



Learn to de-stress and avoid distress in the workplace

BY SHARYN RAITI

Over the past few months I have heard many business owners comment on the stress they face on a day-to-day basis. It seems there is never enough time, resources or energy to get everything done. When asked what these stresses include, the feedback from a group of

salon owners was as follows:

- Lack of business tracking – feeling out of control
- Lack of forward planning
- Lack of understanding in areas of the ‘unknown’
- Doing it all oneself
- Finding the right employees
- Retaining and motivating employees
- Consistency with employees
- Finding the right pillars (people) for and as support
- Tight finances
- Ineffective time management
- Energy management and life balance

Whenever I hear the words “I am stressed, I am exhausted” it’s a sure sign there is significant pressure surrounding this person and they are usually suffering in many ways. This alarming situation causes all types of health issues and, sadly, business income, staff and customers suffer as well. It’s a spiral to disaster but the good news is it’s treatable with the support of the right ‘pillars’ to get you back on track.

Firstly, understand that there are two types of ‘stress’ we are dealing with:

EXTERNAL STRESS

FROM OUR ENVIRONMENT

The outside pressures of the real world – business management, staff, deadlines, time frames, family, etc. - are the experiences present in everyday life that fuel our internal stress levels. The important detail to note is that it is not external stress that causes our internal stress, but the way in which we perceive what’s happening externally that creates internal stress levels.

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INTERNAL STRESS

OUR DIRECT RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL STRESSORS, SELF CREATED

This is the stress created from within – caused by how we view external circumstances. Internal pressure is frequently detrimental to our health and wellbeing and has a massive impact on our ability to perform at our best. Feeling out of control, not coping, drowning in paperwork and bills, we never really get where we want to go. It’s a vicious circle and is self created in our minds.

WAYS TO OVERCOME STRESS AND MOVE FORWARD:

FORWARD PLANNING

MARKETING AND PROMOTIONAL PLANNING

Be sure to forecast a marketing and promotional plan so you are not doing everything at the last minute and being reactive to situations. For example, if a quiet week presents itself, look at what you have in place to act upon this so it doesn’t affect your income. Devise a plan three to six months in advance, stick to it, execute it on time and train your team on the strategy behind the promotion to ensure success. Always ask your employees for input and ensure they participate from the onset.

BE ORGANISED

How do you organise your day? Do you use a diary, or a daily planner sheet to reduce stress? Set out what needs to be done and prioritise the tasks with a checklist. Be sure to cross off tasks as you do them; it’s always a great feeling of achievement. Efficient organisation and task management will eliminate poor time management and make for a more effective work/life balance.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR FINANCES

The new financial year is the perfect time to reassess your financial situation and to get things moving forward.

X

Here is a checklist of questions. Place a tick beside those you can answer and a cross beside those you can't.

- What is your current business break-even?
- Are you aware of your income and expenses?
- Do you understand your profit and loss statement?
- Do you know how your income last year compared to this year?
- Are you up or down on last year's income?
- Do you have a budget?
- Are you using it?
- Do you have team and individual targets in place?
- How much is each employee generating?
- How much are you spending on wages? (never more than 33 per cent)
- Where is your income coming from?
- Do you know your breakdown of retail v services? (Ideally 40-60 per cent)
- What is your treatment breakdown? i.e., facials, waxing
- How often do your clients visit your business?
- What is the average amount spent by each client?
- What is your rebooking rate? (Never less than 60 per cent)
- Are you tracking your results regularly?

What do you need to learn? How much do you know about the operations of your business? How much money do you want to make this year? It's the right time to get organised with your business statistics and be financially educated!

AREAS OF THE UNKNOWN

Look for the right support so you are not doing it all yourself and be educated so you know what you need to do. If you are fearful of figures and financials, look for a professional who can educate you in a language that makes it easy to understand. Finding the right 'pillars' to support you in your business is essential and results in less pressure on you. As part of my business coaching program, for example, I look at all aspects of your business, leaving no stone unturned. I educate you along the way – following a learning curve that allows you to take control of your business.

CONSISTENCY WITH BEAUTY THERAPISTS

Are you monitoring and reviewing performance while helping your team to reach their goals? Are you tracking the results and recording this information? Do you have regular weekly/monthly meetings to review performance? What progress have your staff made – what else can be done to keep them motivated and focused? What training and support is offered to help them improve? What consequences are in place if a beauty therapist continually lets the team down with poor attitude, low figures and lack of contribution?

Are you managing or mentoring? A manager will tell staff what to do, spend lots of time counselling and redoing what's been done and exhaust themselves doing everything. A mentor will ask questions, allow people to grow, and stand in the wings providing support. A mentor doesn't provide all the answers upfront but gives people the opportunity to explore their own thoughts then steps in where needed. Statistics say that employees are happier and will stay longer when they are mentored rather than managed. They will be more consistent and therefore obliging if they are contributing to the success of the business.

FINDING AND RETAINING THERAPISTS

Be innovative when it comes to hiring staff. They need to know your reason for being in business – your purpose – and also where you are heading – your vision. An example of a purpose may be: We offer a relaxing escape for our clients to unwind and discover their inner balance. A vision may be: We are dedicated to ongoing innovation with treatments and skincare to treat the ageing concerns of our clients. This is an imperative part of attracting good therapists into your salon so they understand what you are about and where to from here!

So why would therapists really want to work with you? What are you offering to attract high-end people? Remember to highlight the great conditions and benefits of working in your salon/spa and show potential employees the perks and bonuses available to them. What would you want if you were looking for a job? Brainstorm – ask friends and family what they would look for; ask your employees what they love about working with you. Often they don't know how much you are offering until it is written on paper.

When interviewing, it's also important to discuss that you set targets and goals and provide ongoing training to ensure they are part of a progressive environment. Training needs to be given a true 'value'; imagine presenting a job applicant with a \$1000 training package when you are employing them. Why not add up all the costs associated with training and let them know, up front, how much you are prepared to invest in their growth and development. Wouldn't you be impressed if it were presented to you as a part of your salary package rather than as something that has to be done?

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THREE TIPS TO KEEP IN MIND:

- 1** Do not blame yourself for everything that doesn't go according to plan. Be flexible and learn to be positive about what did go well rather than what didn't go quite to plan.
- 2** Be cautious not to over-generalise – one negative situation is not a reason to believe that this will be a never-ending pattern of doom and gloom.
- 3** Stop jumping to conclusions. If you are interpreting situations without facts this can add to your stress levels.

So we have agreed it's time to let past stresses go and move forward. What guidance do you need to shift the negative effects of stress once and for all? Now is a great time to make a list about what you need to learn and then start researching to find your missing link and business 'pillars'!

Sharyn is offering a FREE Business Evaluation to the first 10 people to contact her, valued at over \$200. **PB**
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