

GMSB 339

[00:00:05] Hello, and welcome to today's episode of the Grow My Salon Business podcast. I'm your host, Anthony Whitaker, and it's great to have you here with us today. Every week, I either bring a guest on the show or I'll dive into a new idea or revisit the foundations of what it takes to succeed in the salon industry today.

[00:00:23] And with every episode, I will aim to bring you practical and actionable opportunities that you can run with in your salon immediately. So with that said, I'm excited for today's episode because at the end of last year, back in November, I believe I recorded podcast episode 322, which was titled The Beautiful Chaos of Building a Team.

[00:00:48] And in that episode I mentioned that one of my favourite TV series of the last couple of years was The Bear. Now, if you haven't seen it, it's about a restaurant in Chicago and the] chaos, the passion, the pressure, and the personalities that exist behind the scenes in a professional kitchen, and I absolutely loved it.

[00:01:09] Now, I think I loved it partly because it reminded me of what great salons are like or. Were like, or maybe perhaps some still are, like, because there are a lot of similarities between a great salon and a great restaurant, whether it's, uh, pressure that often happens or the personalities or the creativity.

[00:01:32] And of course the client sitting there expecting an exceptional experience. Now as well as that podcast over the last couple of years, I've also mentioned a book a few times called Unreasonable Hospitality, which is about a restaurant in New York and the extraordinarily lengths that they go to in order to give the guests an unforgettable.

[00:01:56] Experience not just great food, but incredible hospitality. Once again, there are so many parallels with what great salons do because when salons are operating at their best, they're not just selling a haircut or colour, they are creating an experience. So perhaps it's no surprise that because of those references that I keep making to.

[00:02:21] Restaurants that people had been messaging me, asking me if I'd seen the Netflix documentary series titled being Gordon Ramsey, which I had, and if you haven't seen it then you definitely should because there are so many lessons in the series that I think apply directly to running a good salon. Now on

the surface you might think that that's a bit of a stretch, but when you strip it back, the fundamentals are very similar.

[00:02:53] Now in the Netflix show, Gordon Ramsey also mentions the influence of clothing designer Paul Smith. So whether you are talking about clothes or food or hair. These are all creative industries where individuals have managed to build fantastic global brands in fashion. You've got people like Paul Smith and Hairdressing, you've had brands like Vidal, Sassoon, and Toni and Guy, and in the restaurant world, you've got people like Gordon Ramsey,

[00:03:22] Now they're all very different industries for sure,

[00:03:25] but with the same fundamentals that underpin what makes them successful. To start with, they're all high stakes businesses that are usually started by a crafts person. Rather than a business person. There's also the relentless pressure that those sort of businesses have and the reality that most people who attempt to build something like that will very definitely fail.

[00:03:50] The statistics will bear that out. So the question becomes this. How do you build a brand like that? A brand that people really want to be part of, whether that's a restaurant or a fashion house, or a salon? Well, when you watch the Gordon Ramsey documentary, I think the answer becomes very clear. It essentially comes down to three things.

[00:04:13] First, the standards that you have for yourself and that you set for others on your team. Second is leadership. And third is the sense of belief and pride that you manage to create and instill in your team members.

[00:04:31] So let's start with standards and excellence first, because for me, the first thing that stands out when you watch Gordon Ramsey is his obsession with standards. It's not just that he's interested in standards, it's not just a preference, it's an obsession. Every single detail matters, whether it's the timing, the coordination, the presentation, the communication between the team, the energy in the room, everything has to work together so that the client experiences something that feels effortless.

[00:05:05] But in reality, anybody who's worked in a busy salon or a restaurant knows that behind this seamless experience is often controlled chaos. And the thing that controls the chaos is the standards, not the talent of individuals, but the standards that they set and hold themselves and those around them to uphold.

[00:05:26] Because talent alone isn't enough. Gordon Ramsey doesn't just hire talented people. He attracts talent. He develops talent. He creates environments where talented people can become exceptional at what they do. But he also makes something very clear. You might work in the restaurant, but the name on the restaurant and the reputation of the brand is Gordon Ramsey, and that name stands for something, a level of excellence that you have to live up to.

[00:05:59] At one point in the documentary series, someone literally says to the team, on your forehead, it says Gordon Ramsey. In other words, when the client walks through the door, they're not judging the individual chef or the waiting staff. They're judging the brand, and the brand has a reputation to protect. But the really interesting part for me is that when you watch a show, you are reminded that excellence is never one big dramatic thing.

[00:06:30] It's thousands of tiny things that are done properly. The lighting isn't accidental. The music isn't accidental. The way the plates are presented isn't accidental. The timing between courses isn't accidental. Everything has been thought through, rehearsed and refined because when you are operating at that level, you understand something rarely important.

[00:06:56] Excellence is all about and built through attention to detail. And this is where salons and restaurants are incredibly similar because when a client walks into a great salon, they notice things. They notice the welcome, they notice the atmosphere, they notice the professionalism of the team.

[00:07:18] They notice a consultation, they notice a coordination between the front desk and the stylist. They notice the confidence. All those small moments combine to create a feeling, and that feeling says these people know what they're doing. That feeling builds trust, and trust is what keeps clients coming back.

[00:07:40] The second thing that stands out when you watch Gordon Ramsey is leadership. Now, I will say that leadership isn't always comfortable to watch. He's blunt. He swears an awful lot. He's very direct. He's sometimes brutally honest, but there's something else that's incredibly important. There is clarity. He knows exactly what he expects, and he communicates those expectations very clearly because ultimately, someone has to be the captain of the ship.

[00:08:12] And when you are the captain of the ship, you carry that responsibility with you, responsibility for the standards, responsibility for the client experience, responsibility for the safety, and the livelihood of those on your team. Responsibility for the culture. And there was a moment in the

documentary that rarely captured this just before they officially opened the new restaurant and before the official launch, they ran what's called a test service.

[00:08:44] Now friends and invited guests came in the kitchen, runs a full service. And as you'd expect, lots of things went wrong, orders backed up, timing fell apart. Communication broke down. But Ramsey was relatively calm about it because the purpose of the test run wasn't perfection. The purpose was to find the break points.

[00:09:10] Where does the system crack? Where does pressure expose weaknesses? Because once you know where the break points are, then you can fix them

[00:09:20] And I often say something very similar about every business that's growing and that is that businesses, or rather the systems within them start to break when they expand. What worked when you had two or three staff doesn't always work when you have 10. What worked when you have 10 Doesn't always work when you have 20.

[00:09:40] Growth exposes. Weaknesses in the system, weaknesses in leadership, weaknesses in communication. But if you're paying attention, those weaknesses become opportunities to fix them. That's why great leaders actively look for those break points because fixing them is how the business gets stronger. Another thing that really stands out about Gordon Ramsey is his respect for the craft and those that came before him.

[00:10:12] There's no room for fake it till you make it in the kitchen. You do the work, you develop the skills, you understand the details, because when you truly respect your craft, the standards will naturally rise. And when standards rise, so does the quality of the experience. Years ago, I frequently had the opportunity to travel to and work in Japan.

[00:10:37] and what struck me most about the Japanese was the culture of respect and discipline. Their commitment to excellence, the attention to detail, the pride in their craft of whatever it was that they did. In Japanese culture, there's a deep respect for mastery, for tradition, for doing things properly.

[00:10:59] Nothing is casual, nothing is sloppy. Everything is very intentional, and when you operate in an environment like that, something really interesting happens. The people around you rise to the level of expectation because culture sets the standard. The third thing that stands out watching Ramsey's restaurants is the amount of pride that exists.

[00:11:26] Real pride. You see it in the way the team wear the uniform. You see it in the way they speak about the restaurant. You see it in the way they support each other during service. When a team meeting finishes, the team applauds not because someone told them to, but because they know that they deliver something exceptional together.

[00:11:47] It's a unit, it's a team, and the restaurant becomes the star, not the individual chef, not the ego. The restaurant becomes the star. And when people feel part of something bigger than themselves, something meaningful, something with standards and purpose, they rise. They work harder, they care more. And this is something I think that the salon industry sometimes forgets.

[00:12:12] People don't just want a job. They want to feel proud of where they work, proud of the standards, proud of the team, proud of the brand that they work for. Because when that happens, something changes, people stop behaving like employees, and they start behaving like custodians of the brand. The real lesson for me is that Gordon Ramsey now has something like 95 restaurants around the world.

[00:12:39] Plus television shows, books and media. It's a global brand, and none of that happened because he's good at cooking. It happened because he built a culture of excellence, standards, leadership, training, communication, and a relentless commitment to improvement. He constantly looks for what isn't working and how can they make it better?

[00:13:04] Because the goal isn't perfection. The goal is continuous improvement. So here's the question for salon owners that I want to leave you with. What kind of salon are you building? A building full of individuals doing their own thing, or a team working together as part of something bigger. Could you imagine creating a salon where people are genuinely proud to be part of the team?

[00:13:35] Where training is constant, where standards are non-negotiable, where communication is clear, where the client experience feels seamless, where the team operates, like a unit, because cultures like that don't just happen by accident. They happen because someone sets the standard, someone leads a culture, someone protects the brand.

[00:13:59] So if you are a salon owner, listen to this. Set the standards. Don't be afraid to, don't settle for average. Don't settle for second best. Don't just settle for a group of individuals working independently without direction and leadership all under the same roof. Build something that people are proud to

belong to respect the craft, develop the expertise, set the standards, and lead the culture.

[00:14:24] Because when you do that, something powerful happens. Teams rise to the occasion, clients notice, and the business becomes something far bigger than just a place to work. It becomes something that they're proud to be part of, and that whether you are running a restaurant or a salon, is what world class businesses are built on.

[00:14:49] It is not easy. I never said it was. No one else did. And for every Gordon Ramsey, there's 1,001 wannabes and some. Now, as you probably already know, our salon marketing course is now open for enrolment. I believe it is the most comprehensive and practical salon marketing course that there is. Marketing is understanding how clients actually find you, why they stay with you, and then building your business around that.

[00:15:19] So I put together everything I know about marketing and I brought in experts to fill in the gaps where necessary.

[00:15:26] So if you want to go deeper into how to structure your salon's marketing, I'll put the link to the marketing course in the show notes of today's podcast. Have a great week, and don't forget to tune in next Tuesday for another great episode of the Grow My Salon Business podcast. Until then, bye for now.