

GMSB 247

[00:00:00] **Antony Whitaker:** 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.

[00:00:27] **Antony Whitaker:** Hey it's Antony here and welcome to today's episode of the Grow My Salon Business Podcast. Now, a couple of years ago, I was at Salon International in London and there was a young barber on stage who was not only doing great work, but she also had an infectious personality as well as an amazing level of energy and confidence about her that made her stand out from the crowd.

[00:00:49] **Antony Whitaker:** So today I'm really happy to have Hayden Cassidy as a guest on the show. In today's podcast, we'll discuss the attitude and belief that you need to have in life in order to overcome setbacks and succeed. The opportunities that a career in barbering can bring about, including being the first Dior grooming expert in the UK and the evolving business model of today's barbershop and lots more.

[00:01:14] **Antony Whitaker:** So, without further ado, welcome to the show, Hayden Cassidy.

[00:01:17] **Hayden Cassidy:** Hi, thanks for having me. It's been a pleasure to come on here and chat to you

[00:01:21] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah, no, it's good. I'm really looking forward to it. I mean, uh, I've only met you once before, and that was very briefly. You were very busy on a stage at Salon International, and I was on a stand opposite you, and so I couldn't help but hearing and listening and watching you, and you were, uh, very entertaining.

[00:01:38] **Antony Whitaker:** Um, you know, very infectious personality, loads of confidence and energy and passion.

[00:01:43] **Antony Whitaker:** I know that amongst other things, you've been a professional football player, um, although you are Dublin born, I know you

lived in the US for a while playing professional football or soccer as they call it, until you had an injury.

[00:01:56] **Antony Whitaker:** Um, I also know that I think I read somewhere that you studied psychology for a while, so there's quite a few things that have gone on before you've segued into the barbering thing. So let's just sort of do a little bit of a background about, uh, let's start with the professional football thing because, um, that's, that's very exciting.

[00:02:14] **Hayden Cassidy:** Yeah, it was um, yeah, I've kind of done a number of things and I think, you know, everybody obviously has their journey and how they got into hair. And I think usually people kind of go in straight after school, but yeah, I did a number of things beforehand. And firstly, when I finished school, I got the opportunity to have a, uh, a scholarship to America where I played football there.

[00:02:36] **Hayden Cassidy:** Um, And I was there for two years and had an amazing time. Um, until I broke my leg in a tackle and that kind of ended that I had a bit of rehabilitation. So I stayed there, um, for about two and a half, three years, and then eventually got told that I wasn't going to be, Be able to play at that level again and had to kind of decide either if I wanted to stay and you're right It was psychology stay and continue to study psychology or Come home and kind of just figure out what I wanted to do.

[00:03:07] **Hayden Cassidy:** So I came back home. Um And to be honest, when I got home, I just kind of didn't really know what I wanted to do or what I wanted to get in. So I worked in a bar, I taught dance class, I did a bit of coaching. Um, I did a number of things until eventually I found barbering.

[00:03:25] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay, that's a good summary. So that was obviously a big dream though, the football thing.

[00:03:29] **Hayden Cassidy:** No, it was. Yeah. I mean, it was, you know, I played football since I was six years old. It was always a massive passion of mine, and it was something that I was super determined. And I think as a kid, you know, I just was going to play football. That was it. There was no other parts. There was no other things that I was going to do.

[00:03:46] **Hayden Cassidy:** You know, I remember even In, uh, secondary school going to my guidance counsellor, they were like, Oh, you have to fill out

your forms for college, like in Ireland. And I was like, Oh, I'm not going to college in Ireland. I'm going to play football, you know? And they kind of like smirked and laughed and were like, Oh, but what if you don't get in?

[00:04:02] **Hayden Cassidy:** And it's like, for me, there was just no, what ifs, it was just something I was going to do. And, you know, I was, I was super determined than that. And I think that determination, I think I've always kept and it's carried me on but yeah, football was my number one passion. It was everything I wanted to do and I think eventually when I did get that scholarship I got scouted in a, in a game and I got offered a number of scholarships.

[00:04:25] **Hayden Cassidy:** I ended up taking one in Georgia. And for no other reason than I knew it was going to be sunny and I wanted to escape the rain in Ireland I immediately regretted that when I landed and it was like about 45 degrees and humidity was 100 percent and I had to do um Preseason and that but I was super determined that that's what I was always going to do and you know to get that scholarship and to start that journey was incredible.

[00:04:51] **Hayden Cassidy:** And, you know, I had an amazing two years and a successful time playing and met incredible people. And I think to go at such a young age and, you know, I was 18 when I got that scholarship. And when I got on the plane, I literally was getting on a plane to go over to not, I didn't know anybody, you know, I wasn't, didn't have anybody with me.

[00:05:11] **Hayden Cassidy:** And I think to do that at such a young age, taught me a lot and I think was kind of the foundation of what I've pushed into everything I've done. It's like, okay, just go. I remember my mom saying to me, you know, I was like, what if I don't like it? And she's like, well, you can always come home. And I think that stuck with me.

[00:05:28] **Hayden Cassidy:** And I was like, I've taken that in anything I've done. And I've always thought, okay, if something doesn't go right, or if I don't like it, I can always go back to what I was doing previously. And I think fundamentally, that was what kind of pushed me in. And Got me through them years and got me over and gave me the confidence to just go over and do it headfirst.

[00:05:48] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah, that's, that's amazing. Cause as you said, you know, it was like a dream of yours. You were always going to do it. And at such a young age, I mean, that determination is fantastic, but at such a young age, when it just gets, the rug gets pulled out from underneath you, that must,

Like really shake you, you know, to your very core as to who you are and what you're going to do, because that was such a big, you know, such a big part of who you were.

[00:06:11] **Antony Whitaker:** I love what you said about, you know, going to the careers counselor and just being so convicted that that was your destiny. And then for a tackle and a broken leg to just completely change trajectory of your life. That's admirable. That takes a lot of courage to bounce back from that and reinvent yourself.

[00:06:30] **Hayden Cassidy:** Definitely. I think, you know, I think it taught me a lot. I mean, at the time I was obviously, as you can imagine, devastated for my whole path and my whole idea of what I was going to do to completely change literally within an instant. And I think, um, at the time when I came back and, you know, I battled through, I was had about four surgeries.

[00:06:49] **Hayden Cassidy:** I was actually in, you know, the break was so bad that I was actually in a wheelchair for a few months and for everything to literally take a 180 turn. I think. At the time, I probably got myself into a really kind of sad, dark place, but I think basically when Barbaran came around and I got introduced to that.

[00:07:10] **Hayden Cassidy:** It was like that flame kind of ignited again. And that passion that I once had for, for football kind of came true barbering for me. And I think looking back now, people always say, Oh, it was, you know, it was, it was obviously devastating to go through that and to go obviously get your dreams crushed at that age.

[00:07:26] **Hayden Cassidy:** But looking back on it now, I really do believe that it was a blessing in disguise. You know, I was young enough that I was able to kind of go back and go, okay. what do I want to do now? You know, what can I explore and what let me kind of find myself again and let me find myself without football because I spent my whole life just being a footballer, you know, and it was like, okay, what am I without that?

[00:07:48] **Hayden Cassidy:** And I think that's, that, that was a very interesting, but a very exciting journey to kind of, probably not have the pressure of, okay, I'm just going to be a footballer. I need to make it. This is me. It was like, oh, wait, hold on. There's another life out there. And now it's time to explore that,

you know? So I think I, I kind of learned to look at it in a different, from a different point of view.

[00:08:10] **Hayden Cassidy:** And I think it really essentially just built me and helped me build a kind of wall of thickness and made me stronger. And, and looking back on it now, probably made me stronger than ever going through that and kind of going through it so early on. And. Basically the beginning of, of what I was going to do next, you know,

[00:08:29] **Antony Whitaker:** yeah, yeah. Well, I admire you for that because, you know, having the strength to do that, especially at such a young age, to, okay, you said you went into a bit of a dark place, but then you come out the other end of it and say, okay, so what does life look like after football for me? So, uh, you found yourself into barbering.

[00:08:46] **Antony Whitaker:** I mean, that's quite a segue. Uh, from football, studying psychology, to all of a sudden barbering. Tell us about that. Like, how did that start? Because it's not, you know, it's not everyone's journey, is it? Especially for a young woman to get into barbering and, you know, be so passionate about it so quickly.

[00:09:07] **Hayden Cassidy:** yeah. I mean, it's never something that I could have ever imagined myself in. Like I was never one of those people that was obsessed with hair and wanted to go into a salon and, you know, I, Yeah, it just kind of came from nowhere. But basically, I at the time I was teaching, um, coaching and teaching, uh, dance lessons that I've always done.

[00:09:28] **Hayden Cassidy:** And one of my friends, basically, who was an assistant and, um, teaching dance, he, started to get into barbering and you know, I used to, we used to hang out in, he had a shed at the, out his back at the time where we used to just hang out, but he'd be cutting hair as we were hanging out. Um, and honestly, one time I just said, Oh, I want to try that.

[00:09:48] **Hayden Cassidy:** Like let me try and do a haircut, a fade on one of our friends who, who it was almost like a laugh, you know, we were just trying it out. Um, and I did the haircut and just something felt, I remember the feeling of it just feeling really natural. And I think, To never do something or never even being exposed to it.

[00:10:07] **Hayden Cassidy:** Like the first time I ever was in a barber shop was the first time I ever cut hair, like as a junior barber. And I think for me to pick up a clippers and for it just automatically to feel natural, it was like something ignited in me and I kind of realized like, oh, this is quite fun and I'm enjoying this concept.

[00:10:23] **Hayden Cassidy:** You know, my family, I grew up with a family of artists. So my mom's an artist. My dad was an artist. My grandfather was an artist. I was never into painting as much as probably my family was, um, maybe because I was exposed to it for so long, but I always had a creative streak. And I think as soon as I picked up that Clippers, everything made sense, you know, I didn't really find the confusion which a lot of people struggle when they kind of get into fades or hair cutting, you know, there's a lot to learn and a lot to take in, but I didn't really feel overwhelmed with the clippers in my hand at the very start.

[00:10:55] **Hayden Cassidy:** I just felt excited and I just wanted to know more. And I think that's where the initial kind of passion started to creep in and after that, you know, my friend said, why don't you think about getting into this? And I was like, Oh, you know, I, what would I be doing in a barbershop? And I think he, he said to me, if you got a clippers, uh, scissors and a comb, you can travel anywhere in the world and you can always make money.

[00:11:22] **Hayden Cassidy:** You're always going to be self sufficient. Everybody's always going to need a haircut. And those were the words that maybe got made me go. Actually, you know what? This could be an idea. So I actually went in and I, um, yeah, on that drive home after that haircut, I went into TK Maxx and bought myself a DIY pair of clippers and scissors.

[00:11:42] **Hayden Cassidy:** And I decided I was gonna pursue it. And I, you know, messaged my cousins and said, anybody want a haircut? I put YouTube tutorials out there to look at how to put the top of a hair, how to fade. Um, and I just, you know, it became everything slowly but surely within six months, I was obsessed.

[00:12:01] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Okay. Um, that's the first time you mentioned scissors. You've said clippers, clippers, clippers, which is interesting because You know, I know you've not been in the industry for all that long, but the, you know, the barbering industry has had a huge renaissance and a lot of people were picking up the clippers and getting into it.

[00:12:21] **Antony Whitaker:** And a lot of them have fallen by the wayside. Um, you haven't, you've gone from strength to strength and, you know, you do beautiful work. I love the work that you do. Um, and, and you have become a real sort of, perfectionist. Um, You know, you're constantly seem to be honing your skills.

[00:12:40] **Antony Whitaker:** You have numerous skills. You're very good on platform. You're very good as an educator, but the work that you do is beautiful. So tell us, how did you, how did you master it? How did you get to the level that you're at so quickly? Have you worked with any great mentors that have like sat you down and said, right, if you're going to do this, then this is how you need to do it.

[00:13:03] **Antony Whitaker:** Like, tell us a little bit about that side of things.

[00:13:06] **Hayden Cassidy:** Yeah, I mean, to be honest, I think I'm one of those people that have always been, um, You know, whatever I do, I put a hundred percent, 110 percent into it. You know, I can't do something that I'm not really and truly, um, inspired by. I can't do something that I'm not infatuated with. I have to really love it to kind of put everything into it.

[00:13:28] **Hayden Cassidy:** And then once I fall in love with it, it becomes my, I become a bit obsessive, obsessive with it. And I think I've always been a visual learner. I've always been someone that has to do it to kind of figure out and learn. And, you know, I always put myself in, out of my comfort zone and into the deep end and go okay well show me why, why, why, you know, and being, that's in every aspect of my life and I think when I got into barbering I knew that the best way for me to learn was to be in a barber shop and to watch and to, you know, Constantly be asking questions and figure it out by myself, you know, I can't just sit in a, in a course and sit in a workshop and just be told things I have to be actually physically doing them.

[00:14:08] **Hayden Cassidy:** And I think I've been lucky enough in that every shop I've gone into has not only been super welcoming, super supportive, but I've had incredible support from them. people working beside me and very talented people that have been willing enough to give me their time and their expertise to really guide me.

[00:14:26] **Hayden Cassidy:** And I think that started very much from when I went into my first barber shop as a junior barber. You know, I went into a shop

called Cut and Sew, which is in Dublin. Um, and. They weren't looking for a junior barber. They weren't looking for an apprentice. And I went in and said, please just give me the opportunity.

[00:14:42] **Hayden Cassidy:** I'm willing to put everything into it. Um, they did, they took, you know, a risk and they got me in a shop and I was the first in and the last out. I was working with three of the best barbers and, um, at the time in Dublin and one of them had been trained in hairdressing. He had four years, five years' experience in hairdressing.

[00:15:02] **Hayden Cassidy:** So they were. Not only barbers, but they were barbers with a skill set of amazing hairdressing as well. So, um, to go into a barber shop at that level and to be a junior barber and get the time given to me to really just teach me, you know, I remember it was, it was hard. Don't get me wrong. Like I remember doing haircuts and the owner, Sean would come over and he'd be like, that's not good enough.

[00:15:26] **Hayden Cassidy:** Do it again. That's not good enough. Why did you do that? There's a line in that fade. It's just. How do you get it out? And really, really just took that time to kind of push me to just better myself. And, you know, there's a thing that we call in barbering, especially when it comes to fading, where you don't understand, you don't see anything.

[00:15:42] **Hayden Cassidy:** And all of a sudden it clicks and you see everything. You see every mistake, you see how you can progress, you see how you can learn from, um, and it's like the barber's vision just comes to life. And it takes some people a couple of weeks. It takes some people a couple of months, a couple of years, but for me, I kind of got it very early on.

[00:15:59] **Hayden Cassidy:** And I knew where I needed to push myself. I became very, very good at fades very quickly. But because I became good at fades, it wasn't something that defined me and that I wanted to define me. So because I became good at that, I was like, okay, what am I not good at? Styling. What am I not good at? You know, using the scissors and sectioning and understanding layers and graduation.

[00:16:24] **Hayden Cassidy:** So that became, you know, What I was obsessed about so every time that I learned a new skill and I kind of benefited from that and I mastered it I moved on to the next thing and I continue to do that today

You know, I'm constantly wanting to learn and I think I have an eagerness that I love learning I love finding out why I don't just want to know How to do it.

[00:16:44] **Hayden Cassidy:** I want to know why, why is it that we're doing that, you know, um, when it comes to techniques or anything, you know, I, I love things like Salon International when we first met, because when I'm off that stage, I'm walking around and looking at other stages to be like, is anybody doing something different to get a different perspective?

[00:17:01] **Hayden Cassidy:** I always said, I never ever. I don't want to turn anybody away from my chair. I always want to be able to give a full service to anybody who is willing to sit in my chair. Um, when I started barbering, when I, I was a year in that barber shop and then I decided I wanted to learn everything about shaving because for me barbering is this historical skill set and trade and a lot of that stems from the art of shaving and the the history of barbering and for me I wanted to learn that so I found the best barber who was known for his shaves and his hotels and That whole kind of old school barber and I found the best barber in Dublin and then worked for him for six months side by side to really master that.

[00:17:48] **Hayden Cassidy:** So every kind of aspect of the industry I've always pushed myself and I, I suppose that's, that's down to just my eagerness to learn and it's down to my passion for it. Um, but it's also down to just one thing. Probably just wanting to know more about it. You know, I want, I want to know everything. There's nothing that I'd shy away from.

[00:18:07] **Hayden Cassidy:** I know a lot of the people in this industry is like, I just really love, you know, when, when it comes to hair, I just really love doing color. So that's going to be my expertise. Whereas I assume, yeah, I just want to know everything. And I think there's just a real, I've always had that inquisitive side to me.

[00:18:21] **Hayden Cassidy:** And, um, it's, it's, yeah, it's done me amazing in this industry because I think there is so much to learn in our industry.

[00:18:28] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Um, I know you worked in Berlin for a while as well. So as you were talking then, I was thinking, you know, oftentimes in most barbershops I go into, there are no women. They're all men, uh, as barbers. So has that ever worked against you for you? I mean, you know, when

you said you went into cut and sew and you asked for an opportunity, did they take you seriously?

[00:18:50] **Antony Whitaker:** Did they sort of think, you know, this is a guy's, uh, We don't want you here. Did you, have you ever had any resistance to the fact that you're a female in the, in the world of barbering?

[00:19:02] **Hayden Cassidy:** No, you know what? I think, like, when it came to, when it came to Cut and Sew, I think I was really lucky in that Cut and Sew was a very welcoming space with incredible people Who, and I was quite lucky being a female and walking into that space because I did have that You know, I'd never had that when I walked in there.

[00:19:25] **Hayden Cassidy:** I might've had it once or twice for a few clients kind of making a comment and being like, Oh, we've never seen a female or a female has never cut our hair. Or this is the first time, or, you know, the, the, the, the famous comment, which is, Oh, you're pretty good at this for a girl, you know, like, which I got all the time, but I mean, I never really saw it as, I never really saw it as a negative.

[00:19:45] **Hayden Cassidy:** And I think because I was probably so used to constantly being surrounded by this male dominated. environment from playing football. You know, I played football on men's and boys teams up until the age of 14, you know, 13, 14, when you had to switch to women. So, for me, I was probably just a bit naive and blindsided by that.

[00:20:03] **Hayden Cassidy:** I never saw differences, really. Um, and I, and I, built a thick skin over playing football with guys for so long, you know, you were always being, oh, girls can't play football. And then it was like, well, let me prove you wrong. And, and that was always my attitude. And I think I brought that attitude into barbering when I went into it.

[00:20:23] **Hayden Cassidy:** So although there was definitely probably comments that were made, it was more of a feel for me to prove. Yeah. That I could be better and prove that, you know, gender doesn't come into play, prove that I can do just as good, prove that, you know, it was constantly this thing that almost probably fueled me more than anything, you know, it was passion obviously always fuels you, but whenever there was a little bit of a negative comment.

[00:20:47] **Hayden Cassidy:** It was like, okay, let me, let me, like, let me, let me, let me show people wrong. And I think, you know, that's, that's my journey, but I know specifically to females in the industry, it is a male dominated, dominated industry. There is horrific stories that I've heard of females going in and trying to get a job and being, you know, isolated because they've been a female and getting nasty comments or being mistreated and there is that, that does go along and I'm not trying to hide that or put any shadow over that because that does happen and it really hurts me when that does happen.

[00:21:19] **Hayden Cassidy:** Um, but all I can do is kind of You know, when I educate or when I get on a platform and, you know, I've gone to shows around the world where There might be one or two females in the room. And now when I go and teach a workshop, there's 20, 30 female barbers So the more that we grow as an industry and the more that we're aware of these times that happen or these incidents and the more we vocalize them Um, and support each other, and you know, when I go in and I educate, I try and be there for anybody out there who's going through difficult periods.

[00:21:50] **Hayden Cassidy:** Because, you know, the beautiful thing about Barbaran is we are a very strong community, and I think for the females, for the males, or for whatever gender you might be, it's important that we all stick together.

[00:22:02] **Antony Whitaker:** yeah. Is, uh, as you were talking, I was thinking is, is if I'm sitting in your chair, Is football the thing that you use to break down barriers? Is that, is that part of the conversation a lot of the time during the day for you? Because it's obviously a deep

[00:22:17] **Hayden Cassidy:** No, I Yeah, it is a big passion and I think like it's not necessarily always the initial thing that I talk about. I am great. I have a football chat. You know, I know everything about football, so I'm a big Liverpool supporter, so I can turn a football chat on when whenever I want. And I think, you know, there is definitely clients that I will have that kind of barbershop banter and football chat with, you know, and I love being able to talk about that.

[00:22:41] **Hayden Cassidy:** But there's also, you know, a lot of my clients who probably, absolutely hate football and they want nothing more than not to talk about it. And I think I, I now have, you know, working in barber shops, it was

probably easy for me to be able to almost be a bit of a chameleon and blend into whatever conversation I wanted.

[00:22:57] **Hayden Cassidy:** But I think now that I have, you know, I have a one to one chair studio in London and Um, it's just me and my clients. So my chats range from football to the deepest chat you'll ever, ever hear. Probably deeper than I'd ever even have with my partner or my friends or family because there is that beautiful, intimate, safe space that we can just chat about and we can just be open and honest.

[00:23:21] **Hayden Cassidy:** And so the chats are now, yeah, definitely football is mentioned once or twice in a day, but there's also amazing topics that we have conversations about.

[00:23:30] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Good. Good. Okay. Um, let's change it up a bit then because I know that you are now the, the Dior grooming expert. Um, that is quite an accolade to get. So tell us about that. How did that come about?

[00:23:48] **Hayden Cassidy:** Yeah, it's been, you know, it's, it's an incredible achievement to have and, you know, it was definitely a pinch me moment when they approached me and I got offered, um, to come on board with their campaign and come on board on the team with them. And I think, you know, it's just a very exciting thing and it's something that I probably never dreamed of, you know, it's a possibility that I thought.

[00:24:08] **Hayden Cassidy:** Would never be, would never happen, you know, I don't think anybody goes into their career and thinks I'm going to be partnered with a name like a household name like Dior, you know, so, um, yeah, I, they approached me about a year ago, um, a year and a half ago now, uh, January, 2023, I met the team and had beautiful chats with them and found out their ideas of what they wanted to really create with.

[00:24:31] **Hayden Cassidy:** Coming on as a grooming expert with the Savage team and, you know, it was incredible to see them put barbering on a pedestal and to give an opportunity to someone like me who's a barber who's worked in the industry for 10 years and, you know, to really kind of see, you know, barbering as a whole and see that, you know, nowadays, where do males go and get their advice for and their tips from?

[00:24:56] **Hayden Cassidy:** And it is in the barbershop. So I think that was really clever of them. And I, I'm really excited about, you know, the opportunities that have already come from it and the opportunities that will continue to come from it. And I think it's just as such an exciting moment. And I think, you know, after educating for so long, you know, Um, about six years and after being around the industry to then break into this world, whole nother world was definitely a bit scary, but something that has been super exciting.

[00:25:24] **Hayden Cassidy:** And, you know, again, like I said, I love myself in the deep end and just enjoying every single moment that I get on every opportunity I got. And this is something that is super special and definitely a career highlight for me.

[00:25:37] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. So what, what does that involve? Like on a, on a daily, weekly basis? I mean, I've just written down some things. Does that mean you do shows for them or you're a spokesperson to the media or are you asked to contribute to product development or do photo shoots? What sort of things are you doing under that umbrella?

[00:25:57] **Hayden Cassidy:** And make a complete mix of everything you just mentioned. So, um, it's the first time this role has come along. We have two other barbers who are, um, with the Sauvage team as grooming ambassadors. Um, Vince the barber who is from LA and Chaga who is from Paris. So there's three of us that are spearheading the Sauvage team.

[00:26:15] **Hayden Cassidy:** And, um, It'll be a mix of everything. It will be press releases, it'll be talking about, you know, grooming tips and, um, for publications. It will be coming on and working as part of their shows as celebrity grooming. Um, I've gone over to Paris a number of times and chatted to them and met all their team and give them, uh, you know, some advice on their Sauvage products and what we're doing with it and how to kind of, Um, how to basically create, you know, protocols and, you know, there's a mix of everything and it's really, really exciting.

[00:26:46] **Hayden Cassidy:** And I think the beautiful thing about it is for their side, they just want me to be authentically me, which is beautiful. That's all I can ever ask for partnering with a brand. Um, and from their side, it's a whole new and exciting role. That's. just being explored. And this is the first time it's happened.

[00:27:03] **Hayden Cassidy:** So, you know, from both sides, it's really just a collaborative journey and incredible opportunities have already come from it. And for me, definitely, it's like, you know, working with, working with photographers on set that they have access to or working with, you know, ambassadors that they have or celebrities that they dress.

[00:27:23] **Hayden Cassidy:** It's just, it's just opportunities that I couldn't have thought in my wildest dreams. That I would get and here I am at the forefront of it, you know, so all of the things you mentioned it's it's entailing all of that and it's yeah it's just really exciting to be around and you know I went over to Paris and I got taken around the archives and the gallery and you know by by the team over there and I think During that experience, it was like you realize the extent of the brand and just how incredible the brand is and to be a, you know, Dior has been around for so long and from it to be started by Christian Dior, know, years ago, and for what it's turned into now, it's a household name and it's a, one of the finest luxury like houses in the world and to really see the ins and outs, the detail, the quality of what they represent just makes you feel just so special to be part of that, you know.

[00:28:20] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah, definitely. Definitely. I mean, I know you didn't go looking for this. But obviously there would be young barbers who would be listening to you talk about that thinking, Oh my God, I would love to be, you know, the, uh, uh, the, your grooming expert. Uh, how do I go about doing that?

[00:28:37] **Antony Whitaker:** I know that you never set out to do that, but looking back on it, if a young person was saying to you, what do I need to do? to get that sort of opportunity. What, what sort of advice would you give them? How did you, you know, like, what was it they were looking for that made them come to you?

[00:28:56] **Hayden Cassidy:** I mean, I honestly, honestly, I, I haven't got, I haven't got an easy answer for that. And I haven't got a quick answer for either. And I think for me, what I always, what I always kind of set out to do was just do as much as I could, as best as I could. And take every opportunity that came my way. I'm a very, very hard worker behind all the beautiful opportunities that come along.

[00:29:21] **Hayden Cassidy:** I'm constantly working on. I think we kind of overlook hard work sometimes in our industry. You know, we see the quick

fame, we see the likes, we see the viral videos, but we don't see the foundations before that. has literally been my everything since I started. And since I got into it, I was passionate about it and I'm so, you know, I'm constantly willing to kind of.

[00:29:43] **Hayden Cassidy:** grow and to learn and to speak to people and get involved. And, you know, I think that's the biggest thing for me is it's, it's, it has been a lot about community as well. And just pushing myself. Um, and I think as long as you can be authentically yourself and just push yourself into absolutely everything and say, take every opportunity.

[00:30:03] **Hayden Cassidy:** I think sometimes we can be our own worst critics when we're like, Ah, I could take that opportunity, but what if it doesn't go well? Or what if, you know, the path doesn't lead to where I want to be? And I think, you know, we battle with ourselves so much in that. And I think it's probably, you know, our biggest faults, especially in an industry like ours, where there are so many opportunities.

[00:30:24] **Hayden Cassidy:** Nowadays, you know, you don't just have to be the barber behind the chair. If you want to be the barber behind the chair, you can be, but you don't just have to be that. You can explore other avenues. I've created a career for myself that allows me to be behind the chair, have a beautiful time with clients, which is one of my favorite places to be in is in my studio and then I can be on set at a shoot and then I can go and teach, you know, a hundred people on stage and I've created that because I've been open to opportunities and I've been willing to put myself, you know, in the deep end and put myself out of my comfort zone.

[00:31:01] **Hayden Cassidy:** And I think that's the biggest thing is to not kind of doubt yourself, to believe in yourself and to open yourself up to opportunities. And I think that's a real special thing and a real thing that I think People overthink in our industry, but there's no reason, you know, I think people. Begin to look at failure and really focus on failure.

[00:31:22] **Hayden Cassidy:** What if it doesn't work? What if it doesn't work? And I think, you know, what my mom said to me all those years ago, if it doesn't work, you just come back to the same position you are in. If I am amazing to get this opportunity with York, if that opportunity didn't happen, or I didn't get that, or if I don't continue to get it, I'm still in a beautiful position.

[00:31:41] **Hayden Cassidy:** I still, um, have my clients. I've still have that foundation, you know, I still love my job. So it's like looking at things positively rather than looking at how they could go wrong and I think we put so much pressure on ourselves. And I think if we lift that pressure and we just explore. I think that can lead to beautiful things.

[00:32:00] **Hayden Cassidy:** Um, so for me it's always been, you know, it's always been down to just kind of just looking for, basically looking for the magic and just seeing what happens. And I think when that, also when I broke my leg all those years ago, it's like, I know how quickly things can change. I know how quickly opportunities can be lost.

[00:32:19] **Hayden Cassidy:** Um, And so I never really have a plan. I never really have a five year goal. I can never really know what's going, what next year is going to take. And I think sometimes when we have too much of this is how, what I want to do, this is the goal I want to be. This is where I want to be in 10 years. Sometimes when we put ourself into that box and we give ourselves them goals, I think we kind of almost. can limit ourself a little bit because we don't see the other opportunities that come around us. So it's like we have blinkers on to this laser focused idea that we want to do. I want to open a shop on a high street. We don't see all the other opportunities that then might lead to something even better than that.

[00:32:58] **Hayden Cassidy:** So I think if you just, you know, take day by day, take week by week, opportunity by opportunity, and just explore, I think that's the best thing you can do. Because you don't know what's going to come and land on your feet, or what email is going to be in that inbox.

[00:33:14] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Yeah. Great advice. Um, your space, your workspace, you've alluded to it a couple of times. You said your studio, one to one studio that you've got. Uh, tell us about that. What, what is your space like?

[00:33:27] **Hayden Cassidy:** Yeah, I mean like, you know, I, when I first moved to London about five and a half years ago, um, I truly was focused on education more than anything. I was doing a few guest spots in different barber shops in the center of London. Um, but I really wanted to kind of push the education side of things. COVID happened, um, and obviously we couldn't travel anymore.

[00:33:46] **Hayden Cassidy:** And a lot of my job. And a lot of what I did was relying on travel. So when I couldn't travel, I was eight months, um, not working. Um, I had eight months on universal credits. I didn't really know what I could do. Um, but what I did know is I didn't know I needed to. Create something a bit solid in the city that I lived in, um, and to give myself, you know, backbone of having a clientele and building up that clientele because I didn't have that when I moved to London, you know, I was so focused on doing everything else that that took a backseat.

[00:34:21] **Hayden Cassidy:** So I think I really realized through that time, I needed to create my clientele and I needed to create a business for myself and just a place for myself that was a bit more secure than what I was relying on. So during the eight months that I was off, I taught myself how to build my website, I viewed studios, I realized that I didn't really want to create this big barbershop with my name on it.

[00:34:45] **Hayden Cassidy:** across it and, you know, on a high street. That was never a real goal for me. Um, I think I love the freedom and flexibility of having opportunities that I can change.

[00:34:56] **Hayden Cassidy:** I knew that that's something I was passionate about. And I thought the only way I could really create that is By creating a service, that was just me and my clients. So, you know, when I wasn't there, I wasn't there. But when I was there, I was there for my clients. And, you know, I work with a booking system now that allows me to open my bookings a month in advance.

[00:35:16] **Hayden Cassidy:** So my schedule is pre planned. All of my dates are in. And whatever dates I have left over, four days a week. You know, I might, I might be in the studio nine to nine sometimes, and then days just to get everybody in. But whatever days I'm in, they're in a month before, and my clients know at a month, every month that my appointments are going to open up, and they can book in for their haircuts.

[00:35:37] **Hayden Cassidy:** Um, so I've been able to create that simply because I was able to create my own space that allowed me the flexibility to work with my clients. What I wanted to do. Um, so I have one chair in there. It's just me. Um, most of the time I, when I'm not there on a weekend, if I'm away traveling, what I do is I get some guest artists in.

[00:36:02] **Hayden Cassidy:** So I had my friend, Sarah Hurley, who's a colorist. She came over and did a weekend there so they can rent the space out. This space is a beautiful space. Just. The site London feels, there's an area where you can sit down, chill out lounge. There's a record player, there's my chair and my wash basin. Um, and it's really just a space where I wanted to create that takes away that intimidation from walking into a salon or a barbershop, you know, I. I hate going into a salon, a first time salon, because I just feel this immediate intimidation comes over me and I'm like, Oh, I don't know what to do. I don't know what to ask. And the same with barber shops, you know, I have a lot of friends who walk five times by a barber shop before they'll even get the courage to walk into it, you know, because it's this new environment.

[00:36:47] **Hayden Cassidy:** Whereas what I wanted to create in my space is I wanted to create a space where people. Felt like they could just be their self. They could ask for whatever they wanted. They could have an open, honest conversation. They could have a full consultation. Um, there's no pressure. There's no other ears around.

[00:37:05] **Hayden Cassidy:** There's just me and you, um, and let's create a service and create the haircut that you really want. And let me give you the knowledge. For you to be confident walking away from that, um, and also to just feel comfortable, like I, I wanted it to feel like you're just walking into a room in your house that you're already familiar with.

[00:37:22] **Hayden Cassidy:** So I created this space, it's called Croi, um, it's on, you know, it's, it's just, yeah, it's, it's my little baby, it's my home, and it's where I actually feel most, you know, comfortable. Just most, I never feel like I work. And I think that's the beautiful thing when you find a job that you never feel like you're walking into work.

[00:37:38] **Hayden Cassidy:** It's the, it's the most special thing. Um, and like, you know, my clients, I've built that relationship now because it is a one-to-one environment. I can control the quality of the service and the quality of the conversation. I can really get to know my clients and, you know, We can have incredible conversations, but you know, most of my clients have now become friends with me.

[00:37:58] **Hayden Cassidy:** I go for a pint with any one of them because they're just brilliant, you know, and there's, that trust has been built.

[00:38:03] **Antony Whitaker:** Yeah. Yeah. Oh, that's great. I I was going to say to you, like I built up a picture as you've been talking actually, but I was going to ask you,

[00:38:09] **Antony Whitaker:** before we start to wrap up, um, where do you see the trends coming from with barbering, like where did the, where's your main influences from? Is it from music? Is it from different cities? Is it from fashion? Like what are the things that you sort of pick up on and, and where do you see men's hair evolving?

[00:38:30] **Hayden Cassidy:** Um, I've always been one of the type of people that was really inspired by art and culture. And that's my number one thing is like, I love traveling to new cities. I love experience in different cultures. Like, and I think, you know, I've had the opportunity to be able to travel to a lot of places and to also live.

[00:38:50] **Hayden Cassidy:** In different cities around Europe, but I think that's where I always get my, my big, like my inspiration for shoots, you know, I went on a trip to Japan and the style was incredible. The way they dress, the way they carried themselves, the culture, the way they treated each other inspired me so much. And I came back like, just creatively driven and ready to go.

[00:39:11] **Hayden Cassidy:** Like I wanted to do everything, you know, I was, and that is really where I got my inspiration. And, you know, I love music. I've always been, music has been another passion of mine. Like, and I, and thankfully a lot of my clients now are amazing bands and musicians, musicians that, we can have a bit of fun with when we're cutting their hair, you know, like I just had a musician that's gone on tour, on a European tour, and he's like, right, let's do something different, you know, so you can kind of get that creativity and you can actually try different things.

[00:39:39] **Hayden Cassidy:** I think we take a lot of our inspirations when it comes to trends from What has previously been being done, you know, it's like fashion, everything kind of revolves and goes around 360 and I think nowadays we're looking at, you know, the punk era, we're looking at, you know, the 90s era and it's all kind of coming back again and I think it's coming back but with a different flair and um, I think that's a really, the really beautiful thing about our industry and the beautiful thing about barbering and I always say it, there's no right or wrong.

[00:40:09] **Hayden Cassidy:** You know, it's literally down to your selective taste. There's not really like there's very blurred lines So you can really just explore that creativity now, don't get me wrong Some things won't work out and they won't look great But you will go and you will do a shoot and you will kind of get creative and you'll try something And it just might be incredible, you know, and it might be something that you'll go.

[00:40:30] **Hayden Cassidy:** Oh, well, that was great From that, you know, like social media obviously is always You going to inspire trends, you know, we can now go on our phone. Like years ago, I would have been, when I first started, I would have got magazine after magazine and I'd be flicking through magazines and looking or films, you know, I'd watch Mad Men and I'd be like, well, you know, the haircuts and that I'd watch, you know, Romeo and Juliet with Leonardo and Capri on.

[00:40:54] **Hayden Cassidy:** I'd be like, Oh, that's brilliant. You know, like, so I'd get a lot of inspiration from that. Now we can go on our phones and we have access to like a million portfolios, you know, there's so much inspiration. I generally, with my clients, I'll go into a Pinterest board and we'll talk through different styles or different cuts and find something that suits them or suits their hair texture that they can wear, that they can, that suits their lifestyle.

[00:41:17] **Hayden Cassidy:** Um, so I think. You know, we're kind of spoiled for choice when it comes to inspiration. But again, I think it, it really depends on the type of person you are and what it is you want to create. But I definitely would say to anybody, just try new things, try different things and just explore, um, as much as you can, you know, like even, even if you are that, you know, barber or stylist, uh, just kind of at the moment. It's like stands behind the chair and does client's day today on a, on a Saturday after your finished work or on a Sunday, get a group of your mates, you know, take a few pictures, get a few clients who want to try new things and just try to have fun with it. You know, I think we're so serious in our industry that I think we forget that there's a lot of fun to be have.

[00:42:00] **Hayden Cassidy:** And I think that's where the inspiration will really kind of come from.

[00:42:03] **Antony Whitaker:** great. Okay. Well, listen, we, we need to start wrapping up now. Um, I know you just mentioned Instagram and social media.

Uh, whereabouts can people connect with you on your different social channels?

[00:42:15] **Hayden Cassidy:** So, on Instagram, um, my Instagram handle is Hayden underscore Cassidy. Um, and that Instagram has a link then to my studio, which is Croi London. Um, Croi is spelled C R O I, it means heart in Gaelic. Um, and then you can also find me on TikTok, which is Leah Hayden Cassidy. And my website is www.haydencassidy.com.

[00:42:38] **Hayden Cassidy:** So there are all my

[00:42:39] **Antony Whitaker:** Fantastic. Thanks for that. 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 Hayden and have enjoyed it, then do me a favor, take a screenshot on your phone, share it with your friends. And don't forget to subscribe and leave us a rating and review on the Apple podcast app.

[00:43:00] **Antony Whitaker:** So to wrap up Hayden Cassidy, thank you for being on this week's episode of the Grow My Salon Business podcast.

[00:43:07] **Hayden Cassidy:** Thank you so much for having me, Antony. It was amazing to chat

[00:43:10] **Antony Whitaker:** My pleasure.