

Lessons in Leadership

Salon owner, motivational speaker and author Tina Black shares her top strategies for running a healthy salon.

Tina Black is a woman who wears many hats. The owner of four Paul Mitchell Schools and a Ken Paves Salon, Black also mentors other Paul Mitchell school owners and serves as a motivational and keynote speaker for numerous organizations (most recently, she spoke at Business rEvolution in Las Vegas). She has written two books on the topics of leadership and creating lasting success (with several more in the works), is starting a new company called Next Level Salon Leadership, and continues to inspire others in the beauty industry. “One of the things I have learned from author and speaker Patrick Lencioni, who wrote the book *The Advantage*, is that most business owners spend all of their time on the right things, but they miss the most important things,” says Black. “So I adapted not only his message, but my own strategies I’ve learned from being part of Paul Mitchell, as well as my failures as a business owner, into a curriculum called ‘The 5 Strategies for a Healthy Business.’” Below, she shares insight into her strategies for managing a successful salon, as well as questions that every owner and manager should ask themselves. —As told to Kamala Kirk



Black's book *Be a Leader* includes a foreword by John Paul DeJoria.



Black presents on stage at Paul Mitchell's Business rEvolution.

1 FOUNDATION. Foundation is the first step to a healthy business; if you're not getting the results you want, you must first fix your foundation. Think of it as an apple tree—it's not going to produce fruit if the roots are unhealthy or dying. Your company culture is what makes up your foundation. What are your company's core values, beliefs and mission? Are they written down? Can your entire team recite them? How about your clients?

2 LEADERSHIP. Everything rises and falls on leadership. It's a day-by-day process that begins with awareness. Leaders are developed, determined and inspire change. What's your specific growth plan for this year? What challenges are you facing in your business right now and how will you grow past them? What do you need to change in your business this year?

3 ATTITUDE. Fix your attitude. When you treat your team like family, they will act like family. Take great care of your team physically and emotionally. People never forget how you made them feel. I'm constantly thinking of ways to show gratitude to my team members and help their dreams come true.

4 COMMUNICATION. This is the number one reason why most business owners fail in their salon: They fail to communicate with their staff. If you feel like there is anyone on your team you don't trust or there is a weak link on your team, you have a communication problem. You can't sweep it under the rug—it has to be fixed. Build appropriate solid relationships with everyone on your team. Hold daily 10-minute pow-wows with a written agenda of the day's goals and events, and have weekly inspirational meetings where you and your team discuss victories, highs and lows, what you need to improve on and read a leadership book together (I recommend Antony Whitaker's *GROW* series).

5 HIRING. Every business needs a specific written system on hiring. I require three to five hangout days in our salon for prospective employees so that our entire team can observe them based on three qualities: Are they humble? Are they hungry? Are they smart? We want people who are coachable and teachable, have a specific growth plan and desire a career (not just a job), and are committed to the top values of our salon.