

MICROBIOME SKINCARE -

A New Beauty Trend

Be+Radiance, founded by Aïmara Coupet, is the first microbiome-friendly makeup range for darker skin tones



Brands like Be-Radiance are ushering in a new generation of microbiome-supporting skincare that is cleaner, more effective, and more symbiotic with our bodies. When we say microbiome skincare, we're essentially talking about probiotic-infused products that add bacteria to the skin and help it maintain its optimal balance.

What did you do before you became an entrepreneur?

I was born in the Caribbean, but grew up in Canada. I graduated from HEC Montreal Business School and originally wanted to work in fashion, but I ended up interviewing at L'Oréal, not knowing that beauty would become my passion.

I started my career in 1999 at L'Oréal Canada as Product Manager for Makeup. I then moved to Sephora's global headquarters in Paris to develop the Sephora Collection. Six years later, I took over as the Head of Development and Marketing at blackUp Cosmetics. At that time only a few brands were trying to meet the needs of women of colour.

I left blackUp in 2015 and started to work as an independent consultant and in 2016, I worked with a French lab to develop a very innovative foundation, a cucumber water-based foundation that was free from silicone and petrochemical oils. Working on that very special product, I knew I was developing something new, and I got a vision of a makeup brand truly doing good to the skin using very innovative ingredients and formulations.



Aïmara Coupet, Be+Radiance founder

What was the 'lightbulb moment' for Be+Radiance?

The cucumber water-based foundation was the first step to creating Be+Radiance. Getting to learn more about the skin microbiome in 2018 and started working with a Doctor in Biology to include micro encapsulation of active probiotics in powders was the second lightbulb moment. I was very excited about that vision of a new makeup brand that's good for the skin, including its microflora.

What are microbiomes?

The skin microbiota is made up of the micro-organisms that live on the skin, including the face. They contribute to skin health, combatting external aggressors and stopping pathogens like acne and eczema growing.

They also play a role in skin ageing and skin health. Unfortunately, pollution and stress can affect this natural barrier if your beauty routine is too aggressive.

Be+Radiance powders contain probiotics: those famous micro-organisms you find in things like yoghurt and fermented foods. These 'living' probiotics are encapsulated using a new and innovative technology so they can be added to the powder.

On contact with the skin, this good bacteria activates with benefits for the microbiota it colonises, helping to create a bacteria ecosystem that is naturally protective. This purifies and rebalances the skin and protects it from external aggressors.

When did you launch the brand?

Be+Radiance was born in 2019. The probiotic infused makeup launched in October 2020.

What would you say is the brand's USP?

The products contain probiotics encapsulated using a unique technology to benefit your skin and feed the 'good' bacteria. We are the first healthy makeup brand that goes beyond clean/natural to really act positively on the skin and support its microbiome. We are also multi-racial, so with expertise to better serve melanated skin.

Why are your products so good for black skin?

Melanin rich skin is probably the most hyper-reactive skin. It's sensitive and gets

'We also need to see more black women working as chemists, leading the development and the marketing at beauty brands.'



Cucumber Water-Based Foundation

Pomegranate Velvet Touch Primer

unbalanced easily: excess sebum, dark spots, breakouts. Even though it does not age as fast as white skin and does not wrinkle in the same way, it's a more difficult skin to please as it needs to be kept cool and not irritated by too many chemicals.

We create makeup that is very lightweight, letting skin breathe by not causing occlusion (blockage) with silicones and oils. We are creating products that do not contain alcohol, or preservatives and fragrances that will irritate and disrupt the skin. We also are very aware of the makeup result needed for black skin.

How have customers reacted to your products? Any great feedback?

Yes, we have great feedback as most of our best-selling shades are in the medium to dark range. A lot of our customers are saying that they don't only see the makeup results, they also feel and see the positive results on their skin. You can read comments on our e-shop.

Why is it so important to you to be inclusive for all skin tones?

First because I was born to a black mother whose life experience revealed to me how under-served she was by the beauty industry. Secondly, because I have been in the industry for more than 20 years, I can see that, even though we are more inclusive today, we are still not doing the job properly! We need more R&D dedicated to melanin-rich skin, we need to move forward and stop thinking we should all fit in one size with a Caucasian-centric approach hiding behind a great visual with a black model.

We also need to see more black women working as chemists, leading the development and the marketing at beauty brands. My work creating Be+Radiance is dedicated to innovation with an important focus on serving better darker complexions. Hopefully this will help in paving the way for more.

What are your best-sellers?

So far, we have launched five products: the cucumber water, silicone-free foundations, powders, highlighters, blush, primer and a face oil. I would say our Pomegranate Velvet Touch Primer (£22) and, of course, our Cucumber

Water-Based Foundation in 17 shades (£26) are our two best-sellers. Our probiotic-infused range, including powders/highlighters and blushers, are also very popular.

How has your mixed-heritage background affected your work?

It has made a huge difference! I want my grandkids to live in a world where beauty is no longer associated with a lighter complexion and where beauty products are developed taking all skin tones into consideration from the very beginning.

How has funding been for the business?

I previously did a friends and family round in 2020. Now I'm trying to raise a seed round and I have to admit it's not easy to convince VCs (venture capitalists) that healthy makeup with specific expertise on melanated skin is a huge opportunity, so it's still a work in progress.

Any advice for other black entrepreneurs?

Go for it, work hard and believe in your learning skills. It's impossible to know everything and be good at everything, but learning is something we all can do. Stay focused and take one step at a time. There are more and more opportunities to develop black-owned businesses – it's possible to make it!

What are your future plans?

Succeeding in raising that seed round is the most important thing. I need to make sure I can continue to develop the brand with more innovative products.

Where can we find you?

Website: uk.beradiancebeauty.com



Aimara with her family: 'Growing up I could see how my mother was under-served by the beauty industry'

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