

# How Sustainable is Green Beauty?

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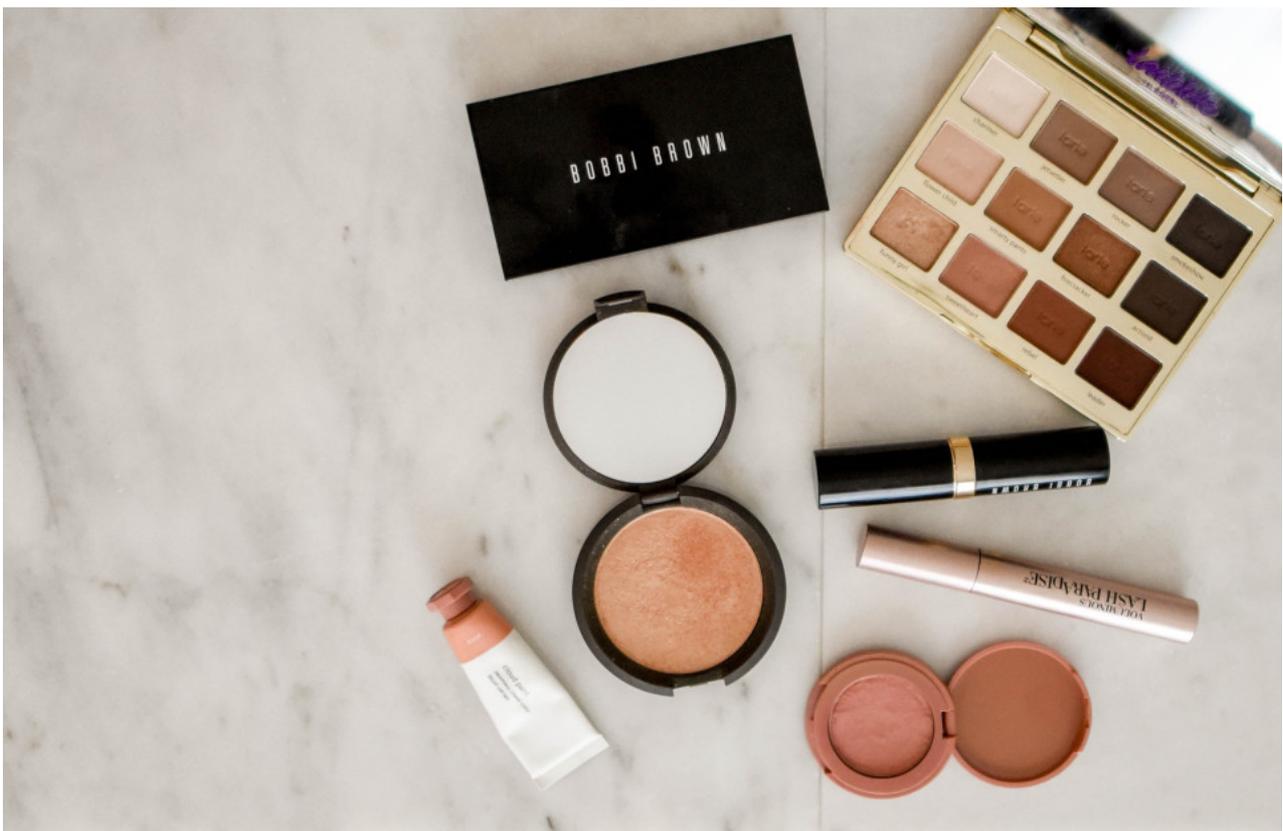
by Naume Guveya - Writer — November 30, 2018

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There has been a recent shift in consumer perspectives and consumers are now favoring organic products over anything that is processed. People are now more conscious of what they are exposing their bodies to and cosmetics are no exception. In a recent report, the [NPD Group](#) showed that nearly half of the women in the United States are actively looking for natural and green skin care products.

The green beauty movement encompasses a lot of principles but it is ultimately about products that are not harmful to health and the planet. The shift to green beauty is a result of the adverse effects that most ingredients in the normal 'non-green' cosmetics have. The US National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health has indicated that [almost 900](#) of the ingredients used in cosmetics are toxic. As the cases of health problems linked to these toxins increase, it is unsurprising that consumers are gravitating towards cleaner beauty.

## The drive behind the popularity of green beauty



**In the Photo:** Selection of beauty products **Photo Credit:** [Element5 Digital](#)

Green beauty is trending because of its long-term health benefits and environmental friendliness, but there have been concerns over green-washing and the misuse of green beauty by brands only looking for market expansion. As a result, some people are viewing green beauty as an overrated and unsustainable fad. On one end, green beauty has

become a symbol of health and environmental responsibility in the cosmetic industry, on the other, there is no regulation of the industry and there is no specific definition of what green beauty is. There is a lack of transparency and a lot of misinformation, so much so that some companies have cashed in on the high prices of their 'green products' which are not truly green.

The green beauty industry is forecast to grow to \$22 billion by 2024 but as consumers become more knowledgeable about some cosmetic companies that are not delivering on the green promise, this figure may prove difficult to meet. The cosmetics industry has been self-regulated for over a century, however companies must now create robust systems for making products that adhere to strict ecological and health standards. A fundamental element behind green beauty is promoting sustainability, and despite the grey areas, and some bad rep that is stemming from ambiguous standards, it is still possible to make green beauty sustainable.

### **What does it mean to be truly sustainable?**

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**In the Photo:** Illustration of strong team ethic **Photo Credit:** [rawpixel](#)

Some companies have environmentally friendly formulations and excellent production and packaging practices, but sustainability is not just about consumers liking the product or using organic ingredients, and it goes beyond marketing and profitability. Sustainability is about going back to the core of the business and ensuring that being sustainable extends to company culture, goals and connections.

Sustainability has to exist within the company structure and there should be synergy between personal and corporate values. Every company member has to know that they are accountable to the consumers who buy green beauty products in good faith. Consumers believe that their green beauty products are safe and good for the environment and each company should ensure that it delivers on this expectation. Indoctrinating sustainability in an organization will create an awareness of the ethical duty to protect the consumers and the environment, and if successful, we may see a decrease in the number of overpriced yet fake green beauty products. Some companies are taking time to educate their teams on the importance of sustainability and how it can form the basis for achieving profitability without sacrificing quality.

Consideration must be given to all company connections if green beauty is to be sustainable. There is no point in promoting green beauty as sustainable if all the links that bring the product together are not speaking the language of sustainability. Partners and promoters need to have sustainable practices that are not wholly focused on just the products. Suppliers are also an important connection that needs addressing. Some companies are mainly concerned with the safety profile of ingredients and not the source, but it is essential to have suppliers who ensure that ingredients are sustainable and 'truly green'. Other important functions that determine sustainability include those responsible for distribution, waste reduction and packaging using biodegradable materials.

The sustainability of green beauty depends largely on the sustainability of a company's long-term objectives. Consumers are becoming more knowledgeable and they are moving away from accepting information without verifying its authenticity. Many consumers are also highly interested in corporate social responsibility, therefore, companies will no longer get away with selling green beauty products that are not backed by green company strategies and objectives. Consumer support will likely be lost if company practices and ethics are not aligned with being green. For green beauty to be sustainable, company objectives have to reflect sustainability.

## **Sustainability goes beyond the promotions**

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**In the Photo:** Woman wearing makeup nestled in vegetation **Photo Credit:** [Sarah Comeau](#)

#GreenIsTheNewBlack is a trending social media hashtag that is being used to create an awareness of green living and it has become a common feature of many green beauty promotions. The hashtag campaign is great but more work should go into bettering health and the environment because green beauty is a phenomenon that pertains to more than just green cosmetic products. Green beauty will be sustainable if focus shifts from being solely on the beauty products to encompass all the core activities and systems involved.

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