



Aesthetic Science Institute

Owner – Michelle D'Allaird



Success Magazine: Michelle, what does success mean to you?

Michelle D'Allaird: It is different for every individual, but to me, success is setting a goal and having the energy, the guts and the perseverance to achieve it, regardless of the obstacles.

“Your skin is the largest organ of the human body – without it, no other organ would survive.”



SM: What sparked your interest in the field of esthetics?

MD: I was intrigued by the beauty business in my late teens, and always had a passion for providing the means for others to look and feel their best.

SM: Why did you decide to open the Aesthetic Science Institute?

MD: I had been in the skin care business for 8 years, and 6 of them were spent providing continuing education to estheticians who had just completed esthetics school. To my amazement, most of them graduated with minimal knowledge and competence, and even less confidence. As estheticians, we work on the largest organ of the human body, and our professional success depends upon our core education. Working side by side with doctors and surgeons, I felt very strongly that we needed a school that set a higher standard of education and expectation for the esthetics profession.

SM: Where did you work prior to starting this venture?

MD: I was the Director of Esthetics for Beaux Visages skin care centers.

SM: How did your previous work experience help you become a successful entrepreneur?

MD: Well, I actually owned my own skin care business before working as an Esthetics Director—I guess it's always been part of who I am—but my passion for skin care, education, and independence all fed into the creation of the Aesthetic Science Institute.

SM: You currently have two ASI locations, in Syracuse and Latham. Which did you

open first, and why did you choose these particular locations?

MD: Latham was easy...I was born and raised here. I graduated from Ballston Spa High School, and I love it here. Fortunately, there was a need right in my own back yard. Syracuse was opened due to the demand as well. There was not another esthetics school between Latham and Buffalo. I received dozens of inquiries from the western part of the state.

SM: Do you have plans for expansion?

MD: Right now, two schools are enough, but I receive constant phone calls from individuals around the country who are interested in starting a school due to the demand in their area. Part of my growth plan is considering the franchise avenue.

SM: How were you able to get the funding you needed? Did you have business and marketing plans?

MD: I worked very closely with the Small Business Development Center. I had all of the ideas and concepts, and they helped me turn it into an amazing business plan.

SM: What was the biggest challenge you faced in the process of opening ASI?

MD: My biggest challenge was simply overcoming the fear of the “unknown.” I knew in my heart it was going to work. There was a need, and it's a business that creates futures and careers for women (and men). I knew if I had the guts to build it...they would come!

SM: What programs do you offer through ASI?

MD: My core program is the NY State required 600 hour esthetics curriculum.

But we have recently added a NY State approved laser certification course and medical esthetics course. We will have a permanent makeup course by 2009, and we also offer a variety of continuing education classes in aromatherapy, lymph drainage, Reiki, chemical peels, and makeup.

SM: What is the aim of ASI?

MD: To create professional estheticians that raise the bar, inspire, motivate, and create a powerful profession.

SM: How are you able to achieve that goal?

MD: By having high expectations of myself, my staff, and my students...and holding all of us to those expectations.

SM: What sets you apart from other institutes in the beauty, health, and skin care industries?

MD: I run ASI as a business of education. It's not about the money. It's about creating professionals. My students are treated as if they are professionals from the first day of class. Professional attributes, and obtaining goals that they never believed possible, set my graduates apart.

SM: What is the most rewarding aspect of owning ASI?

MD: Watching my graduates succeed.

SM: Why is healthy skin so important?

MD: Your skin is the largest organ of the human body—without it, no other organ would survive. People exercise, eat right, and take vitamins to stay healthy...but then they lie in the sun and use soap to cleanse their face. It doesn't make sense. You can get a new heart, new lung or new

liver, but you can never get new skin. Your skin is the one thing that represents your health, vitality, and your beauty... how could it not be important?

SM: Where do you see your industry heading?

MD: We are multi-directional. There is still a large part of the esthetics industry that focuses on health, wellness, relaxation and pampering, but the future is in the medical field. Baby boomers are demanding that they look young and gorgeous for as long as possible, and they are looking to us for help with anti-aging.

SM: In what ways has your industry progressed in recent years?

MD: The esthetics industry has gone from something that people do to make themselves feel good, to a necessity. People now know that taking care of their skin, and prevention, is the answer to true youth and beauty.

SM: What achievement are you most proud of?

MD: Aside from being a mom, I am most proud of achieving my International CIDESCO Certification in May 2000. It allows me to travel all over the world and

practice skin care. There are less than 350 CIDESCO diplomats in the US.

SM: What advice would you give to someone considering ASI?

MD: Make sure that this is what you want to do. Be sure that helping people, changing lives, creating beauty, and making your own future is what you want to do. I firmly believe that life is too short to not get up each morning excited about your life...including your job!

SM: If you had to describe yourself in one word, what would it be?

MD: Passionate.

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