

Client Case Study

Pure Aveda Lifestyle - Swansea



Cheryl Dingsdale's management skills have won her early acclaim in the hairdressing industry. The salon she co-owns – Pure Aveda Lifestyle in Swansea – beat big-name rivals to win the Independent Salon Business Newcomer Award in this year's British Hairdressing Business Awards.

But she doesn't claim all the credit for herself. Much of it, she says, is due to a piece of salon management software called Millennium.

"The judges said they were blown away by the amount of factual evidence in our entry," she says. "Most of it came directly from Millennium. "If I want to know many clients return to us, how quickly, and how many are referrals, Millennium will let me find that sort of information in seconds and print it straight off. "That allowed me to make statements in our entry for the awards and back up every one with factual evidence.

"Millennium played a huge part in our win because a lot of the data the judges were looking for was on the system. It would take people who don't have it a week to get those facts and figures out!

"I went on a course and a couple of salon owners who didn't have the software just couldn't come up with the answers the tutors needed. They had an inflated and inaccurate impression of what was really happening in their salons.

"I knew that our average client retention rate at the time was 83%, because Millennium told me, but the other salon owners could only guess at theirs.

"They might think their salon feels busy, but it could be busy with clients buying cheap services, whereas a salon could have very few clients in it but be making more profit. With Millennium, I know exactly what's happening at any time."

Cheryl says that, unusually for the industry, she works solely as a business manager in the salon she co-owns with Jed Bushby. "I'm not artistic or creative at all, but I love facts and figures and statistics," she says. "You wouldn't want me to cut your hair!"

Having won the prestigious award only 16 months after opening for business, she and Jed are keen to expand. "We're taking on three more stylists to take us up to capacity on this salon, then we're going to open a second one. "Millennium is ideal for us because I'll be able to run two salons from one office or even from home.

"We base our pay on key performance indicators, so the more clients our stylists keep, the more pay they get. Millennium lets us tell them when they're getting close to the trigger-point, so it's an incentive for them to work that little bit harder."

Cheryl says she's used other salon management software before but couldn't get the instant answers that anyone running a business needs. "We all know what it's like to be at the mercy of a call centre that calls you back so that a problem can go on for two or three days with everyone missing each other. "The beauty of Millennium is that if I want specific information from it but don't know how to do it, the back-up from the technical team is second to none. "Millennium is an appointment book, it's your till, it's everything, so you don't want to be waiting even half an hour. You want an answer immediately, and that's exactly what you get from Millennium.

"When I've asked if it can do something that it can't, the back-up team report it to the developers and within two or three months there's an update with that feature in it and it's automatically downloaded on to my system! "I think people underestimate how important software is. They look at the pretty colours and what it can do, but they don't give a thought to the technical support they might need."

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