



# Celebrity-Backed Beauty:

What makes it so successful?

By Cindy Lam

## What makes celebrity-backed beauty so successful?

For as long as we can remember, celebrities have influenced global trends in fashion and beauty. Appointed by the public as creators of taste and style, they naturally impact our consumption patterns, whether we are aware of it or not. This makes **celebrity endorsements an inherently profitable vehicle for marketing**. While leveraging famous figures to generate buzz around a product has been a commonplace practice since the early 1900s, the skincare and beauty sector has seen many newly formed brands.



For example, you may have noticed a slew of celebrities launching beauty lines in the past few years: from singer **Pharrel Williams's 'Humanrace'** and TikTok influencer **Addison Rae's ITEM Beauty**. As a highly profitable industry that is quickly growing, celebrities are capitalising on their successful brand image to replicate similar successes within these new business ventures.

Let's dive deep into what makes celebrity backed brands so successful and look at some examples of some brands that you may have seen around.

## BEAUTY FOR ALL Rihanna's Diversity Based Business Model

In its first year of business, Fenty Beauty became the biggest beauty brand launch in YouTube history, driving commercial success and named one of Time Magazine's best inventions in 2017. Its was no coincidence, and **was a testament to Rihanna's established personal brand** as well as Fenty's marketing team.



Exhibit A: A promotional image from Rihanna's make-up brand Fenty Beauty.

As a relatively untapped market at the time, **there are two key components to Fenty Beauty's unprecedented success in the beauty industry**.

## Inclusivity

While many brands lacked this at the time, Rihanna's mission was for Fenty to cater to all individuals. Her vision of **"Beauty for All"** was the centrefold of the marketing campaign, demonstrated by the launch of 40 shades of foundation.

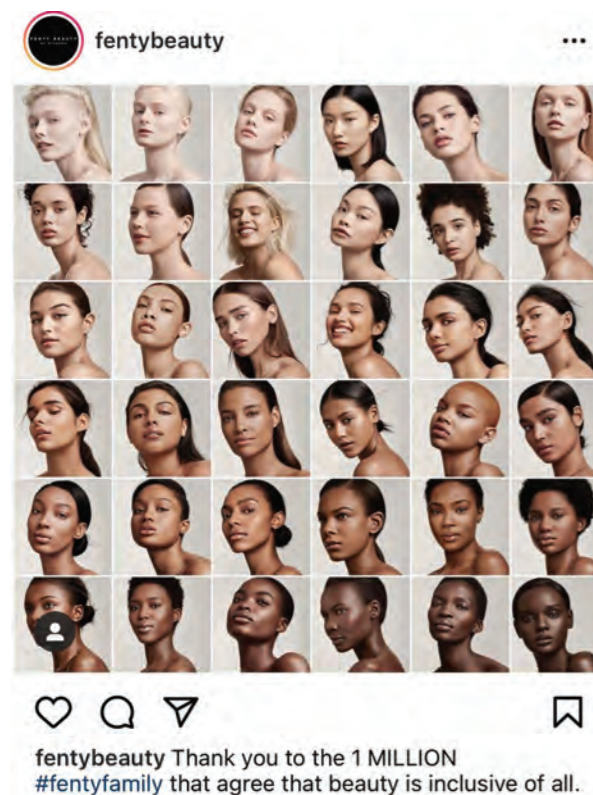


Exhibit B: Promotional material from Fenty Beauty's Instagram showcasing the variety of skintones that their brand caters to.

Inclusivity may seem like a mainstay in today's consumer world, where brands parrot sentiments in their diversity statements. However, at the time of its launch, many brands did not offer the variety that Fenty did, and many women of colour were left with shades that did not match with their skin tone.



Exhibit C: A comment made by Twitter user @glowkit criticizing the shade range offered by popular makeup brand Tarte.

## Through Actions, Not Words

**"The Fenty Effect"**, was a term coined by the media following the success of the Fenty brand and the influence that it had over the whole beauty industry following its launch. What looked like a monogamously white-catered range, offered by most beauty brands, slowly expanded to include make-up for skin tones neglected in the past. This was a wake-up call for the beauty industry to do better - to **achieve inclusivity**.

In Fenty's inaugural promotional trailer, not once has the word 'inclusive' been mentioned. Instead, the wide product range, the representation of POC and the use of diverse individuals in its campaign did all the speaking. **By focusing on authenticity and placing consumer needs at the forefront of product creation and marketing, Fenty has redefined the beauty industry and paved the way for other companies to adopt similar strategies.**

## CELEBRITY BRAND CONGRUENCE: Kylie Jenner's Strategy to Success

Influencers, as the new breed of celebrities have emerged and Kylie Jenner is an example of how social media can propel a reality TV star into beauty-mogul billionaire status. **The tools that Jenner has used to create this success include personal branding, and an understanding of current trends.**

## Personal Branding

Named as the youngest "self-made billionaire" in 2019, there is no denying that Kylie Jenner has mastered the power of personal branding which is a key aspect of her beauty brand's success. **Personal branding is the process by which individuals differentiate themselves by articulating their unique value proposition and using a consistent message and image to display themselves (Vitberg, 2009).**

Since its explosive debut in 2015, Kylie Cosmetics has managed to survive and stay relevant in an oversaturated market, thanks to her relevance in pop culture. Back in 2015, Jenner was the subject of social media controversy, after fans speculated if she had undergone lip enhancements. She attributed this to the use of make-up, and exploited the rumours and controversy by trademarking and selling Kylie Lip Kits, which sold out within 24 hours. **This is a prime example of how Jenner has used personal branding to connect the product she is selling to her personal lifestyle.**

*Jenner's mastery of marketing herself on Instagram and Snapchat is no doubt the reason for the success of her brand.* According to a report by Google, **59.6%** of Generation Z actively uses Instagram, while **52.8%** use Facebook. As the 5th most followed person on Instagram, her profile is prime real estate for advertising. Her luxurious lifestyle, connections and popularity has helped her portray to her customers that she is the person to trust when it comes to makeup and is a **display of how celebrity brand congruence influences public response (Choi and Rifon, 2012).**

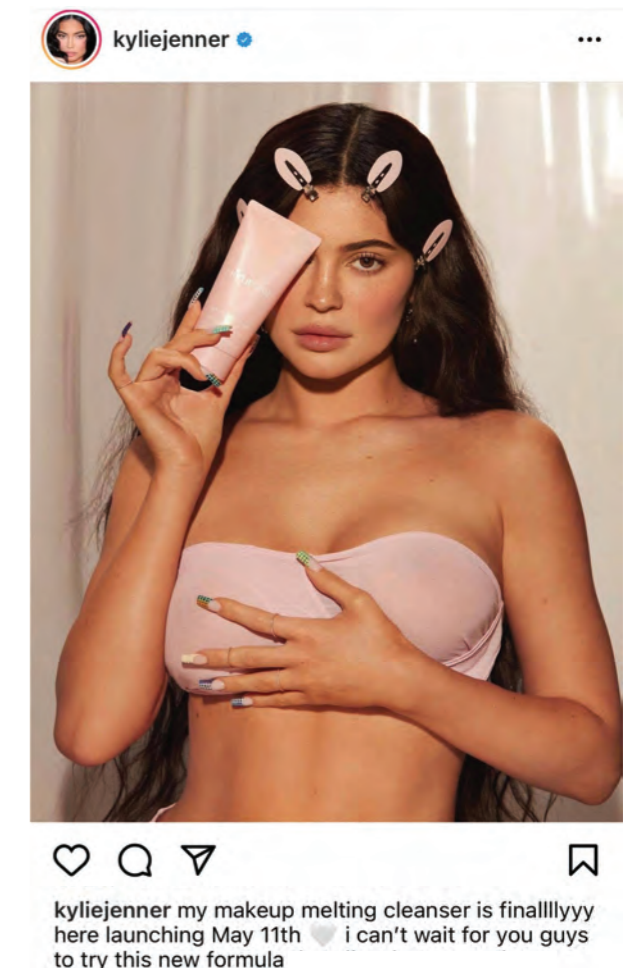


Exhibit D: An Instagram post from @kyliejenner is a prime example of Jenner's use of social media to generate hype for her products.

## Understanding Current Trends

Following the success of its initial launch, Kylie Cosmetics expanded to include eye-shadows, concealers and skincare. Jenner has a keen grasp of the market and current beauty demands, *as she incorporates trends into her products as they come, a key element to staying afloat in a now-saturated industry.*

Her launch of Kylie Skin, at the peak of the skin-care craze, the relaunch of her brand with revamped vegan, cruelty-free formulas with “clean” ingredients, addresses the ongoing environmental and health concerns that consumers have.

## THE FUTURE OF CELEB BEAUTY?

While we are seeing many successful celebrity skincare and make-up brands, it should be brought to our attention that these are products *made for consumers, and that we have the ultimate buying power.*

Not everyone observing this new trend is convinced of the powers of celeb-sworn by skincare, as we become more informed and critical as consumers. Regardless of the product that they are selling, it is ultimately the marketing behind each celebrity which makes or breaks the success of their new venture.

## FAD OR HERE TO STAY?

Celebrity endorsements have lost some of its edge in today's context, thanks to the **shrinking attention span of the modern internet user.** This means that marketers will have to work extra hard to replicate the success of Rihanna and Kylie Jenner's brand, to not only capture but also sustain the attention of consumers. *Will this celebrity beauty craze end up the same way as the early 2000s celebrity endorsed perfumes?*



Exhibit E: Pictured is Taylor Swift's Wonderstruck perfume, which is discontinued.  
Source: shoesandglitter.com



Thanks for reading!  
**Cindy Lam**  
from MarkSoc Publications