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[00:00:05] Hello, and welcome to today's episode of the Grow My Salon Business podcast. I'm your host Antony Whitaker, and it's great to have you here with us today. Let me start by saying Happy New Year, the Christmas rush of clients, uh, frantic shopping and wrapping of gifts, the overindulging with food and time with family and friends.

[00:00:25] It's all over and now 2026 is here. The gifts have been opened, the tinsel has gone. The tree is nowhere to be seen, and now there's nowhere left to hide, and we are back facing the reality of the businesses that we have with all the challenges, the excitement, and the opportunities that a new year and a new beginning presents so happy new opportunity.

[00:00:51] Now, I know that sounds a bit corny, but that's what every New Year brings with it. A new opportunity to begin again with a blank sheet of paper to [00:01:00] reinvent the next step. The beginning of a new year is what I often refer to as a, that was then, and this is now moment, and you get to decide what happens next because the start of every year, there's a chance to begin again.

[00:01:17] And I'm sure you probably have that feeling of there being a subtle pressure in the year to make this year, the year that change will happen in your business.

[00:01:26] Now, having said that, we all know that you don't need a new year, a new month, a new week, or even a new day to begin Again. You can begin again. You can change direction, you can wipe the slate at any time you want and there's nothing stopping you.

[00:01:43] But the new year always feels like a significant chance to draw a line under it and start again. At the end of last year, I got an email from a salon owner telling me how tough business was and how he and many salon owners are just hanging on week by week, hoping for an uptick in business,

[00:02:03] But at the same time saying how worried he was because advanced bookings were down, the salon was quiet, the clients weren't spending the way that they had done previously. Now, it doesn't matter where he was from because it's a familiar story that could have come from many salon owners regardless of where in the world they're based.

[00:02:23] The reality is that times are tough for many. Not all, but many. And that's important to say because I also know of salon owners everywhere that have just had their best year ever. And I even heard one salon owner send me a screenshot from his point of sale system showing that he had finally broken through the \$2 million sales figure for the first time ever.

[00:02:46] But

[00:02:46] Mai has, he worked at it and weathered the storm of business ups and downs over many years, and so he truly deserves it. Now, hopefully I always come across as a glass half full kind of guy where I look at the upside, but I don't always find it easy to be positive and optimistic.

[00:03:06] It would often be a lot easier to focus on all the negative things going on in the world and in business because being in business is hard. That's a reality. There are many small businesses all over the world that are finding it harder than ever to survive and flourish because of the uncertainty around the world that we live in.

[00:03:27] And so what may have worked before may not be working today.

[00:03:32] And look, there are many reasons for that, whether it's a global political uncertainty, the war that Russia started with Ukraine, the Israel Palestine conflict, the US actions in Venezuela that have just taken place. And then there's the potential conflict looming between China and Taiwan. And on top of that, there's the impact that AI is having and the impact that that's having on jobs and the economy, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

[00:03:58] I could go on listing all the challenges that we face today, but I'm sure you get the idea that this is a time where there is uncertainty for many people. And uncertainty means that your clients are more cautious about where and what they spend their money on, and that will have an impact on your business.

[00:04:17] Some of the challenges that we face today are things that you have control over, and some are things that you have no control over, but they still will have an impact on your business. But here's the thing. We are where we are and all those things I just mentioned are things that you and I have absolutely no control over.

[00:04:38] Now, of course, you should be informed, and of course you will have an opinion. But you still have to build a successful salon business regardless of what's going on in the world around you.

[00:04:50] So you and I need to focus on what we can control. So control the controllable, and that means that you need to be more focused on your business now than ever before. I think that this is also a good example of how as a leader, you need to get your team to be focused on what the controllable things are.

[00:05:09] So if I had a salon today, I'd do this short exercise with my team and I'd ask them. What are they in control of? What are we in control of and get them to collectively build up a list. So, for example, you get to control arriving in the salon 10 to 15 minutes before your scheduled start time. You get to control your appearance every day before you walk through the door.

[00:05:36] You get to control the attitude that you have when you arrive at work and throughout the day. You get to control the positivity with which you approach every client. You get to control introducing yourself. You get to control using the client's name and building a professional relationship. You get to control doing a great consultation with every client, every time you get to control, giving them the most amazing shampoo that they've ever had.

[00:06:05] You get to control the questions you ask and the recommendations that you make. You get to control giving every client a great experience, whether that's from the smile on your face to the refreshments you offer and you anticipating their every need. You get to control the conversations you choose to have and not to have.

[00:06:26] You get to control the products that you use on their hair in salon, and you get to control the retail products that you recommend specifically for clients to take home. You get to control the client journey throughout the salon, from reception to consultation, to shampoo to styling station. You get to control recommending when they next need to come back and suggest that they should pre-book their next appointment.

[00:06:50] Now you get to control thanking the client for coming in and telling them that you'd love to see them again. You get to control asking them if they have any friends or family who need a haircut, could they send them to you? I'm sure that with your team, you could add on to that list of all the things that you could control, and all those things are easy to do and they're easy not to do.

[00:07:17] But doing them will have a positive impact on every client, on the services they have, on how much they spend, and who they refer as clients. And importantly for the stylist, it will also have a positive impact on the revenue they produce and therefore how much they earn for themselves. So as a stylist, learn to control the controllable so that it's a win-win for everybody.

[00:07:42] Now, as a salon owner, you also get to control a lot of things. You get to control the staff you employ or decide to let go. You get to control the training you give your team. You get to control the pay structure you have in place, the commissions or bonuses you offer. The benefits you provide, the incentives you have, the culture you create, the refreshments you provide, the prices you charge, the services you offer, the time allocation for those services, the location design and decor of the salon, the dress code for the salon, the days and hours at the salon is open.

[00:08:19] The systems you create, the brands you support in-house and offer as retail, the marketing promotions, you do the budgeting, you do the podcast, you listen to the books you read. The education and training that you get for yourself, and again, I'm sure we could go on, there are plenty of reasons that you could find to not succeed this year, and it's easy to buy into all of them.

[00:08:45] I've been in the industry for 40 years, and building a business has always been hard. There are some things today that make building a business easier than ever before, and there are some things that make it harder than ever before. Change isn't a new thing. There's always been change. To succeed, you have to constantly adapt.

[00:09:06] You have to constantly evolve and you have to constantly be learning. As a salon owner, you get to choose where you put your focus, your time, your energy, and your financial resources. The businesses I see that are growing choose to put their focus on the things that they can control. And that's why now more than ever, that you need to learn how to build a business that works for you.

[00:09:32] Whether your daily challenges are a lack of clients, a lack of staff, or a lack of profit either way, there's no point in pretending that building a profitable, sustainable business is easy because it isn't and it never was. But with the right guidance, the right support systems and commitment, your growth is not only possible, it's guaranteed.

[00:09:54] At Grow, we'll show you how to build a salon business that works for the team, the clients, and the owner in the real world. Because we've actually

done it on Monday, the 12th of January. We are launching our business school program as a package that we've never done before. I'm doing it differently to before in that it's three pre-recorded short webinars spread over three days, the 12th, the 13th and 14th of January.

[00:10:21] By doing it that way, regardless of the time zone that you are in, you can watch them on demand. But I will warn you now that they will not be available to view for long. Now the masterclass is titled. The five things holding your salon back from growing and how to fix them. Now you don't wanna miss this.

[00:10:39] To register, go to [grow my salon business.com](http://growmybusiness.com)

[00:10:43] and join the wait list for notification. So until then, have a great week. Let's make this the year that you take control and grow the business that you deserve. Bye for now.