

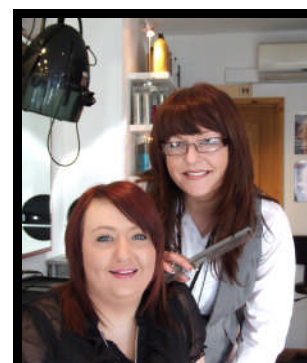


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## CASE STUDY: Salon 1336

Date	05 January 2010
Location	Poole, Dorset
Sector	Hair and Beauty
No. of Employees	14
Key Benefits	Customer care can make the difference in the recession and the training has helped us create a very positive environment here.



### Introduction

**As well as being a popular place for a haircut, Dorset hair and beauty business Salon 1336 has a growing reputation for excellence in training.**

The award winning company made the Skills Pledge in December 2008 before enrolling four stylists on a series of NVQ courses, establishing its own training academy and opening an online beauty product shop.

### Drivers for Commitment

The strategy is part of a 5 year plan devised by owner Natalie Cranston (pictured (r)) which has seen turnover rise and industry plaudits roll in.

Natalie, a former hairdresser to the Saudi Royal family, is so committed to training that she signed up for the same NVQ customer care course as her staff.

A qualified training assessor herself, she did so because she recognises that everyone has their own individual development needs.

Natalie explains: "Making the Skills Pledge enabled us to focus in on our strengths and weaknesses and led to us intensifying our approach to training. From the customer care course we have all learned to see things more clearly from the client's perspective.

"For me individually it is about having a stricter routine in place to make sure I can do all the things I have to do. I love being on the salon floor but that is only part of my responsibility. As a business owner and manager I have to give enough energy to the office based work too."

***" Making the Skills Pledge enabled us to focus in on our strengths and weaknesses and led to us intensifying our approach to training "***

***Natalie Cranstone, Owner***



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### Impacts and Benefits

Among those Natalie encouraged to join the NVQ Level 2 in customer care is Zoë-Jade Andrews (pictured (1)), known as Zoë.

The 23-year-old from Parkstone in Poole has worked for the business since April 2007, gaining promotion from stylist to supervisor at what Salon 1336 calls “graduate director level”.

Zoë, who is dyslexic, says: “The training has helped me think more about what clients want. It’s a hard course – it’s not a walk in the park, but it’s worth it.

“I discussed my dyslexia with the trainer and assessor and they have been able to take it on board. Just because you are dyslexic you don’t have to lack confidence or be miserable. You can’t use it as an excuse. If you do, you are not going to get anywhere.”

Of the ten awards Salon 1336 has won from the National Hairdressing Federation South West since 2008, Zoë has personally claimed two of them.

Now she aims to achieve Level 3 Advanced Hairdressing and study for more English and maths qualifications. “In five years’ time I would like to think I could have my own salon,” she adds.

Natalie says: “We have been inspired by Zoë and her positive mental attitude. Dyslexia can be a challenge but she is living proof that it doesn’t have to stop you.”

As well as the encouragement for Zoë, the NVQ training has ensured a more structured approach to career development all round. A tangible example is a ‘tree of success’ chart in the office which maps career progression and shows the staff where they can go and what the possibilities are.

Salon 1336 has also used a Leadership and Management Grant to bring in a business mentor who advises on strategies for coping in challenging circumstances.

“Ongoing training is extremely important in hairdressing,” says Natalie. “Fashion, hair products and styles all change and you need to have the confidence to try new trends and techniques to deliver to your clients. For any business it is important to develop but for our particular business we need to change ideas frequently.”

The training commitment has ensured that raising standards in customer care is central to everything that Salon 1336 does. The personal touch is an aspect that Natalie believes is crucial to continuing success. The staff make a point of remembering clients’ birthdays and have introduced measures such as discounts for regular customers when they recommend the salon to others.

Natalie says: “It’s not just about a decent cut and blow-dry – it’s about the whole experience of being made to feel welcome and leaving satisfied.

Customer care can make the difference in the recession and the training has helped us create a very positive environment here. If we are happy and confident then the clients will be happy and confident too.”