

NINA. 25 YEARS OLD, THE OWNER OF THE NINA LOOK HAIRDRESSING SALON

I come from a small village. Actually, I have always been involved in hairdressing. After graduating from a vocational school, I immediately found a job in a bigger hairdresser's salon where I worked there for two years. Now I run my own salon near the place where I live.

Photos by POW Photo



Why hairdressing?

I thought it was a nice job and that you can go to work immediately after graduating. At school I really got into hairdressing so that after graduating from vocational school I went to the technical school to get another diploma and to develop further. I also took part in various trainings. I like what I do and that's why I have chosen it.

How did it happen that you set up your own entrepreneurial initiative?

I have always known that I would like to open my own salon. It is difficult to open something by yourself, and the fact that near my home I saw a place for rent that would fit for a salon inspired me even more and I decided to give myself a try.

How old were you when you opened your hairdresser's salon?

I was 22 years old.

What was the biggest challenge at the beginning?

I had to design everything: choose the colours, think about where to put the tubes of the water, the mirror... The stage of planning and design was probably the biggest challenge. I did everything by myself – I even designed the furniture as I could not find the ready made ones like I wanted. My fiancée was my greatest support and advisor at this time but I planned everything and realized it on my own.

Where did you get the funds from?

I benefited from the Labor Office funds in Grodzisk Mazowiecki. It was such a nice co-financing scheme for opening your own business. The largest part of my initiative was financed by this project from the Labor Office. There was also a small financial contribution from my part.

How did you find out about this possibility?

It was over two years ago, so I do not remember exactly. Some information about the EU funds came into my hands and I “followed the river to come to the sea”. My friend gave me some guidelines as it turned out that she had also received this funding. I filled in the whole application with some tips from the ladies working in the Labour Office so that everything would finally be ok.

Is there anything you would have done differently now?

Overall I'm very happy. Although now I start missing one workplace and I regret that I didn't think about it before. Anyway, taking the size of my salon I do not have a enough space here for another workplace.

What fears have accompanied your venture?

I had clients right away. Previously I worked in a salon 5 km away from here and some clients “followed me”. But I had a lot of fears: I didn't know how many people would follow me. I was also afraid if I would earn for the first months to pay the rent and other things necessary for my work as still I didn't have everything that I needed in the moment of the opening. I spent almost all first salaries to provide my salon with the equipment. And everything went well :-)

Have you had such a moment “to be or not to be”?

Yes, at the very beginning. This funding was a significant budget but the money I contributed myself was everything I had. To such extent that while starting the first day of work - I remember, it was Wednesday (my mother told me that I should open the business on Wednesday or Saturday, because it brings good luck) - I probably had 10 zlotys in my wallet. And I thought: "to be or not to be - or I will succeed and I will earn money to develop further, or nothing will come out of it and I will drown in debt". Fortunately, it worked. It was probably the worst moment: I knew that I hadn't got any more money because I had invested everything. That is "to be or not to be".

Was opening your own business was a spontaneous or thought-out decision?

It was very thoughtful. I wondered about it for a long time because it was hard for me to leave the place where I worked. I became friends with girls from work - it is always hard to leave a place where you worked for two years. That's why I postponed the decision so much but in the end I decided that if I don't try now then maybe my life will never let me try - so I decided to take a risk and “what will be, will be”.

How do you develop yourself and your initiative?

I participate in various trainings. As I have too much work to handle by myself I cooperate with one girl. I took one hairdresser who rents one workplace and takes over some of the clients. Besides as

I would like to train someone who will learn my style and techniques of work, I have just taken a trainee from OHP (Voluntary Work Corps) from Grodzisk. In this way I can teach a student in a same way as someone taught me once. So I hope that soon I will have here a hairdresser like me:-)

What have you learned from this experience?

I have certainly learned responsibility for what I do. The fact of the maintenance of such a salon which is rented requires you to arrange a lot of things in your head and the responsibility for payment. With time I also learned how to be assertive to the client. Before when someone asked me "Nina, stay longer to cut my hair" I stayed, but later I realized that I also have my private life and the end of work is the end of work. So mainly I have learned these two things: responsibility and assertiveness.

I remember when I was 16 and I went to vocational school how people were surprised: "why not a high school, why not a technical college, but a vocational school?". And here I am -I have finished my professional education, I opened my own salon and I'm fulfilling in my work. Some people have finished various studies and are still looking for a job to work for someone..and I have my own business. And it's in a small village. And I'm happy.

