

SPA+CLINIC



Make Your Biz a Negative-Free Zone!

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Of all the factors that can make or break a business, its “energy” is right up there – and negative people can have a profound impact on the energy of a workspace and people within.

No matter how upbeat individuals might try to be in their own right, when surrounded by negativity it’s hard for it not to be infectious.

Morale suffers and so does productivity. In a salon, spa or clinic environment, clients will soon get “the vibe” and may be reluctant to return.

It all sounds esoteric but the effect energy has is very real. If you are confronted by negativity in your workplace – whether you are an owner/manager or employee – **Lisa Conway***, mentor, speaker and business coach for salons, has some advice:

I once worked in a salon with a team of mostly pleasant people. Susan was not so pleasant. She always managed to find the dark side of any person or situation.

Hers were the worst clients ever. Susan never had a simple cold – it was always full-blown flu. Her landlord was an ogre. Her dog even pissed her off.

She was never happy unless she was having a bitch about something or someone.

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It was easy to fall into the trap of joining her on the dark side, dropping your guard and having a full-on bitch session with her in the back room. One by one the staff around me joined Susan on Team Negative.

I resisted. I always err on the perky side rather than the glass half empty.

In the end I found myself fighting for the right NOT to bitch. I felt like an outsider because I had a positive attitude.



Lisa Conway

I resolved, then and there that, when I owned he salon, I would make sure it was a negative-free zone. Why? Try these for starters:

- You want your salon to be recognised as a workplace of choice, so you can attract the best people to your team.
- Bullying thrives in a negative or toxic environment; as a boss, you have an obligation to prevent bullying.
- Negativity attracts negativity.

When I did open my own salon I made it clear to my team: “When you walk in that door, you have chosen. Not matter what shit is going down in your private world, you have made a decision that you can work.

“That’s why you walked through that door, so you do everything at 100 percent. If you can’t work, for whatever reason, then you must choose not to walk through that door. If you decide you can’t be at work that day, then you must follow the appropriate channels on calling in absent.

“At work we simply don’t have the luxury of staying in a stinky mood. Your clients are expecting a high standard of service from you. Your teammates are relying on you, so I suggest you consider them first. You’ll be surprised that if you decide to lift your game, you can.”

One day in a team meeting I asked the girls if they were interested in helping me make the salon a negative-free zone. They all supported me 100 percent.

Unlike many salons, I had a 30-minute team meeting each Friday morning and every team member also had a 20 minute one-to-one meeting with me each week. That allowed plenty of time to have a whinge about things that perhaps didn't go to plan.

Otherwise, I couldn't see why anyone needed to be anything else than positive in my workplace.

If things were not right, of course I wanted to know about it. But I had no interest in negative conversation just for the sake of it.

When I sold that business I got my team members to write down things that they liked about working with me. The standout thing was that I didn't take any bullshit.

They all thought my salon environment was fair and that, although I was a hard marker, I praised equally hard.

I pushed them to be their best and taught them that being critiqued was a normal way to find out where to grow.

For a very, very small space where nine women worked, it was a bitch-free zone. They all knew what was expected of them, what I would and wouldn't tolerate, and they never had to guess what I was thinking. I told them there and then.

People who say "I didn't get time to say something to a team member" are fooling themselves. You simply make the time.

I know it's easy to be misinterpreted or misunderstood in a workplace. You need to jump

on any work-related situation when a small crack appears before the whole thing breaks open.

You need to have honest conversations to find out what's really going on. It's a good rule to never let the sun go down on a negative situation, even if it means you have to talk it out on the phone on the way home in the car.

You might well end up in an emergency coffee meeting the next morning before the salon opens. But a crack is much easier to fix than a big gaping hole.

Often at the end of a day after my team had packed up ready to go home, I'd ask one or two people to stay behind for a five-minute chat.

Sometimes it was to thank them. But sometimes I'd delve a little deeper into an issue because I was fierce about making my salon a space where everyone was valued, no one was bullied and we all benefited from it being a truly negative-free zone.

DON'T FORGET TO HAVE FUN



Of course, there's a time and place for everything but you need to plan for some fun in your salon. It's like a reward or bonus, and recognition we're all human and enjoy a laugh.

If your salon is all work and no play, it just isn't that much fun. It's dull, boring and no place for you and me.

You need to understand you're dealing with people who want to have fun. Our industry is full of creative types who love to have a change of pace, to anticipate, to dial up the tempo now and again.

Let the ideas and specifics come from your team and you can't go far wrong. It doesn't have to cost the earth.

Make a resolution to make more fun more possible, more often, and you'll find a tangible lift in the morale of your team.

- *This is an excerpt from Lisa Conway's book, **Your Salon Team – The Salon Owner's Guide To Finding, Motivating and Keeping Great Staff.** ZINGCOACH.COM.AU*

By Spa + Clinic Guest