if you manage it and post to it and have the login details, that's your page. So the salon, even if it's written into the contract, cannot force you to close that page down because it was your page. So the only way you could really have that control would be if you managed all of the pages. And who wants to do that?

[00:59:39] **Antony W.:** Yeah, exactly.

[00:59:40] **Vivienne J.:** Come on. I left a salon to open my first salon when I was 25, and I found ways. There was no social media, but I found ways to write down the numbers, to slip my number to clients. This will happen and some will leave and some won't leave. And, and that's just the way it is.

[00:59:59] **Vivienne J.:** Um, just because they've built up 500 followers on an Instagram page, it really doesn't mean that they're going to take all of your clients away from you because that, that, that won't happen. I, I was a salon owner for 18 years. I had, oh, I couldn't even tell you how many hundreds of people leave.

[01:00:16] **Antony W.:** Yeah. Yeah. So you're a good boss with, sorry, you walked. You walked right into that. Mm. Okay. Well listen, this has been fantastic. I could keep talking for ages. Um, and I haven't even, you know, got to half of my notes. but just wrapping up that last little point, it's about that collaboration function on Instagram that sounds like a really, uh, important thing that people should investigate if they haven't already investigated that, because that sounds like a bit of a win for both.

[01:00:52] **Vivienne J.:** It is. And it's so simple. You simply, when you upload a post or a video or anything, when you are in the upload panel where you write your caption, it will say, um, add tags. When you go into add tags, you can add tags or it'll say invite collaborator. And it's a brilliant way. Now you could do it the other way around as well. So you could say to your team member, everything that I post on the salon page, I'm going to collaborate with you. You know, everything of yours that I post on the salon

page, I could collab, I'm going to collaborate with you. So it is a win-win and it depends on how hands-off or how hands off for how hands on you want to be. And I think, look, salon owners. We, as long as you get the training in to get your team knowing how to take the pictures and how to make the videos. As long as you've given them the training, people will often find their own way of doing things to, and be really surprising. I was at a, I did a class for TikTok actually, and it was so interesting. A load of salon owners were there, and there's one salon that they had. I, it's not about the followers, but just saying, uh, they had 80,000 followers on TikTok

[01:02:08] **Vivienne J.:** and the salon owner said, I let my team post whatever they want on TikTok. I don't care. I don't even look at it most of the time. Don't care what it is they can do all the trends they can do. None of the trends. they can say do where do absolutely anything they want. On TikTok, she said Bit, I'm a bit different about Instagram. Right. But on TikTok, she said, who am I to say you can't do that? That's no good. She said, you don't know when you are going to go viral. You don't know the videos that are going to take off on TikTok. And she said, it's the ones that I was m that that did the most or got the most views or went viral were the ones that I would've gone. That's a bit rubbish, isn't it? And she said, I know nothing, so I'm just going to let them do it. And successfully so far, which is really, it's incredible. And I really liked that real hands-off approach. Just like, well, yeah, okay. I think to have a few small boundaries. I mean, I would still been that controlling salon owner. Um, with the hundreds of staff leaving, I would still have a little bit of wrapped up in, you know, we don't do this in our salon, we don't discuss this type of topic in our salon. So you can do absolutely everything but avoid, uh, religion and politics,

[01:03:25] **Antony W.:** It.

[01:03:25] **Vivienne J.:** know.

[01:03:26] **Antony W.:** Okay. We need to start wrapping up. This has been a fantastic conversation. I've really enjoyed, talking to you and as I said, I've got so many other things I could have spoken about, but we just have run out of time. Uh, so you mentioned, uh, it'd be great to have you back, you, you did mention hairdresser's social club. So where can people find out more about you? Where can they connect with you on Instagram or any other social channels or website address, et cetera?

[01:03:53] **Vivienne J.:** Yeah, so I mean the best place to find me is going to be Instagram. That's where I live and hang out. So you can find me at the Hairdressers Social Club on Instagram. it's basically the hairdressers Social Club everywhere. So www.thehairdresserssocialclub.com come over to my website. There's so much there. There's lots of free master classes and bits and pieces to download. Anything that I find useful for a salon owner is there. So come over to there. Just spend a little bit of time on my website and you'll find something for you in there. The Hairdresser Social Club it is a, I run courses online and in person. I have a membership where people can come and get, you know, their questions answered and inspiration and content ideas. But really, I. What I am is I wanted, when I started using Instagram, I looked for somebody like me and I couldn't find them and they weren't there. And everybody was young and hip with really bright colored hair and like Louise, these really cool people. And I was like, oh, I don't feel like I belong with these people. And that's, that's cool.

But I needed somebody that I could go to and I kind of coined the term, or I kind of call myself and I've made myself sound like a right old woman. But I call myself anti Viv because what I want is I want to, I want you to have somebody that you can come to and ask the real stupid questions. The ones that you go, oh, I really should know this. Like I'm actually, you know, how do I do a post? If you don't know, I will tell you how to do a post. No judgment. It's cool. We've all got to start off somewhere. And that's what I.

[01:05:39] **Antony W.:** Will

[01:05:40] **Vivienne J.:** Am to the industry now.

[01:05:42] **Antony W.:** And I think you have really found a niche that where there's a need and I think you'll fulfill it brilliantly. So I will make sure I put those, uh, links on our website, grow my salon on business.com in the show notes for today's podcast, wherever you're listening to this podcast. So, if you are listening to this episode with Vivienne Johns and have enjoyed it, do me a favor, take a screenshot on your phone, share it to Instagram Stories, and don't forget to subscribe and leave us a rating and review on the Apple Podcast app. So to wrap up, Vivienne Johns, thank you so much for being on this week's episode of the Grow My Salon Business podcast.

[01:06:18] **Vivienne J.:** It's my absolute pleasure. Thank you so much.

[01:06:22] **Antony W.:** Good. Great. Fantastic.

[01:06:24] **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, 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.