Welcome to Episode 48 of the restaurant Brasserie formula. I've been coaching restaurant owners since 2003. And the restaurant prosperity formula is based on what the most successful restaurant owners I've worked with do on a daily basis to achieve their success. The basic premise of the formula centers around achieving prosperity, freedom of your restaurant and the financial freedom you deserve to achieve prosperity or follow a very specific formula made up of leadership and systems training, accountability and taking action. Today's topic centered around the story of one restaurant owner who changed his life for the better through learning to tie all of his systems together, but more importantly, that by adding management, he was able to get his life back and still make the money he deserved. Now I want to tell you about our guest today, magic it's owner of Ben Franklin's Taproom grill in New Castle, Pennsylvania, met his dad and brothers opened a convenience store about six years ago with a small amount of food but due to the state of Pennsylvania, changing some of the laws and resulting in a lot of competition. It was created almost overnight, so they decided to go full service restaurant, go for the business side being the restaurant instead of convenience. After spending about two three years running through not knowing what to do, Matt started on a path to make real change in his business to take control. Listen, and as he shares with us the incredible changes he made, how we got his life back. But first, a word from our sponsor. This episode has been brought to you by BP returns if you're a restaurant owner of a medium to high volume, independent restaurant, multi unit or franchise operator and you're looking for a proven and realistic solution to attract, grow and retain customers. Then you need to visit repeat returns. Repeat returns is a modern marketing platform created by a restaurant owner for restaurant owners. It studies each customer's habits and patterns and predicts the most profitable outcome for your restaurant every single day and employs a marketing to make that a habit. You'll never lose the finger to see if repeat returns is right for you visit repeat returns.com forward slash DSP. Man, I'm so excited to have you and I really appreciate you joining me today.

I'm happy to be here.

Excellent. Well, you are really somebody who's kicked some ass on my program. You have made huge change. You had systems. We'll talk about that. And how to tie things together and really make you change. And I joked with you as you went to the program that you don't want to follow the program. You did lots of extra stuff. You went ahead. So do me a favor. Before we get started. Tell people about your restaurant a little bit about your partnership with family and kind of paint a picture.

Yeah, so we opened our restaurants I'm partners with my dad and then I have two brothers involved. And we opened approximately six years ago, we actually started out as more of a convenience store six pack shop with a small food menu. And I'm in Pennsylvania they changed some of the state laws and it created a lot more competition for us so we decided to go full fledge restaurant. And with that we had no idea what we were getting into as far as running a full restaurant. And so after about two to three years of muddling through the month, we decided to start actually looking into research on how to actually run a restaurant correctly. And that leads us to where we are today about a year later after starting that process.

So talk a little bit about what what some of your challenges were as you started that process. Like what what was it you were looking to fix what was keeping you up at night?

So our biggest problem is we were there every day we were working every day. I have a full time job as a physical therapist on top of the restaurant. My dad runs a heating and air conditioning business on top of the restaurant. So we were we were looking for more of a freedom from the restaurant so that we can still continue to have lives outside of our multiple jobs we have going on. So that's what started the search. And that's what allowed us to get to where we are today.

We'll talk a little bit about your in the process. You added certain things from our 365 and other programs. Talk about that that progression of you're on a journey to try and create the life you want not just the business that makes money but really have some time for yourself and for your young family. What was that process? How did you how did you flow through adding

December January to late 2020, early 20.1 Some website called restaurant under.com Found some systems on there started implementing some of them, but it was kind of sporadic I didn't have the main gear to get all the systems turning at once. So with restaurant underdog calm I heard of restaurant 365 for accounting and software purposes. So I started that process building out the restaurant 365 system back in February through April 2021. And then was that along the way, I ended up sort of listening to a couple different podcasts. I heard Matt last podcast, he's our marketing guy and then Eric categories podcast, and I kept hearing your name pop up. David Scott Peters, you got to talk to him and when we finally signed up with Matt flaps marketing team, he actually sent us your book as a free signup gift for signing up for his program. And when I read it, I read it cover to cover in about a day and a half because I knew I was missing something or lives were getting a little bit easier, a little bit easier. But it wasn't quite there yet to where I feel like we could say hey, we finally made it. So I read the book cover to cover I fell in love with it and then I signed up with you guys. And I think it was September 2001.

So you really you really went on the right path. I mean Jim and joe@restaurant.com Top Notch guys, great site, huge amounts of information that often we joke with him every now and then I talked with him about how they have so much information that the challenge is if you don't know what you're looking for, you may not find it but it's all there and I always talk to people say you're kind of silly not to belong to restaurant.com. And even Jim's been doing this for probably about five years longer night. I've been I've been doing it for almost 20 years. So great site, then you find your way two or 365. And the software is nothing wrong with jumping into software, but it's not a magic pill. You know, it takes work to set up and it's just a kind of a tool. But if you don't know what numbers you need to grab or you're not getting the right numbers and it doesn't always give you what you need. Marketing is always a great thing because we always want increased sales. But the key is can we make the amount of money we deserve on those sales coming in. So it's really interesting to see your progression. It was a path to success. You know, we talked about in our group much about the fixed mindset versus growth mindset. Fixed Mindset people say there's a problem from me this is the car has been dealt with was a government's fault it was my vendors fault my employees, my customers, whereas somebody with a growth mindset has the same challenges but man I cannot learn it. I cannot think I cannot spend it I cannot wait like you will find a way to make it work and that's what I loved about working with you is there was never there's never This is as good as it gets kind of attitude is always like there's another way so I appreciate when you grabbed the book and said I read it to cover to cover in a day and a half or whatever. Because that is really the program. It's the step by step. So what was the difference when reading the book and saying, you know, I need to sign up with David and work with his program and what we're doing.

The book was good. I just wanted the guidance to just get me there. I mean, I was already working on restructuring our business for eight months at this point and I was just overwhelmed with how much work actually needed done and I needed the structure to tell me you need to do this now. And then you need to do this next and then just continuing to move on. The book gets you going that way. But I just said you know what, I'm going all in. I believe that you can help me do this. And that's what made me want to sign up and then also after I met with you in the introductory call, you spoke about an implementer and needing an implementer and I thought that was a great idea to have one. So that also helped me persuade persuade me to sign up for the class because it helped me learn to delegate to other people.

So let's talk about that process. Because you know, I joke about it. I said great work. The fact of matter is you already created a bunch of work, you already started the motion, maybe not necessarily getting the benefits, all the work it was going in, but you were primarily the guy doing everything. Is that correct? That's a fair statement. Correct. So now you're working a full time job as a physical therapist, you're coming in running your family business and it's a full time job and taking things over as far as trying to restructure the business to operate more like a business. You know, as you tell your story as you go from packaged goods to full service restaurant I mean that's that's kind of a strange if you will path for most people you know they think restaurant going into it and you kind of got it euro yen which meant more headaches gain, more challenges, more systems, more everything. So now you decide to come with me because you read the book you say, Okay, I'm gonna paraphrase here you tell me if I'm right or wrong. It's you know, you could do this on your own but you technically by speed and the accountability part that kind of makes the journey go a little faster. Would that be accurate? Correct? Yes. So now talk about in our discovery call, I tell people I said you've got to have an employer, somebody who gets shit done, that you cannot as an owner do all the work wasn't right about that. Not just that you need an implementer but then it can be too overwhelming as a restaurant owner when your job is to work on budgets, marketing, leading the team, developing your managers holding you accountable moving forward. Am I incorrect to say that you don't need to do all the little systems you need to make sure they're getting done?

Yeah, that's, that's correct. So Brandon was our implementer. He's our General Manager. And, you know, I had to start passing it off to him and once I got through that initial hurdle of trusting him to get it done, it became easier and easier to do. And he stepped up. He's an awesome person, awesome manager and you definitely need that extra person to help you because they could very easily get very overwhelming to do it on your own. And then you end up actually probably hurting yourself more because you don't delegate and it limits you on what you can actually get done to continue to grow in your restaurant.

So what were some of your first changes you made? Like, again, I want to make sure everybody understands you were already on a systems journey. Like it wasn't you're coming from zero to sit and go into 60. overnight. You already started down the path. But what were some of the first things that you worked on and said, Man, this is this is what's necessary because again, we joke a joke earlier, you kind of veered outside the programs that I need to get these other things done, and I was a little concerned because it was taking on more work.

What were some of the things some of the things we started with. I know I don't know why I started I started the Prime Vendor first. So I got I signed up with us foods to be our Prime Vendor instead of going through four or five different vendors. We ended up going through USPS and curtsy and then after that I got that done. We started an inventory process so shelf the sheet inventory I went through our entire restaurant, changing all the shelves around organizing everything labeling everything. And this way the shelves were organized so we can then do an accurate weekly food inventory and also liquor and beverage as well. So that was the next step in the process along with creating restaurants 365 So we could do the weekly inventory for the software side of things. After that is whenever we had no manager so I had to take Brandon who was our kitchen manager at the time. But he didn't have the title. He was our guy who created our specials. Basically, he ran the we were doing some catering at the time as well. So he ran that but I asked him, Hey, you want to be the general manager? I knew we needed to restructure our management team. So he said sure, I'll do it. He signed up to be general manager. And then we promoted Steve's to be our kitchen manager. And then we hired out for our front house manager because nobody wanted to step up for that position.

Let me ask a question on the management side real fast, and I was sorry to interrupt you. But you went from zero managers, you were doing everything. And now you would do a full management team that affect your constant negatively. No, I mean, your labor costs. Danny, you're saying the same didn't I mean you were you basically told this extra money for nine employees and moved it right into managers who could control costs and use your system? That's kind of the point I'm gonna bring in is like, I don't want to brush that aside. Yeah, we have no managers and then we decide to bring him in. Then we add another like you just added three, four people to your manager team from zero and you're making the same or better money by having managers in place. That's a reasonable statement. Yes. Correct. Yeah. Okay. Sorry. To get back on your path, but I just didn't want to let that go. Yeah, did not affect our prime costs. We restructured how we ran the business and reallocated labor so that we weren't adding a ton of labor to the to our to our expenses. Yes. So what was that next piece? So you got your managers and what was maybe one more thing that you went implemented right

away? We started working on menuing a little bit, but I didn't understand that fully. I've never done a menu design. We started that more So week one when I start with you guys. So up until that point, I can't remember everything because so many changes over the last year and a half to think about off the top my head right now. It's it's pretty mind boggling,

significant things put in place because again, in the program, we don't get into shops. Eat inventory, gonna get your recipe cards, when you get into menu engineering, we don't get into all those things that are so important we do when we get to the budget process for many, but like you said, we started on week one because you were already excited about systems you had been implementing. And you already had software in place. We just needed to use it. So now what were some of your unexpected changes, like you got benefit of a full management team in place? What would that mean to you?

That was huge. So the management team was probably the biggest one expect to change, especially the implementer portion of that. Brandon stepped up huge hearing a lot about restaurants but the more we went through your your course in your training program, it made him such an even better manager because he understood the numbers more he understood what needed to get done. And that alone took off so much work off my shoulders because he was able to do it and step up to the challenge. And he took it over now he does all of it. He's one of my friends. He's kick ass. You know, he knows how to do it now but I might not have been able to show him the way to do it like the court the class.

So now what about the benefits of the group coaching calls? So he was an owner? What was the benefit to you and what was a benefit to him as your implementer and now who became your general manager was was that something unexpected to that group camaraderie and how we help each other?

Yeah, that was nice, too. It's nice to bounce ideas off of each other. It's nice to know that other people are going through the same situation you are as far as difficulties in your restaurant. Were positive in your restaurant. And it was just nice to know you had that group to fall back on with any concerns or questions or opinions you might want from them in regards to your restaurant, how you should move forward on different aspects. And it was really, really helpful. That was that was also another part of the class.

So talk to me a little about what is life look like? Now, again, I don't want to make people think that we change your life before it's financially for all intents purposes, your prank call stayed about the same. The difference being is you added a full management team which meant you trimmed other fat from them from the Prime customer food costs to labor cost dollars, were able to funnel those into management but having a full management team in place now. Going from working your full time job and full time every day in the restaurant. What it's likely for you now.

A lot better. So I am able to have fun with my family. I'm able to relax more. I don't have to go in every single day like I used to if I wanted to, I could take a couple days off without having to worry about it as much as I did prior because I know Brandon Steve or Ricky Joe's running the place right? I'm spending a lot less time in the business. I'm now working on the business to grow it. So those are always has helped me I'd say that the biggest improvement is time to grow it like I want to instead of working in IT working on the shifts, you know, working as an expo or a dishwasher filling in or even flooding as a manager I have time to work on the marketing aspect, the Facebook, Instagram that sort of thing. So it helps I'm one of those people that can't just take time off. I have to continue to work and grow. So I reallocated the time to progress more than working in the business.

Well, it's much better instead of working if if you don't have a job to save $15 An hour you're working strategically on your business and really, especially in a time where we've got the cost they're going out of control. We've got labor costs have gone up we got the great resignation. You're in a small town, but none of these things have affected you to a point where you're frozen or blaming anybody you are still growing, you are still operating and you have a life. I think that's pretty amazing. And that goes to is a testament to the leader you become for your business. You already were driven, but you had like it's almost as if all you needed was being pointed in my direction and a little nudge.

Yes, exactly. And it not only affected my time but also random or general manager. He was working 65 hours a week for us. He was doing that for two years just to help us get along and now he's down to 45 hours a week, and he couldn't be happier. And that's what really makes me happy. Is it also not only benefit in our life, but also benefit.

That's fantastic. Is there anything that you could tell them who's looking at program right now? What would you tell them and say don't do it. When like, what would you tell them? I would say you'd be crazy not to sign up. But you have to be willing to do the work because if only word is put into it, that's what it is like great work and there's there's no matter how good the program is. There's a lot and that changing company culture is very difficult and it's again why I'm so thrilled to have you one thing is that culture change your business never had a negative. You always presented in a way that you got volume, which we really talked about. How did that help the relationship your dad and brothers in the business making these kinds of changes because the big deal

we would always get arguments just as we're going out and working too much. And now it's the exact opposite. You can hang out without having to talk about where you can join your family especially as a family business. anybody listening? We always get arguments you're ever working on this, this class structure that we're all gonna follow so there wasn't as many organizers there could have been if I was just making them up out of thin air. But now we're we're family you know, we're we're hanging out we're not talking about we're running out. It's much better.

That's good to hear and you got the one at home. So we need the home and family. Is there anything else I can share with people?

Anything before we go, just keep pushing on? I mean, if you listen to this, you'll get through it and the restaurant industry, some of the toughest businesses working. But if you continue to put systems in place to all fall into a puzzle, it's already got the other it's just been one at a time. That's my that's my information for anybody. Even Horace Mann is the endorsement match. So thank you again for taking the time to share your story today.

I look forward to working with you and thank you thank you for taking time to catch up. Before you go

into the actual systems and training feature by countability you're on your way to freedom prosperity for you in the restaurant. Please leave a review on Apple podcast Spotify or wherever you need everything from speaking specifically to read the reviews and hearing how this opinion has been it does wonders. If you find any discussion helpful share them with friends who have access to them who can really cause an injury and promote references we can protect with David Scott Peters, gotta be passionate about what you're gonna be persistent, but more importantly, get out there and kick some ass.