

SERIES 9 EPISODE 5

GLOW UP

The beauty industry is one of the booming industries to take the world by storm over the last 5 to 10 years. The British Beauty Council reports that the British beauty industry grew by 11% in 2023 which sales reaching £27.2 billion for both products and services. This growth now puts the beauty industry ahead of publishing, chemical manufacturing and the creative arts and entertainment industries. It is an industry that is also attracting a lot of workers. The industry's workforce was estimated to be 418,000 in 2023, a 10% increase on the previous year.

It is not just in the UK, Worldwide the global figures are staggering. In 2025, the global beauty industry is expected to be worth \$636.2 billion.

So why the increase in revenue, exposure and popularity? What has happened to make the beauty industry boom?

The industry has shown resilience in the face of economic challenges. Some believe that it has benefitted from the 'lipstick effect' where people still want to indulge in the small luxuries when times are economically tough. That is partly what is responsible for the UK increase of 11% in 2023, commentators believe.

Of course, the other big factor is the social media. Famous personalities, and even some not so famous are creating videos starting with, "So many of you have been asking about my skincare routine..." and a video of all their beauty products follows. Maybe people have been asking, maybe they haven't, it almost doesn't matter – it is the perception of popularity that counts...and sells. 65% of all consumers went to a product because an influencer had suggested it through social media.

BUT there are not just 'influencers' anymore, there are also 'micro-influencers'. For the uninitiated, a 'micro-influencer' is a social media personality with a small but engaged following of between 1000 and 100,000 followers. Their niche enthusiasms and content creation, as well as the view they are authentic, makes them a valuable asset for brands who want to try and increase engagement and target marketing. 10 years ago, people who thought being an 'influencer' wasn't going to last, seem to be proven wrong.

The industry has also created a whole new lexicon too with a growing emphasis on ingredients that use the most scientific sounding name, to new techniques like 'contouring' all to achieve a 'glow up'.

A 'glow up' is the new slang term for a positive personal transformation. This can mean noticeable changes in appearance or style but has also been expanded to encompass a growth in maturity and confidence too. It can stretch to any change that has been made which means that someone is thriving when previously they may have encountered a difficult or awkward time.

20 years ago, perhaps we would have called this, 'growing into yourself' or overcoming 'the awkward phase' when you are trying to work out who you are. The earliest 'glow up' I can remember is when I watched Neighbours in the 1980s as a 10 year-old and Plain Jane Superbrain took her ponytail out, took off her glasses and put some makeup on and the world went mad with excitement. According to Wikipedia it is still a reference point culturally for extreme makeovers.

Whatever your views on the beauty industry, social media or 'glow ups', it appears that this particular industry is going through its very own 'glow up' with no signs of stopping.

Application

The term 'glow up' is as relevant to leadership as it is to the world of beauty. Anyone who has been a leader for any length of time will remember, perhaps whilst cringing, what they were like in their early awkward days of leadership. When we hadn't quite yet grown into our leadership, when we were still trying to work out what it, and we, looked like. There are so many examples of leadership glow ups that I have witnessed in my own life as well as those around me. From individual contributor to team member. From interrupter to empathetic listener. From lone wolf to collaborative leader. From shy presenter to confident communicator. You will have had your own 'glow up' over the years, perhaps it didn't feel as obvious as Plain Jane Superbrain's at the time, but it was significant nonetheless.

The reality is that we all need continual makeovers, none of us are the finished article. As we grow, we learn and we 'glow'. It isn't just about making ourselves 'glow up' though, the work of leadership is to enable others to glow too.

According to a global survey from McKinsey across 2000 people in 81 organisations, there are 4 types of behaviours that account for 89% of leadership effectiveness.

- 1) Being supportive
- 2) Operating with a strong orientation toward results
- 3) Seeking different perspectives
- 4) Solving problems effectively

And, they argue, effective leaders know that what works in one situation may not work in another. They call the adapting of approaches and techniques 'situational leadership'.

If we want to help others 'glow up' then we need to listen to what they want to achieve, what change THEY want to make, where THEY want to go and then we can suggest some things that can help that makeover happen. Of course, in leadership it is not as simple as physically looking different, although sometimes that is a factor. In leadership, it is about the 'glow up' happening on the inside first – not a change of makeup, aftershave or shampoo – but a change of heart and mind.

Sometimes some of the things we believe need to 'blow up' before we can 'glow up'

Questions

We can go up from 'Blow up' to 'glow up' in our leadership – but how?

- 1) If your leadership needs a 'glow up', identify what you look like now in your leadership and what you want to look like and why. What do you want to be different? Why does it matter? If it changes, what will a 'glow up' look like?
- 2) Thinking about your limiting beliefs, what needs to 'blow up' that is preventing your 'glow up'? Perhaps you think people like me can't do things like that? Perhaps your experiences have been tainted by someone else and your confidence has been knocked? Maybe the story you are telling yourself is a limiting one? Or the way you are speaking to yourself is harsh? Whatever it is, identify what needs to 'blow up'.
- 3) You, dear listener, may be a micro-influencer whether you like it or not! You will influence between 100 and 100,000 people if you have worked in a school over a number of years or worked in a business that works with customers. You may not do it via social media, but you are an influencer. So, who are you influencing and HOW are you influencing them? When people come into contact with beauty influencers, they buy the products. When people come into contact with you, what are they wanting to go on and 'buy'? A new attitude or work ethic? A new sense of hope? Aspiration and belief where previously there were none?

Your influence can 'blow up' or 'glow up' others and the lasting effect we can have on each other lasts longer than the latest beauty craze. The influence you have on others, can last a lifetime and although not always measurable in economic terms, is worth far more than it all. Leaders are in the business of helping OTHERS to have their own 'glow up' as well as have their own.

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