



## Boundless Beauty

The Asia-Pacific is an infinitely diverse region, inclusive of countries beyond those in East Asia, where the U.S. beauty industry has traditionally placed its focus.

Here, Beauty Inc examines how companies are addressing that diversity — and the work that remains to be done. Our coverage starts on page 5.

**PLUS: Huda Beauty's newest brand and William Lauder on longevity in the business.**

ILLUSTRATION BY GIANNA SARMIENTO

# Beauty Bulletin



Lezlee Westine and George Calvert at PCPC 2020.

## PCPC 2021 Focuses on Post-COVID-19 Recovery

● **The 2021 Personal Care** Products Council Summit focused on beauty bouncing back after a year hampered by the coronavirus pandemic.

The event, which took place from May 11 to 13 online, included an array of executives talking about the various levels of recovery, from bolstering sales to reintroducing workforces to the office.

For the event's first session, William P. Lauder, executive chairman of the Estée Lauder Cos. Inc., sat down with Jenny B. Fine, WWD and Beauty Inc's executive editor, beauty.

"One of my key takeaways for the year is the resilience of everybody as individuals to adapt to a meaningfully changed environment," Lauder said. "For many of us, working in the Zoom environment, we were only marginally less productive than working in person."

Transparency – from advocacy to sustainability – is also top of mind for Lauder, as consumers become ever more knowledgeable about what's in the products they use and how they are manufactured. "What we do in beauty is surprise and delight the consumer by offering her product

that she didn't know she wanted until she sees that she can't do without it," Lauder said. "In order to attract what we need, which are Generation Z and Millennials, we also have to be great citizens, and stand for something that our employees can be proud of."

Lauder also tackled the acceleration of e-commerce, noting that the shift is expected to be a permanent one for beauty. When it comes to Amazon as a key outlet for prestige beauty, though, the jury is still out. "Their efforts are very nascent, and it would be unfair to criticize without having seen a more fulsome effort over a sustained period of time," Lauder said. "Amazon has been quite innovative and revolutionary in a number of ways, and at the same time, this type of shopping has not enhanced the experience."

But the ever-increasing democratization of distribution, as with Ulta Beauty's partnership with Target and the Sephora-Kohl's deal – those reflect permanent changes to the landscape. "The notion of how we stimulate the consumer has changed," he said. "We've seen that online shopping has replaced two-day trips to shop from a more remote location. What are we going to do to serve

that consumer? [...] It is going to be a hybridized lump, most of our retail trade is oversized and the amount of square footage per unit. They can reduce the size of the unit because I don't believe they need to hold as much inventory. The hybrid model is having inventory for merchandise the consumer wishes to buy right away, such as beauty, and having less of an inventory in other areas," he continued.

As the Estée Lauder Cos., founded by Lauder's grandmother Estée, turns 75 this year, the executive also spoke about what brands need for longevity. "You've got to have a brand and a product that is relevant to your consumer, and secondly, the consumer's got to perceive that what you offer them is desirable enough for them to spend their disposable income on it," Lauder said. "Lastly, that experience has got to be worth it for them so that they're willing to come back again."

Other speakers included influencer and founder Camila Coelho, Imagine cofounder Paul Polman, Procter & Gamble global beauty chief communications officer Kelly Vanasse, and PCPC president and chief executive officer Lezlee Westine.

– James Manso

## By The Numbers: Influencers Driving Brands' Success

New data from Tribe Dynamics points to the influencers behind the brands with the most social media capital.

BY JAMES MANSO

**IN SPITE OF SLUGGISH** sales of color cosmetics, makeup brands are still dominating influencer marketing.

New data from Tribe Dynamics, which tracks the top brands garnering earned media value, shows that the top 10 thus far this year are all focused on makeup. Despite the proliferation of TikTok, Instagram and YouTube remained the most profitable channels.

"Video content, in general, is hugely important. That's an area that we're seeing influencers invest in, brands invest in and consumers respond to," said Brit McCorquodale, Tribe Dynamics' senior vice president of revenue. Instagram Stories have also become a higher priority for social marketers. "Instagram Stories have surpassed the total volume of grid content, exponentially – probably tenfold," she said.

Here, the list of top 10 brands ranked by EMV, and the top influencers.

1. **COLOURPOP**  
\$214,019,167, *Amelia Morley.*
2. **ANASTASIA BEVERLY HILLS**  
\$184,636,016, *Thivi Baskar.*
3. **MORPHE**  
\$184,616,353, *James Charles.*
4. **BENEFIT**  
\$147,385,385, *Angelica Torres.*
5. **HUDA BEAUTY**  
\$132,933,974, *Petra Miettinen.*
6. **FENTY BEAUTY**  
\$128,713,291, *Nae Harrison.*
7. **NYX PROFESSIONAL MAKEUP**  
\$127,016,282, *Mei Pang.*
8. **MAC COSMETICS**  
\$112,390,556, *Bailey Sarian.*
9. **LAURA MERCIER**  
\$101,869,840, *Vanessa Funes.*
10. **NARS**  
\$97,195,666, *Lena Bagrowska.*

Source: Tribe Dynamics  
Period: January 2021 to April 2021

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# Huda Kattan Launches No-Makeup Makeup With Glowish

“My whole problem with tinted moisturizers, they just move all over the place,” said Kattan. BY ALLISON COLLINS

**HUDA KATTAN**, the mega beauty influencer known for her elaborate and full-coverage makeup looks, has gone low-key in quarantine.

Kattan said during the coronavirus pandemic she, like most people, was wearing less makeup. Unlike most people, it led her to develop another brand.

This one is called Glowish, and launches June 1 on HudaBeauty.com and at Sephora with a small range meant to infuse makeup with skin care to give users a no-makeup makeup look. Glowish's first products are Multidew Skin Tint, which comes in 13 shades and costs \$37, and Soft Radiance Bronzing Powder, which comes in five shades and costs \$31, and corresponding makeup brushes.

“It’s for all of us honestly. It’s for the light/medium girl or the full-glam girl when she wants to put something else on as another option. Today actually, I put it on top of my full glam, too, because it’s just so luminous,” Kattan said during a video interview.

Glowish's products contain a minimum of 80 percent natural ingredients and are housed in postconsumer recycled packaging. They contain skin care-oriented



Huda Kattan



Glowish is no-makeup makeup.

ingredients, like Damascus rose oil and red bell pepper extract, which is meant to protect skin from blue light, Kattan said.

It took a while for Kattan, who started her beauty business by launching false eyelashes, to get on board with Glowish's less-is-more concept.

“It was supposed to be a concept of weekend skin,” she said. “My team came to me, and was like, ‘on the weekend people don’t really glam, so we want to do this idea of barely-there makeup.’ I was like, ‘well, I think it depends on who you ask, because I feel some people when they go out on the weekend, they’re doing full glam.’”

“I wasn’t sold in the beginning. Light makeup? Like, eh, not really — I have a few tinted moisturizers that I use, but very little,” Kattan said.

But after a six-month-long internal debate and a lab sample that Kattan says didn’t move when she applied it to her face — “my whole problem with tinted moisturizers, they just move all over the place” — she was sold. Glowish's Multidew Skin Tint contains ethically sourced mica,

Kattan said, which allows for glow with a less slippery finish than a traditional skin tint.

Marketing materials for Glowish were inspired by quarantine-era yoga pants, Kattan noted. “When you’re not photoshopping images in a photo shoot at all — that was a mistake — I was like, ‘this shows my underwear,’” she said. “But it did represent us at the time in quarantine.”

During COVID-19, “the purpose behind makeup changed for me,” Kattan said.

“I felt like before it was more outward, it was more about everyone else having to see me in a certain way, having to glam a certain way, and it became very much about me wanting to feel good for myself and wanting to put my face on because I wanted to look good for me,” she said. She spent a lot of time going through old products for inspiration, and realized that she didn’t want to have to be all glam or no glam.

“Why is it one or the other, why can’t I have my moments where I just do a little flick and put a little individual lash on the corner, I put a lip stain on and just a little Glowish and bronzer — that was my glam honestly during COVID[-19], like the whole time, and I felt sexy,” Kattan said.

Glowish is Kattan's fourth product line. She launched with Huda Beauty, expanded into fragrance with Kayali, and debuted skin care line Wishful in early 2020. She is back in the chief executive officer seat as of March, according to LinkedIn, and is open to launching more brands. Former CEO Nathalie Kristo is said to have left the company.

Kattan is open to launching more brands — but not to fill white space. “I was actually sitting with Martin Brock, the new CEO of Sephora, a few months ago and he was asking me a lot of questions,” she recalled. He was like, ‘you know, it’s really clear the products you guys create have a lot to do with a personal journey that [you’re] on.’”

Kattan said Brock's assessment is spot-on, and that her product lines have come out with her phases of wanting to cover up or celebrate her skin.

“Recently, Sephora came to us and was like, you have to do hair care, hair care is where everyone is focused on,” Kattan said. But she has a complicated relationship with her hair, which breaks easily, she said, and can’t really see herself diving into the hair category.

“The retailers are pushing everyone to do hair care. I felt like I was doing something wrong by saying ‘no,’” Kattan said. “I have no passion toward it.”



The rise in violence against people of Asian descent sparked protests nationwide.

# America's Beauty Industry Should Recognize the Diversity of the Asia-Pacific

The region is infinitely diverse, home to people of all shapes, sizes and complexions. It's time for the U.S. beauty industry to recognize that.

BY ALEXA TIETJEN

**THE U.S. BEAUTY INDUSTRY** has yet to come close to reflecting the infinite diversity of the Asia-Pacific.

The region is home to more than four billion people and more than 50 countries, each rich with culture, language, religion, tradition, music, food, fashion, beauty and more. There is a shared interconnectedness within this region, though that hardly constitutes the monolith that Asians and Pacific Islanders are commonly misperceived to be.

"Asia is not just a blanket term," said Sam Cheow, senior vice president of global makeup innovation for the Estée Lauder Cos. Inc.

Cheow, who is of Chinese descent, was born in Malaysia and moved to New Zealand as a teenager. There, he was exposed to the term Pacific Islander for the first time.

"I'm not sure a lot of people know what Pacific Islander is," Cheow said. "The Pacific Islands are categorized into three regions: Micronesia, Melanesia, Polynesia."

Asians, including Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders are often grouped together as one — a misinformed practice that can lead to assumptions and stereotypes, while simultaneously leaving out entire populations that don't fit into a perceived bucket.

Purvi Desai, the founder of Zaaina,

an artisanal skin care brand that draws from Desai's cultural heritage, said India, where she was born, is often left out of conversations about Asian beauty, which tend to focus on East Asia.

"I've been in this business for 10 years," Desai said. "There are not that many Indian-focused beauty lines out there."

Zaaina's business has grown nearly 700 percent since the onset of COVID-19. The company has retail partnerships with Amazon, Etsy and Costco and sells its line of more than 40 products direct-to-consumer.

Each soap is handmade in Arizona, where Desai is based. The brand is inspired by Desai's mother, who made her own creams and soaps using ingredients, such as turmeric, that were readily available in her kitchen.

"Beauty [in India] is more about holistic living," Desai said. "We were always paying so much attention to what kind of food we were consuming and more of a balanced lifestyle."

Anchit Nayar, chief executive officer of Nykaa.com, a beauty e-tailer based in India, said homemade concoctions are a staple of the Indian idea of beauty. Millennials are coupling this tradition with science-proven skin care.

"The new-age skin-care savant knows his [or] her acids and ingredients," Nayar wrote via email. "An increased interest in wellness, with solutions based on skin type, ingredient-led formulations and advanced skin-care routines are becoming popular. We are seeing a shift toward skinimalism, where more people embrace their skin's natural texture and adopt minimalistic skin care and personalized routines."

As India experiences a devastating surge of the COVID-19 pandemic, Nykaa.com has partnered with GiveIndia to help provide equipment to frontline workers. It has donated Rs. 75 lakhs, and is asking employees to donate a day's worth of salary to its fundraising efforts.

The Asia-Pacific's beauty and personal care market is worth more than \$170 billion as of 2020, according to Euromonitor. That's more than five times what the world's top beauty manufacturer brought in last year, according to WWD's Top 100.

China is the fastest-growing market in the Asia-Pacific and was one of the first markets in the Asia-Pacific region to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Sharon Kwek, Mintel's senior innovation and insights analyst for beauty and personal care.

Outside of "innovation powerhouses" like China, Japan and South Korea, Kwek named Indonesia and Thailand as "emerging markets" with "huge potential."

"Indonesia is definitely one to ►



Sam Cheow of Estée Lauder.



Purvi Desai, founder of Zaaina.



Anchit Nayar, CEO of Nykaa.com.



Sharon Kwek of Mintel.



Jane Lau, influencer and founder of Chuck's.

watch because of their rising middle class, having their own rich, local resources,” said Kwek, who is based in Singapore. “Consumers [are] becoming increasingly educated [and] financially independent — that gives them more spending power. Also, the whole e-commerce space, the market penetration rate is pretty fast and high-accelerating. The cost of data is a lot more affordable. Also the digital growth — social commerce, e-commerce, we are already seeing that happening.”

Thailand's middle class underwent a growth period “a few years before Indonesia,” Kwek said. Thailand was particularly quick to pick up on global beauty trends and localize them.

“They still have their overall trend and outlook, but in a more localized way that will be more well-received by their own local consumers,” Kwek said.

According to Euromonitor, Indonesia's beauty and personal care market is worth nearly \$10 billion. Thailand's is worth nearly \$7 billion.

“Every market has their own cultural values and practices, and their own rituals,” Kwek said. “It magnifies the beauty of the entire Asian beauty market.”

Across the Asia-Pacific, beauty and wellness are merging, as they are in the U.S. and Western countries, to create a modern approach to total wellness.

In Malaysia, where influencer Jane Lau is based, mental wellness is “still taboo to speak about,” she said.

“It's getting there, but it's not as big as in the U.S.,” Lau said. “It's not as big as body health. Some people really need help, so I've been

working a lot with doctors, trying to figure out how we can actually spread more awareness.”

Lau aims to raise mental health awareness through Chuck's, the beauty brand she founded in 2019. Chuck's launched with a single product: a moisturizing honey face mask called Self Love that retails as part of a trio bundle for \$65 on Chuck's website. Self Love is Chuck's bestselling product.

“Instead of just selling a product, I want [customers] to actually feel good about themselves,” Lau said. “The next product was Glow On [a brightening mask with peony] and the third was Chuck It [a purifying mask featuring kale]. Besides focusing on skin care, I focus a lot on mental wellness, personal issues and mental health issues.”

Lau is interested in taking Chuck's international via retail partnerships, but has so far found it difficult to do so during the pandemic. Malaysia was on lockdown when Lau spoke to WWD via Zoom.

“We do ship internationally, [it's] just that the shipping fee is expensive,” Lau said. “[Chuck's is] a small business, and I don't have a big volume of orders. Product-wise, I'm not going to launch a lot of products. I believe in simple skin care. I didn't launch everything [at once]. I started with sheet masks and I came out with a cream and then sunscreen, and I'm now working on a new product, which is probably going to launch in September.”

Mary Jane Ong, CEO of Philippines-based brand Pili Ani, which was founded by Ong's mother, said Pili

Ani aims to popularize pili and elemi oils, which come from plants native to the Philippines.

“When we say Philippines, we want people to know that's where pili and elemi oils come from,” Ong said. “That's something that we want to make a dent on in the beauty industry, and that's why we're inspired to do the work that we do — because we want to represent the Philippines.”

Pili Ani's Ageless Concentrate, which retails for \$32 for 15 ml., is its bestselling product. It features pili oil, for antiaging and moisturizing, and elemi oil, for firming and smoothing.

Last year, Pili Ani took a hit to its business as a result of the pandemic. The company is now taking measures to build up a U.S. audience. Earlier this year, it was featured on HSN.

Hanna Felipe, Pili Ani's marketing manager, noted that while the company is proud of its Filipino heritage, it is aware of colonial beauty standards stemming from Spain's 400-year rule over the archipelago.

“The Philippines has been conquered by Spain for 400 years, so we cannot remove that aspiring for that biracial look. We call it the mestiza look,” Felipe said. “There's also people who are embracing their brown skin. We have been a hodgepodge of cultures throughout the centuries.”

The desire for fair skin, and the pursuit of it through skin-lightening practices, came up organically in each phone interview WWD Beauty Inc conducted for this article. As Felipe mentioned, colonization is often at the root of colorism within Asian cultures, though there are other factors at play, too.

Last year, Unilever changed the name of its Fair & Lovely products, which are sold across Asia and used for skin-lightening purposes, to Glow & Lovely. The name change, which came in the midst of a global reckoning on race, was widely covered, but consumers were quick to both decode the updated marketing lingo and point out that changing what's on the bottle is not the same as changing what's inside of it.

“In some Asian countries, having fair skin is associated with a life comfortably spent inside a home, away from the sun, not having to work,” Cheow of Estée Lauder said. “It signifies that you're either wealthy or rich, and you don't have to work. That is not true, at all.”

“People do stereotype one another based on the color of one's skin, no different from other parts of the world that we've seen recently,” he continued.

Colorism, Lau said, is often perpetuated by the media via TV shows and films that cast actors who have a lighter complexion or more Eurocentric features, much like the mestizas Felipe referred to.

“In Malaysia, we all have different skin colors,” Lau said. “Whitening products are always the bestselling. There are still people who want to look fairer. Slowly, I think people are starting to accept that every skin color is beautiful.”

“It's hard to educate everyone because [in] rural areas, [people] have televisions and whatever they see on the TV — an actress who is fair — they will go for that,” she continued. “They are not too exposed to social media.”

Beauty companies, especially Western companies, exploit colorism via their own advertising, featuring white or fair-skinned women on products marketed toward women of color. These practices are often strategic: The skin-lightening industry is incredibly lucrative, projected to surpass \$12 billion by 2027, according to Global Industry Analysts.

However, these practices perpetuate a global whitewashing and misperception that proximity to whiteness is the ultimate beauty standard.

In America specifically, Asian people are often subject to what is known as the “model minority” myth — that Asian Americans “are hardworking overachievers who have made it to the highest level of success,” said Cheow.

“It is assumed that Asians don't need any help, don't require any further examination of how they're raised,” he said. “It's important to understand that by grouping all Asian Americans together and assuming all of them will do well, you end up ignoring people who might not fit into that group.”

“In the beauty world, we have to take more of an active role to debunk that 'model minority' myth,” he continued. “The color of our skin often shapes a big part of our identity.”

Specificity when speaking about Asia-Pacific is needed to help beauty companies become more inclusive of the region and better serve a particular customer base.

“What do you mean [by] Asia? Are you referring to Northeast Asia, South Asia or Southeast Asia? There are different needs [in each],” Cheow said, noting that climate is often a factor companies overlook in their formulas.

“The first thing corporate America can do to make progress is to recognize that we need to be specific,” Cheow said. “It's toward a positive direction to educate the beauty industry. Companies can play a role in helping employees to unlearn stereotypes. It's more of an education to ensure that there is a lot of diversity and equity training to talk about the different experiences of Asian-heritage Americans.” ■

# How Anti-Asian Violence Has Impacted Beauty's Leaders

Executives from Tatcha, Live Tinted and other companies share how they've been impacted by anti-Asian violence. BY RYMA CHIKHOUNE AND ALLISON COLLINS

**BEAUTY INC ASKED** leaders in the beauty industry about the impact recent anti-Asian violence has had on them personally and professionally.

**DEEPICA MUTYALA,**  
FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
OFFICER, LIVE TINTED:

“Asian Americans are not monolithic. We don’t look the same, we have different backgrounds and cultures. What unites us is a shared experience: a strong work ethic, dedication to our family values, and experiences with racism in America. I was made fun of for smelling like curry, my mother’s Indian accent, and the color of my skin. I remember the bottle of skin bleaching cream on my mother’s vanity used as an everyday moisturizer, or the foundation that was intentionally five shades too light.

Growing up, I had a complicated relationship with the rays of the sun. Socially, I was told to embrace them, to go tanning and lay out. Culturally, I had strict orders to avoid them in fear that my skin would become more tinted. The duality carried through to my features; I felt the need to alter my look to better fit within Eurocentric beauty standards: I dyed my hair blond and wore blue contact lenses. It took me way too long but now the things that make me identify with my Indian culture are my most favorite qualities about myself.

I had no one to look up to that looked like me when I was younger. My ideals of beauty were based on what I would see in the media. I remember telling my traditional Indian parents, at the age of 16, that I wanted to pursue a nontraditional career to create a brand that showed real representation. The only way to create a world where we are represented is if we pave a new path forward, and it is going to take a collective of us to make that happen. I want the next generation to grow up proudly identifying with their Asian culture. If my contribution helps change the narrative, then I will have lived my purpose.”

**JIN SOON,**  
FOUNDER, JIN SOON:

“Although I am lucky enough to have never been personally assaulted, I am very much aware of the escalation of anti-Asian violence. I stay vigilant in my day-to-day existence in order to avoid potentially dangerous



situations. With regard to anti-Asian violence in my professional setting, I have experienced what I refer to as “immigrant racism;” everything from snide remarks about my English to outright racist comments made to my face. Fortunately, the vast majority of my daily interactions are positive and supportive, and for that I am very grateful.”

**JU RHYU,**  
FOUNDER, HERO COSMETICS

“I lived in New York City for 10-plus years and I had never felt scared as a Korean American woman. Not at 8 p.m. or 2 a.m. Not on the subway or walking around. But when I went back to visit at the beginning of April this year, I was really scared that I

might witness or, worse yet, be victim to anti-Asian violence. I was always on guard when walking around. I avoided evening activities so that I didn’t have to walk around at night. I started carrying a keychain alarm in case something happened. I felt scared for my parents who were visiting New York for the first time since the pandemic. I was worried for their safety and whether they would be harassed or attacked, as many older Asian Americans have been targeted.

And this isn’t just an American thing because earlier this year a Japanese man was attacked with acid in Paris (where I live) in the 17th arrondissement. There’s been rising anti-Asian sentiment here as well due to the pandemic and its origins.

These events have really pushed me to think about how to help and what to do. To be honest, I still don’t have a concrete answer, but I am cautiously optimistic. The beauty industry and Asian culture are very intertwined, and it’s been encouraging to see the recognition and acknowledgement of Asia’s impact on Western beauty culture. I’m also optimistic that the increased awareness of the things that we as Asian Americans go through will bring more empathy, kindness, and understanding. We need more of that in this world.” ▶



Shrankhla Holecek



**SHRANKHLA HOLECEK,**  
FOUNDER AND CEO, UMA OILS:

“For me, both personally and professionally, the despicable anti-Asian violence further underscores the glaring disconnect between what we are willing to take from a community and culture versus what we are willing to give back or stand up for. It’s appalling to think that those who perpetrate these heinous acts or sentiments have undoubtedly benefitted greatly from the richness that the Asian community has added to our lives — from art and cuisine to beauty, science and innovation.

It is this ease of appropriation that greatly bothers me about us as a people — we take the great gifts other cultures have long offered so quickly for granted that we assimilate them as ours without even pausing to recognize that the very same accent you may mock in passing is also what gave you your favorite Korean skin care product, or the Yoga practice you’re so quick to ‘gram about.

I say this a little facetiously — but I almost wonder if communities like ours that have so selflessly offered everything from cultural practices to hard work for ages, often with graceful modesty, would be better served if we constantly made a point about reminding everyone loudly where many of the things they love

every day came from. Maybe we mandate that all images of every gua sha tool be accompanied by a smiling Chinese person, or every luxury ‘Ayurveda-inspired’ beauty or turmeric/ashwagandha supplement company be asked point blank what they’ve done to alleviate the COVID-19 crisis in India right now? Obviously I’m being a little hyperbolic for effect, but I think all of us need to strongly rethink what our balance of give-and-take in personal spheres looks like. I think the answers will surprise us all, and I hope it inspires us all to be better. The world needs it more than ever.”

**VICKY TSAI,**  
FOUNDER AND CEO, TATCHA:

“The rise in anti-AAPI hate and violence has certainly affected me, but I know I’m not alone. I’m concerned for my own safety, and recently I’ve been avoiding leaving my house or going out alone. When I do go anywhere it’s with my husband or our 70-pound dog. My daughter has been impacted by it at school since the start of the pandemic, with one of her classmates telling her he hoped the ‘China Virus’ went back to Asia and killed everyone.

As a mother I’m concerned about the safety of my family and my parents, and as a leader I’m worried for my company. A large portion of our employees and clients identify as



Vicky Tsai

Yanghee Paik



AAPI, and it’s our duty as a brand to create positive social impact within the community we serve. At the same time, I also recognize that I also have resources, a platform, and a voice that many others in our community do not. My goal is to use them to be a part of the solution both for ourselves but also for our children — there’s no quick fix to systemic bias and racism. It’s time for us to turn passion into progress and focus on how we as a community can create lasting, meaningful change.”

**YANGHEE PAIK,**  
COFOUNDER AND CEO, RAEL:

“I first moved to the U.S. with my family when I was in middle school.

After three years, we went back to Korea, but it became my dream to come back to the U.S. and develop my career here. America meant so many great things to me — unlimited opportunities, diversity, openness and freedom. When I got into an American MBA school, I left my whole family and friends behind to pursue my American dream with great excitement.

That is why the recent violence against the AAPI community has been truly heartbreaking to see. A lot of us or their parents immigrated here due to their American dream, and we have been trying so hard to fit in and...to be accepted. Before I realized how serious this problem was, I am afraid I was trying to close my eyes to it. There were moments when I was treated unfairly or felt offended, but I just pushed my emotions aside and believed it was a part of assimilating, a price I need to pay as an immigrant.

Yet the recent movement to stop Asian hate greatly inspired me to have a voice and think of my and Rael’s role to make a difference. Our company was founded by three female immigrants from Korea, and more than half of our employees have Asian heritage. We all felt emotional about the growing violence against our community and wanted to help raise its awareness by talking about it on our social media, making donations, and educating our followers about our heritage and role. We also decided not to be shy about our founders’ root and product technology from Korea. Through all these efforts, we’re hopeful people will learn about what it means to be Asian American in this country and how we can respect and embrace our differences.” ■

# Company Founders Bringing Their Asian Heritage, Traditions Into the Wellness Space

“There’s been a lot of cultural appropriation that’s happened over the last couple of years with brands,” said William Li, cofounder of supplement brand The Hao Life. BY RYMA CHIKHOUNE

## THE GLOBAL WELLNESS

Institute includes “The Future of Immune Health: Stop Boosting, Start Balancing” among the trends to watch this year in its latest Global Wellness Trends Report.

Immune systems are complex and influenced by an ideal balance of many factors, according to immunologists. And that quest for balance in health is rooted in many ancient wellness practices, particularly in Asia. For decades, the Western world has adapted many of the customs, like utilizing adaptogenic herbs, acupuncture, massage and exercises such as tai chi — all made to balance and ultimately strengthen the body and its defense against viruses or infections. Today, we continue to see Asian-influenced brands and companies in wellness, particularly with the recent boom of matcha lattes, gua sha tools and varying supplements available on the market.

“There’s been a lot of cultural appropriation that’s happened over the last couple of years with brands,” said William Li, cofounder of supplement brand The Hao Life.

“But when they come out with these formulas, they don’t really pay the respect and homage to the greater philosophy that’s at the root of these remedies,” he continued. “Danielle and I really felt that there was an opportunity to tell that bigger story.”

Launched this month with longtime friend Danielle Chang (the two bonded over their “shared Chinese heritage”), The Hao Life offers six ingestibles made with adaptogenic herbs historically used in Chinese medicine with ingredients like goji berries and black sesame. “Hao” is the Chinese word for “good” and its character represents harmony.

“Unlike Western medicine, which has more of a treatment-based model where you take drugs and you take things when you have symptoms or illness, in traditional Chinese medicine, the idea is much more preventative,” Li said. “What we are proposing is that our supplements, which are based on millennia-old formulas, are something to take on a regular basis to keep your body completely balanced.”

Traditional Chinese medicine, he explained, views the body as an interconnected ecosystem, and balance is aimed by targeting the five vital organs: the heart, lungs, kidneys, liver and spleen. The brand’s tablets — created with all-natural, vegan ingredients largely sourced

in Asia and made in California — are intended for each of the organ systems.

“Growing up, whenever we were sick, our mothers would always go to the kitchen cabinet instead of the medicine cabinet, and along with the food, they would boil these bitter concoctions of herbs that would smell so bad that we had to pinch our noses to drink them,” chimed in Chang. “But, you know, these bitter concoctions really work.”

Along with the strong odors, it takes time to brew the herbs, so the duo, working with Dr. David Melladew, decided to simplify the process by supplying the herbs in pill form, she added.

“They’re all certified for purity, potency, authenticity,” said Li. “We test everything.”

The products, each priced at \$88 (“Eight being a very lucky number in Chinese thought,” said Li), include “Breathing Room,” made for immunity health using ingredients like astragalus root, which has antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties, as well as reishi mushroom and Asian ginseng root.

Young brands like The Hao Life have been emerging in the wellness space, founded by creators of Asian descent showcasing their own heritage.

Grace Yoon of Qi Alchemy, for one, has been offering herbal blends rooted in ancient Korean herbalism.

“They’re everyday staples in a Korean household,” said Yoon. “My grandmother, she was an Eastern medicine doctor, and when I had chronic health issues as a child, she fed me these types of herbal blends, and my body was able to naturally heal on its own.”

Qi Alchemy produces goods sourced in Korea and packaged sustainably in a tube made of glass and topped



Us Two Tea founder Ranmu Xue visiting a tea farm in Taiwan.

with a cork. Priced at \$49, the herbal blends are pearl-like spheres made with red ginseng, which contains ginsenosides. According to Yoon, who works with a family friend who’s an expert in traditional Korean medicine with more than 40 years of experience in herbalism, the bioactive compounds have properties supporting immune system health.

“It’s world-known that Korea has the best premium red ginseng,” said Yoon. “And we have a patented fermented process that we go through where we cultivate it for six years...to really produce the most efficacy.”

Meanwhile Ranmu Xue, founder and chief executive officer of Us Two Tea, has been focusing on supplying the “Champagne of tea” in Taiwan: oolong.

Originally from China, Xue visited Taiwan one summer and learned of the process behind the creation of the naturally sweet drink. The tea farms use a natural pesticide made with herbs and a fruit, which attracts flies that leave behind their saliva.

“That’s why our black tea tastes naturally sweet and smells like honey,” said Xue, who works with small, organic family-owned farms

and uses biodegradable sachets made with corn fiber.

Xue, who has studied and lived in the U.S. for a decade, plans to expand her selections to offer tea from other regions of Asia, including China, bringing a more modern, thoughtful and eco-minded approach to a long-standing wellness practice.

“Eventually, we want to be the one-stop shop for Asian tea,” she said. “I really want to bring our culture and the tea culture here in the U.S.”

“It’s great to see more Asian founders and other ethnic founders sharing their heritage,” said Lin Chen, founder and CEO of Pink Moon.

Chen has been working to make wellness inclusive, she said, offering affordably priced beauty, home and wellness goods (from Japanese washcloths to gua sha tools), as well as an in-house label, created by women and for women online at pinkmoon.co. Each brand is cruelty-free, using “wholesome” and ethically minded ingredients. Many are founded by Asian Americans and women of color, with 1 percent of revenue from every purchase going to a charity.

“Self-care should never be cost prohibitive, and it should be available to everyone,” said Chen.

Next year, she plans to open a physical wellness space in New York City’s Upper West Side, a spa and boutique for women and all genders. All goods and services will be less than \$100, she said.

“The main thing for me is community and [having a] place to gather for in-person events, with workshops, learn from holistic practitioners and experts,” she said. “And having a space that is open, inclusive, a warm, welcoming sanctuary where a woman could just come in, let her hair down and be herself.”



A rendering of Pink Moon's wellness space, expected to open in New York City early next year.

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# AAPI Leaders in Beauty Strive to Create Inclusivity

These leaders say they want to use their positions in the C-suite to promote inclusion and broaden the definition of beauty. BY ALLISON COLLINS

**THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY** needs a more nuanced approach to continued diversification efforts, especially when it comes to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders — and AAPI leaders in beauty are striving to make that shift happen.

For a long time, representing AAPI people in beauty looked like featuring one person with Asian heritage — usually someone light skinned, with Anglo-leaning features and straight, dark hair — in an advertising campaign. But that is shifting as beauty companies begin to internalize the need for true diversification both in marketing materials and inside their companies.

Roughly 7.5 percent of the population in the U.S., or about 24.5 million people, identify as AAPI, according to the latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Data from the Beauty Inc Top 100, shows that five of the 31 largest U.S.-based beauty companies (16 percent of all U.S. beauty companies in the top 100) are run by Asian-American chief executive officers: Amway, led by Milind Pant; Markwins, led by Eric Chen; Olaplex, led by JuE Wong, and E.l.f. Beauty, led by Tarang Amin. There is also L Catterton, a private equity firm with majority holdings in several major beauty brands, which is helmed by James Michael Chu.

Of the entire Top 100 beauty companies, ranked by sales, 33 companies are led by Asian or Asian-American executives, with most headquartered in Asia. Two European companies in the Top 100 are led by Asian-Americans: Wella Co., run by Annie Young-Scrivner, and Reckitt Benckiser, helmed by Laxman Narasimhan. There is also Sunny Jain at Unilever, who is president of beauty and personal care.

Many of the AAPI executives Beauty Inc spoke to for this story said they generally felt welcomed into the beauty industry and supported by mentors on their way to the top, but that they still had to navigate stereotypes, hurdles and racism over the course of their careers. Today, they are striving to build more inclusive companies, inside and out.

Young-Scrivner, Wella's CEO, was told she was “a double dipper,” she said — “because I would check off two boxes for people on diversity, one gender, and the other race.” E.l.f. CEO Amin said he experienced “subtle racism,” including people in meetings assuming he was part of the finance team when he was on the brand team, and inviting everyone except him to baseball games. Wong, CEO of Olaplex, and Deborah Yeh, chief



Annie Young-Scrivner,  
CEO of Wella.

marketing officer at Sephora, both said they have been singled out and asked, “where are you from?” Vicky Tsai, CEO of Tatcha, said she was forced out of the CEO role when she brought in private equity money.

“The reason you don’t see [founders] as CEOs by the time [the company] makes the top 20, top 30 list, is somehow along the way, what happens to them is what happened to me, which is they are told they are not real CEOs, and then they get replaced by white men, probably French,” said Tsai, who has an MBA from Harvard and had run Tatcha through 2018. “I am not the only founder that this happened to, and I share it now because I don’t want this to happen to other founders in the future, other women founders, other people of color. This system is quite the opposite of beautiful.”

Young-Scrivner noted that while more Asian women are graduating and getting degrees, many don’t ascend to the highest levels of corporate organizations because of the “bamboo ceiling.”

“There are certain stereotypes, like ‘can’t really lead people,’ in a way that is negative toward Asians. That is just not true,” she said.

Several major beauty corporations shared deeper statistics with Beauty Inc on the numbers of AAPI workers in their companies, which are featured at the end of this story.

“Asian Americans [and] Pacific Islanders tend to be very much about, let us do our job, let’s not make waves and we will get recognized. It is actually a very uncomfortable position for most AAPI to be vocal about their lot in life or their situation in America because we are all so grateful for having the

opportunity to be here,” said Wong. “I’ve been told, ‘you shouldn’t really talk about this because you are a privileged minority.’”

Wong, who grew up in Singapore and moved to the U.S. as an adult, said early in her career she felt the need to dress in suits in order to avoid being oversexualized, and that when she was working in finance in Asia was asked inappropriate questions by caucasian men interviewing her for jobs, including, “are you married?”

“Now that I look back on it, it was their way to put us in our place. To say, ‘I can talk to you like this and what are you going to do about it,’” Wong said.

Sephora’s Yeh said many Asian-American professionals have stories of being stereotyped. “I’ve had instances when people will say something like, ‘you look really young for what you do right now.’ That’s a lovely thing to say to somebody, but it’s a backhanded compliment,” she said. She’s also been asked, “‘where you are from?’... But I would be the only person of color in the room, and I’d be the only one being asked.”

Tsai, who joined the beauty industry from finance, said she endured “extreme racism [and] discrimination” in the beauty industry.

“I was screamed at. I was physically confronted, aggressively threatened repeatedly as recently as a few months ago. And I just took it,” she said. “Even a track record doesn’t protect you, even being in your own company doesn’t protect you from having opportunities taken away,” Tsai said.

When she was asked to step out of the CEO role a few years ago, ►



JuE Wong,  
CEO of Olaplex

Tarang Amin,  
CEO of E.l.f. Beauty.



Deborah Yeh,  
Sephora's CMO.



Tsai said it was because an operating partner at the private equity firm that invested in Tatcha told her “their vision was to hire a real CEO.”

“I asked this operating partner, ‘was there any information that you got that made you feel that way? I’m just curious, I’d love to learn,’ and his response was, ‘if your ego is so big that you’re willing to hurt the company to keep that title, we can have that conversation.’”

Tsai said she felt ashamed, embarrassed and scared that her business would be harmed and her employees would lose their jobs. “I was never going to tell anybody about this because, to me, it felt very shameful. But then after I watched other people ruin my company for two years and then I had to step back in and fix it, I realized that I am protecting this system with my silence.”

Today, Tsai and other AAPI leaders in beauty say they want to use their positions in the C-suite to promote inclusion and broaden the definition of beauty.

Amin, who was born to Indian parents in East Africa and moved to the U.S. as a young boy, said his immigrant experience has helped drive him to create an inclusive workplace at E.l.f., and it has taught him about business. He helped his parents run a motel on Route 1 in Alexandria, Va., starting from when he was 14 years old, he said. “Everything I know about cash flow, economic profit, how you treat people, really came from those early entrepreneurial days,” he said.

“A key theme of mine in terms of how I lead companies is on diversity and inclusion. A lot of that goes on personal experience of often being excluded, and knowing what that felt like, and wanting to create an environment which is much more inclusive, much more diverse,” Amin said. “I was definitely the minority,

and I certainly had it much easier than my Black colleagues. I didn’t face the outright racism that they often did. It was more subtle racism or racial stereotypes that people put you in.”

When those incidents did occur, Amin said he spoke up. “[It’s] really challenging and making sure you have not only a seat at the table, but that your voice is also heard,” he said. “It probably made me a more resolute leader, more willing to speak up than the stereotype that you’re not supposed to.”

Now that he’s in the CEO seat at E.l.f., Amin said he works to make sure the team is diverse, but also that they are trained to give feedback, resolve conflict and have conversations around good or problematic behaviors “so that you don’t fall into the trap of some people speaking and others not,” he said.

Young-Scrivner said she speaks up when stereotypes have come her way, too. “There are stereotypes where it’s a benefit to be an Asian, and there are stereotypes where it’s not so good being Asian,” she said. “The way I’ve been able to overcome those is being really direct and educating people.”

When she joined Wella last year, Young-Scrivner said her initial priority was to create an inclusive culture where people could bring their best selves to work. “Every promotion we’re asking the question, ‘do we have diversity of slate?’ You always want the best candidate to get the job, you just want the slate to be diverse,” she said.

To better serve Asian consumers globally, Young-Scrivner is contemplating taking specific formulations the company makes for the Asian market and making them available globally, she said. She has lived and worked in nearly 30 countries, and moved to the U.S. at age seven after being born in Taiwan. “Growing up as a minority, you’re really

aware of the underserved,” she said.

Tsai, too, said her priority is to build a workplace where her employees — who are primarily women and people of color — are valued and given opportunities to grow.

Since she stepped back into the CEO seat earlier this year, she hired a consulting firm to get a pulse on where the company was today, appointed a longtime employee to a “people function” and launched corporate programming that’s aimed at creating safe spaces for “people to talk about how they feel, how things land with them, so we can all move forward together,” she said.

“I want to honor the humanity of the people who I am lucky enough to work with. We want to give them room to fly. I want them to matriculate one day throughout the beauty industry, to propagate the entire industry with Tatcha graduates who change the face of this industry, who change the heart of this industry. I want to lift people and start to change the narrative around what is and is not beautiful, and what is and is not worth celebrating,” Tsai said.

Wong said a big focus for her has been on mentoring other Asian-American beauty entrepreneurs, including Amy Liu of Tower 28. Years ago, when Wong was running Murad, she said she advised Liu to take the L’Oréal internship over one with Murad. “I said, ‘well, it pains me to do this because I really like you, but I think you should go to the L’Oréal opportunity,’” Wong said, noting that she feels gratified by Liu’s success.

During her years in the beauty industry, Yeh said she’s seen the beauty conversation evolve to become more inclusive. Early on, she was working on an eye makeup shoot with an art director who said the company needed to “cast certain types of models because we need[ed] a certain amount of eye

## A DEEPER LOOK AT AAPI REPRESENTATION

- At **Shiseido Americas**, 33 percent of C-level executives identify as AAPI; 15 percent of leaders at the SVP level and above identify as AAPI; and 14 percent of managers identify as AAPI.

- At **Sephora Americas**, 12.5 percent of executives identify as AAPI, 25 percent of employees vice president and above identify as AAPI, and 16 percent of employees ranked managers or above identify as AAPI.

- At **P&G Beauty, U.S.**, 8 percent of employees at the SVP level and above identify as AAPI, 8 percent of director-level and above employees identify as AAPI, and 9 percent of manager-level employees or above identify as AAPI.

- At **Estée Lauder Cos. Inc.**, 12.5 percent of the board identify as AAPI, 6.7 percent of C-level executives identify as AAPI, and 16.8 percent of managers identify as AAPI.

- At **E.l.f. Beauty, U.S.**, 20 percent of the board identify as AAPI, 17 percent of the executive team identify as AAPI, and 13 percent of managers or above identify as AAPI.

space,” Yeh said. “Since that time, the conversations turned into...how can we show this look in lots of different types of people and faces?”

“There’s no reason why we should have a simplistic mind-set about what a person is, and what an Asian person is. In the past, one might have said, ‘I’m doing a casting call, I need one of everything.’ When you say one of everything, what do you mean?”

Sephora aims to sell products that meet the needs of all types of shoppers, Yeh said, and to make the retail shopping experience more inclusive. Sephora’s recent Racial Bias in Retail study “found a unique set of challenges for Asian shoppers that include being seen and welcomed in the store,” Yeh said.

In her role as CMO, Yeh said she feels a major responsibility.

“Marketing roles define the stories that get told, and in many cases, they choose the faces that are represented,” she said. “The way I think about that responsibility, quite personally, is to think about my own kids and to ensure the beauty I’m putting out in the world is something that is welcoming for them and their generation and feels inclusive to the communities even beyond my family.” ■



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Nail art by Morgan Dixon.



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## Nailing It

• **MoveOn and Task Force** have teamed up for a campaign that hits the nail on the head.

Called "Nails Against Hate," the companies have joined forces on a social media campaign to push back against the surfacing of anti-Asian sentiments and hate crimes across the U.S. Influencers tapped for the campaign include the likes of pop star

Becky G, actor Rumer Willis and Meena Harris (niece of Vice President Kamala Harris).

The campaign, which includes a combination of nail art from AAPI artists and swipe-up links to various charities, launched on Instagram this week. Here, a roundup of the nail art that made influencers' hands — and Instagram feeds. — James Manso



Nail art by Thuy Nguyen.



Nail art by Masako Beck.



Nail art by Morgan Dixon.