

SarahHudson: 00:00

I am such a big believer in volunteering because it is the only way that you can actually move forward in what you do if you're progressing in something.

AdriVarga: 00:11

And that really separates, you know, the mindset of the employee and the business owner. Because it's just such a different mindset. And unfortunately, uh, right now in our industry, we have so many passion-driven uh business owners who don't understand the difference between the mindset. So we have people who are owing business with the employee mindset, and they are struggling to grow the business because they never learned this part, which is basically some people they are they are very good with instinct.

SarahHudson: 00:45

I think it is such a shame that the apprentices and the younger team members don't have that mindset anymore. And I remember when I was growing up, particularly in the hairdressing industry, people were every Thursday night or Wednesday night they would have a training night. They were working for free. That that was that was a given. And I think it's a shame that we're losing that.

JodieFielden: 01:14

Hello and welcome everyone. It's great to be back. I'm Jody Fieldon, and I'm here with my work wife, bestie and business partner, Adu Varga. During these podcasts, we share how you can leverage your passion into profit. Whether you're a budding entrepreneur, a seasoned salon owner, or someone who's just thinking about starting out, you're in the right place because we've just about done it all, and we're here to share with you that you can too. Because it's time to believe your salon or clinic can be everything you ever wanted. Today is a very special episode. It's special for me because we get to sit down with someone I've admired and trusted for almost 15 years. It's my very own skin therapist and a longtime friend, Sarah Hudson. Sarah is someone that's very well known in the industry here in Australia. Um, she's a highly respected aesthetic practitioner, and she's got over 25 years experience in the health, um, the skin health and aesthetic therapies. Sarah is very focused on skin health overall.

AdriVarga: 02:16

And also, what I love about this episode is that we are not just talking about business tips, but we are diving deep into what it really takes to hold your ground, trust your vision, and also stop making decisions from fear. Sarah has built an exceptional brand that stayed uh brand that stayed true to its values. And we are going to unpack exactly how she done that and what she learned along the way.

JodieFielden: 02:45

Like over the years, when I've been laying there on a treatment table in her room, we talk about business dreams, mindset wobbles, and the big vision. You know, back then uh when I first met Sarah, we were both kind of navigating the early days of learning how to grow a business and how to find something that really was in alignment with who we are and what we believed, and not just really profitable, but um but you know, something that we could be passionate about. What I've seen from Sarah's brand and her clinic has grown to be, you know, so admired and trusted throughout the beauty

industry. It's inspiring to stay the leaf. So I couldn't be more thrilled to share this conversation with all of you. What led you to open Sarah Hudson?

SarahHudson: 03:38

So I had always had a want and a need for two things, and that was to have my own beautiful branded skin clinic, but I also wanted to have my own skincare line as well. And there was always that fire within my belly. Um, I was lucky enough to find a premises in Beecroft, which is where I wanted to open, that had previously been a skin clinic and had gone into receivership. And I could walk into the bones and then re um refit it out exactly the way that I actually wanted. We um basically, when I opened it, I gutted it, um, redid the floor. And back in 2008, um, there really wasn't a lot of um device companies. Like it was really still beauty and skin. And I guess that is how I opened it as a multi-service beauty salon that focused predominantly on skin. I'd had an education background working with Dermologica, and so I really wanted to bring that education into the clinic. Um, and that was really successful for us for a couple of years, but I realized very quickly that devices and the aesthetics were coming into the market. And so within a couple of years, I had stopped the multi-service beauty side and then purely gone just into skin with and heavily into devices. So laser technology LEDs.

JodieFielden: 05:12

So you kind of really early had picked your niche.

SarahHudson: 05:17

I did pick the niche early, and that is because I had such a strong education background in the skin, and I had a focus on the skin, and that's what I wanted to do, and I wanted to be known for the results that we could actually achieve with the skin. And because back in 2008, people were still doing um brow waxing and lash tinting, um, you know, even leg waxing, then that this is before laser hair removal. Um, it was a smaller part of the business and a great add-on to the business, but I never wanted it to be the focus of the business. And that really then showed me as I transitioned into skin by specializing in that one area, why that was actually so key.

JodieFielden: 06:01

Tell me a little bit about the journey, about how you didn't stray from your niche, you know, like you made the decisions about being really strong.

SarahHudson: 06:09

Um, back then the chandeliers and the the florals were really in. And um, even though we were predominantly skin, my hardest issue was in those days was to come away from the beauty world and to be taken really seriously for for what we actually did. And so in transitioning to skin, um, I actually changed the look of the business. So I removed that beauty look um and became a lot more clinical. In fact, I actually shared with a doctor, um, Dr. John Darcy. And in that transition, we let go of all of the beauty, and that was really difficult because we had a very subsignificant substantial um brow waxing business and it generated a lot of money. Also, a lot of those clients that were having their brows done were also having skin um treatments and they were also buying products as well. But when I added it up and thought about what do I want to do, letting go of anything to do with the beauty was really important because it

was the only way I could actually transition the business into being aesthetic skin. So at that stage, it was um uh 20 uh 12, 2013. What I did then was I um totally changed the look of the business. Like I said, I took away all the florals, I took down the chandeliers, I shared with the doctor, so we had a lot more of a clinical look, and that really started the journey of knowing yes, I'm actually on the right track. I also um invested really heavily in a very substantial and good laser called QTERA, and their um speciality was laser genesis and also IPL um um pigment removal as well. So that was the beginning of the aesthetics journey and just concentrating on my niche.

JodieFielden: 08:05

And how big, like investing into something like that, that's the big decision, especially when you're going out of that something that's you know, everyone says don't upset your bread and butter, you know, like don't, you know, you need your bread and butter there, and then everything else you can, you know, will build on that. That's what um what kind of what process did you go through to be able to because that's that's a giant choice.

SarahHudson: 08:33

It was so it was very, very scary. And we obviously had people, um, our clients criticize me for that because Beakroft is a local community, so it's a local business. We were known for what we do, and all of a sudden I was moving away from services that people loved and trusted, trusted us in to aesthetic laser that people thought I was gonna fry their face with. So I'd gone from like massive types of extremes and also extremes in costs. So you're looking at, you know, an eyebrow wax sitting under \$50 to a laser genesis, which is around \$300. So a really big market shift as well. Um, and I just had to know that I had faith in what the results I could achieve with the skin and faith in myself that I could deliver the education to my clients to keep their skin evolving. Because at the same time, I was also seeing clients leave because they weren't getting the results that they knew they could achieve as well. So whilst there was a small part of the business that could be kept through the beauty side, I was also losing clients because they wanted better results with their skin.

JodieFielden: 09:55

Yes. And I guess that's really identifying two different markets that you're playing to, right? You've got, and those I think it really highlights with how much people are willing to spend if their priority is an outcome, a true result. Yeah.

SarahHudson: 10:12

And if you can deliver that in a very significant way, because if you're charging um above \$300 for a service, then it's really key that from the time the person calls on the phone or walks through the door to the time that they actually finish that service, that they feel like they're number one, not just a number through the door. So people are willing to spend it. And I don't think that that when we talked about high-ticket items, this could be related to skin, but it also can be related to hair as well. Um, and I and people, those niche, if you have a niche, people will come to you if you deliver that service correctly.

AdriVarga: 10:56

Yeah, and I think it's really on an interesting point if you could uh share with us the transition time, because that is not like a straight line, you cut the operation, you shut the door and close the door, and the new clients are coming in. So if you could share that with us, because most of our audience they are worrying about changing niche or focusing or level up with the niche because everyone believes that they're going to lose the all the clients in the same time.

SarahHudson: 11:25

Yeah. And yes, 100% we did lose clients. Like, you know, I did have to take a deep breath. Um, I did have to think, oh my gosh, is this the right decision? But I had spent the year previous to that educating myself in laser technology, finding the right, finding the right technology that was correct for me because you're looking um above a hundred thousand dollar investment in laser technology. So it's very, very if I should actually probably say above \$150,000 in laser technology. So it's a very significant investment. Um, so I spent that 12 months before I transitioned, ensuring that I had the right qualifications, that I'd been training. I also volunteered as well. So I went and worked with one of my colleagues for free one day a week. So even before I introduced the technology, I'd already worked for a whole year in understanding it, how the results that I could um achieve with it. And I am such a big believer in volunteering because it is the only way that you can actually move forward in what you do if you're progressing in something. Um I think, I think it's really, really important. And I'm so grateful to her to this day because I wouldn't be where I am had she not allowed me into her business to um work on her clients and actually get that experience. So to come back to your question is yes, it did happen overnight because we had to draw a line in the sand where one day we were a beauty business and the next day we weren't, but I had spent a year in that transition process as well. So um re um, you know, refitting out the clinic, investing in the technology, investing in myself, investing in the education, and making sure I was actually ready as a clinician before I took that next step.

JodieFielden: 13:27

Yeah, that really highlights, and I want people to take notice of this, is that everything Sarah has just prefaced, what she did, was looked at as an investment, an investment of her time, an investment of her money, and an investment in her skill and education. And we do have to sacrifice to be able to do these things, we have to sacrifice something. That's the investment, you know. And I love that you've um gone and you know uh worked in someone else's clinic, and the the the payoff for both them and you is that they get someone in helping them generate more income.

SarahHudson: 14:11

100% and she she wasn't paying me, yeah.

JodieFielden: 14:14

And like what we used to say to our apprentices, right? Is that don't expect to be paid for your training because the payment is the knowledge, the knowledge that you're going to use for the rest of your career. Stop thinking about, oh, I'm not getting paid for these three hours. And as a business owner, we should be remunerating them because that's the right thing to do. But the people that are learning new skills need to understand the knowledge that they're gaining is valuable, and that is payment in

itself because it's going to generate you hundreds of thousands of dollars over your career.

SarahHudson: 14:51

Yeah, and also when I I just and I even say to my daughters now, they in their careers, they and and they've both done really well, and they both will do well because they've both given volunteer time and they wouldn't be where they are had they not volunteered. Because from a business point of view, we can't always afford to pay someone right from day dot because they just don't have the experience. So I knew going into the other clinic, and and it was a clinic not nearby, it was a clinic, you know, an hour and a half's drive away. So it was important. So she knew I wasn't going to um, you know, I wasn't going to take any of her clients. In fact, I helped to grow her business because she had someone that was well educated and willing to learn. And I just, I can't stress that that enough. If you want to further your career, you have to give up something in order to go forward.

AdriVarga: 15:50

Yeah, and and that's really separates, you know, the mindset of the employee and the business owner because it's just such a different mindset. And unfortunately, uh, right now in our industry, we have so many passion-driven uh business owners who don't understand the difference between the mindset. So we have people who are owning business with the employee mindset, and they are struggling to grow the business because they never learned this part, which is basically some people they are uh um they are very good with instinct, what to do, like uh say in Hungary, the hair education, you could actually just pay a salon, you paid the salon, so you can you could get education in the salon, and in two years you become the best hairdresser you wanted to be because you were focusing on the education, but what you gave up, you didn't get paid for the salon, you paid for the salon, yeah, and then in two years' time you were ready and you could easily, you know, look after clients. So it's it's really the mindset, I think, and it's really important.

SarahHudson: 17:01

And I think most of the people that are listening to the podcast are going to be business owners, and I think it is such a shame that the apprentices and that the younger team members don't have that mindset anymore. And I remember when I was growing up, as particularly in the hairdressing industry, people were every Thursday night or Wednesday night, they would have a training night. They were working for free. That that was that was a given. And I think it's a shame that we're losing that.

AdriVarga: 17:27

Yes, yes, yeah.

JodieFielden: 17:28

And the person that we are losers are scared that the whoever they're training is just going to take their knowledge and run away, right? They're just gonna use them for their knowledge and disappear, then they have to train someone else. But they need to remember when they share their knowledge and then they treat their team well, they're not running away anywhere because 90% of salon, whether they own a clinic or they work in a hairdressing salon, 90% of people that are working for themselves aren't like you,

who knew from day one you had a vision, you had a goal, this is what I'm doing. They're doing it because they weren't happy working for someone else. They saw how much the salon was making and go, oh, I'm not getting paid enough, they don't treat me well enough to do this, I'm gonna go work for myself. And that's a the big majority of business owners that are out there. So having that passion and that goal and being super focused on your own development and having a vision and just sacrificing it. It doesn't matter what I have to sacrifice, I'm gonna get it.

SarahHudson: 18:32

And I think that's really true. Like it's one of the things that I've learned the most as a business owner over the years. And I have had a team member leave and open her own business. It's not that great, that's fine. But the majority of people don't leave and open their own businesses, and they equally they see how hard you work. And I think that's good to throw in there with your team as well on how hard you work. So they're like, no, Ashley, I don't want to work Sundays, I don't want to work Saturdays.

JodieFielden: 19:02

Business owners hide, they don't like the team to know everything that's going on, and they always hide the running cost of the business as well, because they don't want the team to know their personal finances. But the problem with that is that they don't understand that the money at the end of the week actually isn't all in your pocket.

SarahHudson: 19:22

Oh, exactly right.

JodieFielden: 19:23

A lot of the time, some weeks, you know, when business owners first start working with us, the team are getting more money than they are, they just get whatever's left over of the week, if anything, or they're out of pocket. So, you know, having that transparency about it's not all rainbows and sunshine. I'm not sitting back here drinking lattes all day.

SarahHudson: 19:43

No, and in fact, someone asked me what was the biggest change that I what was the big why did my business have the biggest growth? Um, and I said to her, I actually work Sundays for a year. Like not on not with not with clients, but I actually worked on the business on and it was a big sacrifice. I was lucky both the girls were you know in high school studying, everyone in the house was studying on a Sunday, um, and that's what we did for a year. And that that was that that was really, really significant in in the business growth.

AdriVarga: 20:14

Yeah, so thank you very much, Sarah, for all the information, and we're definitely going to reach out to you for the future. And out there for our um audience, if you have any questions, please feel feel free to comment. And if you have any questions to Sarah, we are going to pass those questions to Sarah and we're going to make sure that we're going to follow up everything for you.

SarahHudson: 20:38

Yeah, and it might be nice if we can even do if we get like some significant questions, we can get back on a podcast and then answer all of those questions as well. So happy to do that.

AdriVarga: 20:47

Oh, that's amazing. That would be really great. Thank you very much. Thank you for your time. Thank you.