STARTING A COSMETIC LINE: THE BASICS

INCLUDES LIST OF RESOURCES TO KICK START YOUR BUSINESS

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THE SCIENCE AND BUSINESS OF COSMETICS

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About the author

February 22nd 19... 12 P.M.

I was born while in Milan, Italy, snow was falling profusely.
I've always been an introvert and a good student. I graduated from Milan university determined to find a job in the pharmaceutical field. Life happens, though, so I moved to the U.S instead and started working for a cosmetic company Los Angeles based (I still live in L.A).

I hated every single day of it.

As a creative mind, I had many ideas in my head, yet I wasn't able to develop any. I had to do what I was told to. That is it! Days were all the same, and I was growing frustrated and deeply unmotivated. My salary wasn't a good incentive either.

Things got even worse...one of my coworker started picking at me because I was "different" (I still had some of my "European" habits that she thought were very funny). She was very mean to me... I was angry! That was the time when I even regretted I had moved to the U.S.

One day, I finally resigned.

Problem was, I didn't have any money nor idea on what to do next. I was pretty good at formulating cosmetics so I decided to keep that as starting point. I formulated cosmetics as a freelancer, first; then ,after a few years, I founded my company Luisa Fanzani Cosmetics Lab LLC. which helps people to succeed in the cosmetic business with custom formulations.

I love what I do and feel *a sense of purpose* when I wake up in the morning.

I am currently working on other projects...the first will be launching a few cosmetics products (of course); the things I reveal in this ebook are the same tons of clients have asked me during the first consultation. I thought it could be a great idea to provide people with a general sense of what they should expect if they decide to become beauty entrepreneurs.

Don't worry if you're not that far in your journey yet. Grab a cup of coffee, read, and just relax.

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Let's see if we have something in common:

● I love coffee, both American and Italian Espresso. I slightly prefer the American one because it lasts longer.

● I believe in creating more than consuming.

● I like everything that is simple.

● I love High intensity Workouts ,but I hate to run.

● I am always in the process of learning something- May 2018 I am learning some photography.

● Money for me is a tool to buy more time. It's also my way to give back to people who have always supported me.

● I wake up very early in the morning , but can't go to sleep later than 10pm (my eyes automatically shut at 10)

Introduction - Why Start a Cosmetic Line?

The cosmetic industry is one of the biggest on the globe.

In fact, BusinessWire reports it will reach a valuation of $675 billion USD by 2020!

Thanks to permissive cosmetic regulations in the U.S., it's easier now than ever before to start a cosmetic business. Even if you don't know anything about organic chemistry and don't want to learn how to formulate, there are dozens of ways to enter the cosmetic market.

I know what you're thinking...

The cosmetic market is highly competitive, and it's impossible for anyone but a celebrity or a chemist to break in, right? Wrong! All you need to do is be wise when you choose which product to launch (more on this later).

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You know you want to start a cosmetic line, but have you ever stopped to think about your motivation for doing so? Motivation is an essential consideration, because it keeps you going when you don't see any result. And - let's be honest - you probably won't see big results at the beginning. With this in mind, you've got to understand why you're setting out on this path

Some of the most common motivations I've heard are: "making money" (obviously and always the #1), delivering something valuable, improving the lives of customers, transforming a hobby into a stable income, improving the family's conditions, or following a passion.

No matter what your motivation is, understanding it fully will help you make it through the difficult times when you feel frustrated, discouraged, and overwhelmed.

For me, running my own business is an exciting adventure, and I've never regretted starting down this path. My motivation has always been freedom.

With that in mind, my mission is to help you realize your goals, whatever they might be.

Part 1: General Considerations

To start a cosmetic business, you don't necessarily need to be involved in the creation of a new product. Whenever I mention "starting a cosmetic business," people tend to think about launching a "new" lotion or some makeup product.

While these are common compounds (and, sure, you could create a new brand based on them), they're not your only options. Part of my goal in writing this book is to let you know that you have other options.

These options are not very common, which means they have less competition. For example, you could get into (re)-selling raw materials for cosmetics (makingcosmetics.com/ lotioncrafter.com), or creating professional make-up products for movies and theatre only. You could decide to focus on baby, male, or pet products.

Other options include sport products, muscle creams, and similar formulas.

You could also decide to be a reseller only and re-sell other companies' products.

Or you could get involved with **private labelling**.

With private labelling, you usually buy a product in bulk. This product is already on the market, but you purchase it and apply your brand, instead.

For example, you could go to the Body Shop, buy one of their body butters in bulk and apply a label with your brand on it (I am not saying the Body Shop sells as private label, it's just an example).

There are 2 major **downsides** of doing this: first, your **product is not unique**. This inherently limits your creativity and the popularity of your item. Secondly, you have **limited customization** options (usually only the color and the scent of a product can be changed). This can make it difficult to establish yourself in the market and develop a product people know you for.

The main advantage is that **you don't need a formulation to start selling**. You only need a unique design and a brand.

Believe it or not, there are lots of private labelled products out there.

There's also the possibility of buying products that are already packed and you have to just adding your label. Here's an example.

The message I am trying to convey is that "the sky is the limit!".

That said, my biggest tip for you is to **get creative!**

Let's get started!

How Much do you Need to Invest?

If you're considering starting a cosmetics business, your first question is likely about money. How much do you need to invest to succeed in the industry?

Let's break it down:

● At least $2,000 for formulation and testing. If you already have a formula, then calculate around $500 for stability tests. If you're private labelling , don't count this cost.

● At least $1,000 for equipment, including a overhead mixer. If you outsource the formulation and manufacturing, you can omit this expense.

● At least $1,000 for a quality logo and packaging design. See chapter at the end for a list of resources.

Other miscellaneous expenses (manufacturing,containers, ingredients etc.) will bring the overall amount you need to invest between $6,000 and $10,000.

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If you don't have this kind of money, but still want to pursue your dream, here are a few tips to help you save money. Of course, you'll have to compromise on some things.

● Start with a product only and manufacture it by yourself at your place. Especially if you have a 9-5 job, you won't be able to produce many units/day, but this approach will still be significantly cheaper than having a contract manufacturer. If you cannot afford a filling machine, make sure your product is easy to hand-fill (liquids, lotions when they are still warm, etc).

● At the beginning, keep a small amount of ingredients in inventory. This is one of the reasons your formulations should be simple and easy to make. One great product that requires very few products upfront is bath bombs. They don't require a fancy package, the production process is straightforward, and ingredients to make them are inexpensive. Plus, they're easy to customize and always in demand.

● Save on packaging and design by simply printing labels for your containers. NOTE: you want to give your customers the best possible experience with your products, so make sure you follow GMPs (GoodManufacturing Practices) and test the products you sell before they go on the market.

What to do When You Don't Have any Money Saved: How to Fund Your Business

As I was reviewing some of the most Googled queries related to starting a cosmetic business, I found out that one of the most popular queries was "How to start a cosmetic line with no money".

First, the bad news: ***you can't****.*

How to start a cosmetic business: the basics.

Don't worry, though, there's still good news: you can start a cosmetics line with very little money, and without having tens of thousands stashed away in the bank.

You need to find creative ways to raise some cash so you can start the business and realize your dream. As you work to find a solution, remember that you likely won't see any ROI for a few months, or years, so you need to set yourself up to survive during the dry times. As you come up with your funding schedule, don't forget to leave yourself some extra money to pay the bills and support your family.

Take heart, readers: ***this is not impossible.***

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Many cosmetics entrepreneurs I've worked with started their business while working full-time. In some cases, these entrepreneurs were members of a dual-income family, and could rely on their spouse's income while they started their business. Others took a second job in the evenings or on the weekend and put that income toward the startup costs. Still others partnered with a friend and split the investment.

Regardless of which path these entrepreneurs have taken, they all share one thing in common: they live frugally and save as much of their income as they can.

They also take a proactive approach to purposely re-investing into their business.

Instead of going out to eat, they put the money they would have spent toward their business. If you can buckle down and get as frugal as possible, you should be able to save between 20% and 30% of your income each month.

If you have other people to support besides yourself, saving will be more difficult; not impossible, though, and definitely not an excuse for not trying. **Stay focused on your goals.** It's very easy to get distracted by the latest gadget or whatsoever.

Remember why you're trying to build a business. Use that as motivation and keep your head down - you'll get there eventually.

If you don't see any other options, you can consider borrowing money from someone.

As long as you pay it back, this is a doable option. I personally don't like to accumulate debt on credit cards (even with 0% APR), but I've seen people financing their business that way, as well.

TIP: If you have a very innovative idea, try Kickstarter.com or other fundraising platforms. These can be a great way to raise money quickly and have been a source of success for many startups in the past.

Step 1: Decide Which Product You're Going to Develop

As you dive into the cosmetics industry, there are dozens of options to explore. The first thing you'll have to do is decide which product you're going to develop.

As you do that, remember this general rule: *go niche or go broke*.

The smaller the niche you enter, the lower the level of competition. While there are dozens of foundations on the market, there are fewer dog shampoos and male skin creams. If you're looking for a way to be competitive in the industry and make money as quickly as possible, consider going as niche as possible to enhance your chances of standing out.

Not sure which niche to explore? Here's are some tips.

● Conduct research trips to your local cosmetics store. Look for things that are missing from the shelves, or which your customer line could benefit from. You can also use Google as a research tool to help you discover underserved niches and figure out who you should be catering to.

● Think about products you enjoy using on a everyday basis. Can you think of something good that could also be improved? Based on my working experience,

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I can tell many people nowadays are creating 100% natural options from best sellers products that are not.

● Create a product that address a common problem. For example, a client of mine decided to create a skincare kit for frequent travelers. The kit included a cleanser, a moisturizer, and some dry wipes. The problem: it's difficult to maintain a skincare routine while traveling. The solution, to this client, was a compact set that allows the user to clean, refresh, and moisturize the skin without having to carry multiple products.

You could also decide to launch a complete line based on one ingredient (or a group of ingredients); all the products that belong to the line will necessarily contain that particular ingredient. Packaging and brand strategy will be built all around that ingredient to recall and exalt its properties.

For example, there are some skincare/haircare lines branded as "Mediterranean" and based on high-quality olive oil. All the marketing centers on olive oil's beneficial properties. If you decide to move in this direction, make sure the ingredient you choose is not a seasonal trend but has been around for a while (moringa oil is a great example).

Whichever product you decide to start with, remember that:

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● If you're manufacturing by yourself at your place or in your kitchen, it is crucial to steer away from complicated formulations that require specific tools. Instead, develop products with a limited number of ingredients and easy processability.Surprisingly, it could also be a single ingredient product. For example, check this Amazon top Seller product that consists of only one ingredient. Dealing with simple products will make easier to follow Good Manufacturing Practices (especially if you're a beginner formulator) and will lower your initial investment.

● Avoid seasonal and/or now trending products for your first launch. The trend might end and, if that is the only product you created, you'll be in trouble.That said, though, don't overlook trends that are coming down the line. As of April 2018, hemp oil products are growing in popularity. This also happened with moringa oil a couple of years ago.

● Don't waste time developing generic products that don't offer any benefit. This is especially true if they don't compete with the famous brands that are already on the market. I understand this might sound brutal, but if your idea is to create another "highly pigmented" eyeshadow palette, think again! You'll have a very, very hard time beating the competition of bigger brands that are already established in that niche. Having a unique product is not enough; you must also differentiate your brand to make it stand out from competition. Here are some examples of branding phrases that are too common, and should be avoided at all costs: "Beauty from within," "The best of Nature and science," "(product name) that really works." While starting a line that follows these guidelines will be a bit more time-consuming, it'll pay off down the road.

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● If you decide to work with a contract manufacturer and have them take care of the formulation process as well. Make sure you maintain ownership of the formula. Some manufacturers may seem very affordable when it comes to product development; the reason is that they own the formula, which basically means you're bound to them when it comes to manufacturing (unless you hire someone to reverse engineer the formula).

● Start small and lean. The top reason some businesses don't make it to their 5th year is because they run out of cash. Therefore, it's important to spend (invest) your money wisely in things that really matter and which contribute to growing your business. The best way to do this is to start with up to three products only. You should never be afraid of spending money on things like formulation, packaging design, testing, copywriting, quality raw materials etc. Do whatever it takes to ensure your business starts making sales as soon as possible. Sales provide the cash flow you need to invest in growing your business; this is why it's so important your store is up and running in the shortest time possible. If you subscribe to my newsletter, you know there are two mistakes I warn against most: not investing enough and spending too much. If you can manage to walk the middle line, you'll have a much more lucrative career.

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● Don't chase perfectionism. The most recurrent mistake I've noticed among my clients is perfectionism. If you wait to launch your product until it's perfect, you'll never launch your product. Done is better than perfect. Remember that you'll always be able to change if it's that you really want. Or perhaps you'll discover that customers appreciate it the way it is so there's no need for a change. While it seems obvious, I'm not advising you to sell a mediocre product. Not at all. The quality of your cosmetics must always be outstanding. What I mean is that as soon as you have a product that satisfies you 90%, go for it. If you're looking for a way to smooth your path to this, hire an experienced professional formulator so you can be sure you have a quality product. This has the added benefit of freeing you up to focus on the other (equally important) aspects of your business.

● Be patient. The whole process of starting a cosmetic line can take months or years. Inevitably, there will be mistakes that will cause you to lose time and money. Only seldom will things will come out exactly the way you want them. If you don't have the persistence to navigate uncertain times, you'll give up too soon. Stick with it and have faith that it will come together in the end.

● Build a team. Partnering with someone else or hiring contractors will make your life much easier. If you're like me and want to do everything by yourself, now is the time to reconsider. Not only is it not the most efficient way to do things, but it'll increase your burnout risk and make it harder to reach your goals.

● Don't patent your product unless it's (really) unique. Sometimes people fall into the trap of believing their product is unique when it's not. I receive a lot of questions regarding patents on lipsticks or other products. Especially when it comes to cosmetics, patents are a complete waste of time and money. Even if you did succeed, a cosmetic chemist could easily create a product that performs in the same way without breaking the patent. On another hand, it's smart to patent manufacturing procedures. If you developed a special procedure to perform some kind of operation or if you created a new way of making an ingredient, consult with a patent lawyer to evaluate your options.

Step 2: Where to Find Your Product Formula

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Now that you've determined what you want to explore, it's time to figure out where you're going to find your product formula.

Here are some options to check out:

● Hire a chemist. Of course, this is the most logical option (and I'm not just saying that because I am a chemist). Hiring a chemist will allow you to get a custom, professional, high-quality formulation. Everything can be customized from ingredients to fragrance. A chemist should also be able to reverse engineer an existing product if you think it would be a good idea. If you decide to go this route, it's essential to be able to communicate your idea to another person who doesn't know about your project. With this in mind, provide as many details as you can about the product you want. These details include but aren't limited to: color, fragrance, container, special requirements (vegan, no parabens, organic…), star/must have ingredient(s) as well as ingredients to avoid. Keep in mind that It might not be possible to fulfill all requirements. It's also useful to tell the formulator whether you're planning on manufacturing small batches by yourself or use a contract manufacturer for production of larger quantities.

● Raw materials suppliers. Depending on what you're looking for, you may be able to find formulations from a raw materials supplier (for free). A simple Google search is a great way to start looking for these suppliers. You can also use the website ulprospector.com. It's a suppliers database and contains hundred of formulations as well. Big raw materials suppliers always have a team of chemists that work on the development of new formulations. They give away formulations because they want you to buy their ingredients (of course you're not obligated to). I highly recommend this route if you're on a budget but don't want to compromise on quality and safety of products.

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● Stock formulas. These are formulations on the web that are accessible to anyone. I don't recommend using this route unless you can find a way to customize these stock formulations somehow. Even only adding a custom scent can make a world of difference. It's also essential that you make sure final products are safe and stable. Most of the times these formulas are created by nonprofessionals and are horrible when it comes to performance.

● DIY. Get extra creative and develop your own formulas. Of course, this might be tricky if you don't have any chemistry knowledge, but it's possible. I recommend this route to creative people who are passionate about cosmetics and are willing to spend some extra time in shaping their business. In fact, if you need to learn how to formulate, the process of launching a line will necessarily take longer. Remember to source high-quality ingredients from wherever you'd like to, and then blend them into proprietary materials. This kind of custom formulation can go a long way toward helping you develop a recognizable brand. Don't forget to look into sources for fragrances, if you intend to use them. Essential oils are a great place to start especially if you want to keep your fragrance natural.

● Import from overseas. There are certain cosmetic companies abroad that have solid research and development departments. Formulations and ingredients are cheaper, indeed. One of these companies is called Spec Chem Ind and is China-based. Communication can sometimes be hard due to the language barrier, so you must be patient and respectful.

● Contract manufacturers. Many times manufacturers offer a formulation service.

The positive aspect is that the whole process of having your product on the market is streamlined. Everything, from formulation to packaging, is taking care of by them in the same place. The downside is that they can maintain ownership of the formula and you're forced to use the ingredients they have stock of. You should always negotiate the ownership of the formula up front. Some manufacturer also offer the possibility of "renting" a formula and purchase it at a later time. Based on my experience, this route ends up taking the same amount of time or even more compared to hiring a formulator

Tip: remember that **if you opt for private labelling, you don't need any formula**. You directly contact the manufacturer and you're ready to go.

Step 3: Test Your Products

Before you can sell your product on the market, you'll need to conduct some tests to ensure they're safe for human use, and suitable for sale. These tests include the following: 1. Stability tests 2. Sample tests 3. Batch tests

Stability Tests

Ideally you can test the products yourself, but it'll be difficult to gain the qualifications and tools needed to get your products to market. Instead, bring in an outside lab to test your products and secure the certifications they need.

Stability tests include evaluation of the appearance (color, odor, and texture) and physical-chemical stability: pH, weight, assay of preservatives, etc. There may also be a microbial count and preservation efficacy test. It's also possible to evaluate the compatibility between product and container.

See last chapter for a list of recommended testing facilities, if you plan to go this route.

All the above parameters should change only slightly over time (at least 1 year). This ensures the product has ample shelf life.

Stability tests are called "accelerated" because they don't happen real time. Sure, you could collect a sample and observe it for 12 months, but it is not a very realistic and cost-effective operation to do.

Since heat is know to accelerate chemical reactions, we put the samples in a heated, temperature-controlled chamber for no more than 3 months. What happens during these 3 months is exactly what would happen if we left the sample on the shelf for 12 years.

How to Accept or Reject a Sample Based on Stability Tests Results

Before you send your product sample to a lab, measure all the relevant parameters and write them in a document. This is called the COA (certificate of analysis).

For example, you should record the color, odor, pH, viscosity etc (only write what is relevant for your product - if there's no water, do not calculate pH). If you don't have instruments to measure all of these metrics, ask the lab to do it for you before you start the tests.

Stability tests have the purpose of ensuring the parameters you listed won't change over time. If you make a products with a 5.5 pH, you need to make sure this value won't change after a months or even after a year. If it does, you must reject the sample and review the formulation until you obtain consistent results.

This is a very important concept, as you want to offer your customers a consistent and solid product.

You should perform stability tests every time you make a modification to the formula, whenever you change the manufacturing method or facility, or when you alter the packaging.

Microbial count and preservative efficacy test (known as PET tests) are intended to ensure the safety of your product. Cosmetics don't have to be sterile, but they should be completely devoid of pathogen bacteria.

Testing labs can also support certain marketing claims such as " hypoallergenic," "SPF,: and "non comedogenic."f This is also an excellent way to further differentiate your product from the competitors that didn't take that step forward.

Sample Tests

As soon as you think your prototype is finished, introduce it to a focus group to see if it has good chances of selling.

I know many of you might be tempted to have friends and family members test the product, but I do not recommend that. It would be much better to have it tested by strangers.

The reason for this is simple: friends and family will never be objective. While you can start by asking them, you'll eventually have to include other people who aren't partial to you or your brand.

Wondering where to find people to test your product? Get creative. Almost everyone on this planet uses and buys cosmetics and everyone loves free stuff. Another good way of doing this would be to send the prototype(s) to bloggers,influencers, or some other expert in the niche and kindly ask for an honest impression.

If you have children or if you work in an office or know someone that does, take samples of the product to these places and ask random people to try it and leave a feedback. Do not offer anything in return. People might lie to you, but I assure you can tell what they really think just by observing their spontaneous reaction.

Batch Test

A batch test is a test where more people are involved. I like to call it batch test because you'll actually need a full batch of product instead of only a few samples.

Batch testing helps you creating a "buzz" around your brand while at the same time collecting more honest reviews. With this test you can actually start giving away units.

Having the product tested by different people will help you identify potential issues with it (allergies, skin reactions, redness etc.) and fix the problems before the product goes to market. There are many ways to find volunteers for this kind of test.

For example, you can join FB groups and offer the product to the members.

Tip: if you opted for private labelling, the manufacturer should be able to provide you with stability tests results and **all other relevant documents that prove the product is stable, safe and of a good quality**. They should also provide you with a GMP certificate that is requested to sell on some online marketplaces (for example Amazon). Don't forget to ask for these documents when you purchase- even if you're purchasing from oversea!

Step 4: Manufacturing

Once you've tested your products, it's time to manufacture them and send them out to market. How you manufacture the products will depend on the scope and scale at which you intend to sell them.

If you're selling your products on a small scale, for example, you may be able to manufacture your product at your home, or in your garage.

This is perfectly legal.

> "It's not against the law to manufacture cosmetics in your home. Keep in mind, however, that it's your responsibility to manufacture products in an environment that will not cause them to become adulterated." FDA website

If you intend to sell the product at a larger scale, or use more complex ingredients, you may need to hire a contract manufacturer to help you produce it.

Here are some key points to keep in mind:

● If you manufacture at home, use a separate area of the kitchen/house to avoid cross-contamination. Remember that people with severe allergies do exist; this is why avoiding cross-contamination is pivotal. Make sure you follow the Good manufacture practices.

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● If you hand-fill you need to put the same amount of product in every jar. To accomplish this, do not rely on visual inspection (called volumetric filling), yet use a scale to measure the weight of each unit. If you can afford it, buy a filling machine.

● Manufacturers tend to have a MOQ which is usually at least 5,000 pieces. This varies from professional to professional, so contact different companies before making a decision. If possible, visit the facility to ensure they work in a clean space and follow the GMP.

● Use adequate tools. I can't stress this enough. If you're serious about the business, you cannot make products using a kitchen blender.

Step 5: Packaging

For best results, your packaging should be unique, flashy, eye-catching, and in-line with your cosmetics. As you're developing your logo and packaging, don't forget to consider your audience.

For example, if you're creating a cosmetics line for teens, you might want to create flashy, colorful packaging. If your line is directed at older women, though, you may choose to opt for netural, more graceful packaging.

Create a few mock-ups of packaging and send them out to your friends and loved ones.

The feedback you get will be invaluable, and you'll come away with a great deal of intel about what people like and do not like.

Allowed Cosmetic Claims

If you're going to create a cosmetics line, you'll need to be aware of cosmetics claims.

According to the FDA: "Under the law, information on cosmetic labeling, including claims, must be truthful and not misleading. In addition, if a product is marketed with claims for purposes such as treating or preventing disease, or affecting the structure or function of the body—including the skin—it's a drug according to the law, and it must meet the requirements for drugs, even if it affects the appearance."

Check out the FDA website for more information on acceptable and unacceptable cosmetic claims or consult with an expert about your personal situation.

Generally speaking, your cosmetic packaging must include the following information:

- Name of the product & identity statement (helps the consumer understand what the product is).

- Net Weight

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- Directions for safe use
- Safety Warnings
- Name and Place of business
- Ingredients declaration
- Any other relevant information

If you're unsure whether your packaging meets FDA requirements but don't speak the lingo, use a product from a huge cosmetic company as inspiration. See what information they provide and where, then do the same with your product information.

Step 6: Branding & Selling

Branding and selling your cosmetics line is the most exciting part!

If you've reached this point, congratulations. Not only does branding help add your unique touch to the cosmetics line, but it's also one of the final steps in putting your vision out to the world and ensuring it's received with love and excitement.

What you'll find below are some BASIC branding concepts you need to grasp to run your business. Needless to say, this is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to branding and marketing. At the end of the book, you'll find list of resources to dig into this topic.

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Here's what you need to know as you get started:

What is a Brand?

Is a brand a logo? Is it a color scheme? Is it a copywriting voice?

The answer, of course, is *yes*, and *no*.

Branding is *all* these things, but it's not any of these things only.

Think of it this way:

A brand is the culmination of things that comes together to create your company. It's the way you talk to your customers, the colors you use to promote your products, and the way you arrange your website, marketing materials, and social media. It's your company's real and unique identity.

Think of some of the most recognizable companies out there: Coca-Cola, for example, or Starbucks. While neither is a cosmetics company, both are very recognizable brands.

5 Tips to Build Your Personal Brand

Now that you know what a brand is, let's start talking about how to build one. Here are some tips:

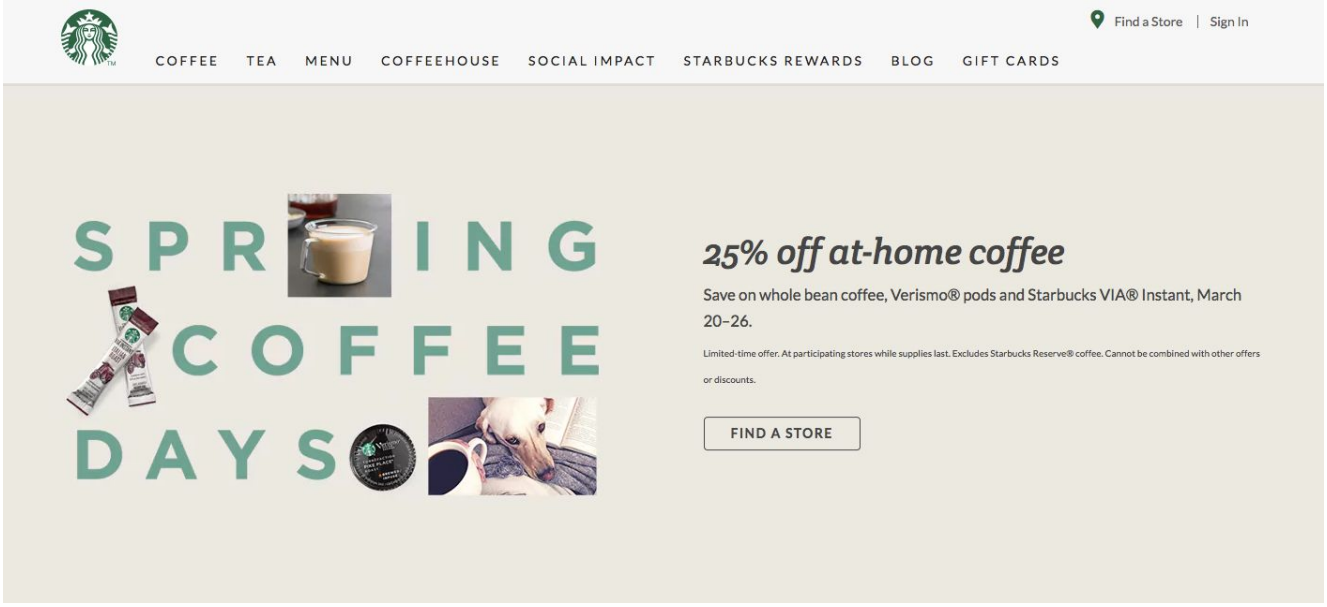
1. Figure Out What Makes Your Line Different

The thing that makes your brand different is your most essential marketing point. Figure this out early and use it to inform the rest of your marketing.

For example, maybe your skincare line is a botanical one. Maybe it's geared toward people with acne-prone skin. Maybe it's for dogs! No matter what the case may be, identify what makes you stand out and use it to your full advantage.

2. Create a Manifesto

Your brand's manifesto contains everything that matters to you. Your mission & your vision. Your beliefs and deep values.



Don't blur the lines, or soon or later it'll become evident and your brand will face serious troubles. If you don't care about the environment, don't pretend you do just because it's considered "cool." Your behaviour must match what you write in the manifesto. When creating your manifesto, you'll be tempted to include very common statements.

Don't do that.

Instead, take more time to perform a detailed analysis of your core values. Don't worry about what people will think and do not try to please anyone. You want to attract people whose values resonate with yours as those will be your best customers.

When you hire employees, give them a copy of the manifesto.

3. Write Your Value Proposition

A value proposition summarizes what your business does, and why it's different from the others.

It has to do with one of these elements: quality, service, selection,originality, customization, and specialisation.

If (as it should be) your product solves a problem, mention it in the value proposition. Avoid generic proposition that won't get anyone's attention.

Here are some examples:

● MAC Cosmetics. “Offering more than 100 shades of professional quality makeup must-haves for All Ages, All Races, All Sexes”. In just one sentence, MAC says a lot; it tells us that their makeup is professional and that is suitable for everyone no matter age or race. Furthermore, they’re saying their inventory has enough shades to satisfy anyone.

● Kiehl’s. “Experience top-rated skincare, cleansers, toners, moisturizers and anti-aging treatments to target unique concerns. Create your custom skincare routine today”. Kiehl’s proposition value tells that they have a solution for every skin concern/problem, and that their products are popular.

4. Get Social

Once you’ve identified your brand’s selling point, it’s time to get social with it. Choose two or three social platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, for example), and use them to start connecting with your readers.

You’re developing your brand (don’t forget it!), so be sure you’re using a picture of your logo, a consistent color scheme, and a friendly voice to build out your online brand.

Don’t be discouraged if things move slowly at first - it’ll pick up as the business goes on.

The #1 rule to grow on social media: give value without asking for anything. Don’t ask people to buy your product right away. Instead, educate them on who you are, what your values are, and what you do.

If you're starting a skincare brand, post every day about skin conditions and similar topics. Keep your posts 90% about education and information, and only 10% about selling.

Advertising on social media will also help you grow even faster. If you can afford it, hire a specialist to create targeted campaigns for your business to acquire new leads.

5. Build Out Your Website

Your website is the front page of your brand. With this in mind, be sure you're updating it as your brand grows. This includes showcasing new products, updating your website copy as you become more professional, and writing blogs to help people understand your mission and goals.

While you can customize your site to be virtually whatever you want it to be, keep in mind that all sites need a few basic pages: an about page, a list of your products, and a contact page. You may also add a blog, an FAQ, or anything else that serves your brand.

The "About" page is very important. People want to know who you are before they buy from you. Mention how and why you selected specific ingredients and include any relevant information that will help them connect with your brand.

Today, there are a few dozen drag-and-drop website builders to choose from, but Wordpress.org stands out as one of the most popular. Offering beautiful themes, full customization options, and a simple user interface, it's the best one out there for people who aren't otherwise experts on web design. Another option I strongly recommend is Squarespace.

Shopify is another amazing e-commerce tool which allows you to build an e-commerce site in a few minutes.

TIP: do not start selling cosmetics without a proper business structure. Although, it is possible to do business as sole proprietor, you shouldn't. Cosmetics are applied topically, including the eyes area. Setting up some business structure (for example a Limited Liability Company) protects your personal assets in case of lawsuits. Apart from establishing a LLC, it is a good idea to purchase additional insurance.

SELLING: HOW TO PRICE YOUR PRODUCTS

This is always a hot topic. You put a lot of effort into creating awesome products and of course you want to get rewarded! Don't worry if don't know how to do the math...You only need to follow instructions and adjust a bit if sales are slow or you're not making enough.

To set up a fair price for your products you should first calculate your cost/unit. This cost includes the ingredients, overhead, manufacturing (your time or employees), packaging, shipping, electricity etc. Obviously, this number is affected mostly by the packaging size, so remember to effectively check how much product is contained in your jar or bottle (place empty jar on a scale, press TARE, fill the jar and read the weight).

Once you have the cost/unit number, multiply by 4 to obtain the retail price. A four times margin should be enough to cover discounts and wholesale prices as well.

Remember that your target customers must be willing to pay the amount you set as price. If not, you'll probably have to review the formulation and opt for cheaper or less ingredients.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions you might have, and I wish you the best of luck in your endeavors! www.luisafanzani.com info@luisafanzani.com

CONCLUSION REMARKS

If you've made it this far, congratulations! Launching a cosmetics business is an exciting process, and I am sure you're going to do fabulously.

If you can keep going even during the hardest times when nothing seems to work, you'll eventually succeed. You won't become a millionaire overnight,but:

- You'll have more time to spend with the people you love and to work on the projects you're actually interested in.

- You'll have the freedom of working when you prefer (at the beginning this means every day).

- You'll have a way to express yourself and learn skills that can be applied in any aspects of your life.

- You'll never be bored again- I guarantee.

LUISA FANZANI
THE SCIENCE AND BUSINESS OF COSMETICS

PART 3: RESOURCES

Here's a list of tools that have had a tremendous impact on me, and that I want to share with you. Hopefully, you'll get a ton of value from them.

BOOKS

- The ONE thing

- The 4-Hour Workweek (this changed my life).
- The Million-Dollar, One-Person Business
- Crushing it! (Useful to understand how to grow on social media)
- The tax and legal playbook (definitely not a funny topic, but the book is very useful).
- Unscripted -one of the best book I've read on entrepreneurship

INGREDIENTS SUPPLIERS U.S & CANADA

The following are my favorite suppliers to buy ingredients in small amounts.

- Ulprospector Suppliers database -request free samples.

- Making Cosmetics
- Lotion Crafter
- Formulator Sample Shop

- Essential Wholesale
- TKB trading (mostly pigments and dyes)
- Lebermuth (fragrances)
- Ingredients to die for
- Brambleberry (Soap Making)
- The Herbarie
- Voyageur Soap & Candle, Surrey, BC
- Rain Shadow Labs, Oregon
- New Directions Aromatics
- Fragrance West

STABILITY TESTING

- AccuBiochem Lab-California. Good & affordable option for entry level businesses.
- Abich Inc. Montreal. This is my first choice because of the high standards and the huge plethora of tests they perform; besides stability and microbiological, they can help you substantiate claims such as "dermatologically tested" and many more. Write directly to the lab manager here

Starting a cosmetic line: the basics

ECOMMERCE/ WEBSITES BUILDERS

Shopify to create your online store in a few hours.

Squarespace

Big Commerce

Woocommerce (if you have a website already and want to add a store to it).

PACKAGING

Bottlemate.com (California supplier)

Aliexpress.com (China supplier- small amounts ok)

Alibaba.com (China supplier- recommended for at least 5,000 pieces)

Amazon.com

Ebay.com

Sometimes when I mention suppliers in China people think of low quality stuff. Please remember that even bottles you see for sale in the U.S have been manufactured and imported from China. Therefore, if you buy directly there, you are going to save money. There are high quality products as well as poor one. You need to ask for samples before you place a big order.

MISCELLANEOUS

Upwork.com to hire freelancers.

Fiverr.com to hire freelancers.

99Designs to launch a contest and have designers create a logo or packaging for you

Legalzoom to form your entity online (LLC, Inc. etc). I formed my LLC on legalzoom and can't complain about one single aspect. They also help you to protect intellectual properties and offer consultations with different attorneys.