

NEW DIRECTIONS

# Our businesses are driven by improvement movements

Three entrepreneurs tell Savanna Douglas how they've tapped into trends that help better people's lives or the environment

**'The clean beauty movement is picking up, with more people questioning what they're actually putting on their skin'**



**DANIELLA SHAPIRO, from Joburg North, set up beauty brand The Oolala Collection, selling a unisex range of animal-cruelty-free, vegan skincare products that tap into the clean skincare movement.**

**+ THE IDEA** I'd become increasingly frustrated with having to fork out so much money for beauty and personal-care products. I started to question *what* I was actually putting on my skin, and why I was paying so much for it. Researching it, I came across the clean beauty movement, which highlights the fact that, without any regulation, many beauty brands have been completely free to use ingredients, like parabens and BHA, that are

known to be harmful to our health or irritating to our skin. Some brands even market the resultant products as 'natural' or 'green'. In a nutshell, what was being advertised on the packaging wasn't always being delivered on in the bottle. The pillar of clean beauty is transparency; it's about championing products that only use safe, non-toxic ingredients, both natural and man-made, that have been scientifically proven to work. This was something I could really get behind. But ingredients weren't my only concern; I realised that many brands were testing on animals, and using unnecessary product packaging, which, more often than not, wasn't reusable or recyclable. I felt strongly that a new-age beauty brand had to step up, offering clean ingredients in products not tested on animals and in packaging that wouldn't be damaging to the environment. It seemed like a tall order, but I felt so passionate about this that I decided to put my money where my mouth was. I had to fill this gap in the beauty market, so with profits I'd brought in running my own marketing company, DaniellaShapiro.com, I set out to do exactly that and so, The Oolala Collection was born.

**+ GETTING STARTED** My goal was to create an affordable, effective range of unisex skincare products containing clean ingredients, which wouldn't be tested on animals or contain any animal by-products. I worked closely with a pharmacist and it was a long, intense process, but after five years of research and product development, we had 45 different skincare products ready for market, ranging from colloidal silt to ultra mud masks, anti-blemish corrector and eye serum. During those years, I was still running my marketing company, while also juggling tasks for The Oolala Collection, like having our recyclable and reusable packaging made, working on our branding, as well as our business and marketing plans, which is my area of expertise. With everything in place, we were finally ready to launch the newly built e-commerce site for >>



**Daniella, who's passionate about animals, created a clean beauty brand that's against animal testing**



of trial and error around timelines and you quickly learn to suss out where you can be doing something better or where you could be starting earlier to improve on product delivery, so clients get what they've paid for within the time frames you've guaranteed.

**+ WHERE WE ARE TODAY** I'm so proud of what we've achieved with The Oolala Collection. Our sales have continued to increase (we're now up to about 250 products every month), so we're doing our part in promoting more conscious consumption within the clean beauty revolution. Our team has grown to 23 passionate people, all working towards the same goal, and I'm happy to report that our products have been really well-received, with our anti-ageing moisturising serum and our targeted pigmentation corrector being the most popular buys. Through continued research and product development, I'm excited to see what the future holds!

**TIP** It takes hard work, patience and unwavering passion to achieve success.

**BUSINESS IN FIGURES**

- Launched: December 2017**
- Turnover: 20% up, month on month**
- Website: oolalacollection.com**
- Total start-up costs: R245 000**
- Comprising...**
- Stock: R150 000**
- Packaging: R70 000**
- Website development: R25 000**

The Oolala Collection in December 2017. I created a buzz through social media, which was the ideal channel as people could engage with us, posting feedback. The open communication between the brand and our customers has really helped to cement a solid, trustworthy reputation for The Oolala Collection.

**+ HIGH POINT** One of the many reasons I started The Oolala Collection was to do my bit in raising awareness about cruel animal testing in the beauty industry and to give customers the opportunity to support a brand that's totally against this barbaric practice. I'm really passionate about animals

and felt I could do even more, so we started a campaign called #IGiveAnF, where customers can help us make a tangible difference to animals in need at two shelters, Hellen – Working in the Community, and Woodrock Animal Rescue. Every time that a purchase is made on our website, a portion of the proceeds go to feeding the animals at these shelters. We only started the campaign four months ago and, to date, we've already been able to supply three tonnes of food, which is fantastic.

**+ CHALLENGE** Meeting manufacturing deadlines has been a hurdle. When you're new to the process, there's a lot