

by Jackie Perrone

# Jenny Backman



Jenny Backman thought she wanted to be an elementary education teacher. Then she met up with the tanning salon business and fell in love. She never set foot in a classroom.

“I was 20 years old, in college, trying to figure out my path in life,” she says. “I kind of lived in a shell, not very outgoing, timid about speaking out. The part-time job at a tanning salon showed me customer service, sales, and management - things that are never part of a children’s classroom. I was hooked. It brought me out of my shell, and I found a way to grow, expand, and serve the public. Twenty-something years later, I am still fired up about this business.”

Her enthusiasm has helped her develop a bubbly, outgoing personality that has brought her success as a businesswoman, with a bright future. Jenny is a native of Lexington, graduated Lexington High and then University of South Carolina, and continues to make her home here.

While she was employed at Carolina Tan Factory, the opportunity to buy into the franchise came up, and she jumped in. “Scary!” she says now.

“Married, two little children; we had to scrape up the money to get in. What happened next? My husband Wesley got laid off. (This was in the economic downturn in November of 2008.)”

While making it through that economic slump, they took on the next opportunity in March 2009 by opening a second location, this time in Irmo. By then, Wesley had joined the team, and the two of them optimistically looked to the future. “We make a good team,” she says. “I tend to want to take the plunge when it looks good ahead, and Wesley is level-headed in figuring out what we can handle. It’s working out just fine.”

What she has learned about management she passes onto her employees, insisting on professionalism that makes sure every client has the best possible experience. She believes in hiring people with good skills and customer-service attitudes, and putting them out front to keep things running smoothly. Jenny credits her mentor, Sylvia Beaver, for her own good start as an entrepreneur, and she also praises her assistant, Courtney Cagle, one of the salon managers, for good business skills.

Inevitably, the question arises: What about more expansion? Well, she does have her eye on possibilities in Columbia. Don’t be surprised if a new location there is announced one of these days. “We’re not thinking of a national franchise with hundreds of locations,” she says. “Those three would keep us busy and round out our connections in the Midlands.” ■

