

CORNER OF
FIFTH

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BEAUTY'S BIG CLEANSE

Trends Shaping a Sustainable and Personalized Industry

A REPORT BY THE RESEARCH TEAM AT CORNER OF FIFTH

THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY is experiencing a significant transformation, driven by a growing consumer demand for sustainable and ethical practices alongside personalized and effective solutions. This report, developed by the research team at Corner of Fifth, delves into five key trends shaping the future of beauty:

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COVER + THIS PAGE PHOTOS: ADOBE STOCK

Sustainable Beauty: A Growing and Maturing Trend

What is Sustainable Beauty?

Sustainable beauty is a movement that prioritizes environmentally friendly and ethical practices throughout the entire product lifecycle. This includes sourcing sustainable ingredients, minimizing waste, reducing carbon emissions, and ensuring fair labor practices.

The history of sustainable beauty traces back to the environmental and natural health movements of the 1970s. Pioneering companies, such as [The Body Shop](#) founded by Anita Roddick in 1976, began advocating for natural ingredients in beauty products and against animal testing. This period marked the first significant shift towards more responsible beauty products, emphasizing ingredients that were not only safe for consumers but also ethically sourced.

In the 1980s and 1990s, increased environmental awareness led to more emphasis on eco-friendly packaging and sustainably sourced ingredients. The concept of cruelty-free products gained momentum, supported by the growing animal rights movement. Brands such as [Aveda](#), founded in 1978 by Horst Rechelbacher, were pivotal in incorporating sustainability into their business models, focusing on holistic environmental responsibility, from sourcing ingredients to manufacturing processes.

The introduction of green chemistry principles in the 2000s marked a noteworthy advancement in

sustainable beauty. Companies began reformulating products to exclude harmful chemicals and incorporate biodegradable ingredients. The focus also expanded to sustainable packaging, reducing plastic use and increasing the use of recycled materials. The rising popularity of certifications like Ecocert (founded in France in 2002) helped guide consumers towards verified sustainable products.

Key Principles of Sustainable Beauty Today Include:

Sustainable Sourcing: Using responsibly sourced ingredients, often from organic or fair-trade suppliers.

Minimalistic Formulation: Creating products with fewer, more effective ingredients to reduce waste and environmental impact.

Eco-Friendly Packaging: Utilizing recyclable, biodegradable, or refillable packaging.

Carbon Footprint Reduction: Minimizing the carbon footprint of production and transportation.

PHOTO: ADOBE STOCK



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Why Consumers Demand Sustainable Beauty

Consumers are increasingly aware of the environmental and social impact of their choices. They seek products that align with their values and contribute to a more sustainable future.

Key reasons for the growing demand for sustainable beauty today include:

Environmental Concerns: Consumers are worried about climate change, pollution, and resource depletion.

Ethical Considerations: They want to support brands that treat workers fairly and avoid animal cruelty.

Health and Wellness: Many believe that natural and organic ingredients are better for their health.

Transparency: Consumers desire transparency in product sourcing and manufacturing processes.

Key Trends Shaping the Future of Sustainable Beauty:

Clean and Green Ingredients: Consumers are increasingly seeking products formulated with natural and organic ingredients sourced responsibly. Brands are focusing on ingredients with minimal environmental impact and known safety profiles.

Biotechnology and Innovation: Advancements in biotechnology are enabling the development of innovative, sustainable ingredients derived from renewable sources. These ingredients often offer superior performance and environmental benefits.

Circular Economy and Eco-Friendly Packaging: The beauty industry is embracing circular economy principles, prioritizing reusable, recyclable, and biodegradable packaging materials. Brands are also investing in refill programs and sustainable packaging designs.

Transparency and Traceability: Consumers are demanding transparency from brands regarding ingredient sourcing, manufacturing processes, and environmental impact. Brands are responding by providing detailed information about their products and supply chains.

Ethical Sourcing and Fair Trade: Ethical sourcing of ingredients and fair labor practices are becoming increasingly important for consumers. Brands are partnering with suppliers who adhere to ethical standards and support sustainable livelihoods.

Personalized and Minimalist Beauty: Consumers are seeking personalized beauty solutions that minimize waste and align with their individual needs. This trend is driving the development of customizable products and smaller, more targeted product ranges.

The Role of Technology in Sustainable Beauty

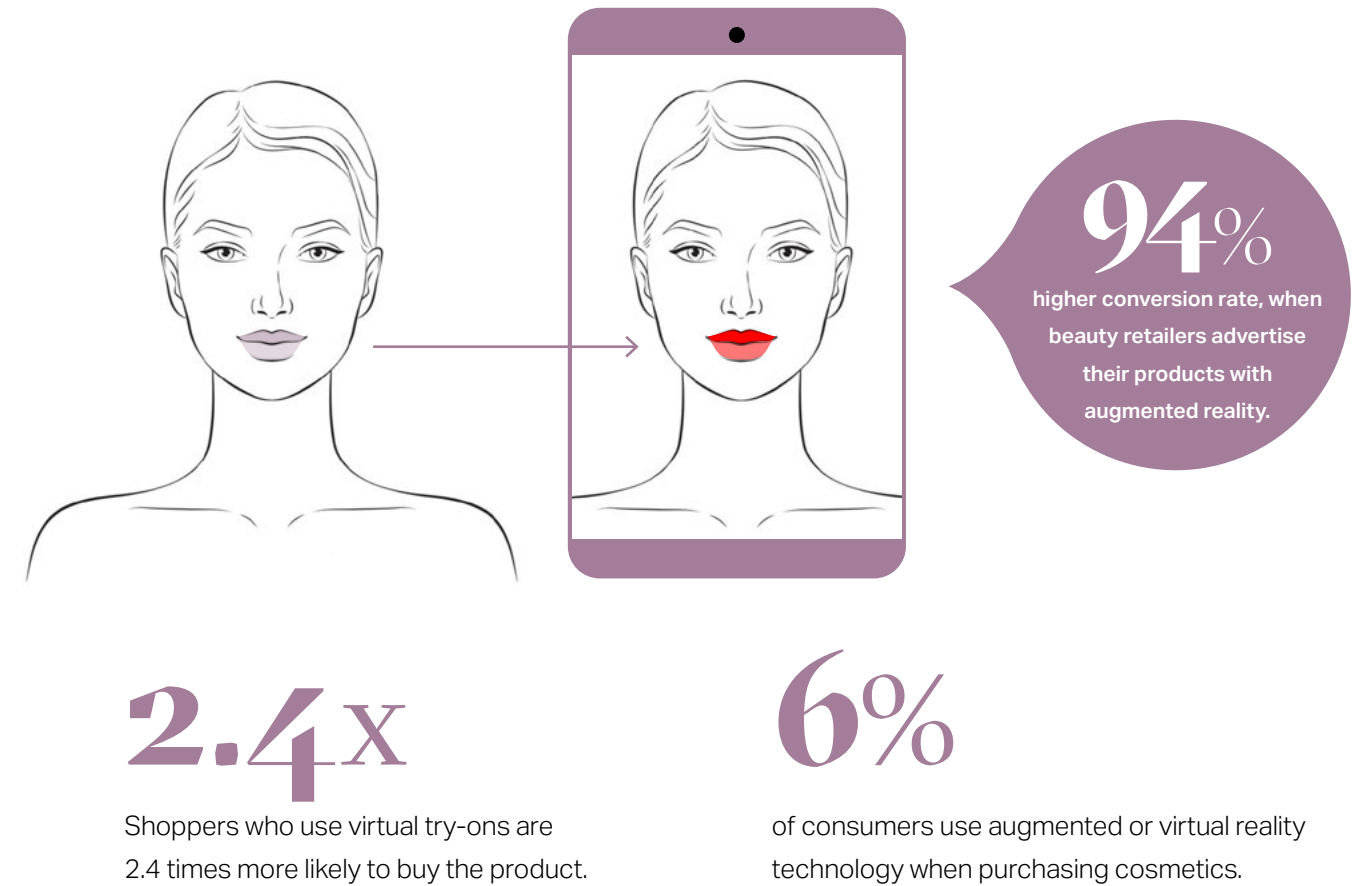
AI and Machine Learning: AI-powered tools are being used to optimize product formulations, predict consumer preferences, and streamline supply chains, leading to more efficient and sustainable production processes.

Virtual Try-On and AR: Virtual try-on technology reduces the need for physical product sampling, minimizing waste and environmental impact. AR experiences can enhance the shopping experience and provide consumers with information about product sustainability.

The Future of Sustainable Beauty

The future of sustainable beauty is bright, focusing on innovation, transparency, and ethical practices. As consumer demand for sustainable products grows, brands prioritizing sustainability will thrive. The beauty industry has the potential to be a powerful force for positive environmental and social change.

Augmented Reality in Beauty: Key Statistics



Leading Brands in Sustainable Beauty Today

Thrive Causemetics

thrivecausemetics.com

Known for its clean and cruelty-free products, Thrive focuses on sustainability and ethical sourcing.

Tata Harper

tataharperskincare

This luxury skincare brand prioritizes organic ingredients and eco-friendly packaging.

The Ordinary

theordinary.com

While not explicitly a sustainable brand, The Ordinary offers affordable, effective skincare products with minimal packaging.

Biossance

biossance.com

This brand leverages biotechnology to create sustainable and effective skincare products.

As consumer awareness grows, the demand for sustainable beauty products will continue to rise. Brands that prioritize sustainability will not only attract environmentally conscious consumers but also contribute to a healthier planet.

STAT SOURCE: THINK WITH GOOGLE (TOP); TECH CRUNCH (BOTTOM)

Personalized Beauty Levels Up

THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY is undergoing a digital revolution, driven by technological advancements reshaping how consumers interact with brands and products. From virtual try-on experiences to AI-powered skincare recommendations, technology is empowering consumers to discover and personalize their beauty routines like never before.

The Rise of Personalized Beauty

One of the most significant trends in the beauty industry is the increasing demand for personalized products and experiences. Consumers are seeking tailored solutions that address their unique needs and preferences. Technology is playing a crucial role in enabling this level of personalization.

Key Technologies Driving Personalized Beauty

Artificial Intelligence (AI): AI algorithms can analyze vast amounts of data to identify patterns and trends in consumer behavior. This enables brands to offer highly targeted product recommendations and personalized marketing campaigns.

Augmented Reality (AR): AR technology allows consumers to virtually try on makeup and hairstyles

before purchasing, reducing the risk of dissatisfaction and returns.

Internet of Things (IoT): IoT devices, such as smart mirrors and skin analysis tools, can collect real-time data on skin conditions and environmental factors. This data can be used to provide personalized skincare advice and product recommendations.

Innovative Beauty Products and Services

Several innovative products and services have emerged to cater to the growing demand for personalized beauty. Here are the top trending ones:

Personalized Skincare Devices: Devices like L'Oréal's **Perso** can create customized skincare formulas based on real-time skin analysis and individual preferences.

Virtual Try-On Apps: Apps like **Modiface** and YouCam Makeup allow users to experiment with different makeup looks and hairstyles virtually.

70

ModiFace has partnered with over 70 beauty brands to bring augmented reality to the masses.

Global Beauty Stats



35%

North Asia is the largest market for beauty and personal care products. North America makes up around 26% of the market. Europe makes up 22%.



\$85

The average per month women in the US spend on on beauty and self-care: haircuts, makeup, and skincare are the top 3 spending categories.



150x

times more ingredients have been banned by the EU over the US for use in beauty products.

GRAPHIC SOURCE: L'ORÉAL FINANCE; GROUPON AND ONEPOLL; FDA, EUROPEAN COSMETIC COMMISSION

AI-Powered Beauty Advisors: Chatbots and virtual assistants can provide personalized beauty advice and product recommendations based on user input.

Subscription Boxes: Subscription boxes tailored to individual preferences, such as those offered by IPSY and **BoxyCharm**, deliver a curated selection of beauty products to consumers' doorsteps.

Product Development and Manufacturing

AI is being used to analyze trends and consumer feedback to predict future trends, which helps in developing new products that meet current market demands. Machine learning algorithms can also help identify which ingredients work best together, optimizing the effectiveness of new skincare and beauty formulations. In product development, AI systems are used to predict optimal inventory levels, manufacture products based on demand predictions, and efficiently manage supply chains, reducing waste and ensuring better stock management.

The Future of Personalized Beauty

As technology continues to evolve, we can expect even more personalized and innovative beauty experiences in the future. Some potential trends include:

Biometric-Based Personalization: Using biometric data, such as facial recognition and DNA analysis, to create highly customized beauty products.

AI-Driven Ingredient Formulation: AI algorithms can analyze vast databases of ingredients to develop new, highly effective formulas tailored to specific skin types and concerns.

Immersive Virtual Beauty Experiences: Virtual and augmented reality experiences that allow consumers to fully immerse themselves in the beauty world, from virtual makeup tutorials to virtual beauty consultations.

By embracing technology and focusing on personalization, beauty brands can build stronger relationships with consumers, drive sales, and stay ahead of the curve in a rapidly evolving industry.

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Going Deeper: The Origins of AI

The idea of artificial beings with intelligence has roots in ancient myths and stories, but the formal study and the conceptual development of AI as we know it today started in the 20th Century.

1940s to 1950s

Formalization of the Concept



Alan Turing (AI composite image above), a British mathematician and logician, developed the concept of a universal machine (Turing machine) that could perform computations similar to a human. His seminal 1950 paper, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence," proposed the idea that machines could simulate human intelligence, introducing the Turing Test as a criterion of intelligence.

Claude Shannon and John McCarthy are other pivotal figures from this era. McCarthy, often called the "father of AI," coined the term "Artificial Intelligence" in 1956, marking the formal founding of AI as a field during the Dartmouth Conference.

1950s to 1970s

Early Developments



The initial decades saw significant enthusiasm and progress, such as the creation of early neural networks and the development of the first AI programs. For example, the Logic Theorist by Allen Newell (left in above photo) and Herbert Simon (right in photo) was a program that proved mathematical theorems.

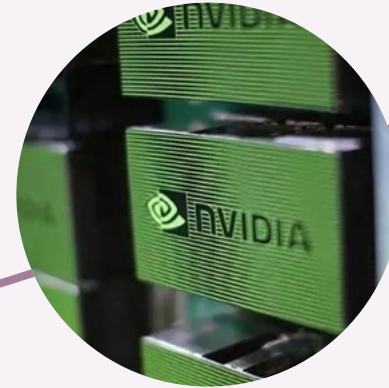
ELIZA, developed by Joseph Weizenbaum in the mid-1960s, demonstrated the possibility of machines processing natural language through a script-based chatbot that could mimic a psychotherapist.



1970s to 1990s

The AI Winters

AI research faced setbacks and reduced funding during these periods due to mismatched expectations and technical limitations. These periods are known as AI winters. (Photo: Mathew Broderick in 1983's War Games movie)

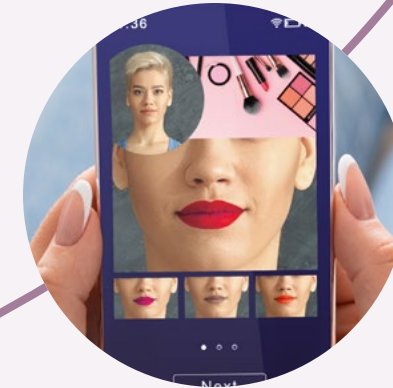


1990s to Present

Resurgence and Growth

Advancements in computational power, the availability of large amounts of data, and breakthroughs in algorithms have led to a resurgence in AI research and applications. Machine learning, especially deep learning, has become central to AI development.

Machine Learning, a subset of AI, aims at programming machines to learn and adapt through experience. Deep Learning, a further subset of machine learning, uses neural networks with many layers (deep networks) to analyze various factors of data.



Today

Modern AI

Today, AI is pervasive across industries from autonomous vehicles to healthcare diagnostics, finance, robotics, and personal assistants like Siri and Alexa.

AI continues to evolve rapidly, blending interdisciplinary insights from computer science, mathematics, psychology, and more, pushing the boundaries of what machines can do. The future directions of AI may include more profound integration with robotics, continued improvements in natural language processing, and ethical AI development, addressing moral and privacy concerns in AI applications.

8.1
BILLION

Expected AI investments in dollars in the global beauty and cosmetics market by 2028.

AI is transforming how people live, work, and play.

AI Sources:

[What is AI](#)

[Common Types of AI](#)

[AI defined](#)

[Benefits of AI](#)

[AI History](#)



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Skincare is projected to generate up to \$177 billion by 2025

Multiple Purpose Beauty Products: A Trend in Minimalist Beauty

IN TODAY'S FAST-PACED world, simplifying our routines has become increasingly appealing. This trend, known as minimalist beauty, has given rise to multifunctional beauty products. These versatile items offer multiple benefits, streamlining our skincare and makeup routines while reducing clutter.

The Origins of Minimalist Beauty

Minimalist beauty, characterized by simplicity and mindfulness, is a concept that has gained substantial traction over the past decade as consumers increasingly embrace less-is-more approaches in their skincare and makeup routines. This trend is deeply rooted in historical practices and philosophies that emphasize natural beauty and holistic wellness.

The origins of minimalist beauty can be traced back to ancient civilizations, where simple and natural ingredients were the basis of skincare and beauty treatments. For example, ancient Egyptians used natural oils and clays to cleanse and protect their skin, setting a precedent for simplicity and effectiveness. Similarly, in ancient India, Ayurveda promoted the use of minimal and natural ingredients tailored to one's specific dosha (body type) to enhance both physical appearance and overall well-being.

The modern minimalist beauty movement,

however, owes much to Japanese aesthetics. The concepts of "Wabi-sabi" (the beauty of imperfection) and "Ma" (the essence of space or gap) highlight the value of simplicity, purity, and the mindful appreciation of everyday objects and rituals. These philosophies have deeply influenced contemporary Japanese beauty culture, which focuses on high-quality ingredients, pared-down routines and elegant, understated packaging.

The appeal of minimalist beauty began permeating Western cultures prominently in the early 2000s. Influenced by both the understated elegance of Japanese beauty and a growing consciousness about sustainability and consumerism, Western consumers started gravitating towards minimalist skincare and makeup. This shift was also propelled by a growing skepticism towards the cosmetic industry's push for excessive product use and constant innovation, which often led to consumer fatigue.

What Exactly are Multifunctional Beauty Products?

Multifunctional beauty products are formulated to serve multiple purposes. They often combine the benefits of several traditional products into a single, convenient item. For example, a tinted moisturizer can hydrate the skin, provide SPF protection, and offer light coverage, eliminating the need for separate moisturizer, sunscreen, and foundation.

PHOTO: ADOBE STOCK; STAT SOURCE:

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How Do They Work?

The key to multifunctional beauty products lies in their innovative formulations. These products are carefully crafted to deliver various benefits without compromising performance. They often contain a blend of active ingredients that work synergistically to address various skin concerns. For instance, a hydrating lip balm may include antioxidants to protect the lips from environmental damage and peptides to stimulate collagen production.

Brands that have successfully tapped into this trend and are leaders in the market include:

Glossier

[glossier.com](https://www.glossier.com)

Known for its minimalist approach, Glossier offers products like the Cloud Paint, a versatile cream blush that can also be used on lips.

Rare Beauty by Selena Gomez

[rarebeauty.com](https://www.rarebeauty.com)

This brand emphasizes inclusivity and offers products like the Soft Pinch Liquid Blush, a buildable blush that can also be used on lips.

Tower 28 Beauty

[tower28beauty.com](https://www.tower28beauty.com)

Their BeachPlease Luminous Tinted Balm is a popular choice, offering a dewy finish and serving as a blush, highlighter, and lip color.

Ilia Beauty

[iliabeauty.com](https://www.iliabeauty.com)

This clean beauty brand offers multi-use products like the Multi-Stick, a creamy formula that can be used on cheeks, lips, and eyes.

WHY CONSUMERS LOVE MULTIFUNCTIONAL PRODUCTS

Convenience

Less clutter in your beauty bag.

Cost-effective

Fewer products mean lower costs.

Time-saving

Quick and easy application.

Minimalist lifestyle

Aligns with the trend of simplifying routines.

Travel-friendly

Perfect for packing light.

RMS Beauty

[rmsbeauty.com](https://www.rmsbeauty.com)

Known for its organic and natural ingredients, RMS offers products like the Living Luminizer, a versatile highlighter that can also be used as an eyeshadow or lip gloss.

Multifunctional beauty products align perfectly with the minimalist beauty trend. By reducing the number of products needed for a complete skincare or makeup routine, these versatile items help declutter our beauty cabinets and simplify our daily rituals. This minimalist approach not only saves time and money but also promotes a more sustainable lifestyle by reducing waste.

Multifunctional beauty products offer a practical and efficient solution for those seeking to streamline their beauty routines. By combining multiple benefits into a single product, these innovative items empower us to achieve a polished look with minimal effort.

PHOTO: ADOBE STOCK; STAT SOURCE: ALLIED MARKET RESEARCH

The men's personal care market is projected to hit \$276.9 billion by 2030.

What consumers put on their bodies is as important as what they put inside.

Clean Beauty: A Revolution in Skincare and Makeup

THE ALLURE OF clean beauty in the realm of skincare and makeup has escalated dramatically, transforming what once was a niche trend into a robust mainstream movement. In this section, we explore trends and identify key brands in this thriving industry sector, shedding light on its origins, rapid growth, consumer impact, and future potential.

Understanding Clean Beauty

Clean beauty refers to products formulated with ingredients that are considered safe and non-toxic. These products are typically free from harsh chemicals, synthetic fragrances, and other potentially harmful substances. The emphasis is on using natural and organic ingredients that are gentle on the skin and the environment. This includes essential oils and other natural ingredients.

The Origins of Clean Beauty

The clean beauty movement can be traced back to the late 20th century when consumers began to question the safety and efficacy of conventional beauty products. Concerns about the long-term effects of certain ingredients, such as parabens and phthalates, led to a growing demand for alternatives.

Parabens, for example, are a specific group of

chemicals that are used to preserve personal care products such as suntan lotions, moisturizers, and other types of skin creams. But there's a problem. Parabens have been found to be endocrine disruptors that can cause a variety of illnesses including reproductive disorders.

About 20 years ago, scientists began looking into the effects of parabens on humans, and there was an immediate industry backlash from manufacturers who used the ingredient. In 2013, scholar Ragnhild Lønseth Aarflot and others began publishing research reports looking at how parabens impact the human body. While the health effects were unclear, one thing was sure: parabens easily penetrate the human body, even the fetus. Over time, researchers began amassing evidence of the dangers of parabens on human health, which triggered a shift away from its use by consumers. Over time, more research was conducted. The most recent research report was published in 2022.

In a blog post by Tasha Stoiber, PhD and Senior Scientist at the Environmental Working Group said given the "endocrine disruption capacity and documented female and male reproductive harm, coupled with the potential for repeated lifelong exposure, it is clear that long-chain parabens (isobutyl-, butyl-, isopropyl- and propylparaben) should not be used in personal care or cosmetic products. Further, products can be made without these chemicals."

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The consumer response was strong.

By the fall of 2021, Beauty Inc proclaimed that “the clean beauty boom has gone mainstream.” Citing data from NielsenIQ, the beauty industry go-to publication said “The movement for free-from and natural products has hit the mass market. Growth in such products over indexed when compared to beauty and personal care sales, which grew 2 percent in the past year.

Aside from the health-based benefits of clean beauty, using plant-based ingredients was seen as a more sustainable practice, appealing to consumers who were increasingly conscious of their health as well as the environment.

Leading Clean Beauty Brands

Today, numerous brands are offering clean beauty products across various categories, including skincare, makeup, and haircare.

Trending clean beauty brands and ones to watch include:

Ilia Beauty: Known for its high-performance, natural makeup, Ilia offers a wide range of products, from foundation to lipstick, that are free from harmful chemicals. The brand nailed a best in beauty award from Allure magazine. Definitely one to watch.

Kosas: This brand focuses on clean, skin-enhancing cosmetics that nourish and protect the skin. Their products are formulated with natural ingredients and are free from synthetic fragrances and parabens. Popular with Kate Hudson and Hailey Bieber, Kosas is a clean beauty brand to watch. The brand zeroes in on what shoppers want and is not afraid to take chances, [check out their minimalist glam line.](#)

Tata Harper: This luxury skincare brand uses organic, farm-fresh ingredients to create highly effective products. Their formulas are free from synthetic chemicals and artificial fragrances. The brand also excels in creating [striking package designs.](#)

Drunk Elephant: This brand is known for its innovative skincare products that are free from essential oils and irritating ingredients. Their formulas are designed to work synergistically with the skin’s natural microbiome. The brand is popular with younger consumers and influencers. Note: But there’s a cautionary tale regarding the use of the latter: The brand had come under fire for certain claims made by influencers. After a review by NAD, the brand was cleared by the agency and told to recheck posts made by influencers, according to a report earlier this month in Beauty Packaging, the trade publication.

RMS Beauty: This is another brand to watch in the clean beauty space as it offers a range of organic makeup and skincare products that are formulated with raw, unprocessed ingredients. Their products are known for their [natural finish and long-lasting wear.](#)

The Future of Clean Beauty

As consumer awareness and demand for clean beauty continue to grow, the industry is likely to see even more innovation and expansion. Brands are constantly developing new formulas and technologies to create products that are both effective and sustainable.

In addition to ingredient transparency, clean beauty brands are also focusing on ethical sourcing practices, sustainable packaging, and social responsibility. By prioritizing these values, they are not only creating better products but also contributing to a more sustainable future.

News: Ilia Beauty

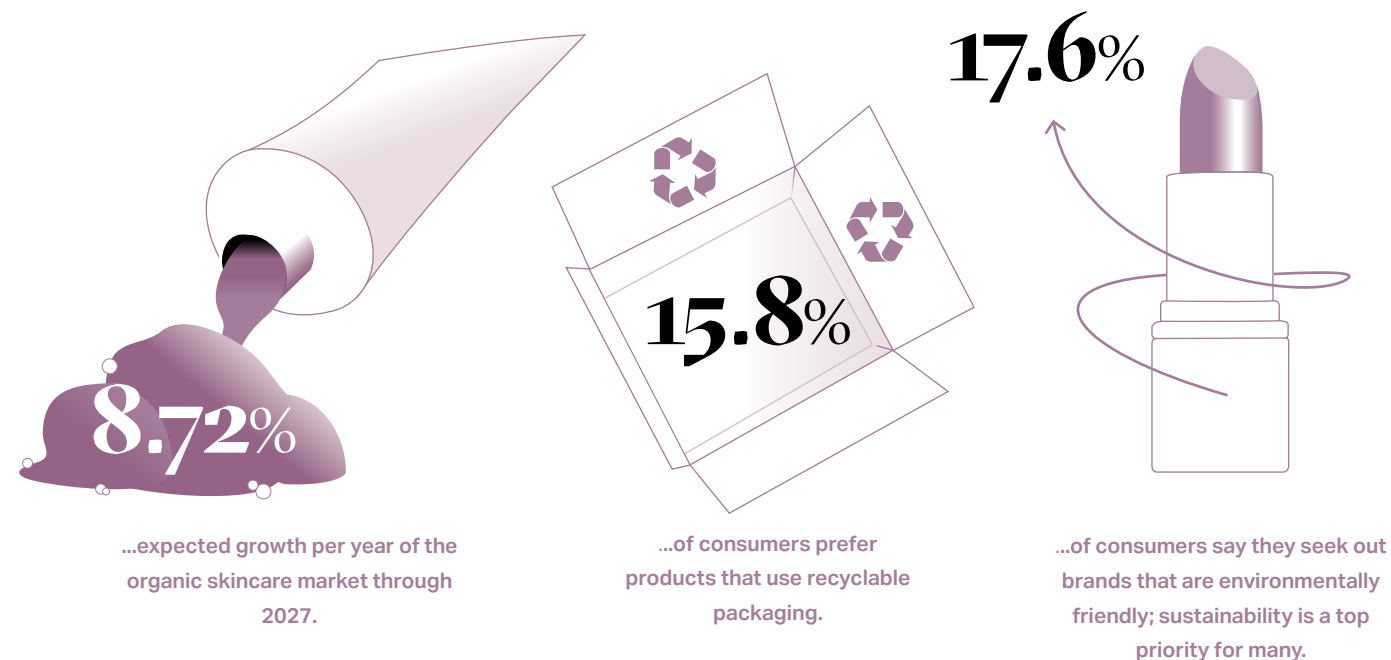
The company announces the appointment of Paul Schiraldi as the new Chief Executive Officer, taking over from Lynda Berkowitz.

LYNDA BERKOWITZ, after leading the company for nearly eight years, will transition into semi-retirement. However, she will continue to serve in an advisory capacity at Famille C, the investment firm of the Courtin-Clarins family and the majority shareholder of Ilia Beauty. Berkowitz played a pivotal role in the expansion of the clean beauty brand, elevating its revenues from \$2 million to \$200 million.

Founded by Sasha Plavsic in 2011 in Laguna Beach, Ilia Beauty was created with the vision of developing products that are not only gentle on the skin but also offer long-term advantages. The products combine “clean” ingredients that blend makeup with skincare and are developed with sustainability in mind. Under Berkowitz’s leadership, Ilia Beauty expanded its market presence across the U.S. and Canada, partnering with major retailers like Sephora. Additionally, the brand ventured into international markets including the U.K., France, Australia, and New Zealand, and recently started offering its products at Ulta Beauty.

Reflecting on her decision to appoint a CEO early in the brand’s journey, Plavsic said in WWD this past October that “the best decision I ever made was to bring on a CEO when we were generating just a few million in revenue and to pass that leadership to someone who truly understands operations.” She praised Berkowitz’s robust connections with North American retailers such as Sephora and Ulta, attributing her background in sales as a substantial asset.

Clean, Natural, and Organic Beauty Product Statistics



SOURCE: MORDOR INTELLIGENCE

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Ingredient Spotlight: Hyaluronic Acid

HYALURONIC ACID has become a staple ingredient in many skincare products due to its ability to hydrate and plump the skin. Its popularity is expected to continue as consumers seek effective anti-aging solutions. Believe it or not, Generation Z is deep into anti-aging formulations. Over 70 percent of this demographic uses anti-aging serums daily.

What is Hyaluronic Acid?

Hyaluronic acid (HA) is a naturally occurring substance found in the human body, particularly in the skin, connective tissues, and joints. It's a humectant, meaning it attracts and retains moisture.

Where is Hyaluronic Acid Used?

Hyaluronic acid is widely used in various industries, including:
Cosmetics and Skincare: In moisturizers, serums, and creams to hydrate and plump the skin.
Medical Field: For joint lubrication, wound healing, and eye surgery.

Why Consumers Demand Hyaluronic Acid

Consumers are increasingly seeking products that deliver visible results and address aging concerns. Hyaluronic acid's ability to hydrate, plump, and rejuvenate the skin makes it a popular ingredient. Additionally, its natural origin and safety profile make it appealing to a wide range of consumers.

How is Hyaluronic Acid Made?

Hyaluronic acid can be derived from two main sources:

1  **Animal Sources**
 Traditionally, HA was extracted from rooster combs.

2  **Bacterial Fermentation**
 A more modern and ethical method involves fermenting bacteria to produce HA.

BENEFITS OF HYALURONIC ACID IN BEAUTY PRODUCTS

Hyaluronic acid offers numerous benefits for the skin:

Hydration

It attracts and retains moisture, leaving skin plump and hydrated.

Anti-aging

It can reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles.

Skin Repair

It promotes skin cell turnover and wound healing.

Skin Barrier Protection

It helps strengthen the skin's natural barrier.

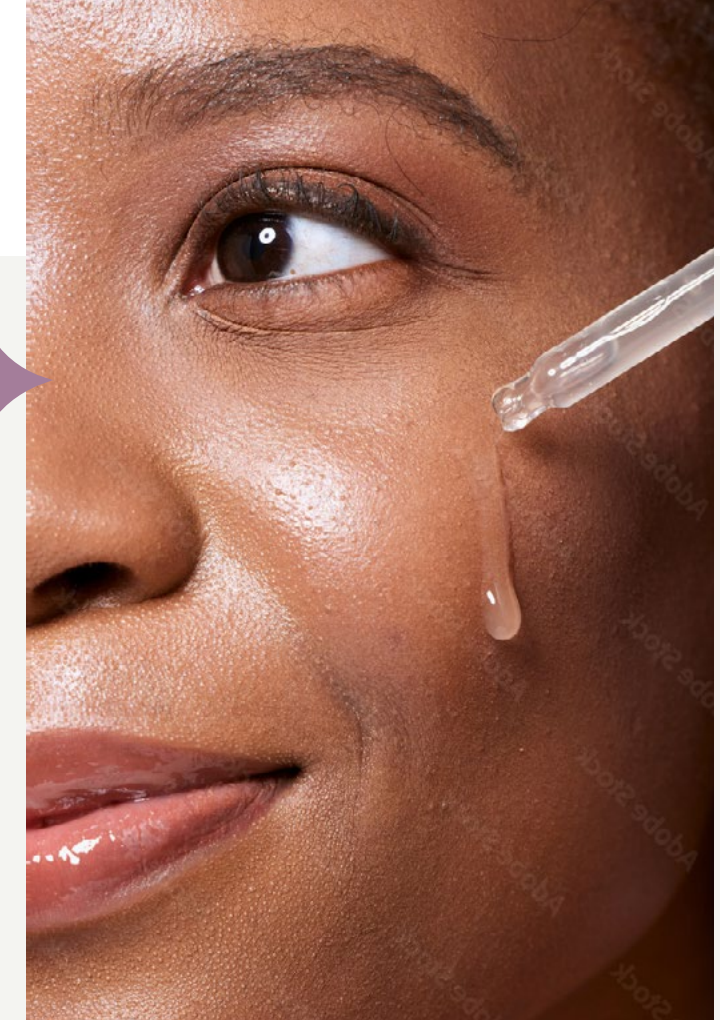


PHOTO: ADOBE STOCK

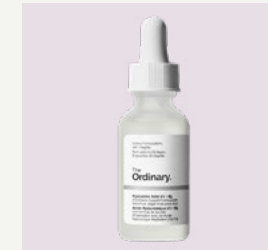
Brands and Products Using Hyaluronic Acid

Numerous brands incorporate hyaluronic acid into their products. Some popular examples include:



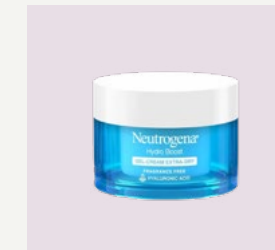
Cosrx Advanced Snail 96 Mucin Power Essence

This essence contains hyaluronic acid to hydrate and soothe the skin.



The Ordinary Hyaluronic Acid 2% + B5

This serum offers multiple molecular weights of hyaluronic acid for optimal hydration.



Neutrogena Hydro Boost Hydrating Gel-Cream

This moisturizer contains hyaluronic acid to provide long-lasting hydration.



Drunk Elephant Hyaluronic Serum

This serum combines hyaluronic acid with other hydrating ingredients to plump and smooth the skin.

→ As the demand for effective and safe skincare products continues to grow, hyaluronic acid is likely to remain a popular ingredient in the beauty industry. Its versatility and ability to address a wide range of skin concerns make it a valuable asset in any skincare routine.

Executive Q&A with Ortwin Ertl

CEO, Annikki GmbH

WEBSITE: annikki.com

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ANNIKKI GMBH, the leader in cell-free redox biocatalysis, is developing game-changing technologies and innovative approaches to solving complex environmental problems in a variety of industry sectors. Annikki is currently working on technology to make biobased glycolic acid, which is widely used in skin care products.

Here, Ortwin Ertl, founder and CEO, shares insights into the sustainability challenges facing the fashion apparel and beauty markets.

Corner of Fifth: What was the impetus behind founding your company?

I was in the pharma space where I commercialized the first cell-free processes to make pharmaceuticals (which included the core part of the Atorvastatin-molecule, better known under the brand name of Lipitor). I had the idea of extending the technology to be applicable

to biobased chemicals. It needed to be improved significantly and developed further to cover oxidation reactions, which we did not have access to initially.

There was also the question of getting the performance of the enzymes high enough to be able to make chemicals at the low cost needed for large-scale products such as cosmetics or fibers. In the end, however, the urgency to come up with a solution to stop emitting enormous amounts of greenhouse gases in the chemical industry that was cost-efficient enough to do away with the classical petroleum-based processes made me move ahead on this.

Co5: From a sustainability/circularity perspective, what do you see as the challenges facing fashion apparel brands, textile companies and beauty brands using traditional petro-based materials?

You cannot call yourself sustainable if you continue to use oil as a raw material for your textiles. The recycling rates are very low, even for the most-recycled plastic in Germany with its mandatory redemption system for bottles, the recycling rate for PET bottles is below 30%. That means 70% of the bottles are only used once and a steady stream of oil is needed for new bottles. The same is true of textiles. The fossil carbon that was dug out of the ground eventually ends up where it does not belong, which is in the atmosphere.



“You cannot call yourself sustainable if you continue to use oil as a raw material for your textiles.”

Pressure will increase dramatically for all companies to switch once the leaders have pivoted to new, biobased materials. One also should not forget that what is purchased in the future is decided by the generation of today’s 15- to 25-year-olds, who are going to be affected by the perils of climate change more than the average person, who is older.

Co5: How would you describe your company’s value proposition and innovations to apparel and textile companies as well as consumers?

Well, for consumers it is that there are now textile, beauty and apparel products available which you can buy without putting the livelihood of your children and grandchildren at risk by causing greenhouse gas emissions. If you buy

these products instead of petrochemical products, you are contributing to a vast reduction in greenhouse gases emitted by the petrochemical industry today.

To the leading and innovating companies who take this path, it means that they are facilitating the transition, they are the ones pushing the doors open to change. This will benefit them not only in reputation but also financially, as the first movers will get the recognition of the customers.

Also, being ethical does not stop at a certain issue: As a customer, I also do care whether the product I am wearing is made using dyes which are toxic or dyes which are safe to use. There are a lot of customers who recognize and value products that are made with the impact on consumer health and the environment in mind.

PHOTO: ADOBE STOCK

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Conclusion

THE REPORT COMPILED by Corner of Fifth provides a comprehensive analysis of five key trends that are reshaping the beauty industry: clean beauty, personalized beauty, minimalist beauty, sustainable beauty, and the use of spotlight ingredients such as hyaluronic acid. These trends highlight a transformative period where consumer preferences for sustainability, effectiveness, simplicity, and customization are steering industry standards and practices.

These trends collectively paint a future wherein the beauty industry evolves to become more aligned with ethical standards, environmental sustainability and personalized consumer experiences. Brands that continue to innovate in line with these values are set to excel. By embracing these transformative trends, the beauty industry is not just enhancing its product offerings but is also playing a pivotal role in advocating for healthier choices and sustainable practices. As a result, these trends are not merely shifts in consumer preference, but are stepping stones towards a more ethical and environmentally-conscious global community.

Report Sources:

[WWD](#)

[Beauty Inc](#)

[Fashions in Makeup: From Ancient to Modern Times](#) by Richard Corson

[Not Just a Pretty Face: The Ugly Side of the Beauty Industry](#) by Stacy Malkan

Beauty Brands' Sales



The future of beauty is here, and it calls for meeting the complex needs of an evolving consumer.

PHOTO: ADOBE STOCK; STAT SOURCE: STATISTA



Corner of Fifth Services

We are a full-service content creation, marketing and design studio that believes in the power of storytelling, captivating audiences and reshaping brands along the way.

With vast experiences in the media, marketing, design and editorial/reporting spaces, Corner of Fifth can create a unique, customized program for your brand. Here's a snapshot of what we can do for you:

Content Creation

Crafting original projects that remain ahead of the curve, incorporating ideation, creative writing, and custom campaign development.

Marketing

Helping brands get discovered through strategy, social media, lead generation, email marketing and AI research.

Creative Design

Leading the creative process from start to finish, from messaging and brand development, to getting to the print, digital, social or video finish line.

Brand Strategy

Developing custom plans across the marketing, social and media landscapes that put brands first to audiences they are looking to capture.

Production

Launching memorable, trending experiences such as webinars, programming/panel discussions and live events.



CORNER OF FIFTH

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the future of beauty