

Beauty business shining example

REAL innovation in an industry as big as beauty can be almost impossible. Unless you are Joel and Tania Turner.

They have created what they believe is the industry's first customised online booking engine to service the customers using the four Shine Beauty salons in Southport, Chermside, Brisbane's Myer Centre and the Sunshine Plaza.

Back in the late 90s, Mr Turner was heading up successful Gold Coast advertising firm Turner Sands and Mrs Turner was a beauty therapist with a dream of owning her own salon.

The first Shine outlet opened in Southport in 1999.

Mr Turner could see the rapid advancement of the online retail revolution and found himself designing online booking engines for big franchise clients that were based on the very tools he was developing for the Shine salons.

"In 2007 my agency was acquired by Smart, the dream was for me to free up my time and join Tania as she was so busy," he said.

"I had been doing the marketing and accounting anyway, but from then on, I developed tools for franchising and knuckled down to build a lot of the systems.

"I had developed all the websites and tools for Montezuma's

SECRETS OF OUR SUCCESS

Shine Beauty

and Donut King and I found I had been walking into boardrooms saying 'you need a reporting system that emails you every half hour with data on how your stores are performing' (for example). At the same time, I am thinking 'why don't I do this for Shine?'.

"And then in 2009 I discovered the systems were so good, we wanted to retain them and not release them to franchisees."

The salons now operate instead under appointed managers on negotiated leases.

Mr Turner is proud that he can match online booking performance with his closest rival, mylocalsalon, Australia's biggest.

"We have four salons and they have 341," he said. "I have staff do 15 minutes of data entry per night and I spend three hours each day monitoring, whereas mylocalsalon has a team of 50 development people.

"They did \$35,000 last month in online bookings, and we will do \$16,000 this month. We had 221 bookings in March and April whereas mylocalsalon had 248 in Fe-

bruary and March.

"We are four times more powerful at converting and we have developed a really user-friendly website. I spent more than three years working on it, using feedback from (advertising) clients who wanted it to run faster, who wanted customers to be able to buy in three clicks and who wanted a compelling price presented to the customer so they bought quickly."

The Turners, who won the large lifestyle services award at the recent Excellence in Business Awards, have been approached for acquisition four times in the past 12 years.

"But we always end up thinking 'they are not bringing anything we really need'."

The Turners are now negotiating a fifth salon.



BREAK IT DOWN TO BASICS

ESTABLISHED: 1999

STAFF: 35, 40 at Christmas

SECRETS: Never give up, hold on to your dreams, don't let others turn you off, embrace concepts of innovation and entrepreneurship



BUSINESS CLICKS: Joel and Tania Turner, at their Sunshine Plaza Shine Beauty salon, are proud of their custom-made online booking system and their recent business award win.

PHOTO: BRETT WORTMAN

New rules for donations

THE support by big business of political campaigns is as old as democracy itself, but a new set of rules for political donations is likely to have business rethinking the extent to which it provides financial accommodation to political aspirants.

The changes to the law have come about as a result of amendments to the Electoral Act (Qld) 1992 and took effect from May 20 this year. The new regulations impose reporting obligations on both the person making the donation and the politician receiving it, and place a limit on the extent to which political campaigns can be supported in any given financial year.

Not surprisingly, the legislation defines a "political donation" very widely, so that it catches not just cash donations but also loans, goods or services and even "gifts-in-kind" which covers the sale of an item for less than its true value.

The new laws impose caps on the amount that may be donated for electoral campaigns during any financial year of \$5000 to a political party or \$2000 to a particular political aspirant. The obligation to report the donation, however, cuts in at a much lower level. Now, even the person making the donation must report a gift of \$1000 or more to a political party, within eight weeks of the



LEGAL EAGLE

Travis Schultz

applicable reporting period.

As a result of these changes, it seems likely that business owners with an interest in party politics are now far more likely to make a donation of less than \$1000 to avoid tripping the disclosure obligations, and that where donations are made, they will more likely be for general party purposes (rather than an electoral campaign), where the donations are still subject to reporting requirements, but the same caps do not apply.

If a business owner is thinking about supporting a political campaign in the forthcoming state elections, they will need to ensure that they are well across these changes as fines of up to \$10,000 can be imposed as a result of a failure to report their donation to the Electoral Commission.

Travis Schultz is the Managing Partner of Schultz Toomey O'Brien. Ph: 5413 8925.

Big brainwave is a cash coup

ASUNSHINE Coast company has won the largest possible grant available in the state government's What's Your Big Idea Queensland program.

Small Business Minister Jan Jarratt said a brainwave from Alexandra Headland firm RA Mason Transport Pty Ltd prompted the judges to hand them \$50,000.

"The concept of a light system

that alerts drivers when their haulage vehicle nears capacity weight saw this Sunshine Coast company awarded the maximum amount possible under the scheme," she said.

"It continues a local success story for an operation started 15 years ago and has evolved into transporting everything from minerals to demolition material and scrap metal. The main benefit of the WIL System cham-

pioned by RA Mason Transport is a quicker turnaround for haulage vehicles and less time waiting in line at weighbridges."

RA Mason was one of 31 Queensland companies to share in the \$5.5 million grants scheme.

Ai Group Queensland Director Matthew Martyn-Jones said the widespread winners proved there were no limitations to ingenuity.

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