



SANDRA CARR AND DONNA BEAM

Sheer Professionals
Wooster, Ohio

It's tough to do everything well. But Sandra Carr and Donna Beam prove you can be nationally recognized artists and business leaders, and do it from a single salon in a smaller sized town. In addition to a four-time repeat performance on the SALON TODAY 200, the Sheer Professionals team has been nominated in several NAHA categories, capturing Makeover Artist of the Year for 2000. A national color spokesperson for Matrix, Carr's also earned top honors at Haircolor USA. But the duo never outgrows their community—the salon spends a tremendous amount of time helping cancer victims, including establishing its own wig bank.

Most important current salon initiative: Updating our salon systems with an emphasis on customer service, creating an apprentice program, and updating our website and employee manual.

Most important current industry initiative: Carr: We do a lot of wigs for cancer victims and have established a wig bank in the salon. Plus, in my position with Matrix, I am able to teach and rekindle the passion with people in the industry. Beam: Living professionalism on a day-to-day basis and understanding it is the best example for your staff.

Biggest business mistake: Carr: Sometimes we lapse into feeling like we're weak leaders. But I'm lucky to have a partner, because we don't lapse into the same thing at the same time, and we can support and pump each other up.

Greatest business success: Carr: Being in a partnership that doesn't allow us to get discouraged when things are difficult. We push each other to the next level. My partner and I have accomplished a lot as a team—like being nominated for NAHA three times

and winning the last time. Beam: Our employees and their success.

Three industry gains in the last 20 years: Carr: The transformation of our trade into a profession; computerization and technology in products and retail; a raise in the compensation levels in the industry.

Three industry wishes for the next 20 years: Carr: Continued focus on the passion of our craft; business laws that support the small business owner; and continued growth in the economic and academic ends of our business. Beam: That the generations who follow us learn from our mistakes and successes, and that they use that knowledge to build the industry to new heights.

Love to lunch with: Carr: David Craggs, president of L'Oréal USA.

Years as a salon owner: Carr: 10; Beam: 27

First salon stats: Carr: Technically, the current salon is my first. Beam: 1,000 square feet in a downtown office building with 15 employees.

Current salon stats: One location in Wooster, Ohio; 3,600 square feet; 30 employees.

Greatest recent business risk: We now provide one of the highest level compensation programs in Ohio. We have 401(k), profit sharing, dental, co-pay on insurance and paid vacation.

Greatest creative risk: Photography. It's expensive but so worth it. It's the most amazing way to track where you've been and to push yourselves to where you want to be. We do photographic sessions for our staff.

Advice to a new salon owner: Carr: Do it only if you have to. Somebody said that to me years ago, and it makes so much sense. You need to build a support system of salon owners who are friends and who have quality businesses. Beam: If you have the dream, goal, ability to stay focused, and are generous with your time and energy, you will be successful.

Current readings: Carr: *The Bible* and *Left Behind* series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins. Beam: *Chicken Soup for the Soul*.