

FOLLOWING HIS DREAM

Juan Juan not only delivers quality service to clients but also passes down his legacy through a flourishing training academy.



Juan Juan, founder of the J Beverly Hills product line, J Beverly Hills Academy and the Beverly Hills salon that bears his name, has truly experienced the American dream. Of Lebanese descent, he migrated to the United States from France 20 years ago knowing no English and has since built a booming hairdressing business. After spending a short time in Cleveland and working under José Eber in Los Angeles, he started to cultivate his empire in 1984 with a 10,000 square-foot salon, which now employs 100 people. He expanded his business in 2001 with the J Beverly Hills Academy in an effort to make education accessible and affordable to all. Each

month, 30 stylists venture to Beverly Hills for a three-day seminar to soak up the Juan Juan culture and learn what has made him so successful. "We teach stylists how to become better at what they do and make them want to seek better ways to make clients feel special," he says. Here, he preaches his education practices.

HIRE THE RIGHT PEOPLE

The true sign of a good leader is his ability to delegate. Knowing that education wasn't his forte, Juan hired a director of education, Misaki, who had studied at the prestigious Vidal Sassoon Academy in London. He also brought in nine other key employees, including Maria Santilli, who is his senior corporate educator.

EDUCATE THE EDUCATORS

In the beauty business, learning new techniques is an ongoing process. Juan stipulates that his educators regularly attend trade shows and technical seminars. "It's important to see what other people in the industry are doing," he says. "We can't learn everything from ourselves; we need to also learn from others."

DEVELOP A UNIQUE CURRICULUM

The Juan Juan workshops focus entirely on cutting. "When it comes to hair design, people are lacking in the concept behind the techniques," says Santilli. After a presentation of the academy's latest collection, students spend two

days in the salon in a hands-on workshop perfecting the showcased techniques. "We want to open their minds to new concepts of design, from cutting to texturizing, and to experience the learning process with them," she says. On the last day, attendees present their mannequins and explain their visions. Santilli also takes the seasonal collections on the road, educating salons around the country. "Everyone walks away with something different," she says. But what attendees bring back to their respective salons is consistently priceless.

GET THE WORD OUT

Although Juan has never advertised in newspapers or magazines for the academy's classes, they continue to be booked solid each month. Word-of-mouth recommendations have fueled the classes' popularity with a return rate of 60 percent. "I think stylists believe that what we are doing works, and that's why they come back to the academy and refer their friends time after time," says Juan. Of course word of mouth may not work for everyone, so examine the options available to you and your budget. Placing ads in trade magazines and local newspapers and distributing promotional material at trade shows may help bring in attendees. Once other salons and stylists become aware of what great things you are doing, the learning process can begin.

For more information on the J Beverly Hills Academy, call (800) 980-0098.

—H.C.