

# Outloud | PERSPECTIVES

WHERE THE PROFESSIONAL SALON INDUSTRY SPEAKS UP

Great leaders use their lesson learned as a compass to cultivate future success.

In this leadership issue, we ask three industry veterans:

**What is the one mistake in your past that helped you become the leader you are today?**



**Gary Udell**

Co-owner of Gerry Udell, Inc.

**THIS IS A TOUGH QUESTION** because every executive or leader makes numerous mistakes throughout his or her career. (I am still making them!) The key is to learn from these mistakes and to capitalize on them.

If I had to pick one big mistake that has influenced my future decisions, it would be an incident early in my career when I turned down the opportunity for my company to carry a product line that later became an extremely popular and successful line, and one that would have made our firm a lot of money.

I based my decision on the promise of a manufacturer that we represented at the time who assured me his company was about to launch, within a year, a very similar product. Not only was the timeframe incorrect, the promised product line never came to fruition.

I still support, encourage and take the promises and dreams of my manufacturer partners into consideration, but I learned that business decisions must be based on tangible details and concrete facts if you are going to lead your company in the right direction.

Gather the facts and then assume your leadership by being decisive.



**Patrick McIvor**

Artistic Color Director for Matrix and owner of Patrick McIvor Color Studios

**I OPENED MY FIRST STUDIO** in Princeton, New Jersey. At that time, I really just wanted to work for someone else, but because of several circumstances, I wound up opening my own place. I wanted to target clients in this suburb where many of the people worked in New York City and were familiar with the work I had done there. I had an almost instant clientele and my hair coloring received recognition from the national consumer press. So what was the mistake?

As my father told me, I was “too busy robbing gas stations to be able to plan a good bank robbery.” In other words, I was so busy at the salon that I didn’t make time to train a team—all the learning was by osmosis and I was just figuring things out as I went along.

When I returned to New York City and worked with Nick Arrojo and Rodney Cutler, I decided I would not be the number one producer in the color department. My goal was to be number two or three while I was working to build the department and train the best team.

The approach is called POP (pride, opportunity and purpose) and I make sure our team members are proud of our salon, get opportunities they won’t get at other salons (Fashion Week, photo shoots, education, travel) and work purposefully within the systems we use for servicing guests. I’ve learned from leadership experts like Bill Gates whose “Think Week” teaches that it takes time to make things better and you (as the leader) can’t be constantly working yourself during that time.



**Don Shedrow**

General Manager of InfraShine, Inc.

**EARLY IN MY SALON INDUSTRY CAREER**

I was working as a sales agency representative and was offered the opportunity to sell a line of professional appliances. The brand was not large or well known, and I simply didn’t take the time to research the products or the manufacturer or to evaluate the potential this could have had for my company. I basically just let this opportunity get away from me by not making the appropriate effort to either accept or turn down the offer. After approaching others, that brand took off and made a lot of money for a lot of other people. I lost a great opportunity by simply not paying attention and taking action.

Today, as general manager for another successful line of appliances, I look at every offer or situation as an opportunity, and give each its due thought and appropriate action. This philosophy applies to all aspects of business—not just sales but management, staffing and even product development.

As a leader you have to set the standard for a great work ethic and follow through on every detail. This early mistake was painful at the time, but became a very important lesson that I have come to appreciate immensely.

## CLICK!

Do you have a hot topic on which you’d love to see different perspectives from the industry? Send it to **Stacey Sobie** at [ssobie@vancepublishing.com](mailto:ssobie@vancepublishing.com) and we’ll get the dialogue started.

