

Agency for Change Podcast: Sara Dreamer, Vice President of Innovation and Growth at Marianna Beauty

Announcer:

Welcome to Agency for Change, a podcast from KidGlov that brings you the stories of changemakers, who are actively working to improve our communities. In every episode, we'll meet with people who are making a lasting impact in the places we call home.

Lyn Wineman:

Hello, everyone. This is Lyn Wineman, president of KidGlov. Welcome to another episode of Agency for Change podcast. I'm going to start today with a question for everyone. What industry can be traced back thousands of years and still happens to be around today? All right, think on that for a minute. If you guessed the beauty industry, you would be correct. And today, we are chatting with someone who works at the leading developer and manufacturer of innovative hair and beauty products. I'd like to welcome Sara Dreamer, vice president of Innovation and Growth at Marianna Beauty. Sara, how are you doing today?

Sara Dreamer:

I'm wonderful. Thank you for that. When you hear the industry introduce the way you just did, it kind of revives my energy because it is a wonderful industry, and it has been around for a decade. So, that explains some of the evolution but it also explains some of the challenges and opportunities that we face as an industry. So I love that. Thank you, Lyn.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah. You know what, Sara? We've all been through a lot in the last year and working from home. And the thing we all talk about is Zoom meetings. And so all day long, we look at ourselves on a Zoom screen. And so I've got to imagine beauty more important now than ever. But before we dig into Marianna and the beauty industry, I just love to hear more about you, your background, and how you found yourself in this industry.

Sara Dreamer:

My background is pretty dynamic. And when I look back and think of all of the different industries I've been part of and places I've gone, it really is kind of a hodgepodge. I started my professional career in the pet industry. It was for a small animal manufacturer, literally six gravel road miles from my home here in Alvo, Nebraska, which is in the middle of cornfields and bean fields and 80 acres of nothingness, which we love.

Sara Dreamer:

But I started working for my father in law's high school classmate. He was starting up a rabbit food business, believe it or not. So my first sale in my career was selling rabbit hay for rabbits. And it was interesting, because my roots are from a farm. I grew up in Iowa. Never once that I imagined selling hay differently than feeding it to the livestock, it was definitely one of those moments in your career where you think, "What am I doing?" And the culture was wonderful. Our growth was amazing.

Sara Dreamer:

One of the things that we accomplished while I was there is we became a National Exporter of the Year. So, imagine what that means in a little farm in Murdoch, Nebraska. We competed at regional and national level. And actually the owners went to go meet the president, President Bush at the time. So, how awesome is that? But we sold rabbit food and for guinea pigs and chinchillas and llamas, and it was amazing. It forced me to learn something that I had never learned.

Sara Dreamer:

I think it was the first reality that I realized I have a little bit more technical in my mind than I do than I have always thought. I mean, creative people oftentimes get pigeonholed, but it was something that really taught me a lot about myself and the way that I process and think as it pertains to kind of your career path and honing in on your strengths and weaknesses. So for me, that was bittersweet. It was a family-owned company that taught me about being a good teammate, taught me about being creative and carefree, but yet disciplined and structured. So, love that.

Sara Dreamer:

After I left there, it was kind of a whirlwind. I honestly was a working mom of two little kiddos that was so busy and fabulous. And when you become a sales executive and a mom at the same time, there's a lot of times you have to make some hard decisions. My career path had to make a couple hard decisions. I graduated working for an organization in California, also in the pet industry, where I led industry initiatives and worked for a nonprofit that worked closely with pet stores, pet distributors, manufacturers who were putting green leaves on their packaging and saying it was natural. And the industry was like, "Slow down. This isn't right."

Sara Dreamer:

So, I had some really big movements in the pet industry, which were great. What that did was put me on the road more days a week than my family could allow. So, what do you do when you take an all-time high in your career and you stop? It was the right decision but it was a darn hard one. So, that's when I leaned on my network. My good friend Joey was always a business mentor of mine. He was one of my first phone-a-friends. And I just said, Joe, I've got to come back to Nebraska, I've got to stay here. And I had worked from home, you see, but I wasn't really at Nebraska as much as I wasn't.

Sara Dreamer:

So, it was difficult. We're in Omaha and Lincoln and I had worked at a global level. And that was difficult to replicate. It was a change in expectations of myself and what I was looking for. I had to trust and believe. And I actually had to go through a pretty rough journey to get where I am at today. So, I take all of that as gifts and it's all part of it. And the cool thing is when you're in a position where you feel like you're meant to be, you can look back and think, "I used to run a forklift." And today when I go downstairs and when I'm walking through the floor of our production facility and I see people buzzing around on those, it brings back such a warmth that says, "I've been there."

Sara Dreamer:

And I don't really know why. At the time it was what I needed to do. But now I can reflect and say, "Gosh, it was just part of the journey." So, that's a long way to say where I've been but there's a short way to do it. So definitely, that kind of explains it. So through networking, through people, through perseverance, and putting myself out there, I accepted a position at Marianna Beauty. At the time it was

entry. I got in. I think national sales manager maybe was my title. And when I spent my days essentially selling and promoting bobby pins and mannequins. Yeah, because one part of Marianna's portfolio is they outfit cosmetology schools.

Sara Dreamer:

So if you are pursuing or have pursued becoming a cosmetologist, there's a kit that you get that inside there's curling irons and bobby pins and clips and all of the tools you need to learn your trade. And so that's a big part of our business. And so, that was the opening. That was the first opening that the company had had at the time. So, being a person who loves product back to the day when I was selling rabbit food and I was good at it like they're really good at selling rabbit food, I can say that I was really good at selling rabbit food.

Sara Dreamer:

So, that question, that desire to get back into what I call the widget world where you sell product instead of service, love them both, but I prefer selling product. That was my entry. So, I started there seven years ago, and worked my way up. And that's kind of the story. A lot in between, but that's kind of how I got here.

Lyn Wineman:

That's amazing. I'm sure there are a lot of people listening who will really appreciate that. Also, Sara, we have to make hard choices. And it seems like sometimes women more than men have to make hard choices to say what's right for my family, what's right for my kids and my spouse, what's right for me personally, and to blend all those things together. But I think it's really cool to hear your story and look back on it and think every chapter probably led to you learning something, acquiring a skill, growing your experiences to be really great at what you're doing now. And this makes so much sense to me now, because I've heard you refer to yourself as a beauty strategist by day and farm girl by night. I love that so much, being a farm girl myself. Can you just tell me more about what that looks like for you?

Sara Dreamer:

Sure. Post-COVID, which is I think we could all kind of talk about that.

Lyn Wineman:

Oh, hallelujah.

Sara Dreamer:

Yeah. I spend a lot of my time in New York City. New York is where a lot of my largest clientele operates. And so, when I would say beauty by day, I literally would be up and down the streets of New York catching cabs, running with the quick speed of New York, and working with people so extremely different than myself and the way I was born, raised and still live. And so I think that's one where, for me, it is such a yin and a yang when I think about when I come home down a dirt road that oftentimes doesn't have a rock that it's muddy.

Sara Dreamer:

And so, honestly, it's kind of hard to believe sometimes. And I've got a lot of colleagues in this industry that are New York born and raised. So it's very rare to run into people like me that came here a

nontraditional way and are rubbing shoulders with that group. So it's great. It's almost like a mini vacation sometimes. Although, I don't know if I would call what we do when we work our tails off whether it's in New York or near a beach in California, it's still is hard work. So my husband might not believe me but I'm telling you what, it's not all glam.

Lyn Wineman:

I'm going to vouch for you. Business travel is not all it's cracked up to be. People hear that you are going to these amazing places, but they don't realize you're basically seeing the inside of the airport, the inside of an Uber, the inside of a hotel room, the inside of a conference room, maybe a client's office space, maybe you're going to lunch. But you're not taking time out to go to the beach or Disneyland. You are working, working, working, working usually very long days, particularly when you add the travel into that. So Sara, let's switch gears here a bit. I'd love to hear more about Marianna. If you had to summarize Marianna's mission and what they do in a couple of sentences, what would that be?

Sara Dreamer:

We impact the beauty industry one shampoo bottle at a time. And what that means for us is we manufacture liquid beauty. What is liquid beauty? It's everything in your pantry except for aerosols. That's what we say in our industry. We don't do aerosols. So that's a manufacturing difference that we should all know.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah. Good for you. Good for you. My hairdresser just announced to me that she was going to stop carrying my favorite line that I've been using for years. And I literally hoarded it. I bought everything. So I'm stocked up now. But that's so important to people. It really is.

Sara Dreamer:

That brings up a good point to kind of talk about when one of the biggest evolutions, the beauty industry is going through now, which is exactly what you're experiencing. On the business side, that translates to beauty destinations like Sephora and Ulta where we all love ourselves. We lose our checks, we lose ourselves, we lose track of time. Those are disrupting the way that products are being promoted and introduced into the industry.

Sara Dreamer:

The interesting part about haircare is we don't have a doctor. So skincare has dermatologists and they become the voice of. In healthcare, we've got the doctors of all of the different entities. But when we think about haircare and specific, there's no doctor of haircare. We all put our stylists in the position of authority to serve as what we would consider the doctor or the professor of in another industry. So, the changes, unfortunately, with COVID and the way people congregate, the way people socialize even for services such as our haircare, that's changed.

Sara Dreamer:

We all went through probably a crash course. I mean, I have a couple friends whose husbands learn how to cover up their roots. I mean, that's how things are going. I just watched a video of Blake Lively and her husband Ryan was covering up her roots during COVID. So I mean, it went viral, all of us learned how to become our own stylist in some ways. So, I think the changes that we're seeing is this shift of

professional industry, which is what we call it. I think people will just call it their stylists or their salons, and then where you can purchase all those products.

Sara Dreamer:

So Lyn, I'm not sure what line it is that you're in love with. But my guess would be that it stopped being exclusive enough to your stylist that it didn't make sense for them to purchase it anymore and maybe, you could even purchase it somewhere cheaper. And I think that's the part that as an industry, we're working through, it's very disruptive, when you think of brick and mortars and full truckloads of products and distribution center, and now we're going backwards and saying let's sell them one at a time again.

Sara Dreamer:

So, it's been a true circle of almost product life to think a lot of these brands started waiting for a retailer to pick them up, waiting for a salon distributor to pick them up. And so they had to hustle them one at a time in ways that were difficult and prolonged. And as soon as they hit that distribution, they started selling in pallets. And the great thing is that for a long time was the true sign of accomplishment that was meeting the demands. That was how people forecasted and planned the growth of their businesses.

Sara Dreamer:

And now, we're coming back in and saying, hey, okay, but we're wanting to do something completely different again. And so, the comforting part is it's not something we haven't seen before, but the playbook is very different. The expectations are different, the consumer engagement is different. And that's the part of the industry I love more than anything is just rolling up my sleeves and being part of the disruptions and helping navigate what makes sense of it and what we can plan for in the future.

Lyn Wineman:

Absolutely. This is such an interesting time, because as we do come out of a year and a little more of COVID and people have been at home and learning how to do all these things from home, we're now on that cusp of the world reopening or at least in our markets and then the country, the world reopening. And it will be interesting to see what major shifts are going to happen now in the next two, three, four, six months, what stays and what goes back to the way it once was. So, I have heard that Marianna has a powerful mission statement and is a purpose-driven company. I really love to hear more about that and where the mission and the purpose has come from and evolved over the years.

Sara Dreamer:

Marianna started as a company owned and had been for the majority of the 54 years that we've been in business. And that to me resonates still today when we think about an Omaha-based manufacturer who doesn't have a single customer in our backyard, what does that look like. And I believe that the mission of Marianna represents kind of the Midwest ways and how we take that and we share that through and with our customers and the brands that we work with.

Sara Dreamer:

We'll be on calls with customers. I lead new business development, so I get to be kind of the first voice that they hear. And I get the opportunity to meet them and to share about us. And inevitably, there's a difference there that truly comes from... Maybe I'm biased, but I think it comes from the Midwest culture. And that represented through the people that work at Marianna Beauty. And when you take a sampling of people from, oh, let's just say a 50-mile radius of Omaha, it's pretty great people.

Sara Dreamer:

And so, when you take 394, I think is where we're at today, and put them together, it's pretty powerful. So, more than a mission of changing the world, one shampoo bottle at a time. I would say shampoo becomes a tool for all of us that work there to be our best us. And when I go out and represent the organization, it's a way for me to be proud of being from the Midwest, of being part of an unexpected element, like who would have thought that there's a savvy beauty company in Omaha. Hello, there is, and we're constantly hiring. So by all means, don't forget about us.

Sara Dreamer:

But I think a lot of people buzz by our facility on I-80 and probably wonder a little bit what it is. I always thought it said marine and I don't know if that's just my visual letters kind of smearing together sometimes. But for a long time I thought it said marine or I thought it was maybe a boat. I honestly didn't know at all what that business was, which is pretty prominent right there.

Lyn Wineman:

It really is. The building, you can see it right from the interstate, people drive by there all the time, multiple times a day.

Sara Dreamer:

Yes. And nobody would think it smells like sharp notes of bergamot inside or wonderful floral extracts that are permeating our business on a daily basis, like sometimes you can actually see like bubbles coming out of some of the vents and the pipes. And so, the relevance is awesome. But I guess, to go back to your question, Lyn, I think the biggest part of what Marianna is and what it isn't is we're a bunch of great people in an industry that is built upon products that we make. It's a family business. We're part of the livelihood. We make product that takes an indie brand, a new startup brand, and gives them hope and gets them purchased by L'Oreal, or whatever the journey might be. So, I love that through making shampoo, we make friends.

Lyn Wineman:

I like that.

Sara Dreamer:

We make brands successful. And at the end of the day, we end up and all of the people who are listening to this in your bathroom.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah.

Sara Dreamer:

So, again, it's a great tool. It's a great journey to making a difference. And I think, from my perspective, that's how I would summarize Marianna's impact to the city of Omaha, to the state of Nebraska, to the families that work for us. I think that's my best way of explaining it, Lyn.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah. I just had a moment. While you were sharing that story, I had a moment of just imagining what it must smell like in your office. I bet it's pretty amazing, isn't it? Because your favorite shampoos, I mean, part of the experiences is the smell of it.

Sara Dreamer:

Actually, it's still the number one decision making-

Lyn Wineman:

Is it? Wow.

Sara Dreamer:

Yes. It's like, who won? So, when we talk about clean beauty, that's evolved tremendously. And I'm sure that all of us have been more aware of products, whether we're told to or whether it's been marketed in a way that we need to. The awareness has shifted. The consumer demands have shifted. So, our industry, not too long ago, was dominated by the big guys. And whoever is listening has the big guys in their industry, too.

Lyn Wineman:

Absolutely.

Sara Dreamer:

For us, it's L'Oreal. And they dominated with product lines like Paul Mitchell and Redken. And we can think of these names that come to mind. And they used to be it.

Lyn Wineman:

It, yeah.

Sara Dreamer:

By a landslide. And today, that is so the opposite. They are now having to just acquire startup companies that have come out of nowhere. And what I love about what I get to do is I bridge the gap between a concept and idea and into a product that goes on shelf. So, the bridging of that gap today looks so different, because some of my customers are marketeers. Some of our customers, Lyn, are a lot like your organization where they do marketing for companies. And part of that is now becoming a portfolio of product through maybe founder brands.

Sara Dreamer:

So we've probably fallen in love with Kristin Ess at Target. Who hasn't? If you haven't, you should because she's a very famous stylist in California who's making products now for all of us to enjoy. And those are the changes that have disrupted and given opportunities in places where it's super fun but it's very different than it was before.

Lyn Wineman:

I love hearing that the playing field is evening out. I mean, I really do think all of the digital, the technology trends, the fact that indie and founder brands can have, they can have strong marketing,

they can have great branding themselves, they can have access to someone like Marianna that can really help them level up and compete with a mega brand like L'Oreal. So I love that you're doing that.

Lyn Wineman:

I mean, Sara, I love that your title is VP of Innovation and Growth. I mean, you must in that role have a huge opportunity to shape the future and product strategy. And so, we've talked a bit about clean beauty and industry disruptions. But I'm curious, what other new trends do you see coming online for the beauty industry?

Sara Dreamer:

Oh, wow. That's something that is what I like to say micro trends. And I think we grew up in a time when predictability... It was real. And I think, again, a lot of people can probably relate the day the voice of customer is personalized, a customer that was maybe defined. We have a society that is full of variations. And so for us to define a trend, it's like chasing ants. It's really difficult. I would say to you, well, Lyn, it depends on what you're wanting to reference. You what I mean?

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah.

Sara Dreamer:

It's not about the demographic. It's not about a portion of the country. It's not about household median income. It is about expression of oneself. And I think that those over the last several years, that has become without boundary. It's amazing. So for me, when we work with brands and when we develop strategies, now more than ever, it's important for us to really hone in on what are we trying to do here.

Sara Dreamer:

Because we don't get to get away with any product marketing anymore or even just growth in a sales strategy by saying we just want to increase sales, or we would like higher margin or whatever, the KPIs end up being that were challenged, how are we going to get there today is all about distribution channels. So, we think about should this be consumer direct? Is this something that could flourish on Amazon? Should this be something that we develop a... Do you remember when we call them landing pages? What do you guys even call them now? What are they called?

Lyn Wineman:

Oh, we call it campaign pages, jump pages, I mean, all kinds, still they have different meanings because you can see somebody go, "Oh, I'd like a landing page." And then before you know it, it's got five or six pages. It's a microsite. Or you've got one long page that has a full content on one page. So, it's hard to even know what to call them anymore. It's just whatever you need, we figure out how to develop it, right?

Sara Dreamer:

Right. And those might be more about the trends on the business side. So what does it mean for you and I as just consumers? Are you ready for this?

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah, let's hear it.

Sara Dreamer:

Perms, they're coming back.

Lyn Wineman:

No. Oh, my goodness. Sara, are you serious?

Sara Dreamer:

I hope nobody wrecked their car or fell out of their chair, because I don't think that the '80s bangs are coming back yet. But wouldn't that be fun? I do believe, though, this is what's happening. Yes, so we're calling it texture.

Lyn Wineman:

Texture.

Sara Dreamer:

People are trying to find unique ways to talk about it, but it's really about it's perm for people who don't have curly hair. Yeah, it's fascinating. It's at home beauty. I mean, we went through a whole DIY and we thought people wanted to make their own concoctions. And I think for a minute, people maybe thought that was cool. But I think for the most part, the only thing driving that is necessity, like if you have to. I mean, we've all been in a point where we tried to make a cake or something and we didn't have buttermilk, but we realized that if you put like vinegar or something in milk, you could make it.

Sara Dreamer:

So I think that all of us have had this moment of DIY in our lives, but I don't think it was ever sticky enough that the industry would say, "Hey Lyn, just go ahead and make your own shampoo. Put a booster in it." We're seeing brands like Function of Beauty, which was a site that you could put in your hair type, kind of your challenges and your aspirations, and they would send you your own custom bottle. So on your bottle of shampoo it would say Lyn's shampoo.

Lyn Wineman:

Wow.

Sara Dreamer:

The cool thing about that is a lot of it was marketing. Function of Beauty, don't be upset at me if you hear the podcast. But what that is it is achievable, meaning products that you use in your shower have to go through a lot of stability and technical review. So, it isn't just something we can just make. Just doing that, there's a lot of natural bacteria and things that get in products that aren't preserved the correct way.

Sara Dreamer:

So, I think it's one where as an industry we were like, well, maybe people don't actually want to do it themselves. But I think what we've done is bridge the gap between doing it all the way for them and just

giving them more choices. And so what we see today is consumers don't use a full line. You're used to be kind of committed like everything in your bathroom was blue

Lyn Wineman:

Oh, yes. I went through that phase.

Sara Dreamer:

Yeah, with blue and blue. And even inside, one of the clear bottles that have blue beads or something. So, I think that we all can relate to the time when we would buy into a brand and we would think this is the loyalty. My commitment to this is by buying all of them. And we would actively try something new that came out in those brands. That was great. Today, those very same brands are on the struggle bus, because their whole methodology was just add a new skew and somebody will buy that.

Sara Dreamer:

And now I would think that any of us on this listening would say, it's a shade of rainbow underneath your sink, I hope, because you shouldn't be committed to one. People aren't even using the same conditioner and shampoo together anymore. And I think it's because when the industry grew, we made so many choices. But just think through this. If you're a person that colors your hair, on packaging it'll say like chemically-treated hair. I think that's what we usually say. But what if you're also a person who has frizz? Well, there's a smoothing one probably right next to it. So do you buy the-

Lyn Wineman:

Yes. I've been there, where you stand. You stand there and you go, "I have all three of these problems." Should I buy all three and mix them together? What should I do here? Should I use them on alternating days? I've been there, Sara.

Sara Dreamer:

So ladies, on behalf of the entire industry, I'm sorry that happened to all of you. That is just how this industry blew up in blue. But what's great is we're figuring it out. And so what you're seeing is brands coming back in, going through the noise and being more specific, more intentful. So you're seeing treatments. And it's okay to fall in love with a shine spray from one and a mask from another. I would say don't feel bad. I think for a while, depending maybe on your age or maybe how you were introduced to haircare in your life, it's okay. It's okay. And brands might make you feel like you should but it's okay. The cool thing is that each product has a business... I mean, of course there's thousands and hundreds of thousands of selections just at Target. But yeah, feel free to shop. Shop around, mix it up.

Lyn Wineman:

I can hear in your voice that you love these products and this industry that you work with too. Sara, is it even fair to ask you, do you have some favorite products at Marianna that you use, or is that off limits?

Sara Dreamer:

It's not off limits but I can start just by saying just because they're my favorite products does not mean that we make them in Omaha. I don't have a contract that I have to love what we make, that I don't not love what we make because they're not great. But in my position, the luxury besides being my friends

who get to reap the rewards of a shampoo that I tried and I needed to pass it along, I use a lot of product. It's important for us to understand-

Lyn Wineman:

What's out there?

Sara Dreamer:

What's out there? In shampoo, the main cleansing component is a surfactant. Okay, surfactants have sulfates. How many people on this call say, "Oh, I was totally not supposed to use sulfate."

Lyn Wineman:

Right, yes.

Sara Dreamer:

It supposed to be sulfate-free shampoo.

Lyn Wineman:

Sulfates are bad if that's get in my brain. Yes.

Sara Dreamer:

Yeah. Is it? Well, that's a question that our chemists would challenge you. My point is this. So the variations of demand of the customer have created raw material changes that really do impact how products work. And so, innovation is not to find some unique mushroom extract that grows on the underside of a stone on Tuesdays and Wednesdays during the month of July in California. It's really about taking products and changing the way we apply them, changing the viscosity like how they feel in our hands, making a sprayable cream, like that's something that's like, wow, you can spray creams, yes, sort of thing. So, you asked me my favorites.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah.

Sara Dreamer:

Okay. So, my favorite shampoo right now is from Virtue Labs. Virtue labs, I believe, is still maybe only sold online. I might have to check to see but they may be available at Sephora and/or Ulta. I love them. So that's what I use for shampoo and conditioner. And I mix it up. So, don't stay to the same. Mix it up every month.

Lyn Wineman:

Well, I'm not going to be mixing it up, because I literally just cleared a whole counter at my stylist of my brand that I love. I have to start mixing it up after that.

Sara Dreamer:

After that. And it's because your hair, it's kind of like I've heard allergy medicine. And I'm not a pharmacist. I'm not stepping out of my technical lane here. But you're supposed to just switch up your allergy-

Lyn Wineman:

That makes sense, because you build a tolerance or-

Sara Dreamer:

Build a tolerance, exactly. So much like this, so is shampoo and conditioner. For sure at a mask in your regimen, a mask is put it on on a Saturday morning. Do your Saturday morning routine. Leave it on for 20 minutes, an hour, some people even sleep in it if your regimen is... For me, my morning coffee is actually my shower. So I tend to be the get up, have to shower. So, what I do then is put it on at night. And that way, when I get up in the morning and jump in the shower, I can hit my regular routine and carry on with my day.

Sara Dreamer:

So, add a mask. Most of the time you'll see them in a jar on the shelf like we as an industry have historically put masks in jars. And I'm not real sure that I love that in my shower. We're kind of graduating the tubes, so bear with us. That's just something that people did for a long time. So look for that. I have a favorite spray that becomes my "toner". Now, this is one that I can't share because it's actually not available on the market anymore. But I'm trying to get it commercialized.

Sara Dreamer:

One of our good friends at Neora, which used to be called... People may have a friend that sells it. Neora has a really great essence. I think they named it an essence, which would be very close. So I love that one as well. And then my hair is really fine and needs volume. So I make a concoction. So I put in a gel and a little bit of a serum. So serum is heavy for most people but it gives you that boost of shine and smoothness that is what we call now perfectly imperfect, which is-

Lyn Wineman:

Yes, I know exactly what you mean. Yeah.

Sara Dreamer:

And you talked about the Zoom calls. In their industry, trend reports came out like people are doing masks and it was because a mask is this like super deep conditioning that takes away some. It gives you this boost of shine and manageability and styleability. You'll love it. If you don't do it, do it. You'll love it. You'll understand why. It's like a conditioner on steroids. So that is easy add-on to your week that all of a sudden it makes you look like you've got your shit together. Sorry, pardon my French, but we are all trying to do that.

Sara Dreamer:

So Moroccan oil is kind of like the godfather of this. If you can get your hands on an itty-bitty jar of Moroccan oil, it will last your whole lifetime. But to just use that in your stylers just gives you this fabulous shine and smooth flyaways kind of look. So that's my trick for perfectly imperfect look. Yeah, and mix up your shampoo and conditioner.

Lyn Wineman:

Wow, cool. People who are listening won't be able to see you but your hair, definitely, you've nailed the perfectly imperfect, like it's awesome. It looks awesome on you. And I have a confession to make.

Sara Dreamer:

Okay.

Lyn Wineman:

I had a spiral perm. Anybody who's ever had a spiral perm, they were those tubes. And when I would have the spiral perm, they were so heavy that I literally would start crying because for a half an hour it's pulling my hair. And then when I met my husband, Neil, he's going to hate it, but we'll find out if he's listening or not if he comes and asks me about this. My husband Neil had a mullet perm when we met. So we met in the '80s and that was hot at the time. But a mullet perm, he no longer has the mullet perm. I can't see myself going back, but maybe if you call it texture, words matter, call it texturing, maybe, maybe, maybe.

Sara Dreamer:

Okay. Well, your husband is way on the trending path here, because what I didn't talk about was trends in men's haircare.

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah. Are mullets coming back?

Sara Dreamer:

Mullets are back.

Lyn Wineman:

No.

Sara Dreamer:

I don't know where my kids are grown, but wherever kids congregate these days, I don't know how they do it with all of the social things. But if you go to some type of event, whether you're seeing probably ages, I would say 6th graders to probably 10th graders are all about mullets right now. So, moms, if you're listening, I don't know what to say. Let's just not braid them. Remember when we would call braid them and they would call it a rat tail.

Lyn Wineman:

A rat tail.

Sara Dreamer:

I hoped that those don't come back but at the end of the day, truly, I don't know if Instagram does this. I don't know what outlet teaches these kiddos on haircare trends, but they're on point. Even in small Nebraska, it's crazy. It's fun. It'll grow back.

Lyn Wineman:

All right, everyone. You heard it here first, perms and mullets on their way back here is what we have to look forward to. So Sara, the beauty industry been around for thousand years, isn't going away anytime soon, constantly evolving to be eco-friendlier, more sustainable to be on top of the trends. Where do you see Marianna five years from now?

Sara Dreamer:

Oh, it's going to be on ride five years from now. We are growing and we are on the brink of pretty great growth. So, I believe when this airs, that'll be maybe easier to talk about. But what that means is taking our commercialization expertise, our commitment to each other into this industry, our experience of 54 years, and we're just going to keep growing. So, what that means is, in addition to Omaha, we're hoping to grow into other markets to where we have other facilities, leadership, including myself, we will be able to go and coach and grow other organizations.

Sara Dreamer:

What it means for our customers is going to be additional capabilities. So, perhaps we will someday, Lyn, be able to do aerosol, which I told you earlier we don't. It's a special facility. It needs cages. Everybody can imagine. It's flammable. So, with that comes manufacturing nightmares. But nonetheless, we're growing. And what we will continue to do is grow into other parts of the industry. So, we are haircare experts. I would say that's not all we make at our facility.

Sara Dreamer:

It's probably 80% of the types of products we make. The other 20 is shared by skincare and body. But what we're going to do is continue to grow into the other parts of the industry. So skincare, I am super excited about the opportunity to help innovate and develop products in that space, which has just been something we haven't done due to capabilities.

Sara Dreamer:

Look at your shampoo bottles and then look at your favorite moisturizer, it doesn't take a packaging engineer to see that the differences of billing them obviously require a very different machine. So, what we'll do on our end is continue to grow and consolidate in a way that some of the smaller guys that pioneer through this industry like we did, we'll be able to have them join our mission and continue growing the way we know how to grow with them through other companies. And I think that's the most exciting part.

Sara Dreamer:

We oftentimes say we're just getting started. And there's not a lot of times when you pause and say that. I'd say that in my life, I'm 44 years old and I'm just getting started. I think it's something that we all have to just give ourselves that opportunity to hit the reset button. And it's not to start over, it's to get started. And I think that's in a lot of ways we all can relate to that personally. But as far as Marianna's future, I would say that we're just getting started. And that's terribly fun to think about, kind of stressful to think about to be honest. But really, it's one that I think a lot of companies that are in a growth mode right now, that's the way of the future is to take what you do best and we call it, we're going to bottle it up, develop our skills and our processes and our expertise and our passion and we're going to to keep growing the business.

Lyn Wineman:

Sara, that sounds really exciting. And I'm going to be watching for the news on your new developments at Marianna. Very exciting, I can completely see how your expertise in sales, marketing, distribution, and the beauty industry and your culture will all come together and make you a success as you expand. And you personally, your background is so impressive. And I am sure young people can look to you as a leader in the industry. What advice would you have to young professionals wanting to be where you are one day?

Sara Dreamer:

Well, that's really a profound question. I would say the best advice that I've ever gotten was to be okay with my strengths. And I know that might sound crazy to be okay with your strengths. To be okay with your strengths means that you embrace them, you don't define them. Even our strengths should not be something that we've defined. It shouldn't be. When you are okay with them, you forget a lot about your weaknesses. I had to grow up in this industry by being me, by being willing to be me, by being my best me at the time. And with each and every day we all get a little bit better, we hope anyway.

Sara Dreamer:

So being your best you right now, it's okay. And I'm going to be honest. With a lot of male counterparts, I work in an industry that you would think is flooded with women. It isn't. The inner workings of the industry is very male dominant. And I think that's one where there's oftentimes additional challenges that come with being okay with your strengths as women.

Sara Dreamer:

I think that's one where at home, it can't be defined if your full-time job is being a mom. Where would we begin? Where would we begin? Like you're a badass laundry folder or you're last minute pulling meals together, you know how to hide dust underneath your rug when a neighbor shows up unexpectedly? There's a lot of strikes that we have, but they shouldn't be defined.

Sara Dreamer:

And I think that gallop has a great way of telling you in ways that this is who you are and go with it. So, I've always done that. And that's put me on a forklift. I ran a warehouse where I literally sell dog food. I mean, you guys, I sold Cutco knives, I sold rabbit food. I was in Japan with another six-foot tall female. And imagine, two six-foot tall females, and we're supposed to wear black trench coats. And so we did. And it was crazy, but those are all things that matter. And do it and embrace what it is and don't feel what you're doing right now is wrong. It is what you need to do right now.

Sara Dreamer:

And I think that sacrifices and maybe changes in workplaces or maybe you just can't stand a boss or you got let go because of some way or another, be okay with where you're at right now because being okay with where you're at now will put you where you need to go next. My grandmother was pretty wise. She was a woman that grew up on a farm. And so, her job was to centrally get some things done to it. My father and my grandfather and the family. And so she did her duties quietly. And in any little chances I would get, I think what I brought out in her was the little spark that she always had to keep hidden.

Sara Dreamer:

And so, that inspired me to say, you know what, this is who I am. I can get criticized for the way I say something or the way I do things and what I know and what I don't, and you just kind of have to not care, because learning is very different than not taking criticism. And I believe all of us need to continue to learn. But taking criticism doesn't mean that that's your way of learning. And I think that sometimes that's confused. So, I would say to anybody out there, just be you, be your best you and be okay with that being enough for right now.

Lyn Wineman:

Such sage advice. That's amazing. Amazing. So Sara, we all know leaders are learners. And you've talked about learning along the way. Do you have any favorite books, blogs, or podcasts that you can recommend to others?

Sara Dreamer:

Confession, I don't spend enough time on that. That is on my list of things that I want to focus more on. I spend my time on blogs, learning about different things in the beauty industry, which is addictive, let's be honest. But it also is part of my job. I grew up in a company that Good to Great was... I know there's been so many well-written books since then that articulate things a different way. I still love that.

Sara Dreamer:

My favorite part of that is the hedgehog concept. And I know that in the book, it's written as a business strategy of like what is your company good at. That to me is part of when I said own who you are, that's my personal hedgehog. I forced my hedgehog concept on myself. So, is it a part of a business? Yes. But what I love about Good to Great is that part, I took personally and I use that as a personal tool.

Sara Dreamer:

Although it's written as a business tool, I think it's definitely change perspective and take a peek. I don't remember the page, the chapter, what it is, but it's very profound. Just Google hedgehog concept, Good to Great, and you will see probably a little diagram with a circle in it. Read it and translate all of those things to you and your life and parts of your life that you're trying to balance.

Sara Dreamer:

But I think if that's my favorite, it was profound for the business when I was there, it showed us how to be our best company at the time. So I had success from business from that book and, again, had never let that go. And so I think that's something I held on to. So, maybe not a podcast, maybe not a blog, and maybe not a current book that anybody is like seeing pop-up on your Amazon read, it's just one that I feel like is near and dear to me. And it's been a pretty good staple.

Lyn Wineman:

Such a great classic. Thank you for bringing that up. Great Jim Collins book. And I'm transformational. So Sara, another question I have for you. This is one of my favorite questions. I love to hear what leaders have to say. I'm inspired by quotes and I'm wondering if you could give us a few of your own Sara Dreamer words of wisdom that we can take back and keep.

Sara Dreamer:

Okay, Lyn. So, you guys on this call can't see me, but you can-

Lyn Wineman:

I can see you.

Sara Dreamer:

I'm going to look up and I'm going to read what's above my desk, as it is one of my ultimate favorite dig into the core of who I am, kind of explain Sara Dreamer better than I've ever seen anybody articulate.

Lyn Wineman:

Fantastic.

Sara Dreamer:

Here's how it goes. Are you ready?

Lyn Wineman:

Yup.

Sara Dreamer:

Here's to the crazy ones, the misfits, the rebels, the troublemakers, the round pegs in the square holes, the ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules and they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them, about the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things, they push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we should see them as genius, because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones that do.

Lyn Wineman:

And I'm going to tell everyone you did look up and read that, except for the whole last phrase you did by memory. And how perfect that your last name is Dreamer, and that is about the crazy ones and the dreamers and the people who believe they can change the world. I believe, Sara Dreamer, that you can change the world. I love your energy. So, for our listeners who want to learn more about Marianna, and maybe you mentioned you're going to have open positions, you're going to have some news coming up, where can they go to find you?

Sara Dreamer:

Mariannabeauty.com. But by all means, I would love to meet anybody on here through LinkedIn. I know that sometimes connecting with people who you see pop up or a network suggestion, I feel like right now I would love to know more of the listeners. I'd love to get to know more professionals and business advocates and whomever listens to your podcasts when I rooted here and love all of the people that I have interacted with. And as we said earlier, you and I have crossed paths in the past-

Lyn Wineman:

So many times.

Sara Dreamer:

Yes. And so, I love that. That's part of all of the things that maybe matter most about what we do is the people we get to do it with. So, I would love for people to reach out on LinkedIn.

Lyn Wineman:

All right. Everyone, find Sara Dreamer on LinkedIn. You'll see the spelling of her name in the show notes and also the spelling of Marianna which has two Ns, Marianna with two Ns, when you go to that website. So Sara, as we wrap up our time together today, which has been so much fun, I've really loved this conversation, what is the most important thing that you would like people to remember about the work that you're doing?

Sara Dreamer:

The next time you use your next favorite beauty product, pause for a moment and think about the fact that there's a pretty good chance that could have been made in Omaha, Nebraska.

Lyn Wineman:

Wow.

Sara Dreamer:

Who would have thought, right?

Lyn Wineman:

Yeah.

Sara Dreamer:

That's exciting from just the possibilities and businesses out there that we just don't know what they do, this little secret is something that I owe. For those that listen, it'll resonate to you when you're in a store, again, using your own favorite products. But just think people in Omaha are doing that. And that's pretty great.

Lyn Wineman:

That is cool. You kind of think Paris, Milan, New York, LA, Dallas as being beauty hubs. But Omaha, Omaha as a beauty hub, that is fantastic. Sara, I have really loved hearing about your journey, chatting with you, talking about the industry and the cool things that are going on at Marianna. Thank you so much for joining me today on the podcast.

Sara Dreamer:

Thank you, Lyn. It's been great. Appreciate it.

Announcer:

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