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**Product Development
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ABOUT ME

I've built my career working with beauty products in real-world conditions, understanding not just what consumers say they want, but what actually makes them buy, use, and rebuy.

- 15 years (and counting!) in the Beauty Industry
- Licensed cosmetologist, stylist educator, curly hair specialist, and former makeup artist with hands-on experience testing thousands of products on diverse clients
- Dual bachelors degrees in psychology and sociology with an emphasis on consumer behavior and decision-making
- MBA candidate with marketing concentration, bringing strategic rigor to consumer insights and research

I uncover the answers beauty brands need to make better product decisions. I work with founders and established brands to understand what drives consumer behavior, identify performance gaps, and determine opportunities for change through real-world testing grounded in 15 years of working directly with products and consumers. This combination allows me to design rigorous research, interpret findings accurately, and translate insights into actionable strategy.



Mission: This work is designed to support high-stakes product decisions by determining what to build, what to change, and what not to pursue.

Vision: An industry shaped by thoughtful founders, meaningful products, and lasting connection.

HOW I WORK

Concept Development

Before investing in formulation and manufacturing, you need to understand whether a product concept addresses a real consumer need and has a clear reason to exist in the market.

This work examines the category landscape and current opportunities, benchmarks competitive products to understand existing offerings, and tests the concept with target consumers to assess relevance and purchase interest. Findings are synthesized into a strategic product brief that anchors development decisions and provides clear direction on whether to proceed as planned or revise before further investment.

Product Performance Analysis

Lab testing does not predict how a product performs in real routines. Products need to be evaluated in salons, bathrooms, and daily use to understand functionality, consistency, and whether claims are credible.

This work compares your formula to leading products in the category, reviews ingredient strategy in the context of consumer expectations, and coordinates extended real-world testing with professionals and experienced users across a range of hair types and environments. The outcome is a clear picture of performance, including where the product delivers and where refinement is needed before finalization.

Customer Insights Review

When the target customer is not clearly defined, products struggle to convert. Assumptions about the audience often lead to messaging that does not connect and positioning that fails to perform.

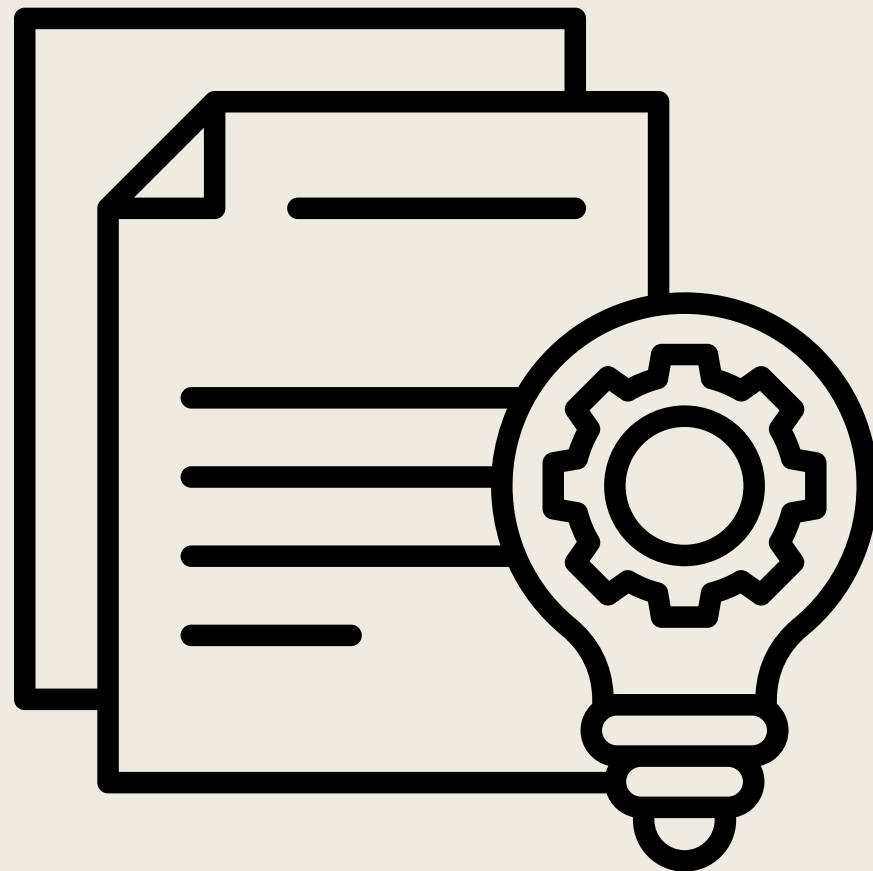
This work examines potential customer segments within your category, tests product experience and messaging across multiple audiences, and identifies which group responds most strongly and for what reasons. You receive clear direction on audience focus, positioning, and messaging based on how consumers actually evaluate the product.

Product Course Correction

When a product is underperforming, the visible symptoms — returns, reviews, stalled growth — rarely point to the real problem. Making changes without understanding the root issue leads to wasted time and additional cost.

This work analyzes existing customer feedback and performance data, conducts fresh real-world testing with new users and benchmarks against competitive alternatives to isolate whether the issue is performance, expectation-setting, or positioning misalignment. The goal is to identify the primary source of underperformance and determine what should be addressed first.

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT



Examine the Idea Before You Build

Before you invest in formulation, manufacturing, and marketing, you need to know if your concept resonates with your target consumer.

What's Included:

- Consumer research design (surveys and interview protocols specific to your concept)
- Category opportunity analysis and competitive landscape assessment
- Product development brief for your formulator (product specifications, performance requirements, and competitive context)
- Consumer testing results and strategic recommendations

Essential for: Founders with a product idea who want to examine demand and refine positioning before significant investment in development.

PRODUCT PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS



Real-World Testing, Clear Performance Signals

Your product may perform beautifully in a lab, but how does it work for real consumers in their daily routines?

What's Included:

- Comparative performance analysis against category leaders
- Claims credibility assessment
- Real-world (professionals and consumers) testing protocol, execution, and results documentation
- Prioritized improvement recommendations

Essential for: Brands with products in development or existing SKUs who need unbiased performance feedback before launch or reformulation.

CUSTOMER INSIGHTS REVIEW



Clarify Who the Product Is Actually For

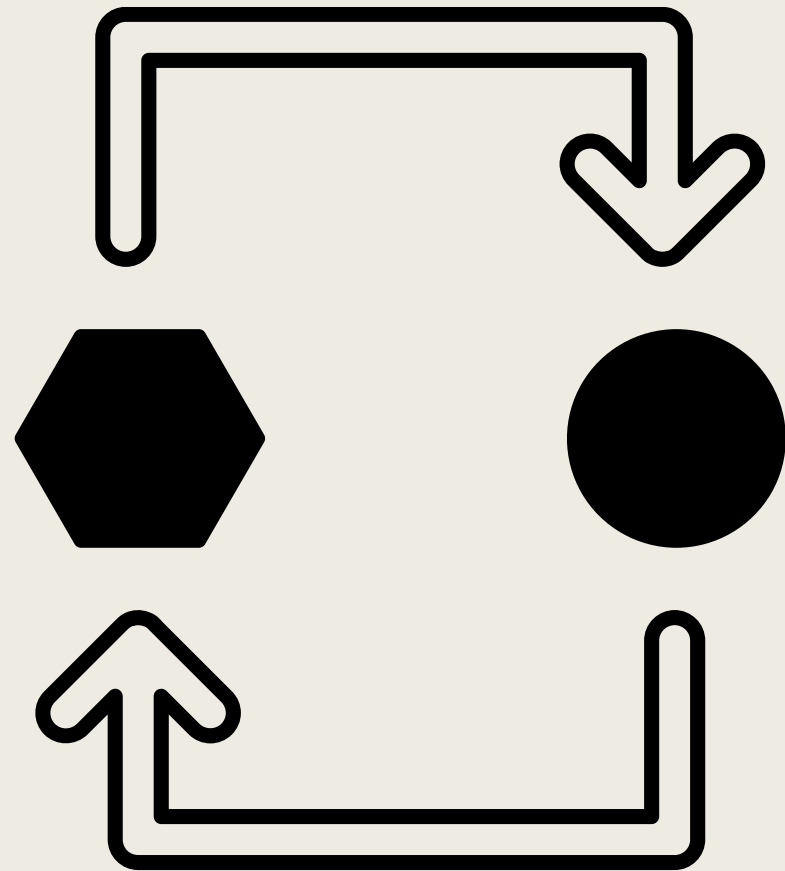
When the target customer is not clearly defined, products struggle to convert. Assumptions about the audience often lead to messaging that doesn't connect and positioning that fails to perform.

What's Included:

- Custom consumer research design (surveys, interview protocols, social listening framework)
- Consumer segmentation analysis identifying distinct audience groups and their characteristics
- Target consumer profile with motivations, pain points, purchase drivers, and unmet needs
- Positioning framework grounded in how consumers actually talk about products in this category
- Competitive preference analysis and white space identification

Essential for: Brands that lack clarity on their true customer, are expanding into new demographics or categories, or are experiencing weak conversion due to unclear positioning.

PRODUCT COURSE CORRECTION



Diagnose What's Underperforming And Why

When products underperform through low repeat purchase, high returns, negative feedback, or missed projections, the cause is often unclear. Making changes without understanding the root issue leads to wasted time and cost.

What's Included:

- Consumer research design (surveys, interview protocols) specific to diagnosing performance issues
- Performance gap analysis identifying where experience diverges from promise
- Root-cause diagnosis (formulation, packaging clarity, positioning, or expectation management)
- Consumer feedback synthesis revealing patterns in complaints, returns, and dissatisfaction
- Competitive analysis showing how your product compares
- Prioritized recommendations for improvement with rationale

Essential for: Brands with launched products showing low repeat purchase, elevated returns, negative feedback, or missed sales expectations who need clear direction before investing in reformulation or repositioning.

EXTENDED PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic Advisor

Ongoing advisory support for brands managing multiple products or complex product decisions.

What's Included:

- Regular strategic consultation on product concept, performance, and positioning decisions
- Review and refinement of product briefs, claims, and development priorities
- Ongoing competitive and category monitoring relevant to your products
- Structured input on testing results and next-step product decisions
- Direct access for timely questions and decision support

Ideal For: Brands developing multiple products per year or needing experienced oversight without hiring a full-time product leader.

For brands building a portfolio or navigating complex product development cycles, retainer partnerships provide consistent senior product support without adding full-time headcount.

Embedded Product Partner

Senior product leadership integrated directly into your business, functioning as a fractional head of product and consumer insights.

What's Included:

- Hands-on guidance across product development, testing, and refinement
- Ongoing review of formulation direction, performance findings, and claims
- Continuous competitive and market monitoring tied to your category
- Product pipeline planning and long-term innovation roadmap development
- Executive-level briefings to support leadership and investor conversations
- Direct access for urgent or high-impact decisions

Ideal For: High-growth brands preparing for major retail expansion, acquisition, or rapid portfolio growth who need embedded senior product expertise.

ALIGNED PARTNERS

I work with beauty brands who need clearer information to make confident product decisions. This typically includes:

Early-stage founders reducing uncertainty around demand, positioning, and performance expectations before committing to formulation.

Indie brands preparing to grow who need real-world feedback on prototypes and existing products to ensure they perform as promised and resonate with target consumers.

Established brands testing new products who need unbiased performance insights and consumer feedback to inform reformulation, line extensions, or repositioning decisions.

Product development teams seeking honest assessment of how products perform in real-world conditions compared to competitive alternatives.

Agencies and strategic partners who need consumer insights and performance evidence to support product launches and marketing strategies.

IS THIS RIGHT FOR YOUR BRAND?

This work is a fit when you need answers to questions like:

- Will my target consumer actually buy this?
- Why is my product underperforming?
- How does my product compare to what's already on shelf?
- What should I fix first: formulation, positioning, or pricing?

You'll get the most value if you:

- Are committed to making data-informed product decisions
- Have 8–12 weeks to invest in structured decision-making work
- Are willing to act on insights, even when they challenge your assumptions
- Need beauty industry expertise you don't have in-house

This probably isn't the right fit if:

- You've already made final decisions and just need confirmation
- You need immediate answers (meaningful research takes time)
- You have an experienced consumer insights team with beauty industry fluency already on staff

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

The work is only valuable if it leads to better outcomes for your brand and your intended audience. Here's what that looks like:

Confident Product Decisions

You move forward with clarity on what to build, how to refine it, and why it matters to your target consumer, backed by evidence, not assumptions.

Products That Perform

You launch knowing how your product performs in real conditions, where it excels, and what trade-offs your customers will accept.

Clear, Credible Positioning

You know exactly how to talk about your product — what language resonates, what claims hold up, and what differentiates you in the market.

Reduced Risk

You avoid costly missteps like reformulation, repositioning, or low market demand because you validated performance and appeal before committing resources.

Customer Trust

Your product solves a real problem and delivers on its promise, building the kind of trust that drives repeat purchase.

CASE STUDY

The Barb Shop is a styling product line built for short hair, a category historically underserved by mainstream haircare brands.

The Challenge:

The Barb Shop needed products that delivered professional-level performance for everyday users — people with short hair who'd been overlooked by an industry built around long, straight styles. The stakes were high: if the formulations didn't work across diverse hair types and styling techniques, the brand risked launching products that couldn't deliver on their promise, damaging credibility in a community that had been let down by mainstream brands before.

The Work:

Through iterative real-world testing with early prototypes, I evaluated the Go-To Styling Cream and Texturizing Sea Salt Spray against competitive alternatives, identifying where they excelled and where refinement was needed. Testing spanned diverse hair types and styling techniques to ensure formulations worked as intended in real conditions, not just in theory.

Beyond performance validation, I developed packaging copy that clearly communicated product benefits and usage, created educational content demonstrating real-world application, and built product-forward video content for social platforms to reduce confusion and increase confidence. I also directed product styling for campaign photography, ensuring visual representation accurately reflected how the products actually performed.

The Outcome:

By the time the brand launched, the products had been pressure-tested in real conditions, claims were backed by evidence, and customers could trust that what they bought would actually work. Clear communication reduced purchase confusion, and real-world validation ensured products delivered on their performance claims. This foundation of performance credibility allowed The Barb Shop to build loyalty from day one, avoiding the costly reformulation and repositioning cycles that plague brands who skip validation.

This collaboration proved the power of hands-on product insight at every stage of brand building — from first prototypes to flagship campaigns. My work ensured that The Barb Shop's products, positioning, and storytelling remained rooted in performance, cultural relevance, and community truth.

Founder Sheena Lister has described our partnership as **"critical to brand growth and innovation."**



CASE STUDY

Soft Rows is a textured haircare line designed for versatile styling, supporting natural texture, heat styling, and protective styles without forcing consumers to choose between performance and hair health.

The Challenge:

Soft Rows was designed to meet a complex need: textured hair products that could support multiple styling approaches without compromise. But even great formulations struggle if consumers don't understand what to buy, how to use it, or why it works. The founder needed to ensure the products would perform as promised in real-world use — and that customers would have the knowledge to get results.

The Work:

Our collaboration began in 2022 during early product ideation, where I identified product gaps and unmet needs in the textured hair market based on professional experience and provided insight on consumer behavior patterns and purchase drivers specific to textured hair products.

In 2024, the focus shifted to performance communication. I created stylist-led product demonstration content that linked formulation science to real-world results, developed educational video showing how products perform across different hair types and styling techniques, and translated technical product benefits into consumer-friendly language that builds confidence and understanding.

By 2025, we'd developed a comprehensive product education strategy: a framework for communicating product performance across all customer touchpoints, content pillars that explain what products do, how to use them, and why they work, and reusable education architecture that now serves packaging, website content, and retail partner training.

The Outcome:

Clear education reduced the friction that causes returns and "didn't work for me" feedback. When customers understand how products work and how to use them correctly, they achieve better results — and return with trust. The education framework now provides scalable infrastructure, ensuring consistent and accurate product communication across internal teams, retail partners, and influencer collaborations. Product-forward content demonstrated real-world use, set accurate expectations, and built the kind of credibility that drives repeat purchase.

This multi-year partnership demonstrates how strategic product communication evolves alongside a brand — from early concept work through scalable education systems that support growth. My work ensured that Soft Rows' products remain grounded in performance truth, that customers can confidently choose and use products, and that the brand has architecture to maintain clarity as it scales.

Founder Quani Burnett described the process as "**one of the most inspiring and aligned strategic efforts in the brand's development.**"



MY PROCESS

This process exists to guide product decisions where the cost of getting it wrong is high. Research and testing are used to challenge assumptions, clarify trade-offs, and determine whether to move forward, adjust direction, or pause.

What do you need to know before you can move forward?

We start by clarifying your product challenge, business goals, and key questions that need answering before you can move forward confidently.

What assumptions need to be examined?

I design the research approach, selecting the right methodology, identifying target participants, and structuring the testing protocol to get you actionable insights.

How does the product actually perform with real consumers?

I conduct the research: testing products with real users, interviewing target consumers, analyzing competitive alternatives, and gathering the data you need.

What does the market context suggest?

I synthesize findings into clear insights, identifying patterns, root causes, and opportunities that directly inform your product decisions.

What should change, if anything?

You receive strategic recommendations with prioritized next steps: what to do, why it matters, and how it impacts your product strategy and bottom line.

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**LET'S WORK
TOGETHER TO
DECIDE WHAT
HAPPENS NEXT**

