

GMSB 235

[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.

[00:00:28] **Antony Whitaker:** Hey, it's Antony here and welcome to today's episode of the Grow My Salon Business podcast. In case you don't already know, video versions of the podcast are now available on our YouTube channel. So, if you want to put faces to the names and head on over to Grow My Salon Business on YouTube and make sure you like and subscribe to the channel.

[00:00:49] **Antony Whitaker:** And if you're already watching this on YouTube and you're finding these video podcasts helpful, then make sure you hit the like or subscribe Thumbs up button. It's a small thing you can do that goes a long way for me and the channel. And if you like this type of content, then let me know in the comments below.

[00:01:08] **Antony Whitaker:** So, with that said, on with today's show, I read somewhere recently that there are now over 4 million podcasts in the world, but the same article, it said that over 75 percent of them are dormant because although they start off very enthusiastically. Most of them run out of steam and never get past 10 episodes.

[00:01:31] **Antony Whitaker:** Today's guest is Kati Whitledge, who amongst many other things has a podcast that at the time of recording has so far exceeded 500 episodes, which is a major feat in itself and testament to Kati's entrepreneurial spirit and her commitment and drive that has enabled her to build a very successful business.

[00:01:52] **Antony Whitaker:** And today's podcast, we will talk about marketing and client recruitment and retention and Mya, the matchmaking software and lots more.

[00:02:03] **Antony Whitaker:** So, without further ado, welcome to the show. Kati Whitledge,

[00:02:07] **Kati Whitledge:** Thank you, Antony. I'm super excited to be here. Happy to be with you today.

[00:02:11] **Antony Whitaker:** me too. This has been a while in the making. So, it's great that we finally get the opportunity to connect. So, let's start with an overview of you and your background. Who is Kati Whitledge? Give us your sort of two-minute backstory.

[00:02:25] **Kati Whitledge:** Well, I'm excited to share with you. I started this industry, the beauty industry, like many of you did. I started off as a hairstylist behind the chair. I quickly grew that area of my life to the point where I was double and triple booked all the time. The space that I was in did not really allow for the kind of growth I needed logistically.

[00:02:49] **Kati Whitledge:** So, it was either go into a booth, rental model, or maybe start a salon. And I chose to start a salon. I opened my first brick and mortar hair salon in 2010. I have expanded that company three different times. We now have three brick and mortar salons to our hair, one is nails. In the midst of all of this, I created a proprietary software for marketing that helped my own salon grow into seven figures and just 1150 square feet at the time.

[00:03:22] **Kati Whitledge:** Um, and, and we launched eventually Mya. Mya is a client recruitment software for the beauty industry. We have helped generate almost 20 million of revenue for our members. And that is probably the accomplishment, uh, that I'm most proud of outside of having babies and whatnot, but um, it's been a really wild ride, a fun ride.

[00:03:44] **Kati Whitledge:** And I just, of course, I love this beauty industry. I love everything we have going on. And you also know, cause you're joining me soon, that we have a podcast for the industry as well. And so, between our software company, our hair salons, our nail salon, and the podcast and our community, we just all day long, everything we do is beauty industry business.

[00:04:05] **Antony Whitaker:** Good. Well, you are a bit of a, you know, a hurricane of a success story because there's so many things you've got going on and we're going to touch on all of them, but I do want to focus mainly on Mya, uh, because it, uh, it intrigues me. But before I dig into that I want to ask you about what, you know, why the hair, hairdressing industry, like how and

why did you decide that hairdressing was what you wanted to, you know, pursue or hair and beauty was what you wanted to pursue.

[00:04:30] **Kati Whitledge:** I don't know how much time we have for this, but I grew up a, the naughty pastor's kid. Um, I did not have my act together for many years. In fact, this new generation of beauty pros, what we consider the generation Z, Gen Z, I am, I'm in awe of them. I feel like they are coming in so much more as expected of them. And I didn't even have any of that put together until I didn't even start beauty school until I was, I think, 22 or 23. So I had this background of just partying and living a low life lifestyle. To be honest, I hit this rock-bottom moment. And my sister said to me, you know, I quit partying and doing everything.

[00:05:17] **Kati Whitledge:** I quit cold Turkey of everything. Got out on my own, disassociated with that lifestyle and everybody in it. And my sister said, gosh, you have this talent of looking at people and, you know, what would look good on them, you know, what would look good on them for clothes and for their hairstyle and makeup and tonality and things like that.

[00:05:35] **Kati Whitledge:** So why don't you do cosmetology? So, I applied to the local tech school, uh, and they had a wait list, so I couldn't get in right away. And I thought, well, because of my lifestyle being so terrible, I had put on so much weight as a young woman that I actually entered into college first and foremost at the university for learning how to help others be healthy.

[00:05:56] **Kati Whitledge:** It was a health club technician program. It was the first time in my life. I did a 4.0 in school, which in America, it means you're perfect. You're all A's,

[00:06:07] **Antony Whitaker:** Fantastic.

[00:06:08] **Kati Whitledge:** and came out of that twice in my life because I've had kids. I've, I've actually lost over 100 pounds, very hard to do now that I'm midlife. I, I'm settled into where I'm going to be.

[00:06:22] **Kati Whitledge:** I feel great and amazing. That's been a whole journey in and of itself. But finally, after going through that schooling, there was an opening for cosmetology and I dove in and realized that what I had a vision for in others, I could now learn how to bring that to life. So, when I was in beauty school, I ended up being somebody who set records.

[00:06:42] **Kati Whitedge:** I performed the most services and clients of any student of any, any time. And I also sold the most products of any student of any time at that time. You know, this was back in 2006, so I was very, very driven and motivated, probably because I had wasted in my mind so many years of my life to things that were not healthy and serving me.

[00:07:04] **Kati Whitedge:** Um, and I've been kind of getting after it ever since. It used to be from a place of, I have a lot of making up to do. Now I like to get after it for the fun and joy of getting to, not having to, but getting to. And that's how I originally got started. Yeah.

[00:07:20] **Antony Whitaker:** Do you still interact with clients behind the chair? I mean, do you do any of that? So, or you totally focus on the business now?

[00:07:27] **Kati Whitedge:** I have not been behind the chair since 2013.

[00:07:31] **Antony Whitaker:** Right. Okay.

[00:07:32] **Kati Whitedge:** Yep. So, it's been some time. Yeah.

[00:07:33] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. I'm not surprised because you're, you're building quite an empire now. Um, Mya, before it was Mya, I have to ask this for my own, um, you know, satisfaction here before it was Mya. You had a product called Meet Your Stylist. So is Mya a reincarnated, reinvented, repackaged version of Meet Your Stylist.

[00:07:56] **Kati Whitedge:** It is.

[00:07:57] **Antony Whitaker:** It is, right. Okay. And, and so why the change? And is it an acronym? And if it's an acronym, what does it stand for?

[00:08:05] **Kati Whitedge:** Everybody wonders this. They have all these assumptions. So, we launched as Meet Your Stylist because I made it from my own salon and we had hair stylists. So, it made sense. And that's, you know, our original market was finding salon owners who had hair stylists. And as we grew, we realized there are now med spas everywhere and, and salon and spa.

[00:08:26] **Kati Whitedge:** So, we need to help people who are trying to find their perfect esthetician or barber or nail technician. And so, in the midst of evolving the brand, we did a whole rebrand because we now serve a broader

market. And we also created a whole new, more sophisticated tech stack. So, it was like, I had kind of mastered the craft of being a hairstylist and you never really do, but you, you know, I got to a point where I was doing pretty well.

[00:08:59] **Kati Whitedge:** Then I had gotten to a point where I really mastered what it meant to be a salon owner, having a business that would work without me. And that is such a freedom goal that most owners have. And so, we got that to that point and then here I go and I start a technology company. And for this, I'm like a baby infant.

[00:09:19] **Kati Whitedge:** No clue what I'm doing. If somebody said, what's your tech stack? To me back and when I launched, I would say, I have no idea. What does that even mean? So, it was time for that evolution. I, you know, we've not arrived, but I've learned so much, which came with new technology implementation. So, Mya is here. Um, it could mean meet your artist.

[00:09:41] **Kati Whitedge:** If you really want it to, it could mean meet your appearance professional for us, Mya. In my mind, Mya was a persona. She was going to be your guide for finding your perfect professional within the beauty industry. So.

[00:09:55] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. I think it's; I think it's just fine without it being an acronym

[00:09:58] **Kati Whitedge:** Yes. Yeah. It's not, technically doesn't not have an acronym, but if people, they think that, so it's cool

[00:10:03] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah, sure. Yeah, I wondered if that's what it was. Okay. So, in the intro, you sort of described it as I think you said, um, that it was a marketing and client recruitment matchmaking software. What exactly does that mean?

[00:10:18] **Antony Whitaker:** Now, a lot of people will be familiar with it already, particularly in the U. S. Outside of the U. S. A lot less so. So, tell us, tell us what that means.

[00:10:26] **Kati Whitedge:** So, client recruitment is, what is a way to get more clients in the door? But here's a really hard truth. And this is applicable to almost everybody listening. 65 percent of your clients are not coming back to your business a second time. And I thought to myself, after all this time, after

all these years, we've been in this relationship business, how in the heck could that be possible?

[00:10:57] **Kati Whitedge:** Once we keep a client, they have an average lifespan of seven years. What is the disconnect here? Well, we know that clients don't return for a couple of reasons. One is misalignment. And the other is missed expectations. So, it's not about like, whoa, you gave me a terrible haircut. This is, we did not click and communicate well together.

[00:11:23] **Kati Whitedge:** And I'm like, gosh, if we could fix this. Originally, my intention was to create this matchmaking that was based on algorithms that go way beyond just what services you do and what's your availability. Because that's what we're already doing. We're already taking calls and answering text messages and emails based on what are you looking to get done and let me go see who's available to do it.

[00:11:48] **Kati Whitedge:** And that's not working for us. What I realized in the midst of this technology creation is that Mya isn't just matchmaking. We don't even put that we're a matchmaking quiz in our, you know, header of our website. We are a marketing software, which means we are going to be the most strategic digital sales funnel that any beauty industry could ever have for their company.

[00:12:14] **Kati Whitedge:** So, I want you to imagine if you're picturing your business's website, how much traffic do you have coming to your website? Well, let's say you have a thousand website visitors every month. They land on your site and then we want to look at what do they do when they get there? Are they choosing your brand or are they bouncing off to go look at the other five results that came up when they Google searched or looked, you know, depending where you live, what search platforms, Google is still king, at least here in the U S right?

[00:12:44] **Kati Whitedge:** So

[00:12:45] **Antony Whitaker:** it is.

[00:12:46] **Kati Whitedge:** of course, so if you don't have something sticky to engage with them, we're already losing. And the second issue is we're not connecting. So you need to engage with your website visitors. Of course, if you have this opportunity, like, Hey, wondering which professional here is the right

fit for you? The answer is yes, they all are. Here's this way to find out. Well, that's connection. So how do we bridge this gap and create an emotional connection between our consumers and our team members? Because here's the thing, and I love studying neuromarketing, which is based on social psychology, brain science, and behavioral economics. People still want to know, like, and trust you before they buy from you.

[00:13:33] **Kati Whitedge:** And 95 percent of decisions are made emotionally with our prefrontal cortex, that system one part of your brain, which means we're all intuitive, emotional people. So if I can't create a way to connect with you digitally and ensure and predict that you're going to have an awesome experience, when you come in, we're not setting ourselves up for success.

[00:13:57] **Kati Whitedge:** We're, we're vulnerable to that loss after a 1st visit

[00:14:02] **Antony Whitaker:** Yep.

[00:14:02] **Kati Whitedge:** lastly, we're not capturing anybody's information. Have you gone shopping anywhere lately? If you pull up any website to shop online. What's the first thing that you're prompted with? Hey, give us your email and your phone number and we'll give you the savings.

[00:14:19] **Kati Whitedge:** Or if you're at a store, Hey, give us your email to join our rewards club. Everywhere you go, the name of the game is let me capture data about you so that I can nurture market to you and have an opportunity to sell to you more often. And here we are as a beauty industry, like a little timid on email marketing, or I mean, marketing equals communication.

[00:14:44] **Kati Whitedge:** If you are communicating with your audience, that's marketing. And there's four groups that we're always communicating with, AKA marketing. We're always communicating with our already clientele. We're always communicating with prospective clients. We're always communicating with our team and we're always communicating with our prospective team members.

[00:15:08] **Kati Whitedge:** That should be happening all the time. So with these things, engage, connect, and capture, that's the puzzle pieces we need in order to convert website visitors into lifetime clients who actually get retained and stay the long haul.

[00:15:26] **Antony Whitaker:** Um, so I'm, I'm going to be the, I'm going to be the person listening to this podcast who doesn't know anything about you. I'm at the, I'm at an advantage because I've researched a bit. I know a little bit about you and and how Mya works, but I'm on that hairdresser who's walking the dog.

[00:15:40] **Antony Whitaker:** Listen to the podcast and there's plenty of them and they're smiling to themselves now because I know that's what a lot of people do and they're thinking to themselves. So, is it a bit like Tinder? Is it a? Is it a, uh, an app on the phone? Is that what she's talking about without a matchmaking type of thing?

[00:15:57] **Antony Whitaker:** Now, you know, I know the answer [00:16:00] to that, but can you answer that question for me? Is it an app? Is it that sort of thing?

[00:16:05] **Kati Whitledge:** So here's what I want you to picture. If you have your own Instagram hair page, raise your hand. We all do. If you are a salon, spa, barbershop brand, do you have a company Instagram? Yes. Do you put that Instagram on your website? Yes. So you see this opportunity to like clients visit your website.

[00:16:27] **Kati Whitledge:** They see, oh, I could click on this Instagram icon and it takes me to your specific Instagram page. That is how Mya works. We're going to be a call to action throughout all the hot spots on your website where people are going to click through and they're going to go through your matching experience.

[00:16:51] **Kati Whitledge:** Let's say on Instagram. You are wondering are people who are following me compatible for me? You have Mya matchmaking opportunities. So you say, Hey, are we a match? Click on my link in bio. So one of your dropdown options can say, take the matchmaker to see if we're compatible, right? They click on that.

[00:17:11] **Kati Whitledge:** They go through the experience. So there is no embedding of any code. You don't have to rely on consumers downloading any apps onto their phone, whether they have Android or Apple ISO, right? There is none of that work, because we don't want to put that many steps in front of the consumer to prevent them from engaging.

[00:17:32] **Kati Whitedge:** Right? So it's very simple. They click on it, they go, they take the survey, they see your level of compatibility, they see their top matches at your business.

[00:17:40] **Antony Whitaker:** Right? So that's what's going on in the back end. There's a survey of questions and you've got all your team built into it and you're matching this person likes this. And so you can, you know, through the algorithm, determine who is the best fit for them. Um, okay. So that, that's great. Now you, you said it integrates with your website.

[00:18:03] **Antony Whitaker:** Um, does it integrate at any level with your point-of-sale system?

[00:18:07] **Kati Whitedge:** Yeah.

[00:18:08] **Kati Whitedge:** Yes. Well, if you are using currently Phorest Salon software, or if you have Zenotti, we have conversations going with multiple other points of sale. That is a key factor, what I will say is we had a salon join us in 2017 are still with us today. They went from one location to now having three. Every time they continuously have Mya grow with them and they have it as part of every one of their locations, this owner does 5 million in revenue, has never had an integration with a point of sale.

[00:18:49] **Kati Whitedge:** Her software doesn't integrate with us and guess what? It has zero negative effects on her getting and keeping clients. They average, are you ready for this? Two matches per hour. So, call a match, a lead. They average two matches, uh, two leads per hour and guess what they're paying per lead, 20 cents. This is unheard of.

[00:19:12] **Kati Whitedge:** I know I want to, I don't want to get all mathematical for

[00:19:14] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:19:15] **Kati Whitedge:** say that you get the highest spending clients at the lowest acquisition cost through our,

[00:19:24] **Antony Whitaker:** Now I understand why it needs to integrate with the website, you know, cause I'm a client. I'm going to your salon website. I totally understand that. And I understand what you've said about that it does

integrate now with Zenotti and Phorest and others, but I'm thinking, well, why does it need to integrate with them?

[00:19:43] **Antony Whitaker:** Because the client doesn't have access to your point-of-sale system. The client has access to your, your website. So, I get why that would be where the relationship starts. So, explain to me the relationship between the point of sale and Mya. Why does that happen?

[00:20:00] **Kati Whitedge:** they're the extra perks, uh, the dessert after the main meal that this offers is imagine that a client is matched with their top three professionals at your business. Automatically all of their survey information is pushed into a new client card or profile in the point of sale.

[00:20:23] **Antony Whitaker:** Got it.

[00:20:23] **Kati Whitedge:** If no matter which one of the three that they end up booking with, that provider is going to have access to seeing not necessarily their contact info, but all their wishes and desires.

[00:20:37] **Kati Whitedge:** And what have been nice to know, by the way, stylists love this. They want to have this information to say, oh, okay, Jenny Smith is coming in and here's what she has going on. You know, because really the power of Mya isn't just matchmaking. In addition to that, we expedite the consultation process. So, we're finding out all this information, including photos before a client even comes in for the first time and empower our team to have an amazing consultation and direct the path for that entire visit and future visits.

[00:21:13] **Antony Whitaker:** So, the client, the client can upload photographs to it before they've even come into the salon

[00:21:17] **Kati Whitedge:** absolutely,

[00:21:18] **Antony Whitaker:** Got it. Okay. Yeah.

[00:21:20] **Kati Whitedge:** I mean, what a great way to build your Instagram following and your connections. I mean, there's just so, so, many things that we could talk about. Another perk is quantifying. So, we can show you stats, but we couldn't show you, if we don't integrate. We can't say Jenny Smith came in and spent this much on these things over the course of the year that

we have a way for you to figure that out if we don't integrate, but of course, then you have to figure that out.

[00:21:50] **Kati Whitedge:** We teach you how to do it. If we do integrate then it's done for you. The point of sale pushes that data into our dashboard for you. So, yes, there are cool perks, but it's not like the success makes or breaks the integration, but there, it would be a very nice thing to have.

[00:22:07] **Antony Whitaker:** Sure. Okay. So, what sort of impact have you found that it's had? I mean, I know you said you developed it for your own salon to start with, um, and then thought this is so, good. The industry needs this. What impact does it have on staff? And client retention, because you must have some data on that.

[00:22:27] **Kati Whitedge:** Yeah, there was one salon who is just incredible at tracking their data. Some of the data I never even thought to track, they brought to my attention and they increased their new client retention by 65%. I mean, when you know that the national US national average retention rate for new clients is 32 percent to increase that to 65 percent is massive and really life changing.

[00:22:58] **Kati Whitedge:** Cause you think about how much does it cost to get a new client versus what it costs to keep an existing. So, that is one incredible stat. This particular owner there in New Jersey said, hey, we were tracking what the average spend was for new clients. And on average, it's 119, but we started tracking the average spend of our clients that came through our Mya funnel, and they spent an average of 160.

[00:23:27] **Antony Whitaker:** Wow.

[00:23:28] **Kati Whitedge:** Now this isn't just a couple people spending 40 more on average their new clients that came through our funnel spent 40 more across the board. Like what kind of impact does that make on your business over the course of a year across the board? That's massive. And so, I could, there's stats left and right.

[00:23:47] **Kati Whitedge:** Our average conversion is 40%, which means out of every 10 people that go through your funnel, four out of the 10 are going to come in and do business with you, that is also staggering.

[00:24:03] **Antony Whitaker:** it is. It is. So, uh, can I ask how many salons are you, are you currently in? Or is that proprietary information you can't divulge at the moment?

[00:24:11] **Kati Whitledge:** Yeah, well, we are now in the U S Canada and Australia. Of course, we love the UK and we are working hard to come to you. Um, we are almost a 300 in the U S

[00:24:23] **Antony Whitaker:** Fantastic. And I'm surprised you said you're already in the Australian market. That's great. Yeah. Good. Okay. All right. So, um, how do salons Drive Mya or how are clients finding it? So, if I'm a salon and I decide, yeah, I want this, how do I drive clients towards it? Is it just a case of you put it on your website and I'll see it and I'll be curious and I'll click on it.

[00:24:49] **Antony Whitaker:** Is that the sort of process or, or how do clients market it? It's probably a better question to ask, how are clients marketing it to potential consumers?

[00:25:00] **Kati Whitledge:** Well, there's so, many ways, but first and foremost, we're conversion software. So, we are going to convert website visitors. You already have traffic coming to your website. Now we know what we need to do with them. We need to offer them a way to go through your funnel and become a client. Um, remember we talked about Instagram.

[00:25:18] **Kati Whitledge:** Everybody has a hair page or a business page on Instagram. Imagine you posting what we all typically do, a post that says, check out this amazing hair color by Sasha. Wondering if Sasha is your salon soulmate, click the link in our bio to take our short matchmaking quiz. So, that is where you can market it on your social media.

[00:25:42] **Kati Whitledge:** We teach salons how to utilize, this is a call to action for their either Facebook or Instagram ad campaigns that they do. We have incredible statistics showing. What an increased amount of engagement and click rate those have. We run those four companies that want our help to do it, or we teach you how to do it yourself.

[00:26:03] **Kati Whitledge:** But I also want you to think about, remember how we talked about your four groups that you're marketing to? Well, you have these existing clientele, but if you run a report and found out how many clients came in that never have come back or. I haven't seen them in like three

months. Wouldn't it be nice to get this in front of them knowing that the reason they haven't been back is typically for misalignment or missed expectations.

[00:26:28] **Kati Whitledge:** So, if I now implement this as a drive back campaign, which most point of sales have this automation in their software, we just change up the language and the opportunity in those communications. And now we're increasing the number of clients that we're driving back to our business who have already been in.

[00:26:50] **Kati Whitledge:** So, you can utilize Mya in so, many special ways. And we have success guides and ongoing training web events for our community that help consistently teach everybody how to optimize their software with us.

[00:27:04] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay. Um, what else can I ask you about that then? So, questions, you said it's a short quiz. So, give me an example of a couple of the questions that they will be asked in the quiz.

[00:27:15] **Kati Whitledge:** Yeah. And if everybody wants to visit joinmya.com it's M Y A. So, joinmya.com. You can learn about our brand and kind of look through that. But we have, it'll say, try the matchmaker. You can click on that at any time and go through that and see what it's like for yourself. Um, one of the questions that I think is powerful is hearing what challenges are you facing right now?

[00:27:40] **Kati Whitledge:** So, let's say I'm looking to come into a med spa and maybe I want injections. Maybe I want dermaplaning or microneedling. Maybe I don't know what I want. But I know what I'm struggling with, I feel like I'm struggling with fine lines or dry skin or so, when I enter in that area of concern, now I'm more empowered as a professional to help guide that guest.

[00:28:06] **Kati Whitledge:** On what kind of solutions that we can provide today, what kind of products you should be taking home and utilizing in your routine, there's just so, many more ways to help them when we identify those challenges, that's from more of a logistics perspective. One of my favorite questions is identifying what matters most to the client when they come in for their visit.

[00:28:29] **Kati Whitledge:** You know, so, if we think about the personality styles of our professionals. I'm going to go to the hairstylist when I think of this, because I, I have been one. I, that's how I identify most. And so, you're going to have hairstylists who no matter what, when, when they have a guest in their chair, they're going to say, well, what are you thinking you'd like done today? And then you're going to have hairstylists that say, I can't wait to tell you, here's what I want to do with you today. Let's, you know what I mean? So, you're going to have different personalities behind the chair. Well, depending on the personality style of the client, who are they going to do better with, are they, do they want and need somebody to tell them, here's what you need to do with your hair, or do they have a vision?

[00:29:15] **Kati Whitledge:** They're really strong about what they want and they need somebody to be able to like hear them out, really listen to them and then deliver. So, we want to make sure that based on our proprietary matchmaking process, that we're getting that piece of the puzzle, right? Because without that, nothing else matters.

[00:29:32] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah, exactly. Okay. And is it, um, like the example you just gave where you were talking about more med spa, that sort of made me wonder straight away, where is it mainly being positioned in the market, in hair salons or in the beauty side of it? The skin side of it? Or is it sort of a pretty even match?

[00:29:51] **Antony Whitaker:** What, what, what, how does that go?

[00:29:53] **Kati Whitledge:** Well, of course, we're going to be heavier on hairstylists because we started as Meet Your Stylist and, you know, that's, that's how we originated. But, um, we are growing in all categories more and more. Yeah.

[00:30:05] **Antony Whitaker:** Great. Okay. And, um, is it, is it, is it, is it like a slimmed down version for independent operators as opposed to just being for, you know, a team-based type of salon?

[00:30:19] **Kati Whitledge:** Antony, I'm so, glad that you asked me this because this is launching soon. We are working with a pilot group of solopreneurs who are going through this, who really want to promote this on their social media. But they also, they don't have time for this back and forth, let's DM each other forever before we see if we can move forward with an appointment.

[00:30:44] **Kati Whitedge:** So, Mya is going to be positioned to help them see if we're compatible. Are we really a match? And if so, let's expedite that consultation process, get all of this data about them. And then here you can, you can book with me. So, long story short, that is coming soon.

[00:31:01] **Antony Whitaker:** because that's interesting, the conundrum there, because if you're a salon owner and you've got five staff working for you, and based on them filling out the questions, it will point them towards one of those staff who is the most compatible. Whereas if you're an independent and you're just a business unit of one, and you're using Mya, it's either going to say we're compatible or we're not.

[00:31:24] **Antony Whitaker:** Um, it's not like, whereas if you've got a team of people as a salon owner, you're winning either way. It's just a matter of. Who that client goes to. It's going to recommend them to somebody. Um, I'm intrigued as to how you, how you're going to get around that so, that it works at the independent level as well.

[00:31:43] **Antony Whitaker:** And obviously that then brings up the next question, which is about cost. So, uh, how does it, how does it work in a salon situation? Is there a, like a membership or a subscription fee based on how many staff you've got? Like, how does that work?

[00:31:57] **Kati Whitedge:** Yeah. Irregardless, if you have, you know, five stylists or 50, the subscription model. So, it's a month to month. Is based on the type of services you provide. So, if you provide hair services, if you provide barbering or hair, uh, styling services, that's one category. Hair is one category. And if you choose one category, so, let's say you're just skincare or you're just nails or just massage, that is 149 a month.

[00:32:28] **Kati Whitedge:** And then it goes up from there. If you're like, well, we do hair and skin, or we do hair, skin and nails and so, on. That just builds then your monthly subscription. Um, of course we are the only marketing company in the industry that actually guarantees a return on an investment. And the average return is over 46%.

[00:32:50] **Kati Whitedge:** And when I often teach about, you know, what should you expect for return? I'm always teaching that five to one ratio for every 100 you spend. You should absolutely expect to get 500 in return. I will

share that we have a salon in our near Chicago, Illinois, who has a smaller team and she brought up Kati.

[00:33:12] **Kati Whitledge:** We had a 46 percent conversion rate in one month and they spent, these clients spent 4, 606 in one month, in one month, they brought in over 4, 000 in revenue. And they've spent, you know, I think they have two things. So, they've spent 198 in their monthly. So, it's like, here's the question. Would you spend 200, 300 a month if you knew you were going to put in your pocket two to three thousand, of course, yes, and we do it over and

[00:33:43] **Antony Whitaker:** you keep on doing it. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:33:45] **Kati Whitledge:** fill the funnel

[00:33:46] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Okay. All right. I know we need to wrap up in a couple of minutes, but I just have a few quick ones for you here. Uh, the obvious one, I think is the answer to this question is what part of your business? Because you've got Mya, you've got salons, you've got nails, you've got products.

[00:34:03] **Antony Whitaker:** So, what part of your business are you most focused on expanding?

[00:34:07] **Kati Whitledge:** software.

[00:34:08] **Antony Whitaker:** Software. Right. Okay. And the other thing I noticed is I was on your website having a look around before we got on the call and you've got a big team of people with a variety of different business functions, which is impressive. You've got people that are SEO, you've got graphic designers, you've got branding specialists, and that's just the beginning.

[00:34:30] **Antony Whitaker:** Um, are they all full-time people employed by the company or are they sort of outsourced, you know, VAs? How does that work?

[00:34:37] **Kati Whitledge:** Uh, no, but we are hiring a technical administrative assistant because we really need extra help. We're growing, growing. Uh, We have a combination of people who are full time team members versus they are

an extension of our team, but they're, they're fully embraced to be part of our team. So, I don't know if that's helpful for your question, but

[00:35:01] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. No, that, that, that, that is, that's fine. That's fine. Um, quick, short, quick-fire answers. What's your biggest strength?

[00:35:08] **Kati Whitedge:** Personally, I believe my biggest strength is two things. Number one, my intuition, I think is very strong and a much-needed asset in growing business. My second top strength is seeing the strengths in others and really knowing how to position the right people in the right positions. Cause if that's off, uh, companies don't grow.

[00:35:30] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Yeah. Okay. What's the biggest lesson that you've learned in life? Not necessarily hairdressing might be hairdressing a business, but it can be anything.

[00:35:39] **Kati Whitedge:** Um, the biggest lesson I've learned in life is this is all temporary. My faith is very strong and no matter how much I focus on the growth of business, the grind, the entrepreneurial pursuit, being great, great, great, and all these ways. Um, none of that goes with you. Uh, you know, when we think about everlasting life and what does that look like?

[00:36:07] **Kati Whitedge:** And so, my faith in Jesus is, is the foundation of everything.

[00:36:10] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay. And, uh, you're a mum. Uh, again, looking at all these titles on your website, there's a few people with the surname Whitedge. So, your husband is working in the business. Uh, Tyler, is it brother, brother-in-law,

[00:36:25] **Kati Whitedge:** He wishes, I'm kidding. Tyler is not, uh, my husband, Anson is my husband.

[00:36:31] **Antony Whitaker:** Anton. Yeah, Anton. Sorry, that was your husband. But then there's Tyler as well. Yeah,

[00:36:35] **Kati Whitedge:** Yes. So, Tyler is my brother-in-law, um, both men, by the grace of God, we were able to take out of corporate America to join us in this pursuit together. Um, funny enough, I am still 97 percent full equity owner of the company and all the other companies, 100%. So, it's been

interesting, but they, they bring special skills to the table that I don't, I don't have.

[00:37:06] **Kati Whitledge:** So, surrounding yourself, yes, with people who are better than you are, but they are incredible people to work with. And you know, one of the things that make a healthy company healthy company is you're willing to banter sometimes. I think sometimes companies avoid conflict, but if you do that. You will never have innovation happen.

[00:37:26] **Kati Whitledge:** So, bringing people around me who are willing to banter and argue your perspectives and points of view in a really healthy way with each other. And that dynamic we have, and it's incredible. And obviously there's a very high level of respect and trust.

[00:37:44] **Antony Whitaker:** Um, yeah.

[00:37:44] **Kati Whitledge:** and it's gotta be that way to, to yeah, grow a team and inspire the team that you're, you're looking to bring on board.

[00:37:52] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Okay. So, look, we need to start wrapping up. Whereabouts can people connect with you on Instagram or website or any other social media channels?

[00:38:00] **Kati Whitledge:** I would highly recommend checking out joinmya.com. If you scroll down to the bottom of our website, you can then dive into all of our social media. We actually offer a ton of resources on our YouTube page, as well as our Instagram. And I mentioned our podcast as well, which Antony is going to be joining here pretty soon.

[00:38:20] **Kati Whitledge:** So, that is a great resource. We have over 500 episodes, um, where you can hear more stories of owners in the industry and just different industry pioneers, uh, which are very inspiring. And that's just been pivotal to even my own growth. And development is, is being able to interview and learn from others.

[00:38:41] **Kati Whitledge:** So, please visit joinmya.com.

[00:38:43] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay. Well, look, I'll put those links on our website, growmysalonbusiness.com and in the show notes for today's podcast. So, if you're listening to this podcast with Kati Whitledge and have enjoyed it,

do me a favor, take a screenshot on your phone and share it to your Instagram stories. And don't forget to subscribe and leave us a rating and review on the Apple podcast app.

[00:39:04] **Antony Whitaker:** So, to wrap up, Kati Thank you for being on this week's episode of the Grow My Salon Business podcast.

[00:39:11] **Kati Whitledge:** Thank you so, much for having me, Antony. I really appreciate you.

[00:39:14] **Antony Whitaker:** 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](https://www.growmysalonbusiness.com) or on Facebook and Instagram at [Grow My Salon business](#) and if you enjoy 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