



READY TO START BUILDING A TEAM?

A 6 Step Guide

BUILDING A TEAM TO HELP YOU SUCCESSFULLY GROW YOUR BUSINESS

You did it! You followed your passion and started your own Bridal Beauty Business and things have been going really well for you...so well in fact, that you are thinking it might be time to start growing your business and building your team.

When I started HCTB over 20 years ago, I had absolutely no idea what I was doing. I didn't have a business degree or really any clue about running and growing a business. Like many of you, I just followed my passion and made the rest up as I went along. That worked pretty well for me UNTIL I started to try and grow the business. When it was just me and I was doing everything myself, things were great...I knew I could count on my staff to live up to my standards and meet my expectations because I WAS my staff!

Expanding and growing your business is inevitably going to involve bringing people on to work for you. People who you will be counting on to uphold the standards of your business that have made you successful thus far. And, I hate to break it to you but it's not as easy as just hiring stylists who do good hair and makeup. I hired the best stylists I could find and things ran pretty smoothly for a while...until they didn't anymore. It was only a matter of time before my lack of knowledge, structure, systems, policies and leadership skills along with the new responsibilities and pressures my growing business brought on soon became too much for me to handle. It seemed like all of my time was spent putting out fires and trying to keep my head above water and it almost drove me to call it quits on several different occasions. Flash forward 20+ years and I am happy to say that I (obviously) did not call it quits. I instead decided to learn anything and everything I could about running a successful business and was able to turn things around and create a high six figure bridal beauty business that smoothly and successfully serviced over 500 weddings a year!

You are the new generation of bridal stylists and you have the very distinct advantage of having a world of knowledge at your fingertips. The internet has opened up opportunities that weren't around when I was starting out. You don't have to make the same mistakes I made but you DO have to search out the information that you need and implement it into your business.

I want to make sure that my many sleepless nights and years of trying to blindly "figure it out" will not be in vain and while I can't guarantee that there won't be any bumps in the road, I am confident that my advice will help you to start to get clear on the steps that you will need to take in order to build your team and help you successfully grow your business.

STEP ONE – CURB YOUR ENTHUSIASM

I know you are excited to get going! Maybe you are starting to turn down weddings and you keep thinking about how much money you could be making if you had other stylists working for you or maybe you are turning down weddings that are too big because you don't have enough help. You are chomping at the bit to hire stylists and start expanding your business but I am telling you, the worst thing you can do is jump right in and start hiring stylists without a plan! Instead, use that excitement and enthusiasm to work smart and set the foundation for your future success!

STEP TWO – GET CRYSTAL CLEAR

Much like dating, you need to figure out who you are in order to have the best chance of finding the most compatible partner. The same is true when it comes to finding your team. I hope you have figured out by now that doing good hair and makeup is only a small part of what makes a successful stylist. Yes, you heard me right, a SMALL part. Look...you can teach someone how to do good hair and makeup but you can't teach someone how to fit into the culture that you have created. You can't teach someone how to uphold the standards that you have established or to have the same values that you do...these are things that are typically inherent to someone's character. You need to start by getting crystal clear on what exactly those standards and values are? Who are you? What is the culture you are trying to create? What does your "brand" stand for?

Answer the following questions to help you get crystal clear on who you are AND where you want to go.

- What is special and/or unique about my business?
- Why would a bride choose my company over anyone else?
 - NOTE: The answer shouldn't be because of price OR that you do the best hair and makeup!
- Are there any services that I offer or a way in which I offer those services that a bride cannot find anywhere else?
- What is special or unique about ME personally that has helped me to achieve success?
- What are the key values that are most important to me?
- What style of hair and/or makeup am I known for?
- Who is my ideal client?
- How do I want my clients to feel after they work with me or one of my stylists?
- If I could wave a magic wand...where would I want my business to be in the next five years?

STEP THREE - THIS IS HOW WE DO IT HERE!

Once you have determined who you are and what you represent, you need to make sure that the logistics of the business are running smoothly. Not having clearly defined systems, policies and procedures is going to be the #1 reason you run into trouble when trying to grow and expand. It's time to take an inventory of every area of business to make sure that everything is systematized and you have clearly defined policies for everything.

Using the checklist below, go through each area and clearly define how you do things. What is your step-by-step process when a bride contacts you for information? When a bride books with you? How do you schedule trials? What is your wedding day system? EVERYTHING should have a step-by-step system that you follow.

SYSTEMS

- Interested Bride
- Booked Bride
- Scheduling
- Trials
- Wedding Day

Next, go through and ask yourself, what are my policies for each of these areas? What do I require for a bride to secure her date? How soon before the wedding day should a bride book her preview? How do I schedule trial appointments? How WILL I schedule weddings and trials for my new stylists? Again, EVERY area of business should have clearly defined policies.

POLICIES

- Booking
- Securing Date
- Trials
- Changes
- Wedding Day
- Hair & Makeup

Finally, document EVERYTHING! I suggest you create a "Company Manual" where you keep track of all of your systems, policies and procedures. This is going to be crucial for quick and successful growth. You don't want to be wasting any time "reinventing the wheel"!

STEP FOUR – ADOPT THE RIGHT MINDSET

My biggest piece of advice when it comes to growing your business and building a team is to create a “system” dependent NOT a “people” dependent business!

What this means is that YOU decide how you want everything handled in your business and then create clear procedures, systems, and policies that will help to guarantee that your standards are upheld. Make sure everything is documented and then train your staff on how you expect things to be done. This goes for not only your stylists but for any position you create in your company. Do you think that Starbucks hires people because they know how to make a great cup of coffee and then just gives them a green apron and let them loose? Of course not! New hires go through a detailed training process known as the “Starbucks Experience” in which they learn not only how to make excellent coffee but also an overview of the company’s history and culture, where the coffee is grown as well as how it is harvested and roasted. Because of Starbucks’ strong vision and brand, they also feel as though it is important to educate their employees on how they treat their farmers as well as their commitment to social responsibility.

I mentioned it before but it’s worth mentioning again...doing good hair and makeup is a SMALL part of what makes a successful stylist! Hire on character first and then train your staff on all the “logistics” of the business, including hair & makeup!

My second biggest piece of advice when building your team is to remember that this is YOUR business and you get to make the rules. Besides not having your systems, policies and procedures in place...this is the number one thing that is going to bring you THE most headaches when you start growing your team. People are, by nature, self centered. This isn’t a judgement and it’s not even a bad thing...it’s just human nature. Most people want what they want when they want it. Again, it doesn’t make them bad people or bad stylists...it’s just the way it is.

The key is to remember this and to also know that while people may challenge you, it is your job as the boss to set your expectations and boundaries AND to clearly articulate and enforce those expectations and boundaries. Most people are going to respect this and, as a matter of fact, most people want and need boundaries in order to be able to feel as though they are effectively doing their job. When you don’t set strong boundaries and your staff does not know what is clearly expected of them, it can lead to, at the least, confusion and at the worst, distrust and resentment.

The biggest obstacle to doing this is going to be your mindset. When I started my business, I was such a people pleaser! I wanted so badly for my stylists to like me that I didn’t set clear expectations and boundaries. I drove myself absolutely crazy trying to make everything “fair” for everyone. The problem with this (in case it isn’t obvious) is that this is impossible! It’s impossible because fair is a subjective term...it means something different to everyone.

Try to always take all sides into consideration and make decisions that can be of the most benefit to the most involved but at the end of the day...you get to decide what “fair” is for you and your business and then find people who are willing to work within those parameters.

STEP FIVE – BUILDING YOUR TEAM

- **Determine What You Are Looking For**

- Based on the questions you answered in step two, determine what is important to you and your business. This is going to help you to determine what is important to look for in a potential stylist or staff member.

- **Create an Avatar**

- Just like you have (hopefully) done with your ideal bride, you now want to create an avatar of your ideal stylist. What are their character traits? What do they value? What is their skill set? What do you require as far as availability? What about equipment and supplies? Do you need stylists who can do hair or makeup or both? Think of anything and everything that you could want in your ideal stylist and write it down.

- **Create a Hiring System**

- Just like with every other area of your business, it's important to create a system for hiring stylists. What steps will you take to find, interview and hire stylists? Where will you find them? How will you give them information about the job? How will you interview them? Determine what will work for you and how you want to do things when it comes to hiring stylists and create a step-by-step system and checklist.

- **Create a Training System**

- As far as hair and makeup, you can choose to simply hire on talent and then let the stylist do what they like when it comes to hair and makeup but, most likely, you have a certain style of hair and makeup that you are known for and it's important to protect the integrity of your brand by making sure that all of your stylists are on the same page. If you are planning on training stylists on hair and makeup, how will you do this? In person? Via Zoom? On the job? Along with hair and makeup, you are also going to need to train stylists on how you run your business. All of the systems, policies and procedures that you determined in step three, you now need to train your stylists on. Determine what will work for you and how you want to do things when it comes to training stylists and create a step-by-step system and checklist.

- **Managing Your Stylists**

- The more time you take to clearly define AND articulate your expectations to your stylists and to train them on your policies and procedures, the easier it is going to be to manage them but...when you bring other people on in your business, there are always going to be things that come up that need to be dealt with. Play devil's advocate and think about any possible things that could go wrong. What do you do if a client isn't happy with your stylist's work? What will you do if a stylist is late? What is your policy on stylist availability and what will you do if a stylist does not adhere to your policy? Think of these things before they happen and better yet, create policies for these things and include them in your training. The more a stylist knows upfront what to expect, the better. Let your stylists know what they can expect to happen if they are late. If they are consistently unavailable or if a client isn't happy. Set clearly defined policies and procedures and make them clear to everyone involved.

STEP SIX - GIVE YOURSELF SOME GRACE

In this new internet age that we live in it may seem like everyone else has it all figured out while you are struggling just to keep it together. Business can be confusing and overwhelming and you are not always going to get it right and that's ok! This is going to be true throughout your business journey, not just at the beginning and especially when building your team. If you are committed to being successful and growing your business, if you have big dreams for yourself, the growing and learning never stops. Remember that no matter how great it seems like everyone else is doing, everyone struggles sometimes in business and in life, no one has it all figured out...no matter what it looks like on Instagram!

Building a successful business is a constant work in progress and the fact that you are taking the time to read this and to check out valuable resources such as the Bridal Beauty Association says a lot about who you are and you should be very proud of yourself...you are on the right track! Keep searching out the information you need and keep moving forward and working hard towards your dreams but most importantly, remember to give yourself some grace along the way! You got this!

If you want more information, I have created a two part video series that goes into step-by-step detail on exactly how to find, hire, train and manage a dedicated and loyal team! The videos are available as part of the premium membership packages at Hair Comes the Bride Pro.



Gina Ludwig is the founder and CEO of Hair Comes the Bride and Hair Comes the Bride PRO. She started her career over 20 years ago as a bridal hair stylist, makeup artist and headpiece designer and now focuses her attention on helping stylists and small business owners build their dream businesses by providing resources, education and business consulting.