

Episode 317

[00:00:05] **Antony Whitaker:** Hello, and welcome to another episode of the Grow My Salon Business podcast. I'm your host, Antony Whitaker, and as always, it's great to have you here with us today. Now, before we dig into today's episode, I do wanna say thank you to everyone who sent in photographs of where they listened to the podcast.

[00:00:22] **Antony Whitaker:** Honestly, it really makes my day seeing you tuning in, whether it was from the salon, or the car, or the kitchen, or out for a run, or even at the gym. So keep them coming. I love to see where you are listening. And don't forget to tag me at, grow My Salon Business on Instagram, or you can email them directly to me.

[00:00:41] **Antony Whitaker:** Okay? Now, if you haven't listened to last week's episode. I highly recommend that you go back and start there because today is very much part two of a three part series on marketing and what we're covering today builds directly on what we talked about last week.

[00:01:00] **Antony Whitaker:** So. A quick recap in case you haven't heard it and have no intention of going back to the previous episode, even though I'm recommending you do. But last week we talked about the three functions of marketing, and I define them as being, attracting new clients, turning those clients into regulars, and then keeping them as long as possible.

[00:01:21] **Antony Whitaker:** And we looked at the data, the really uncomfortable data that says most salons are actually pretty good. At the first function, they're getting about one new client a day, which is excellent, but they're failing miserably at the second and third functions because 60% of new clients never return for a second visit.

[00:01:43] **Antony Whitaker:** And by the time you get to six visits, only one in 10 of those original new clients are still around. So that's a 10% retention rate, and I genuinely believe that that is the single biggest problem facing salons today. So today we're gonna talk about why that happens, where it all goes wrong, and what marketing really has to do with it.

[00:02:07] **Antony Whitaker:** So let's start by thinking about this from the salon owner's perspective. Imagine you are investing thousands, maybe tens of thousands on advertising or beautiful salon design, or on the rent for a great location, on a fancy website, on SEO, on social media marketing, on all of it. And the reason you're doing all of that is to attract new clients.

[00:02:32] **Antony Whitaker:** That's the goal, to get people through the door and it works.

[00:02:36] **Antony Whitaker:** You are getting that minimum of one new client today. They walk through the door for the first time, but here's the thing. At that moment, the moment they walk in, the location doesn't matter anymore. The Instagram posts that brought them in doesn't matter anymore. The Google ad doesn't matter anymore.

[00:02:55] **Antony Whitaker:** All of that has done its job. It got them there. Now what matters is what happens next. Now it's about getting the client to come back. Now it's about turning them into a regular. Now it's about the second function of marketing, and this is where most salon owners completely misunderstand what marketing is, because the second function of marketing isn't about advertising.

[00:03:20] **Antony Whitaker:** It's about the experience a client has in your salon. It's about the quality of work you deliver. It's about the relationship they build with the person who does their hair. If you get the client experience right, if you deliver the quality they expect, if your team builds genuine professional relationships with clients, then you are on your way to turning that new client into a regular and then keeping them for as long as possible.

[00:03:48] **Antony Whitaker:** But here's the problem. Most salons don't do that, and that's why 60% of new clients never come back. So why don't they come back? Well, there are two main reasons. Reason number one, you didn't give them a reason to, and reason number two, their expectations weren't met. Now, let's start with the first one, because it's an easier one to fix.

[00:04:12] **Antony Whitaker:** Here's something that most hairdressers don't want to hear. For a lot of clients, a haircut and colour you just gave them is a commodity. I know. I know. You pride yourself on your creativity, your technical skill, your years of training, and those things absolutely matter. But here's the reality. Most clients assume you're good at hair.

[00:04:33] **Antony Whitaker:** They expect you to know what you're doing. That's an expectation. It's an assumption. That's the baseline. So if all you are selling is the service, the blow dry, the haircut, the color that in the client's mind, that's something they can get elsewhere. But when you are selling the service and building a relationship and creating an experience, now you're giving them something they can't get anywhere else.

[00:04:59] **Antony Whitaker:** Now you're giving them something personalised, something unique. Let me give you some examples of what I mean by giving them a reason to come back. It's using their name multiple times, not just at the start. Throughout the appointment, it's asking them questions and actually listening to the answers.

[00:05:19] **Antony Whitaker:** It's going outta your way to connect with them. Not in a forced way, but in a genuine way. Some clients wanna chat, some don't. So read the room.

[00:05:28] **Antony Whitaker:** It's telling them I've really enjoyed meeting you today. I'd love to see you again. It's suggesting that they should come back, you know, for this cut or for this colour. Coming back in about six to eight weeks will keep the shape looking fresh. And then, and this is a big one, it's offering to rebook them right there.

[00:05:45] **Antony Whitaker:** I know you like a late night or a Tuesday or a Saturday afternoon, whatever it is, but say to them, let me get you booked back in now. That way you'll get the day and the time that's most convenient to you. You see, it's all those little things that's marketing, that's the stylist marketing themselves, and when you don't do those things, you are not giving the client a reason to come back to you specifically.

[00:06:09] **Antony Whitaker:** You are just another salon, another haircut, another commodity. Now let's talk about the second reason that clients don't return, and that is their expectations weren't met. Now this one's a bit harder because it could be a lot of different things. Maybe they didn't like the haircut or the colour. Maybe it wasn't what they asked for, or it didn't turn out how they'd imagined.

[00:06:31] **Antony Whitaker:** Maybe they didn't like the salon. The atmosphere, the cleanliness, the music, the vibe. Maybe they didn't like the stylist or the assistant or the receptionist. Maybe the price felt a bit too high for what they got. Maybe the appointment took way longer than expected. Maybe they felt rushed, maybe they felt ignored.

[00:06:50] **Antony Whitaker:** Whatever it was, there was a gap between what they expected and what they experienced, and that gap was big enough that they decided not to come back. And here's what's important to understand both of those reasons, not giving them a reason to return and not meeting their expectations. Both of those happen inside the salon.

[00:07:13] **Antony Whitaker:** So marketing isn't just about what gets clients in the door the first time. Marketing is about what happens while they're there. Let me paint you a picture. Imagine. You are watching the Olympics. It's a four by 400 meter relay. The starters pistol fires and the first runner takes off. It's exciting. It's fast.

[00:07:37] **Antony Whitaker:** The crowd is going wild, but the real moment of tension is the baton change when the first runner passes the baton to the second runner who's already moving, and sometimes, sometimes during that handoff, the Batten gets dropped. And when that happens, no matter how fast the rest of the team runs, no matter how hard they try, they almost never recover.

[00:08:01] **Antony Whitaker:** The race is lost in that single moment. Now, let's apply that metaphor to your salon. The baton is the client. The first runner is all the marketing you've done to get that client through the door. Your location, your branding, your advertising, your social media, your website, your reputation, the second, third, and fourth runners, that's your team, the receptionist, the assistant, the stylist.

[00:08:30] **Antony Whitaker:** And if the handoff doesn't go smoothly, if every single person on that team doesn't do their job, you drop the baton, you lose the client. Think about everything you've done as a salon owner. You choose a location, you design the space, you name the salon, you decided on the services and the pricing. You build a website, you created an Instagram presence.

[00:08:51] **Antony Whitaker:** You develop relationships in the community. You choose your product brands. You recruited your team, you set standards, you train them. All of that is marketing, all of it. and from the client's perspective. All of that has created a certain level of expectation and their mind before they ever walk through the door.

[00:09:16] **Antony Whitaker:** So when they do walk in, you've done your job as far as the first function of marketing goes, tick the box, you attracted them, but now you are passing the baton. And the question is, will their expectations be met? Will they become a regular or will they become part of the 60% who never come back? Because once that client walks in, the second function of marketing takes over and everyone on your team has the responsibility to make sure the promise your marketing made is matched, or better yet exceeded by the reality of what happens when the client is there fall short, and you drop the Baton.

[00:10:04] **Antony Whitaker:** Now the first phase of your marketing. Attracting clients involved a lot of money, time, and risk. You've invested heavily in that. The second phase, delivering on the promise also costs money. Of course it does, but the second phase is really about getting your team to deliver on what your marketing promised.

[00:10:25] **Antony Whitaker:** And that's about recruitment. It's about training, it's about leadership systems and management. This is where marketing becomes about your team. It's about how they interact with clients. It's about consistency. It's about standards. It's about the experience you create and the relationships you build.

[00:10:46] **Antony Whitaker:** And as a salon owner, it's your job. With your marketing hat on to decide what those standards are, to develop the systems, to train the team, and to manage the whole process. But here's the thing. You can have the best Instagram account in the world. You can spend a fortune on Google Ads. You can have the most beautiful salon in town, but if your team drops the Baton when the client walks in, none of it matters.

[00:11:12] **Antony Whitaker:** All right, let's wrap this up. As I said at the start, this is part two of a three part series on Salon marketing. Next week, in the final episode, we're gonna get into the solutions. We're gonna talk about how to actually fix this problem, how to identify where your specific leaks are.

[00:11:34] **Antony Whitaker:** And how to start plugging them. And if you're listening to this thinking, yes, this is exactly what I need help with, then I want you to know that we're launching a very comprehensive online marketing course very soon. Now, this isn't just theory. This is a step-by-step system for mastering all three functions of marketing in your salon.

[00:11:55] **Antony Whitaker:** So if you want to get priority notification for when enrolment opens, plus any pre-launch bonuses, head to growmybusiness.com/course/marketing and join the wait list. I'll also put that link in the show notes of today's episode.

[00:12:15] **Antony Whitaker:** All right. I'm Antony Whitaker and thank you for listening and I'll look forward to seeing you next week for part three where we get very solution orientated. Until then, take care. Bye for now.