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Home > Features > Salon Management > A True Team: NH2 Salon

A True Team: NH2 Salon

By Melissa Hill | 02/12/2008 11:31:00 AM

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Nina Husen and Nicole Hitchcock
NH2
Novato, California

NH2 is dedicated to education and being team-based. Why the focus on that?

Nina: Nicole and I have a long history. I've been in the industry 25 years, and it's been 15 years for Nicole. We came together last year, and through our history of devotion to education and our passion for this industry, we wanted to create a space where we could provide excellent service for clients, but also a place for stylists to learn and grow.

Nicole: I think a big part of that focus is being team-based. Burnout in this industry is epidemic, and I think we've both gone through phases of witnessing that and feeling it ourselves.

Nina: Stylists are rewarded for learning, for teaching younger stylists and for doing hair. You're compensated no matter what you are doing. When you're working as

an independent, the more heads you do, the more money you make. In our business, you're rewarded for growing the level beneath you. The stronger the business is as a whole, the more rewarding it is for the stylists.

How did you find your team?

Nicole: We started with just Nina and me, and our assistants from former jobs. We let everyone in the local community know that we were looking for a dream team and people just started stopping by and sending resumes. We haven't had the typical problem of finding good staff. We have people just waiting for the salon to grow enough for us to hire more. It's not for everyone though. In this business model, everyone comes to work at the same time, regardless of when their first client is. If there are no clients, they're focusing on something else within the salon.



NH2
Established: July 2007
Website: www.nh2salon.com
Chairs: 20
Square feet: 4,000
Employees: 7
Prices: hair cut, \$80; full-head highlights, \$165
Primary hair care line: Bumble and

Tell me about NH2U, the education component of the salon.

Nina: As part of the 4,000 square feet of the salon, we have a small theater. We're launching NH2U here in April. The first class is the Color Reality Series. It's a six-hour class with color theory, demonstrations and hands-on work, covering basic color knowledge, all the way through to color correction, focusing on reds, pigmenting and beautiful blonds. I've taught this class all over the country, and everyone from the very beginner to those at high-end, thriving salons have benefited from it. Students from local schools are welcome as well. Matching up students to salons is a big issue—new stylists get their licenses and then have to find the perfect fit. So we thought having the students and professionals combined would be great.

What was your biggest challenge in opening the salon?

Nicole: Nina and I previously did both color and cut. But we decided to departmentalize the salon, so we both had to decide whether to cut existing clients' hair or color it. I decided to cut hair. Everybody has been extremely supportive and ecstatic.

Why make the decision to departmentalize?

Nicole: Because we're an education facility—most hair dressers are either scientists [color] or architects [cuts]. We've witnessed people compromising their strengths and building up their weaknesses. Instead, we're taking what

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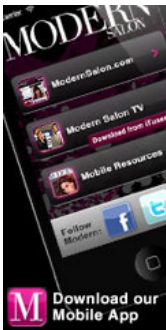
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