

The Advertiser

BEAUTY'S BIG MOVE AS BUSINESS GIANT

By Business Editor CAMERON ENGLAND

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THE obsession for good looks and self esteem has catapulted a South Australian business into the national spotlight as one of the fastest growing franchises in the country.

Essential Beauty, a waxing and body piercing specialist service, opened its 18th store yesterday in Rundle Mall, capping off a rapid expansion which has made it the third most prolific franchise in the nation.

The beauty therapy company now has 13 stores across metropolitan Adelaide, plus two in Melbourne and Perth and one in Queensland.

In the past three years it has grown store numbers by 212 per cent, following in the footsteps of fellow Adelaide success story Boost Juice – on 587 per cent with 102 outlets – and Oporto Chicken at 259 per cent with 68 outlets, according to *BRW* Magazine.

The company, which was founded by Tony and Melissa Maiello in 1990, started franchising in 2000, largely in response to demand from customers wanting to run their own stores.

The business focuses on waxing, body piercing and permanent make-up, which Mr. Maiello said was a neglected part of the market when they started, tucked away as a second thought in the back of hair salons.

A former schoolteacher, Mr. Maiello said the key to the company's success was picking the right franchise managers. This was because of the large amount of literally hands-on human contact the business demanded. "We've got to search for clever, thinking managers," he said.

While Mr. Maiello is happy with the company's success, he's not intending to take the world by storm. "Realistically I'd like to be about 25 stores.

"I think organic growth is better than growth for growth's sake.

"We're never going to get to 150 stores, there's too much human content, compared with selling doughnuts or a product made elsewhere."

The measured rate of expansion is not for lack of demand, with Mr Maiello saying he received seven or eight franchise inquiries every week.

The company's "Spice up your life" advertising campaign, which trades heavily on the company's XXX waxing product and body piercing, was also a key to growth, using cheeky and risqué imagery to make the brand stand out.

Mr. Maiello said he was also always available to franchisees on the phone, and bragged he only drove a Toyota Camry, saying success had not gone to his head.

He was proud that the franchisees leading the business' push into Queensland and Melbourne were Adelaide expatriates.

"Don't tell me things can't be done in Adelaide. South Australia has a lot to offer," he said. "South Australian businesses have kicked a lot of butt on a national level."

Essential Beauty employs more than 130 people.