



Jamie Brooks - What the last recession taught us?

With worrying economic predictions, we are heading for unprecedented times, but working and living through a recession isn't new for Jamie Brooks. Co-founder of Brooks & Brooks, London, has lived through five recessions, run a business through the financial crash of 2008 and trained as a hairdresser during Black Wednesday in the 1990s. "The last crash was an economic recession where money was tight, but this is more of a health emergency. So it has to be viewed on its own merit and we are learning as we go along.

"The last recession was about money; this pandemic is about keeping people apart. Last time, the hair industry could just get on with it as it was mainly banks and investors that were closing, but this time we are seeing a societal change which is effecting every industry. Post-Covid, we will see a different culture, where people will be less tolerant of packed trains or busy pubs and be more conscious of cleanliness. This is going to become common place so as a business, we need to be ready for a new outlook. "

1 During the last recession, salon business grew as people were looking for an escape - and it's the same now. They are looking for something away from the doom and gloom so make sure there's a positive vibe in the salon and every client has a great experience.

2 If you don't know what you're doing, your team won't either. Set out a plan and stick to it - it will be the right thing for your business whatever else is happening.

3 Step back and look at everything - when you're in the middle of it, it's easy to make a bad decision.

4 Go back to your core business strengths and values and work by them. Try not to get distracted by everything else.

5 Think carefully about introducing new initiatives such as discounting - don't do anything you wouldn't be prepared to do when we get back to 'normal'.

6 Have a plan B, C and D - if another lockdown was announced, be ready. Follow your instinct and keep moving, don't stand still.

7 Remember the client is king. With shows and education cancelled, everything is about the salon - the service, the visit, the experience. Get the balance right between restrictions and a pleasurable experience for your clients.

8 It's a rollercoaster and many people don't want to be on it! So try and be as normal as possible.

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