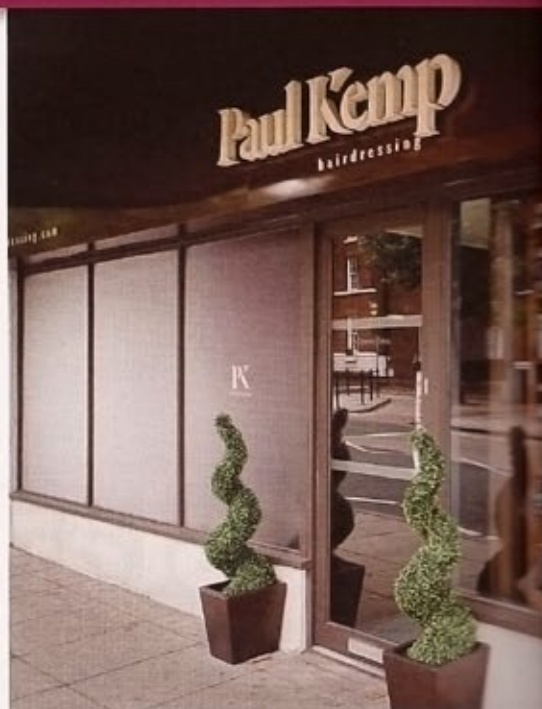




L-r: Paul Kemp and Adam Carter



Jakata interior



Paul Kemp interior

SECOND BASE

Why did award-winning salon owner Adam Carter opt to open a second salon in the same town?

Matthew Batham finds out

It sounds like commercial suicide – open a second salon in the same town where you already have a successful salon business. But this is exactly what Adam Carter, owner of award-winning Jakata in Warrington, Cheshire, did – and it's a decision that is already paying off.

Says Adam: "It made sense. We looked at various options and ways of expanding and decided that a second branch was the answer. We clearly had enough demand."

The new salon is markedly different to the existing business – for a start it's not called Jakata, it's named after Paul Kemp – a top stylist with Jakata, who owns a share of the business. The aim, says Adam, is to offer a premium hairdressing brand to appeal to the wider Warrington client base – thereby avoiding the dreaded prospect of cannibalisation of the existing salon.

Adam certainly has plenty of experience to call on when making such key commercial decisions. He opened Jakata with his then wife in 2003, following several years working as a successful stylist within a town centre salon.

Natural career progression

"Jakata was a year in the planning," says Adam. "I read every business start-up manual available and surfed hundreds of online articles. For me, it seemed like a natural career progression – it was an opportunity to push and challenge myself and widen my skills in a range of new areas."

Adam had a clear vision of the type of site he wanted for his salon. "My start-up budget was extremely limited; we didn't want to take on too much debt to keep our risks minimal. We wanted a town

centre location but with low rent and rates. Most decent-sized ground floor premises were outside our budget, but we discovered a first and second floor premises with loads of space – and it was an existing salon so it didn't need too much work to get it up and running. It was just what we were looking for – and the rent was really low too."

Because Adam had done his homework, getting the business up and running was a trauma-free process. He also had a clear idea of what he wanted to offer with the new venture.

"We were specific about every aspect of the service and the client experience. We ensured our marketing materials looked completely different to the competition – I wanted to avoid generic hair images, for example. I always said I wouldn't use hair images until we could produce our own work. We used every avenue available to us to promote the brand – local paper advertising, text messages, email shots, mail shots and a website."

"Our main aim was to deliver a message that differentiated Jakata from the competition. We were the only salon in the town to offer hair and beauty which was a goal from the offset, although it was probably too personal, yet it was also what made it unique. Over the years it's evolved, which is probably down to the influence of the rest of the team and their clients."

Adam admits that being a salon owner has had its fair share of ups and downs: "Running a business is like being on a roller coaster; there are so many highs and a fair few lows. The high points for

me are when I achieve a goal; I take a look around at a salon bursting at the seams with people or see my images published in magazines and think: 'I made this happen'. Obviously, I couldn't do it without the help from some amazing people, but I instigated it."

Business model

Says Adam: "It made sense for Paul to run the new salon, he's a busy stylist with experience in managing – I knew that his target market was different to Jakata's so we built the brand around those ideas. I wanted Paul to take creative control of the start up so it was exactly how he wanted it."

While Paul has taken the reins, Adam has played a major part in developing the new business.

"We've used the same business model, structure and systems that Jakata uses and stamped the new brand on it," he says. "Paul's ideas and direction create a unique feel to the salon and it will develop in a different way. As time goes on he'll gain an in-depth understanding of the inner workings and really make his mark."

Adam has definite goals for the newly expanded business.

"I want both salons to be maximized within the next two years. I'd definitely like to take Jakata into a different location and I'm sure Paul will want to open another branch too when that takes off. Once things have come into balance and we've got everything running like clockwork I'm going to start planning my next venture." **21**