

Great Clips / The Beginning



Great Clips is Born

Great Clips started in 1982 with owners Steve Lemmon and David Rubenzer.

Current CEO and Chairman Ray Barton began working with Lemmon and Rubenzer in the fall of 1982 and became part owner and CEO in March of 1983. Barton had been an officer and director with real estate franchising pioneer Century 21 in Minneapolis-St. Paul, and like Lemmon and Rubenzer, had experience as a hair salon owner prior to Great Clips' existence. The duo believed Barton's talents and vision would help Great Clips grow. Barton, in turn, faithfully held to the belief that the haircare industry as it was known was about to face a revolution.

Up until this point, most received haircuts in one of three ways: in full-service salons, from a mom-and-pop barbershop (remember the barber pole?) or at home. Barton saw the industry changing. He believed that haircare, like real estate, fast food, pizza and many other industries, would change from one dominated by independent mom-and-pop stores to be dominated by national brands. He believed the Great Clips concept of providing the customer with outstanding quality, with more convenience at a low, affordable price would be the concept to change the industry, and Great Clips had the opportunity to lead that change.

Great Clips management also realized that a key component to growing successful franchises was establishing training and procedures that would ensure that customers would receive the same, high-quality haircut—no matter which Great Clips they visited.

that was then...



Quick Facts

- Established in 1982, Great Clips perfected a system for delivering value-priced haircuts to the entire family in a convenient, no-appointment environment.
- Great Clips Chairman and CEO Ray Barton believed early on that the Great Clips concept of providing the customer with outstanding quality and more convenience at a low, affordable price would change the industry.
- President Rhoda Olsen began her career with Great Clips in 1984 on a part-time basis, charged with drawing up a training program. After three years, she joined brother Ray Barton's side as the head of human resources for the company. Her ascension didn't end there. In 1998, Olsen was named president of the company.
- As Great Clips has grown, so has its offerings to assist salon owners and stylists. In addition to the compilation of training manuals and videos, the home office in Minneapolis has created various orientation and seminar programs. These include Great Clips Academy, LEADS salon manager training, a multi-salon leadership program, the Leadership Institute and Franchisee Orientation & Training.



Great Clips Grows



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with Cheerios and Sprint, had held its now-annual Charity Golf Classic and had initiated a partnership with NASCAR. Great Clips was on a roll.

As Great Clips has grown, so has its offerings to assist salon owners and stylists. In addition to the compilation of training manuals and videos, the home office in Minneapolis has created various orientation and seminar programs. These include Great Clips Academy, LEADS salon manager training, a multi-salon leadership program, the Leadership Institute and Franchisee Orientation & Training—all delivered in training centers across the nation. The development of a Point of Sale system and internal Web site all assist salon owners and their staff in the common goal of establishing and maintaining successful franchises. Undoubtedly, building the internal infrastructure

while at the same time modifying it to effectively address salon owners' concerns can be a challenge. By looking at the growth Great Clips has achieved, we can clearly see that the strategies employed have borne fruit.

What's Next?

In 1988 at the first convention, Barton set an extravagant goal of reaching 3,000 salons by the year 2000. As the millennium dawned, Great Clips consisted of about half of that number. But to Barton, whether or not the magic number was reached by a certain date didn't matter. What did matter was that a vision was in place, and Great Clips has become the world's best, largest and fastest-growing salon brand. As Great Clips heads into the latter half of its third decade, that goal of 3,000 nears, as does making its mark as a Billion Dollar Brand in total sales.

"We can be the biggest, we can be the best. It's about putting one foot in front of the other, day after day. There's no magic to it," Barton remarked.