



NO STUPID QUESTIONS

How Indie Beauty Brands Practice Inclusivity



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In this edition of Beauty Independent's ongoing series posing questions to beauty entrepreneurs, we ask 17 brand founders and executives: What is your brand's approach to inclusivity?



PAAYAL MAHAJAN

Founder, Essential Body

Inclusivity is not just a term for me. I am a brown woman who has faced a lot of discrimination while living and working in the U.S. I have faced assumptions around my background with no thought or interest in where I come from or what my heritage is. I have dealt with the blows of white privilege in the workplace and personally. I was also judged for my size for a majority of my life. I am someone who has fought and continues to fight for the rights of the marginalized and oppressed.

I am not interested in tokenism. I smell it from a mile away. You can't fake your way into being inclusive. My authenticity and my voice are the most powerful ways for me to communicate that my brand is me, and it espouses my values and my perspective on the world. It never was, and is certainly not enough now, to do a rainbow of ethnicities in your imagery. I see brands appropriating cultures, not giving thought to messaging and imagery. None of that is for me. You can't be mindful of inclusivity unless you fundamentally shift your mindset. This is not something businesses can phone in.

If you have a question you'd like Beauty Independent to ask beauty entrepreneurs, please send it to editor@beautyindependent.com.