



# My World: *My Team*

Ken Picton discusses the power of teamwork.

One of the questions I get asked all the time is "What do I think has made us as successful as we are?" As someone who does business seminars all over the country, I wish I could say I have all the incredible answers that no one has thought of - but ultimately, the only answer I can come up with is: my team. We have a beautiful salon, a great service menu, fantastic location, but it's my team that brings it to life.

As we hit 25 years in business this year, I've been reflecting on the people that have helped us reach this incredible milestone. I have a team of over 40 and a third of them have been with me over 12 years, another third have been with me over seven years, which, for me, is why we've been so successful.

The first thing I ask when doing a business seminar is "What is the biggest problem you face in running your business today?" No surprises that that answer is usually 'staff'; they are the essential ingredient in running a great salon. Learning how to recruit them, nurture them, keep them and sometimes let them go is a full time job in itself.

My team, as a whole, has won numerous awards and one of my proudest moments in business was seeing my general manager win Manager of the Year in the British Hairdressing Business Awards. She started with me 22 years ago, as a 17-year-old part-time cleaner, and over the years has risen to become my right-hand man (woman!). We also have numerous award-winning hairdressers within our salon that are part of our Artistic Team and are flying the flag for our brand, not just nationally, but internationally.

Having a loyal team has also had a massive impact on breeding client loyalty too. We can create a great environment and

be multi-serviced, but without the great team it all becomes expensive wallpaper. It really is important, as a salon owner or manager, to appreciate the diversity of what a long-standing team can bring. One of the things I've learnt to do over 25 years of managing people is to really embrace the saying 'Different strokes for different folks'. You will have lots of different characters within a staff room and the quicker you learn to embrace them, like them, and enjoy them, the easier managing your team will be.

After spending years looking at the Google Analytics of our website, it's always shown me one thing: that the people pages are the most consistently viewed pages, so it was important to show our clients what they wanted. We created, in our new 2015 website launch, a whole new section where every member of the team, not just the 'superstars', get their profile posted to show what an important part they play within the organization. This is also a great tool for recruiting new people, as hairdressers will always migrate to these pages to check out our background too.

As someone who is lucky enough to have a committed loyal team, it also pushes me to make sure that those individuals get the greatest opportunities as well, and this is probably my greatest challenge, not just managing them but giving them what they need.

To find a great balance within the team, we have to accept that there will always be a mix of workers who just want to do their job, earn the money and work 9-5. There is nothing wrong with that as they can be the biggest money takers, fitting in well, but you'll also need to look for the creative types who will want to make the most of artistic opportunities.

One of the best things about having a strong team is that when you bring in new talent, the existing team are so emotionally

attached to the brand that they nurture and police the newcomer which is a brilliant induction to them doing the things that we want them to do, and they quickly learn the way we want our customer service to be upheld.

I'm proud to say that my first-ever assistant still works for me after being trained through our systems, after having five boys as well. For me, developing our training and education academy with all our knowledge within the team is a no-brainer. We are now putting more finance and time into our City and Guild accredited academy to make sure we're shaping the future of our brand, and young hairdressers as a whole. We are quite small to be a City and Guilds centre, but we believe it's a powerful tool for attracting new assistants, which is a huge problem within our industry.

So what's the plan for the next 25 years? More of the same I hope, nurturing and embracing so we can achieve as much as possible. Success is so much better when shared, and who better to share it with than the people who have helped you get it?