

# Different Day Different Business

By Sian Jenkins

WITH 2 SALONS, A KID'S HAIR CUTTING CHAIR BUSINESS AND A CAR WASHING BUSINESS, ALL IN MELBOURNE, MARK AND SHELLY GIBBS CERTAINLY HAVE THEIR HANDS FULL.

They first purchased the East Ringwood salon three and a half years ago and at the time were not hairdressers. Since then Shelly completed her apprenticeship and together they have increased weekly turnover from \$1200.00 to approx. \$3500.00 by getting approx. 20 new clients every week. 6 months after the original purchase, they decided to expand and they leased a second shop in Boronia, fitting it out with a lot of essentials such as chairs and basins from eBay.

Shelly now works between both the salons and Mark works between all of the businesses; the salons, the Chairco Concepts kids cutting chair business and the car washing business.

When they first purchased the East Ringwood salon there was no phone, no EFT and no computer so the first thing that they did was to connect the phone and EFT and then brought in the Kronos Booking System which they not only use for the salons but also for the other businesses in terms of customer data base and stock control. We caught up with Mark Gibbs and asked him to share some of the secrets behind his and his wife's success in their very busy life.

**WHAT IS YOUR MAIN POINT OF DIFFERENCE?** Our salon staff are always friendly and go the extra mile for our customers. We say we style the customer's hair the way the customer wants it not how the stylist wants to style it. Also we have a guarantee hanging at the computer where they pay before they leave. It says "IF YOUR FREINDS ARE NOT GREEN WITH ENVY WE WILL REFUND YOUR MONEY NO QUESTIONS ASKED" I might add, we have never given any customer their money back because we stand behind what we say.

**HOW IMPORTANT IS YOUR SALON MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO THE SUCCESS OF YOUR BUSINESS?** Without Kronos we wouldn't have a salon. Think of a car without wheels. What do you have? A shell. Kronos is the best thing we ever did. It fitted into the budget and works well for salons of all sizes. I am not very computer savvy but if I and my 12 year old daughter can use it I think there is no more to say. It is the best in Australia by far. It has the lot, customer data base, stock control, marketing reports and the list goes on and on. There are always heaps of updates all of the time and a pop up that tells you what those updates are. Nowadays, it is

impossible to run a salon with just a book. I don't care what anybody says, that is only for your bookings. What about stock control, marketing, sending letters to your first time customers etc. Some salons may not use all the features but at the end of the day it is up to you what you want to use as it can be personalised to suit every ones needs.

## WHAT ARE THE BEST FEATURES OF THE KRONOS SYSTEM FOR YOU?

The best feature about the programme is that it is the best priced on the market in terms of what it offers, the backup phone support, online support marketing, cash control reports and stock control.

## HOW DOES KRONOS COMPARE WITH OTHER SYSTEMS YOU HAVE USED?

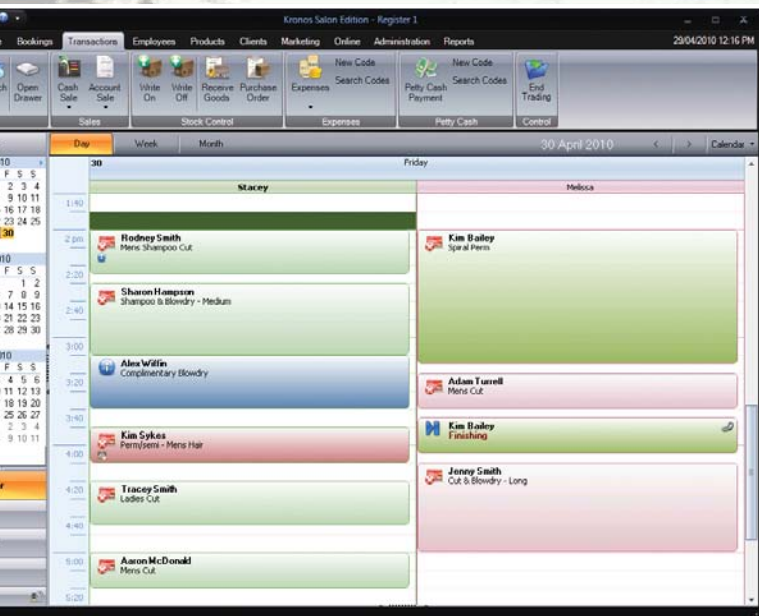
We looked at a lot when we were looking around but the thing that stuck in my mind was that Kronos stood out above the rest in customer service. What gave them the edge over the rest was that we were offered a free evaluation for 30 days and any help was just an email or a phone call away. Most of the others just wanted sales. The team at Kronos wanted to sell you their system and ongoing support not just try to get sales. They took the extra steps to do so and helped us with all our questions and they won hands down. I think the proof is in the pudding. I now have three systems set up and I think that says it all.

**WHAT DO YOU DO TO MARKET YOUR SALON?** Kronos' Marketing features can send out emails, sms messages and even print birthday letters and thank you letters. The marketing is great and that is just a few examples. We also use Worldwide Salon Marketing - this company supplies letters for you on templates and all you have to do is print



them off and send them out. They specialize in Direct response Marketing and it works very well.

**CAN YOU TELL US HOW CHAIRCO CONCEPTS CAME ABOUT?** Chairco Concepts came about back in 2007. We went to Hair Expo in Sydney where we stumbled across the kids cutting chairs. We decided to hire one for 12 months and after we had the bike in East Ringwood for 2 weeks we called the people we had met at Expo and asked if we could have another bike for our Boronia shop and leased it also for 12 months. The kids cutting figures went from nothing to a staggering 80 % increase in 12 months. We have the bike at the front window so everyone that walks passed can see it. After outstanding results and 2 years on we were approached to see if we wanted to purchase the business and we did. We didn't change a thing and now Chairco Concepts is a great complimentary



business to the salons.

#### HOW DO YOU JUGGLE RUNNING BOTH BUSINESSES?

The secret to juggling and running many businesses is to be organised. Prioritise your working week and work hard. Look after people, pay them well and speak to them like you want to be spoken to and you will go a long way. Let people think for themselves and have a go and if they make a mistake sit them down over a coffee and have a chat. Don't scream and shout. Talk to people. I find you get more back than you give them. If one day it is quiet tell them to go home and still pay or if you know it is their birthday give them the day off and again still pay or let them come to work and send them to the movies as a treat, again pay them. Then down the track you will walk into the salon and it is after 5 and they are still there. Why? Because now when you need them to put money into the till they are remembering what you did for them. It is a revolving door. The more you give your staff, if they have substance, the more they will give back to you.

**WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THE FUTURE?** Our 5 year plan is to open 5 more salons, 1 very year. The secret is to not grow too big, too soon or you will fall over. Chairco Concepts five year plan is to branch out interstate and overseas and try to lease 50 bikes very year.

**WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE OTHER SALONS IN THESE TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES?** It is not tough out there it is only as tough as you make it. I don't understand why salons close on a Monday or a Tuesday. Instead change one staff member's roster and roster one staff member on for the Monday or the Manager or the Owner work the Monday. So the Owner or the Manager has to work 6 days a week? Wow!! Let's just say that Monday you take \$300.00 for the day, multiply that by a month, that's \$1300.00 and for a year \$14,400.00. How hard was that? Just a change of a roster. Can you afford to let the sales pass you by?

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