

## GMSB 306

[00:00:00] Hey there, and welcome to another episode of the Grow My Salon Business podcast. I'm your host, Antony Whitaker, and whether you are a returning listener or perhaps this is your first time, either way, it's great to have you join us here today.

[00:00:17] This is episode 306, and in episode number 304, I talked about what I called the leadership crisis in the salon industry. That I believe is one of the things, keeping employees from reaching their full potential.

[00:00:35] I spoke about how there are many salon owners that have effectively abdicated their role as leaders and have no idea how to build a business that enables their team to thrive. It's easy to buy into the hysteria (that we as an industry are sometimes guilty of creating) and believe that no one wants to be an employee anymore, and that everyone wants to be self employed.

[00:01:00] Yes there has been a huge swing in that direction over the last 20 years but there are plenty of people that don't want that, and instead want to work somewhere 'that is bigger than them'. Somewhere that offers a great place to work, a great team environment, training, marketing, great pay and genuine career opportunities. But they want to work for a leader - someone who genuinely knows what they're doing

[00:01:28] and that's what's in short supply. 'Leaders and visionaries' who know what they're doing and are prepared to put in the work to create a business that many employees want to be part of. Just to be clear; I'm not saying it's easy, because it's not - it's hard! And it can be incredibly frustrating, and at times people will let you down. But it can also be the most rewarding work that you can do.

[00:01:55] And I don't just mean creatively, but financially, and in terms of your own personal development as a human being, a business owner, and a leader in the industry and the wider community. And a lot of people will assume that 'that's just not me'. I'm just not that person. But, here's the thing, becoming that person doesn't happen overnight

[00:02:20] it's a journey that never finishes. And whether you thought about it or not - when you opened a business you took the first step on that journey - and the success of your business is determined by how you continue to evolve and grow as a leader. Today, I am going to talk the practical strategies and systems that the most successful salon owners use to build the business that they want!

And at the same time create environments where stylists can thrive and earn what they're truly worth.

[00:02:54] Now, This isn't theoretical stuff, aside from building my own very successful salons, I've also spent years working with and studying some of the most successful salon businesses - multi-million dollar operations with dozens of employees who consistently create stylists who are six-figure earners. So, what I'm sharing today is not just what I believe and experienced in my own salons - but it also comes from what I see the most successful business owners are doing every single day.

[00:03:27] These are proven principles from salon owners 'who have in the past' - and continue to today - to get great results and build incredible teams and profitable businesses in the process. And many - if not all of them - have been guests on my podcast at some point over the years...And so I'll include in the show notes of today's podcast a selection of 'must listen' episodes where the focus is on building a culture that creates high earners.

[00:04:00] So until then, here's my list of five points that they all have in common.

[00:04:06] The first thing that they all have in common is that they have strong foundations. They have clarity around the vision for the business they want to have and the values they represent as a brand. And they're clear about what their non-negotiables are, and perhaps that is something fundamental that most salon owners get wrong.

[00:04:26] They think that being flexible and accommodating with everything will create more loyalty, but here's what the most successful salon owners know. You also need to be crystal clear about what your non-negotiables are. Now, that might sound simple enough, but think about it. How many problems in your salon would disappear if everyone just worked hard, shared the same brand values, and genuinely worked as a team?

[00:04:54] I know of a business, it's not a salon, but their mission statement simply says, we're here to make good things happen for other people, and I really love that we are here to make good things happen for other people. But here's the key. It's not just a slogan. You have to mean it, and you have to be willing to part ways with people who generate good revenue, but who don't align with the values that sit behind that mission statement.

[00:05:22] As a former multi salon owner, one thing I learned very quickly was that there's no amount of money that makes it worthwhile to put up with people who aren't aligned with your values. Let them go. And often you'll find that the clients can also sense that toxic energy and they'll actually stay with the salon anyway.

[00:05:42] So the most successful salon owners don't just have core values written on a wall or in a manual somewhere. They live them, they breathe them, and they make decisions based on them every single day

[00:05:54] And every coaching conversation they have with a team member, every decision, every policy gets filtered through whatever those values are.

[00:06:04] When you have this kind of clarity, something magical happens. You start attracting people who share your values and you repel people who don't share your values. Yes, you heard that, right? Repelling the wrong people is just as important as attracting the right ones, and that then leads perfectly into the next point, which is that the most successful businesses.

[00:06:29] Hire for attitude and ambition, not just for technical and creative skill. Here's where I think most salon owners get it backwards. They hire for technical skill and they hope that they can teach attitude and ambition. But you can't teach attitude or ambition. You can only expose people to what that looks like, and then hopefully you can nurture it, you can develop it, and eventually you can reward it.

[00:06:54] So how do the most successful salon owners recruit? Well, I think they focus on three key traits. The first thing they look for is does that person have the ability to build their own clientele? In other words, you don't just want stylists who sit there and wait for a column of clients to be handed to them.

[00:07:15] As a salon owner, you should have a marketing plan in place. It's already attracting new clients for them, but you should also expect your team members to know how to attract and retain a clientele as well, because, well, that's essential of both the individual team members and the business are to meet their respective goals.

[00:07:35] The second trait that successful salon owners look for when recruiting is respect for yourself and for others. So how do they present themselves? Are they well put together? Do they respect their environment by cleaning up after themselves? Are they a team player? Now, obviously people

can fake it for an interview or even a week or two, but they can't keep it up forever, and so those qualities are on trial every single day.

[00:08:03] The third trait is possibly the most important of the three, and that is what I've already touched on, and that is attitude and ambition. When you hire for attitude and ambition, you don't need to micromanage because ambitious people with the right attitude want things for themselves. So they do the right things without being told what to do because they appreciate the culture and understand the opportunity that's in front of them.

[00:08:31] Put simply, when you are hiring for attitude and ambition, you don't have to be trying to motivate people because you are hiring people that already want it for themselves. So that leads us to the next point, which is the importance of creating systems that support success culture. Without systems is just wishful thinking.

[00:08:54] Meaning that even if you have a good culture today without the systems in place, it's totally dependent on the people that work there. And when they move on, the culture moves on with them. So the key learning is that the most successful salon owners have robust systems in place that support their salon culture.

[00:09:14] And so when people leave, and they inevitably will at some stage, but when they do, the culture stays intact, and that's because of the systems that are in place. Now within any business, there are hopefully numerous systems, but there are three systems that I really want to emphasise. The first. There's training and development systems, and many salon owners are neglectful in this area because they assume that new stylists already have the skills or that they'll somehow magically just develop those skills.

[00:09:48] And they also assume that the more established team members will just automatically keep up with the ever changing trends and techniques, uh, changing technology in the products. And what is a fast moving world and a fast moving industry. That successful salon owners recognise that it's ultimately their responsibility to make sure that everyone on their team has the skills needed to serve the clients and represent their brand standards.

[00:10:15] And that doesn't happen without an ongoing training program in place.

[00:10:19] Now, I've always believed that ultimately it's down to the salon owner to train their team for the standards that they expect their people to have.

Now, obviously in most countries there's also usually a more structured system through private or government schools that are training providers, but I don't believe that it's their sole responsibility to get people to the standards that you as a salon owner expect them to have.

[00:10:43] I think that's your job as the business owner

[00:10:46] And as well as training and development systems, the most successful salons have very established communication systems. Whether that's regular team meetings, clear one-to-one feedback processes, a daily huddle, formal appraisals, or a salon, WhatsApp group, or whatever else you might have in place.

[00:11:06] Communication systems keep everyone informed and aware of what's going on and what's expected of them.

[00:11:14] The third category of systems is recognition systems, and what's important here is that it's not just recognising the top performers. But recognising improvement and any personal best, celebrate personal best for any individual regardless of what the actual amount is, because if it's their personal best month ever, then it should be celebrated because a brand new stylist should be cheered on if they've had their best month just as much as the top performers should be celebrated.

[00:11:43] Now, sometimes the new stylist numbers might be mediocre, but recognising effort and growth is crucial.

[00:11:53] So that leads me to the next point, which is that the most successful salon owners understand that they have two sets of clients. The first is the paying clients that come through the door, and the second is the employees who serve them. And so the most successful salon owners recognise that their job is providing structure and support to take care of the business side of things so that the stylists can focus on what they do best.

[00:12:20] Now, whether that's in the form of making sure the products that they use are always available, or that in the event a stylist calls in sick, that someone else handles their appointments and looks after their clients, either way they don't have to think about it. As well as providing that structure and support, the most successful salon owners recognise that they need to provide growth opportunities for those on their team.

[00:12:43] Clear career paths, ongoing education and mentorship programs. And something that most people miss is that you need to pay special attention to people in their four to five year mark because they often hit a wall where they start to lose focus and start to wonder, is this all there is? So salon owners need to understand that if they don't provide growth and opportunity for those on their team, then those team members will assume that the only way to grow is to leave and to grow elsewhere.

[00:13:14] And that takes me to the importance of financial security. Now, obviously everybody needs financial security and successful salon owners recognise that it's now more important than ever to have a pay system in place that rewards people for their productivity because the lure of being self-employed is that they will make more money.

[00:13:37] And let's face it, in some cases they do. But in many cases they don't. So have a system in place that rewards people well while still allowing the business to be profitable and to grow. Because when you provide genuine financial security, your team are more likely to stay with you, and then they're able to focus on growth.

[00:13:58] Instead of survival. And that leads us perfectly into my last point, which is that they need to have both performance standards and accountability for results. Because as a salon owner, as much as you want to do all these great things, whether it's rewarding your team financially or to invest more in training or various marketing initiatives, the reality is that you can't do those things without a financially successful business.

[00:14:26] And it's because of that realisation that the most successful salons have clear performance standards, whether that's about the non-negotiable steps that make up the client service experience, or the productivity standards that the stylists are expected to reach across the range of key performance indicators.

[00:14:44] Either way, there needs to be both established, expected levels of productivity and accountability for their results. So where do you start? Well, I know that you've probably heard most of what I've said before. So where do you start turning ferry into implementation? Because that's the key word, implementation.

[00:15:08] It's not enough just knowing what needs to be done. It's about making the commitment to implement. So here's where to start. Step one, define what your non-negotiables are. What are the two or three things that you will not compromise? Write them down and commit to them.

[00:15:26] Step two is audit your current team, meaning who aligns. With your values and who doesn't. Now be honest about this.

[00:15:37] Step three, start having the conversations with the right people. Talk about the vision that you have for the business and get them excited about building something special and becoming part of it. And if you think that some people on your team are not a fit, then either help them to change or help them to find where they do belong, even if it's not with you.

[00:16:00] Step four is build your systems. Start with communication and recognition. Make sure people know what's expected and that good results will get rewarded. Step five is invest in training for you and everyone on your team. And step six is be patient be persistent, culture change takes time, but every day you delay is another day of lost potential for your team and for your business.

[00:16:33] So final thoughts before we start to wrap up is building a great team culture isn't about having the most expensive looking salon or paying the highest commission rates. It's about creating an environment where people can do their best work and where they can grow as professionals and as human beings.

[00:16:51] And at the same time where they can take pride in the fact that they are part of building something bigger than just them. The salon owners who get this right, don't see their team as expenses. They see them as partners in creating something meaningful. They understand that their job as leaders is to create opportunities for others to succeed and to protect them from the obstacles that would prevent that success.

[00:17:17] Remember, culture isn't what you say. It's what you do. It's not what you allow or do as a one-off. It's what you consistently reinforce, and it's not about being perfect, it's about being intentional. Your team is capable of extraordinary things, but they need the right leadership and the right environment to make that happen.

[00:17:39] The question is, are you ready to create it? So with that said, let's start winding this episode up, but before we do, we do have multiple free resources on our website from our weekly podcasts, such as the one you're listening to at the moment, to the two minute salon manager videos, as well as our paid for resources, whether it's our books or our one-to-one coaching or our online courses.

[00:18:03] Now relative to today's podcast, there are a couple of resources that I wanna point you towards. The first is my best selling books, the Grow Series. So there's Grow One Super Stylist, which is all about getting those on your team to understand that ultimately they're responsible for their level of productivity, and therefore for how much they earn. Grow Two Management is particularly relevant to today's episode, and that's very much about you as a business owner.

[00:18:31] And Grow Three Team is also relevant to today's episode and Grow Four Marketing is the final in the Grow Book series. Now you can find them at [Grow my salon business.com/books](http://Growmysalonbusiness.com/books), or if you're serious about management, then head on over to [grow my salon business.com/course/management](http://growmysalonbusiness.com/course/management) and jump on the wait list for our Online salon management course.

[00:18:57] so that we can let you know when it's next open for enrollment. So that's a wrap until next week. In the meantime, take a good hard look at your salon culture and ask yourself, is it helping your team to reach their potential or is it holding them back? The answer to that question will determine not just their success, but yours as well.

[00:19:19] I'm Antony Whitaker, and I'll see you next week.