



Photography Neil Brewer

# Case study

**The aim of this case study is to show how a small business successfully re-branded their offer in a competitive market with a few activities highly focused on internal and external customer needs.**

*'We saw a 40% increase in enquiries and won 100 new customers per month'*

## **Facing the challenges**

Owner-managers Susan FitzGibbon and Neil Brewer relocated to Haywards Heath from Bournemouth, acquiring Supermops, a hair-dressing salon which had been trading for some years. The opportunities to develop the business were considerable. The premises were located just a few minutes away from the busy high street allowing access to many potential customers who were unaware of the service. Their less expensive location allowed them to offer a better priced service than the high street salons. The size of their premises also enabled them to develop a wider range of personalised treatments for customer hands, feet, body and face.

The challenges were equally high. Not enough people were aware of their range of offers and value; the trading name, location and outside signage did not attract new customers. The internal layout needed improving. The staff had not previously been formally trained in promoting high value services. The business had not previously applied professional branding principles as an "employer of choice". The business needed more than a "facelift" yet the new owners still had to work a six day week and manage a team of specialists.

## Overcoming the barriers

Susan and Neil decided they needed extra short-term help for a limited period. They short-listed local Business Link advisers before selecting a qualified consultant who had performed a “mystery shopping” exercise without charge. This exercise not only demonstrated the ability of the consultant in their own environment, it also provided a high quality report on the business from a customer perspective. This initial report enabled them to plan a ten week programme of change without interfering with the day to day management of staff and customers. The strategy for change used the principles of an internationally recognised process called the balanced scorecard. This focused on developing customer relationships by balancing external marketing activities with internal employee and manager development.

The outside branding has been redesigned with a complementary brochure and marketing support materials with the help of the Brighton Festival designer. New branding on the outside has been supported by positive new experiences for customers inside the business. Onsite training is ensuring new customers experience excellent service during all points of contact or “moments of truth”. Bite-size interactive learning sessions using role-play have been specially designed and delivered for all staff including part-timers. One to one coaching and team exercises have been reinforced with easy to read pocket-books. New communication channels and procedures have been

set up to recognise excellent quality of work amongst the staff. The managers styles have been adapted to be more consultative.

## Reaping the rewards

Consultancy costs have been paid back by an extra 100 new clients per month. Interruptions to work have been kept to a minimum with short on-site meetings during off-peak hours, and much has been accomplished. The look and feel of the business has been polished. The staff training has developed more team-work and customer rapport. New customers from a wider area are coming in and a high profile re-launch promoted the new name of SusanNeil. Susan says “In just a few weeks this project increased incoming enquiries by 40%, and new customers are not only booking our whole suite of services but have allowed us to add Indian head massage, reflexology and hair extensions.” They have been quoted by the Learning and Skills Council as a best in class retail business and Susan and Neil have shared their success story to another 20 Sussex owner-managers to help them re-brand their own businesses.

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