

## GMSB 342

[00:00:05] **Antony Whitaker:** How do you train a salon manager to get things done? Now, last week I was having a conversation with George, who is a coaching client of mine, and we were talking about a topic that frequently comes up when talking about salon management and that is. How can the business owner train or employ a salon manager to run the business the way that they want it to run?

[00:00:30] **Antony Whitaker:** Now, on paper, it sounds simple enough, you just hire a manager. But in reality, it's just not that simple because that one question opens up a whole series of other questions, and every time you ask one, it leads on to the next, and they all need answering. So you end up with questions like, when should you employ a manager?

[00:00:54] **Antony Whitaker:** What should you look for when hiring a manager? Should the manager also be an income-producing stylist? And what goals and responsibilities should and shouldn't you delegate to the manager? And how do you get a manager to do things the way that you want them done? And underneath all of them sits a bigger question and that is.

[00:01:19] **Antony Whitaker:** How do you, the salon owner let go without everything falling apart? So by the end of today's episode, I'm going to give you a five step framework for training a salon manager successfully, one that works for you and at the same time sets them up to succeed. Now for anyone new to the podcast, I'm Antony Whitaker and this is the Grow My Salon Business podcast.

[00:01:45] **Antony Whitaker:** And as always, it's great to have you join us. So let's get straight into it. Effective management comes down to two things and you need both. First, there's the people skills of management, and second, there's, uh, systems and processes or what I sometimes call the stuff of management. Now, let me just define what each one of those means.

[00:02:12] **Antony Whitaker:** People skills are the human skills, uh, soft skills, uh, communication skills of management. It's how you engage and interact with the people on your team. It starts with simple things like saying good morning when you walk in and thanking people. At the end of the day, a smile, positive energy, the attitude that you project.

[00:02:35] **Antony Whitaker:** Taking the time to acknowledge good performance, having empathy and building trust and respect. And as you can

see, none of that has got anything to do with hairdressing, but it's got everything to do with connecting with people. Now, the second category is systems and processes, the things that support you as a manager.

[00:02:59] **Antony Whitaker:** They're things like the operations manuals, the job descriptions, the checklists, the team meetings, one-to-ones, and the values that you've built into the business. Now, when you have both the people skills and the systems and processes working together, that's when you start to have control in a good way.

[00:03:18] **Antony Whitaker:** You have calm, you have order, and everyone knows what's expected of them. But before we go any further, we need to have a quick reality check. And that is this. Most salon owners are also hairdressers and most hairdressers naturally lean towards one side or the other. Either the people skills or the systems and processes.

[00:03:43] **Antony Whitaker:** Rarely do people cover both. Sometimes they do, but rarely is one of them, not their strong suit. Now, in my experience, salon owners who aren't hairdressers. Tend to be more systems orientated and salon owners who are hairdressers tend to lean more towards the people side. Now, for this episode, I'm gonna focus primarily on salon owners who are also hairdressers.

[00:04:11] **Antony Whitaker:** Now at some point, the day comes when you realize that you need help with the day-to-day running of the salon. Now, that realization might creep up on you slowly, or it might arrive as a full on meltdown moment where you think to yourself, I just cannot do this anymore. Because you can't always be in the salon, and when you are there, you've got a clientele that needs your attention.

[00:04:37] **Antony Whitaker:** On top of everything else, the business demands add on a personal life, maybe a partner, children, friends, and something has to give. So if the business is gonna grow and if standards are gonna be maintained, you don't just need people skills and systems. You need help someone you can delegate to and rely on to get things done to your standard, whether you are there or not.

[00:05:04] **Antony Whitaker:** Now, maybe you call them an assistant manager or maybe a manager, maybe a salon coordinator. The title matters less than the role, but the title is important. But finding that person and training them to be what you need isn't easy. You want someone who thinks like you, understands you and has the same emotional investment in building a successful business.

[00:05:30] **Antony Whitaker:** You want them to handle the things that you can't. You want 'em to be loyal because deep down you are probably a little worried that if you train them up, they'll leave and take the team and the clients with them when they go. And I get it. All of that is very real. But there are two problems that tend to trip people up before they even get started.

[00:05:53] **Antony Whitaker:** The first, the way the business has survived is that you are the business. There's very little written down. Everything goes through you. The second, the financial reality of employing a manager. You are already doing all of this without being paid extra for it. But a manager will expect to be paid properly for that work.

[00:06:17] **Antony Whitaker:** And if you have a small salon, say three to five team members, which is a reality for the majority of salons, no matter where in the world you are, then everything is essentially gonna be down to you. A business that size simply can't generate the revenue needed to pay the team, cover overheads, make a profit, and also pay a manager who isn't behind the chair producing income.

[00:06:40] **Antony Whitaker:** So unless that person is also a hairdresser who's directly generating revenue, you simply can't afford them. In that case, a realistic move is to start delegating specific responsibilities to someone already on your team. Inventory control, staff training, opening and closing when you're not there. Maybe social media.

[00:07:04] **Antony Whitaker:** Beyond that though, it's still your business, which means evenings, weekends, and the gaps between clients. Now you can do it. Plenty of people have done it before you, and I'm not saying it's easy, but it is doable.

[00:07:18] **Antony Whitaker:** if you are serious about growth, if you have a vision for a bigger business, even perhaps multiple locations, you cannot skip the foundations because if you try to hand over a business that only exists in your head, then you are not delegating. You are dumping chaos onto someone else and expecting them to sort it out.

[00:07:39] **Antony Whitaker:** Well, they won't, and they probably couldn't even if they wanted to. So what do you do instead? Well, here's my five step framework. Step number one, you can't delegate what isn't defined. Now. This is where it all starts, and this is where most people also go wrong. You expect someone to just know how things should be done.

[00:08:04] **Antony Whitaker:** But if it's all in your head, it's inevitable that they'll get it wrong. And when they do, you go thinking to yourself that, well, they're useless, but they're not useless. They're guessing or doing it the way that they've done it somewhere else, perhaps. So the first step is this, get it out of your head and onto paper.

[00:08:24] **Antony Whitaker:** You are opening and closing routines, how complaints are gonna be handled. Inventory control team schedules. Annual leave expectations. Whatever it is, it needs to live somewhere other than between your ears. That means your operations manuals, your checklists, your job descriptions, your vision and values for where the business is going.

[00:08:46] **Antony Whitaker:** It. Without that, there is no point of reference. And so essentially without that, there's nothing to manage against. So at best, your manager is gonna make it up as they go, either running everything past you first, which then defeats the purpose of even having them or guessing what you'd want. Neither of those things work.

[00:09:09] **Antony Whitaker:** So step number two, you have to grow. Into having a manager. Now, this is the part that some people won't, like most salons are too small to support a full-time manager. And as I said before, if you've got three or four team members, the numbers simply don't stack up. You need to pay the team properly, you need to cover your overhead, you need to make a profit, and then also pay a manager who isn't directly producing revenue.

[00:09:37] **Antony Whitaker:** It just doesn't work. So what tends to happen is you go and hire them anyway, and then you resent the additional wage and you expect miracles or you overload them with responsibility and the inevitable happens. It breaks. Instead of asking, do I need a manager? Ask, what level of support does my business actually justify right now?

[00:10:03] **Antony Whitaker:** Now, maybe that means a senior team member with some additional responsibilities. Maybe it's a part-time salon coordinator. Maybe it's outsourcing specific tasks to an external person or agency. Maybe it's a front of house role that carries real managerial responsibility. Someone who looks after systems and keeps things running rather than just being a receptionist answering the phone and taking people's money.

[00:10:29] **Antony Whitaker:** That's what I mean when I say your business needs to grow into management. You don't jump straight to it. You build towards it, and that all starts with you. It has to. It's your business, it's your vision. So step number three is stop looking for a mini you. Now this one

catches a lot of people out because you think that you want someone who thinks like you and acts like you and cares like you, basically, you sort of think that you want to clone yourself, but here's the problem with that.

[00:11:07] **Antony Whitaker:** You part of the reason that you are stuck. As I said, most owners are strong on either the people skills or the systems. Very rarely are they strong on both. So hiring another version of yourself just gives you more of what you already have and less of what you are missing. If you know that you are not organised, you need someone who is someone who can bring structure and systems to the business.

[00:11:34] **Antony Whitaker:** If people management isn't your strength, then you need someone who is genuinely good with the team. Of course you've gotta like them, but the goal isn't to find a mini you. The goal is to build the missing half, and that means being honest with yourself about what you are not good at and what you need to let go of.

[00:11:58] **Antony Whitaker:** Which brings us to step four and step four is important. Step four is train them for outcomes, not just tasks. Now, this is where leadership really comes to play. Management isn't just about ticking boxes. It's about thinking. It's about problem solving. It's about decision making and communication. If you train someone by saying, do this, then this, then this, they'll come back to you.

[00:12:29] **Antony Whitaker:** Every time something changes or doesn't go to plan, they won't know how to think their way through it because you've never taught them how to think. Instead, what you need to do is train for outcomes. So what does that look like? Well, what standard are we aiming for? What matters the most? So instead of saying, here's how you deal with a complaint, you say, here's the outcome that we are going for.

[00:12:57] **Antony Whitaker:** The client feels heard, feels valued, and comes back. Now they have a framework to think within, not just a script to follow. And here's something important. Stay open to the fact that there might be more than one way to reach the same outcome. They might have a different approach to yours, and sometimes it will be a better one.

[00:13:19] **Antony Whitaker:** So don't assume that your way is always gonna be the right way. It might just be a different. And this is also where the coaching side of management comes in. The one-to-ones, uh, the debriefs, the conversations after things have gone wrong because things will go wrong. That's not failure though. That's just training.

[00:13:40] **Antony Whitaker:** That takes us to step number five, and I call that let the leash out slowly. Now this step is about two things working together, you letting go gradually, and them taking up responsibility gradually.

[00:13:59] **Antony Whitaker:** This is the part that most owners struggle with the most because control. Feels safe, but if you hold on too tight, you don't create a manager. You end up creating an assistant. The key is progression, not perfection. You give responsibility in layers. You test, you review, you adjust. Lots of communication, lots of feedback, lots of, let's look at what happened there and work it out together.

[00:14:32] **Antony Whitaker:** And over time, confidence builds, trust, builds, capability, builds. And before you know it, you're not needed in the same way anymore. And that's the goal. So let's bring it all together. If you wanna successfully train a salon manager.

[00:14:49] **Antony Whitaker:** here's the five step framework. Step number one, you need to define everything. Get it out of your head and written down. Step number two, grow into it. Don't hire ahead of your financial reality. Step number three, hire for what you are missing, not for another version of yourself.

[00:15:13] **Antony Whitaker:** Step number four, train for thinking and outcomes, not just tasks that need to be checked off. Step number five, release control gradually and intentionally because management isn't just about hiring the right person, it's about creating the right environment for them to succeed in. Now, one final thought, if you want to grow.

[00:15:41] **Antony Whitaker:** You'll need someone in a management capacity. That's inevitable. That's just part of the journey of growth. But you get to decide how much responsibility you give them, how quickly, and how well they're prepared before you do. Because done right, a great manager doesn't take control away from you. They give you back your life.

[00:16:04] **Antony Whitaker:** So before you go, if you've been listening to this and thinking, I know that I need this, but I don't even know where to start, then there are two ways that I can help you. One-to-one coaching with me is the first one where we work through the specifics to your business or my management course where I go deep into systems and structure and leadership communication and how to build a team that actually runs properly.

[00:16:32] **Antony Whitaker:** Because none of this is gonna happen by accident. It's built step by step. And if either of those sound like what you need,

just reach out and send me a message and I'll point you in the right direction as to what I think the best route to take us, whether it's one-to-one coaching or my online management course or a combination of the two.

[00:16:53] **Antony Whitaker:** So that's it for today. I'm Antony Whitaker, and I'll look forward to seeing you next Tuesday. Until then, take care. Bye for now.