

Oolala Collection Club answers the call for 'clean' beauty

By Lauren Hartzenberg

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Consumers are wising up to the far-reaching environmental, ethical and health benefits of conscious consumption, and a review of our beauty routines are an important part of the lifestyle audits we're undertaking.

The beauty industry's image has been marred by false labelling, outdated and cruel animal testing practices, and empty promises in terms of what products actually deliver.



Aiming to cut through the marketing clutter is recently launched 'clean' beauty and lifestyle brand Oolala Collection Club. The brand is backed by five years of research and development, and all products are unisex, vegan, cruelty-free, eco-friendly and devoid of parabens. Product packaging is also recyclable to minimise waste.

Taking a stand against animal cruelty

The founder of Oolala is Daniella Shapiro, a seasoned marketer and businesswoman who saw a gap in the local market for affordable, yet luxurious beauty and lifestyle products that live up to their claims.

"From the get-go, my mission has been to develop a clean, yet affordable luxury skincare line – free from animal testing and all the 'usual chemical suspects' such as parabens. I wanted to create change. I want to take a stand against animal cruelty and be a voice for those without a voice who desperately need one."

Shapiro says that findings from research she conducted into the ingredients present in skin and personal care products left her shocked.

"Many products on the market lead consumers to believe they are natural and not tested on animals, when in fact there are discrepancies between what the products promise, what they deliver and where they are sourcing their ingredients to make such claims."

"There's a lot of mixed messages out there with regards to animal testing. Although some cosmetic companies claim they don't test on animals, they're often sourcing ingredients from companies who do... and there's no transparency there."

Proudly South African

Oolala products are all made locally, with the various ranges designed to meet specific skincare needs. The brand is

currently exclusively available online from the Oolala e-commerce platform, with a chatbot available to assist shoppers with skincare concerns and guide them through the purchasing process.



Daniella Shapiro

■ ***ethical consumption in general?***

I think that the interest stems from consumers wanting real information that is going to make the world a better place. I don't want to say that as a cliched statement, but genuinely people are becoming more authentic and transparent and that's the information they want conveyed to them by brands.

Consumers are shying away from brands that are just about pumping millions of dollars into marketing campaigns. They want to know what's going into their products... what ingredients are going into their bodies. 60% of products that we put on our skin get absorbed into our bloodstream, and that is a very scary fact when we consider how to take care of our internal organs and look good externally at the same time.

We need to encourage positive change, not only for ourselves but for our children and future generations. So it's very important that people are encouraging the move towards a more sustainable, healthy, non-toxic lifestyle.

■ ***How do you think the experience garnered in your marketing career will assist you in your new endeavour?***

Having been in business since the age of 19 and starting from scratch and really having hands-on experience, I think it's all really been about learning lessons. Whether it be partnership lessons, investment lessons and especially how to be very resourceful. I'm smarter because of mistakes I've made in the past and now I'm using those mistakes to make better decisions in future.

Marketing can be a costly exercise but there are smart ways of doing it. I've learnt through experience how to navigate through the marketing process in a smart, cost-effective way as opposed to being brainwashed into thinking that you have to spend hundreds of millions to get a brand out there.

■ ***There's somewhat of a misconception about cruelty-free beauty products not being as effective as those that aren't. What do you think is stopping more brands from abolishing animal testing?***

I think that there is a lack of education and awareness as to what actually provides results. I think that there's also a lot of laziness – it's all about the bottom line for the majority of brands. It's all about mass production and pumping volume, with very little regard for ethics. They don't have integrity and credibility because that's not a core focus for them. So they're quite happy to put any ingredients into their products, place a huge markup on them, send it out to consumers, and just keep on mass-producing.

We sat down with Shapiro to chat ethical consumption, her Oolala journey, and how the brand aims to make cruelty-free beauty the norm.

What inspired your career expansion from marketing to beauty?

The core focus of how I live my life has been about wellness and balance and beauty. I have gone through challenges along my personal journey where I felt like it was important to look on a deeper level as to how I could take care of myself in a holistic sense, both internally and externally.

Another big reason for creating Oolala is that in today's economy we don't want to spend thousands of rands on cleansers and moisturisers, but we shouldn't have to compromise feeling and looking good because it's unaffordable. I found there was a gap in the market to provide a solution to that problem.

What do you believe is driving the rising interest in ethical beauty and

ethical consumption in general?

■ **Oolala has been described as a lifestyle brand, not just a skincare company. What is your ultimate vision for the brand?**

The ultimate vision is to create a community that really resonates with what the brand stands for from all angles – so the fact that it's 100% vegan, 100% cruelty-free, 100% paraben-free. It's not about social media portraying an image of perfection. We want to change things up by saying 'we are real, authentic and transparent and we want to share that with you'.

We're also about educating consumers about mental health, wellness and balance. We want to create a platform where consumers are open to engaging and interacting with each other about topics that are important to them, without feeling like they're going to be judged.

Very importantly we want the brand to be relatable. We want the back story to be conveyed to consumers so that they understand why it was developed, and getting them to know my personal journey to understand the person behind the brand.

Business, beauty and balance... I think those three words pretty much sum up the whole lifestyle side of Oolala.

Shop the [Oolala Collection Club online](#) and keep up to date with brand developments on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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