

Create Referrals with your Experience. Transcript

Shawn 0:02

Welcome to another episode of The Nice Job Podcast. I'm your host, Sean Hill. Welcome into Episode Seven to hear the Nice Job Podcast. Just a couple more to go here in season three will actually wrap it up before

Shawn 0:16

the end of 2021. We'd love to hear your feedback on the season or your favorite episodes. You leave a review wherever you listen to this podcast, or drop us an email podcast at nice job.com. All right, let's see who our guest is today.

Ramon 0:32

Hi, I'm Ramona rice,

Shawn 0:33

Ramona. So glad we were finally able to have you on the show. Give us a little hint, a little tip on some of the things we'll learn today.

Ramona 0:41

One thing that will kill the sale is assuming too much?

Shawn 0:45

Well, well, well. We'll explore that. And plenty more. Here in this episode of The Nice Job Podcast. Let's dive in. If you like energetic episodes, if you'd like ones filled with positivity and filled with passion, you pick the right one. I mean, all of them are great. I don't think we've made there was that one bad episode, but I don't think we made that many bad episodes, but some ticular I know is gonna be a good one, even before the conversation starts just based on the positivity and energy that I know our guest is going to bring. Who is that guest you ask? Well, allow me to introduce her. She's a mom. She's CEO. It is Ramona rice. Ramona, thank you so much for joining us here on the Nice Job Podcast.

Ramona 1:25

Sean, thank you so much. Super excited to be here. And yeah, I didn't know how excited or energetic I'll be because it's three o'clock in the afternoon right now. And it's been a long day. We've, we've, we've had to CEO things today, a lot of I had to say no a lot. I think that's my job. Really, I should have told you to say the person who says no all the time.

Shawn 1:50

With mom and CEO will just go right off that since you brought it up. What's it harder to say? No, as a mom or a CEO?

Ramona 1:56

Oh CEO, for sure. Being a mom is easy. Because you know, you have autonomy over them, honestly, it's like no. And I've always had the mindset of my kids. I'm like, I'm your mother, not your friend, their vital care if you like me, what I care about is that am I making you a productive adult? That's my job. If you're productive, I've kept you off the pole out of jail. And we've never been featured on Dateline, we have done well as parents

Shawn 2:21

where to go I feel like those are, those are key goals that all parents should strive out for. And you know, as much as I'd love to dive into the mom's side of things, I am definitely unqualified on that side. And many would say I'm unqualified for the CEO side, but we're gonna focus a bit more on that one. And one of the reasons I wanted to talk to you today, and what I wanted to dive into this episode is a lot of you will listen to the Nice Job Podcast is a variety of different industries. And they come from a variety different backgrounds. But I've always found there's common themes that tend to run through all those businesses. One in particular, obviously, you know, we're gonna bring this up first about how reputation matters how it's a true pillar of growth and how it's really going to, you know, the only things you come in with business and also leave with is your reputation. Everything else can kind of be cyclical in a way. The other thing that always tends to come down, as we've talked about leadership style, leadership buy in, and really setting a good culture. And then the biggest element which will kind of live a little bit in today, though, I know we'll touch on the other two is about that kind of customer experience, the customer journey, you know, how people feel when they're interacting with your business from from the first contact point to the end. And I guess I didn't really get into kind of what you do you know, your industry and things like that. So I guess what kind of start there if no one's heard the name Ramona rice, what's our key bullet points? Our key stat sheet, what do we need to know about you, your industry and what your what your expertise is in that sense?

Ramona 3:43

Sure. So I run on own a 7500 square foot Day Spa in Virginia, southeastern Virginia. So think where Pocahontas lived, and you are you the Battle of Yorktown for the you Hamilton fans? I'm literally 20 minutes from that battle. I probably have stood where Hamilton stood yes on that cool. But regardless, I so I own a 7500 square foot day spa. So I have three sets of customers. First are the external customers that come in and get spa services like massages and skincare, the internal customers, which are independent contractors that do said services. And then finally, are the shareholders ie my family because it is a family owned business. So there's a lot of different levels of customer care and customer service. So some of you who have who've heard me before, I have a podcast called spa for newer in the spa space. And we talk about, again, how to run day spas. But you're absolutely right, Shawn, pretty much you can learn basic fundamentals of Customer Care customer service from any industry. If it's good customer service, you can bring it to your business. And it's so important to think about that entire customer experience and not just the endpoint where they're paying. I'm talking like before when they're researching when they're gathering that information, and that's why reputation is a huge part of our business. Because I cannot tell you how many times someone has called us and said we picked you because your reviews are so good. We picked you because you had so many views, we pick you because so and so said we should go. Or we see a Facebook post,

hey, where should I go to get massage? Oh, you're gonna go distress. And it's like the names T shirts Express. And it's like 10 people commenting on it. And I'm just as the owner going, like, like, like love, love, love all those things. So absolutely. It doesn't matter if you're running on your carpet care business or cleaning service or your doctor. Bottom line is if your customers are happy, they are going to be profits throughout the world. And they're going to do it through online and talking to their friends and family and saying, I love this so much that you need to go experience it. And there's a lot of ways they'll do that.

Shawn 5:37

And I think the key identifying question that perhaps this is the question I think you should start off with, and I kinda wanna get your opinion on that one is really at the core of it, figuring out what happiness looks like for the customer. And I think because that's the thing that you kind of look across the industry. But what point what are they feeling? Or what are they doing? Do you think that's the right mindset to take as you start to build that? Or is there something maybe I'm overlooking?

Ramona 6:05

No, I think it's a good place to start. And I think the first thing you have to ask yourself is what is the customer expecting from you, you know, I hate the term that customer is always right, that is wrong, it is false, throw that away. If a customer says that to you, that is not the right customer for you get them out of your place immediately. Like like just seriously, like kick them to the curb. I'm not kidding, fire bad clients. And the reason I say that is because if the customer's always right, customer's job, and a transaction is to get the goods or services at the lowest price possible. The job for the business owner who's selling set services or set products is to sell them at the best rate possible. And not at the highest rate the best, right? You don't want to gouge anybody. And so if the customer is always right, that means that the owner is always wrong. And I hate that. So one of the things I do when I'm working with my massage therapists here, my front desk or when my spa partners, as I get them to switch that product, and I get into say, we must meet the client's expectation, who sets the expectations for us, we need to be really clear in our communication, and what we offer. And if we can do that, I'll give an example. So just last week, we got to one star reviews on Google. That's always fun. Heads up, I use the nice job system. It's great. And so I got an error. I was like, Oh, what is this about was about a woman who was upset. Because we charged our no show policy, it is expected for our clients to show up on time ready to get their services. If not, we will charge the full amount. And we ask for a credit card on file to keep that they signed that acknowledgement on their client later. It's on our website. It's literally everything, Shawn, and we talked about it when they booked the appointment. And when we remind them of appointment, and this woman didn't show up or and then she only called us when she got charged. And so she got mad and wanted us reverse charge. And I'm like, I'm not doing that. Because we were clear in our expectations, your job clients to show up on time, and to pay us this amount. Our jobs provide great care. Now if on the other hand, she did her part, she came on time and did not get great care, then we have a problem. And we didn't meet that customer's expectation. And that's I think the first step is making sure you're clearly communicating what are the expectations, if I'm doing something at this price, here's what you're going to get. And if you happen to throw in a fruit few extras, or you

know under promise over deliver that sort of thing. That's fantastic. But you must must make sure that customer understands the expectations of what they're going to get for that price. And if they don't, you need to have that conversation with them. Or you need to look at your marketing, look at the way you onboard clients to make sure they understand and some will never get it, this woman was never going to get it. So then she shone then she went under her husband's Google name. And so I got to I got to respond again going, this is your husband's name. Let's not do this. But here's the whole scenario again. So I called her out because she decided to act a fool. And the reason I have the confidence to do that, Shawn, is because we have 1000s of five star reviews 1000s of them because we made it a real emphasis in our company to get reviews, gather them, hunt them out, ask clients to give it to us and because we have so many I welcome the BS one star reviews because I'm like you give validity all my my good ones. And

Shawn 9:15

because also then you're actually the exact story that you told is we set expectations. The customer didn't do the basics. We follow our protocol, we follow our expectations. We've set the standard. And now anyone reading that review understands like, Okay, well, I'm a chronically late person, like blowing things off. Maybe this isn't the business for me, but that's a customer that you don't want, right? It's unreliable causes more problems on the board cost you more business in the long run. So you talked about firing the customers you don't want. That's a great example. And I've often said that bad reviews are just failing to meet expectations. And so that then comes down to Okay, well I want to set these expectations. I want to tell my customers, you know, this, this and this and but I'm not sure if there's something I need to bombard them with in the very beginning, like, before we go any further, like, what is that balance between setting proper expectations, but also enticing them with marketing? How do you find that balance?

Ramona 10:12

So the first thing is, is that I love featuring what are the benefits of me buying the service, what's the benefit to be buying this product. So the benefits of me getting massage, for example, is I'm going to feel less stressed. And when I walked in, that's a benefit, I'm going to walk away feeling energized and ready to go, or a skincare treatment, my skin is going to look better than when I walked in. Or if I use this product, it will do this. So I like to focus on those benefits first and foremost, but then it's part of the education pays for the client, that you especially service providers, you have to educate the client. So let's say it's a carpet shampoo, for example, if you've got a client who is getting their carpet shampoo, and they continually wear shoes in the house, we know that carpet is gonna get what dirty quicker. So you may do a blog post saying, hey, one easy way to keep your carpets clean, is to remove your shoes. That's one piece of information. And you start all these little tips you'd like to give your clients, sprinkle them throughout your marketing throughout the talks with your clients throughout the like your blog pieces, do some PR these kinds of things, respond to reviews that question the validity of your product, saying, well here is the benefit or clients normally get. We're so sorry, you didn't get that. And then if it was your fault, and say this was our fault, we're gonna fix it. Or if it was a client, I'll say, thank you so much for your feedback. And that's how you do it. It's like a sprinkling

because you don't want to bombard the client with too much information. At the same time. You want to have it in places where because there are those, like my husband is that detail or he wants to know everything, everything he just loves as my new details. He's a very micro thinker. And because of that, and I'm a very macro thinker, I'm like once I decide some That's it, I'm acting, I'm going where's he's a very micro thinker. So you have to have places on your website. And you have to have the knowledge within your team to be able to answer those micro questions that some clients like to ask. But then also make it stupid, easy for those macro buyers who are like I'm just ready to buy right now.

Shawn 12:04

So I wanted to ask you almost take what I know that you do, and almost to transport it into something different. And what I mean by that is is, you know, the spa experience you and I talked to when we were on a podcast earlier before about that moment when people are coming to the spa, how quickly they're starting to look for signs that they're in the right place, they're in the right thing. But a lot of our you know home serve special listeners, things like that. They're going to someone else's home, right, they're kind of going into that environment. So almost to use any old sports term, like the home field advantage. Sure. Someone really transport the same things I know you do within your spas to make sure that from the first sort of moment, they're getting that feeling, how can they do that in a traveling sort of way or you know, when they're going into someone else's home turf? How do they have a good road game in that in that sense?

Ramona 12:57

First thing is you want to make sure you are setting the expectation a couple days before, this is what you expect when we arrive. This is what needs to happen. So again, let's talk about carpet cleaners. I don't know why I'm on carpet cleaners. I have like all floor like hardwood floors in my house. But I'm just into carpet cleaning right now. So I've been watching a lot tic tac Shan about carpet cleaning. It's fascinating. Yeah. And in the dirt is just deliciously great to watch, you get flushed down the toilet anyway. So think about it. So if I'm a carpet cleaning company, right, and I have a carpet cleaning van, I'm going to tell them okay, you're an expert these to practice technicians here are their names. This is what we need you to remove from the rooms. This is what we can and cannot remove from your rooms. This is what we're expecting the home to be like, we're expecting that there are going to be no pets that are grooming the way or humans in the way. We're expected. There's no furniture in the way where you want to go. And then we also need to upset in that kind of onboarding email. This is what you can reasonably expect from this one treatment. Be prepared that we may need to come back for an additional treatment. And that will may be between this in this class. So that's the first thing. The second thing is is that especially if you're traveling your cars must be clean, folks. Okay, so that's your mobile office like I'm a big believer and so we have a beautiful like butterfly garden when people walk up. Beautiful bench. We have beautiful holiday decorations right now because it's it's the Holy sign. But I make sure the front areas clean. So like for example, we used to have smokers not in our day spa, but around us. I went to all the businesses said absolutely not. We need to come up with a better place because this isn't liquid any of us. So make sure that they're not smelling like smoke, make sure their teeth are brushed. I hate to say this, but in this day and

age, we have to check on those things. Make sure that they introduce themselves, do they have a script? This is Hi I'm such and such here's how I'm going to handle your home today. This is what you can expect me this is how you're going to feel safe having me in your home. I think that's that comes down to it particularly with COVID and everything else going on. People want to feel safe. So make sure you put the expectation out. If you expect the homeowner to wear a mask while they're in the home. Then make sure you put that on there. It's a reasonable accommodation or the homeowner can step out whatever those accommodations are, but I think that's again, that goes back to the expectations short of, you have to be almost stupid clear, you cannot assume in this business, you cannot assume in any business that the client will understand what they need to do. I cannot tell you, when I was an active massage therapists are no longer active massage therapists. But when I wasn't clear enough with the client, how many naked butts I saw on top of sheets, because I wasn't clear enough about where they should lie down. And it gets really embarrassing after a while to see all these. So you learn really quickly to say, Okay, we're gonna get underneath both of these sheets. And we are gonna take everything off because I need to work muscles there. And you got to explain why. Same thing. So again, if you need like, for example, I have a ferocious dog. She's great to me, but she hates other people. So I know I have to lock her up, I have to have time to lock up. So one of the things before I have a technician come in, as I say, Please don't ring the doorbell, it'll make my dog nuts. And I judge the experience right then and there if they listen to that request, because it's a really easy one.

Shawn 15:52

That brings up a good point of sometimes those are key questions that can differentiate yourself, right? So saying, like, Hey, would you like us to ring the doorbell? Knock on the door? Like, how would you like us to let you know, they're here, because I'm gonna might say, Oh, great, actually text me, I'll put the dog away, then come out won't be that big of a deal. Or you know what, like, the kids might be sleeping during that time. So just let me know. Or someone might say, You know what I'm working with headphones on make sure you're knocking loud, you know, make sure you're doing this. That's a key question, you ask that setting an expectation that we want you to have the ultimate experience our founder here at nice job large.

Christiansen likes to say that you should be selling eight and 10 Star experiences, right? If you're just selling five star experiences, you're limiting yourself, they're going above and beyond, I think that's a small little subtle thing that you can add to your experience that shows you're kind of above and beyond, which then brings into Okay, well, if you're a solo entrepreneur, you're very small team sign, it's very easy to have that quality control, when it comes to teaching your team and making sure that they're not assuming and things of that nature, is there a strategy or techniques that you've used in the past? Or is it really just come down to these regular check ins to make sure that everyone's doing it the right way?

Ramona 17:02

It's a combination of both. So I'm an interesting business because I have contractors, so legally, I cannot tell them exactly what to do. But I can say these are foundational pieces, that we will not contract with anybody who cannot meet these bare standards. And we actually expect more than that. And we show them the data going, if you do go above and beyond this is how much

more money you can make. So there's that right there. But with my front desk staff, particularly, I am very fortunate in college, I did the Disney internship. So I spent six months down in Orlando, working at Disney, and nobody does customer service Guest Relations better than Disney, nobody. And just learning all the little things they do to make that guest experience so phenomenal. And it comes down to like I said, you know, it's easy to personalize. So I let my front desk for example, I do not give them a script of you must say exactly this thing. I'm like, please hit these points, but I want their personalities to shine. The other thing is part of that hiring process is you need to make sure that you understand your strengths as a business owner, and that you're hiring your weaknesses. So for example, I'm a messy person, believe it or not, Shawn, I know you can't tell with my office looks so clean, because I have other people that keep it clean for me because I am messing. And I just pile things. And so I surround myself with neat freaks. So they keep it clean, and they keep me accountable. And I have to be humble enough and vulnerable enough to allow that in the biggest problem when people and it's funny because I'm shifting more into coaching in this is that when we decide to bring on people to help us grow, because there's only so much a solo entrepreneur can make, it's just not possible. When we decide to branch out and bring other people in. It's a vulnerability that has to happen. Because you are now trusting your baby your business with other human beings. And that is so scary. So the most important thing you can do is number one is consistently coach on the spot. When you notice something's wrong. Do it gently, don't do it from the clients or do it from the customers but say, Hey, I'd rather you approach it this way. And then give a reason why this isn't because I said so situation can't do that mom, you can do that. But for business, you can't give them the why I want you to repeat back the the phone number in case you accidentally make a mistake. Because we need to be able to get a hold of clients in case we need to reschedule or do something like that. It's so important we get that information. You need to follow whatever it says how you communicate with a client outside this office because that client made it important for us to know that. And then when they don't do it, you have to hold them accountable. So the first thing I do is I have a meeting and a touch point say okay, we didn't meet this expectation. So this is your freebie This is how are we going to correct this and I let them come up to me and we come up with a plan together. Then if they do it again, then I have to say we're going to document this because we need to show a paper trail so that we can show how much you're going to improve because I believe in you this much and you go from there. If they don't approve from that point then you do need to get rid of this person they're not going to represent your brand well and which is why I'm always say always be hiring. And I know right now I was like no one's hiring. No one wants to work. That's malarkey. If you're a place that it's fun to work for, that you're paying a good wage, you will find great people, you just have to be willing to do it. It's no different than any other sales. So your reputation as a business owner, not only and that's why I said, I have three sets of customers, Shawn, remember, I started, I had the customers actually pay. And then I have all my internal customers, that front desk is my internal customer. So I have to make sure number one, that they're aligned with my vision, and they know why I'm doing the things I'm doing, why we do the things we do not because I think it's the best way. And then I have to be willing, Shawn, as the business owner, say, you know, they like for right now, I have not worked the front desk full time, in about five years. So I heavily rely on my front desk coordinator and my office manager to tell me, Hey, we need to shift something. And unless I'm completely against it, I'm like, let's try it, because it gives them ownership. But

they're also at their front line. And that was one thing I've loved about working at Disney is that they had their upper executives, at least in merchandise, actually work the parks every once in a while to remind them what it's like to work in front of guests. And I think it's just brilliant. So also, every once in a while, do your carpet cleaning owners, whoever you are, everyone's want to jump in and do a massage. I don't want to. But I remind myself why don't want to do it, you know are all worth the front desk. Same kind of thing. Shadow. There's a reason why the show Undercover Boss was so popular and why brought about a lot of changes of companies, because the owners actually saw what was really happening. And it's amazing as you get further and further from where the action is, you lose sight of of how hard that actual job is.

Shawn 21:37

And that also shows your team the leadership buying as well, because you are willing to go and make sure that you've seen it firsthand, right? You're not just going with oh, well when I was doing that 5, 10 years ago. That's how I did it. And I'm never changing that you see kind of the evolution, because a lot of times, you know, we talk about communication throughout an organization. And you know, oh, well, you can talk up, you can suggest things above. But the main reason that doesn't happen is because the leadership buy in is just this facade. And so actually, you know what you just talked about? Getting down in there and doing it, I think is a great tip. And I always say there's notepad moments here and the nice job podcasts where you should be, you know, furiously writing, that last answer you just gave, I think is definitely a notepad moment for this one here. And we could talk about so much, but you get these quick and digestible. So before we go, I want to ask you the question, I've been asking everybody here in season three, because I want to get your particular answer and honestly compare and contrast against the others. But feel free to answer the business sense or the personal sense. But the question I've been asking everybody this season is, which do you embrace more challenges or opportunities?

Ramona 22:42

Oh, that's a good one, I like an opportunity, a challenge is too much work. I'll just be honest, in this season, I'm in. Again, it's funny, I try to spend 60% of my time with my kids 20% in the office, and then 10% For my marriage and 10% for me, so it's not a lot of time. So I'm going to take opportunities rather than trying to fix challenges. Now, if the opportunity fixes the challenge, fantastic. But opportunity also, you know, there's a lot more going for it, I think it's also it takes a bit more bravery to go after the opportunity, because that's unknown, a challenge, typically something we know. And either we can't fix or won't fix it. So I just, I know, ignore them. But I would rather say You know what, let me focus on opportunities. I'll give an example my personal life. So right now, my daughter is a bit accepted to be a house of delegates page in Richmond, we live in Virginia, and only 30 students were selected out of 300. So it's a really big deal. The opportunity is fantastic. So I'm gonna ignore all the challenges of how expensive the clothing is my God, because she has to wear a certain uniform, you know how I'm gonna have to four times a week drive to Richmond and back or three, two times a week drive to Richmond back, or the challenge of being scared because my three year old is going to be in Richmond, those are all challenges, the opportunities to great to not worry about the challenges.

Shawn 24:02

I love that I think that's the perfect capsulation of embracing something. So you're not you know, you're not ignoring one or the other. But there's an opportunity there, you're certainly going to embrace that. Or someone listen to this episode. And once they embrace the opportunity of trying to connect with you or hear what you're doing or learn more about you, where should we direct them towards?

Ramona 24:20

You know what I'm gonna say right now. Tick tok. And the reason I'm saying that because I'm having the most fun with that app, and I am in a fun career kind of flex, where I'm actually branching out beyond just a spas and talking to service base, particularly moms who want to be a CEO want to be a mom, and how do you balance the two which requires honestly you hiring a team just like we talked about today, and there's expectations so if you head over to Tiktok at Spa printer, you can find me also on Facebook at Ramona rice.

Shawn 24:49

All right, we will have those links both in the show description. And if you're watching on YouTube, you just saw it on your screen as well. So head on over and say hello to Ramona, Ramona, thank you so much for taking time If you certainly did, I know you were a little worried was late in the day and it's been kind of a rough one. But you brought the passion, the positivity I was looking for. And thank you sincerely for taking time out of your day to join us on the Nice Job Podcast.

Ramona 25:10

It is my pleasure, Shawn.

Shawn 25:13

Special thanks once again to Ramona rice always enjoy the conversations. I was able to join her on her podcast earlier and was glad to return the favor, here today. My three key takeaways for this episode, first, little vulnerability. Ramona talked about how you really need to relinquish some control of some parts of your business, and how that can make you feel vulnerable. But overall, that's gonna put you in a better place to look at things from an objective view and make key decisions. Second, she talked about setting expectations well before you even arrive on site. Now Ramona, as a spa owner, majority of her clients are coming to her brick and mortar location. But for a lot of our home service professionals listening and you're going to people's homes, the more preparation that you can give the expectations they should expect when they come on site, and the way you present yourself once you arrive, we'll start the customer experience off on the proper foot to get you towards that big review. And I would be remiss if my third takeaway wasn't about those reviews. We're gonna talk about the competence she now has after getting tons she said 1000s of five star reviews to embrace the one star reviews we talk a lot of times and reputation marketing about how every review can be marketing gold. I thought Ramona laid out a great example during the episode of why it is truly important to continually collect reviews and make it a part of your culture. That feedback is necessity. There's takeaway that you got from this episode that I didn't mention, drop us an email podcast at nice

job.com There's a couple of episodes to go I hope you'll stay tuned. We'll see you next week here on the nice job podcasts until then, hope you being healthy hope being safe. Don't forget to little fun out there as well.

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