

# In Focus: Leadership

## BUSINESS

# From High Touch Service To Beauty Brand

● Glamsquad's Amy Shecter shares insights into how the on-demand service is evolving, and becoming even more relevant to its clients.

BY ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ

Since Glamsquad launched in 2014, the on-demand, in-home, personalized beauty service has expanded into six major markets and clocked more than 600,000 appointments. And since its inception, the company has evolved from a technology-driven service to a “multidisciplinary beauty brand.”

As part of an ongoing series of executive interviews, Tim Boerkoel, founder of global executive search and consulting firm The Brownstone Group, talks with Amy Shecter, chief executive officer of Glamsquad, about this evolution as well as what it takes to drive success in a highly competitive market.

**Tim Boerkoel:** Amy, you are leading a very active business with a growing value proposition. How has this experience compared to your previous leadership ventures?

**Amy Shecter:** I have had the incredible opportunity of working for different brands across multiple categories, in a variety of roles and catapulted across industries. People often ask me how I've been able to work in footwear, denim, fashion, fitness, tech and beauty, and I believe it is because I haven't been afraid to take risks and fail. Each experience has taught me a lesson that I have used to help me lead effectively today, and I am lucky to be able to bring different points of view to a role.

The first thing I do when I join a company is immerse myself in the brand, the people and the culture. I believe it's important to understand what is working and what's not working before making any decisions about what path to take. Within a few months, in collaboration with the leadership team, we create a project plan to align with the priorities, and then communicate those initiatives throughout the organization. Having a clear vision and a path to execute against makes the whole company operate successfully. Critical to the success of this plan is the vision around the customer. It is critical to understand the needs of the customer and then build a multifaceted business plan that drives to win.

I was actually a “power user” of Glamsquad and obsessed with the company a while ago. I was spending a lot of time talking to the beauty professionals who came to my home about their jobs and the company, and they had so much passion for what they were doing. I thought it would be an incredible opportunity to be a part of a disruptive business that is so relevant in the 21st century. Glamsquad is more than just a beauty services company – it

is a brand that helps women of all ages look and feel their best so they can make amazing things happen.

And now we are at an exciting juncture where we have evolved from a technology-driven beauty services business to a multidisciplinary beauty brand. From selling products in the home to our partnership with CVS, Glamsquad has an exciting trajectory ahead of us. And our squad consists of our beauty pros, clients and employees, who all passionately support the overarching mission of the brand. I put great importance in creating a community of motivated people with a strong, shared vision and high integrity, and I'm proud to be a part of it. It's also been great to be able to partner with a best in class executive team as the brand evolves.

**T.B.:** Can you share more about Glamsquad's venture into branded product and partnerships?

**A.S.:** From Glamsquad's inception, we've approached the business with the goal of being a beauty and lifestyle brand powered by technology. Our mission is to empower women to look and feel their best, and consumers are seeking luxury experiences that are curated specifically to fit their lifestyle. When it comes to these experiences, they expect a high level of personalization and immediacy, and we are certainly in a moment where convenience is critical. Glamsquad is uniquely positioned at the forefront of this shift as we provide our consumers with the most elevated, personalized and convenient experience. Launching our own product line was a natural next step and has been years in the making.

Through the 600,000-plus appointments we've completed since our 2014 launch, we have listened and learned what our consumers and beauty professionals really need and want in beauty products. We developed the Glamsquad styling collection from the feedback we have received from both our customers and our beauty pros. We are the only business of our kind approaching beauty from this lens. The in-home experience becomes a unique micro lab that fuels this feedback loop, allowing us to invent and iterate. This data is our “superpower” that drives the product development process and allows us to meet the personalized needs of our clients. And the constant communication between our beauty pros and our clients allows their relationship with Glamsquad as a whole to evolve and grow.

With our desire to further disrupt and modernize the beauty industry, and an approach that lets us stay in close touch with customers, it made great sense to take the business beyond our in-person appointments. We were looking for a partner that was both innovative in the beauty space and had the reach to provide us with accelerated growth beyond our current market expansion strategy. Almost a year



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and a half ago, we connected with CVS and quickly realized that we had a similar point of view around the future of how consumers engage with beauty services and products. Our discussions led to CVS making an investment in Glamsquad, forming a great strategic partnership. And right now, we are testing our new concept in four markets. This investment instantly expands the Glamsquad community by creating a new channel for us, and a new high-value beauty offering for an even broader market.

**T.B.:** You and your team are turning a lot of ideas into meaningful action. What are some of the lessons learned from mentors and your time in the industry that allow you to be so effective at driving growth – particularly in an industry that is new to you?

**A.S.:** I've had many mentors throughout my career, and reiterating what I said earlier, you have to be willing to take risks. An early mentor also encouraged me to make choices that align with the personal brand I hoped to achieve.

Another critical lesson my experiences taught me is to replicate the things that have worked, and don't repeat those that didn't. It's important to be a perpetual student, and I continue to find value in learning from the people I report to, those who report to me, and my peers. I am lucky to have an incredible “village” of peers who are always there for me, and I am also fortunate to have a “family fan club” that has given me the wings to accomplish so many of my career goals.

**T.B.:** Given your diverse customer base and team, and the activity within the beauty industry, how have you approached quickly developing a best-in-class company?

**A.S.:** We view Glamsquad as having two clients – our customers and our beauty professionals – and we care deeply for both of them. And I am so passionate about the entire group – clients, beauty pros, employees. The key is to hire strong talent

that truly supports the overarching mission of the brand. As a member of the squad, it is key to utilize the strength of your team and allow ideas to flow upstream.

Additionally, identifying and activating new opportunities and partnerships, such as creating branded product or partnering with CVS, creates additional points of connection for the entirety of Glamsquad.

**T.B.:** Glamsquad's beauty professionals make up an impressive distributed workforce. How do you scale and maintain excellent standards with this increasingly popular model?

**A.S.:** Glamsquad offers a unique career opportunity for beauty pros who are passionate about what they do and who want to focus on their craft. At Glamsquad, they spend their days doing exactly what they love and we are here to empower them to be successful entrepreneurs. With us, they are able to set their own hours, choose where they book and essentially be their own boss. They are true brand evangelists and love to help make women look and feel amazing. Additionally, we encourage creative growth and development, provide access to top brands and partners, schedule flexibility and competitive compensation. And very notably, the network and true community that our beauty pros can share in is unparalleled in the industry. They are true brand ambassadors, giving life and meaning to our brand.

Our trusted and talented beauty professionals are highly experienced and have eight to 10 years of industry expertise. They must be; our clients are inviting Glamsquad into their homes or other personal spaces to prepare them for red carpet events and runways, editorial shoots, special dinners, a night on the town or even proms. And sometimes for no reason at all other than to be pampered via the Glamsquad experience. Therefore, the beauty pros are rigorously vetted and on-boarded to guarantee consistent, high-quality results with every booking. Our acceptance rate is less than 16 percent, and once you are a beauty pro, we make sure they receive consistent opportunities to learn about trends in the industry and receive support from the Glamsquad community. And lastly, proprietary technology that we developed in-house ensures that our clients are paired with the best beauty pro for their needs.

**T.B.:** What advice would you give people earlier in their career? Any words of wisdom given all that you've learned on your path to becoming, and currently being, a CEO?

**A.S.:** I would advise that people think about the role they have now and how it enhances their exposure, educates them about something they are interested in, and fulfills their vision for their personal brand. And on that note, recognize that personal choices definitely have an impact, so it is always good to be mindful of how one interacts with others, at work and socially, online or IRL.

Last but not least, speak up, stand up and fight for your voice to be heard. Take risks, which is not something everyone has an appetite for, but I think it helps us learn and grow. And have a passion for what you are doing. If you are passionate about your work, it becomes a part of your life. As Sheryl Sandberg taught all of us in “Lean In,” “Women need to shift from thinking, ‘I'm not ready to do that’ to thinking, ‘I want to do that – and I'll learn by doing it.’”