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## **The Beauty Buddy bridges the gap between brands and consumers**

**Sisters Wendy Slattery and Tracy Levy have built The Beauty Buddy, a data analytics company dedicated to the beauty and cosmetic industry.**

[The Beauty Buddy](#) provides real-time insights and actionable data to global retailers.

Data is gathered directly from consumers' social interactions through a product review app designed specifically for beauty consumers.

According to Wendy Slattery, CEO, The Beauty Buddy is bridging the gap between brands and consumers in an €800bn industry. Pre-Covid-19 only 12pc of this converted into online sales. Post-Covid-19 the world will look very different for this segment.

“It is estimated the average woman spends more than €80,000 during their lifetime on beauty and cosmetic products,” said Slattery. “With 88pc of all beauty purchases bought in-store, brands have no real engagement with their consumers. As an analytics company our competitive advantage is that we supply real-time data versus static data, providing brands and retailers with direct access to their customer, enabling product personalisation and other advantages at scale.

“Post Covid-19, we also become the non-contact digital assistant that allows customers in-store to find out all about a product without picking it up, providing them with a positive in-store digital experience and the information they need to make an informed purchasing decision,” she said.

### **Power of the crowd**

Beauty Buddy is an inclusive community of Beauty Buddies made up of real, honest, independent and trusted peer to peer users who connect with each other to learn about and decide which beauty, skincare and wellness products to buy.

Users simply use their phone to scan the product in-store (or search at home) to find out all they need to know about that product.

“Harnessing the power of this unique, trusted and independent beauty community, the app takes into account everything it knows about the user and recommends the best products, reviews, ratings, tutorials, etc. relevant to that user, whilst also extracting real-time insights, analytics and actionable data that is invaluable to brands and industry partners including access to consumer

behaviours, competitive comparisons and sentiment analysis etc.

“Brands can then use this data to identify with the consumer and to create personalisation at scale, retailers will use this real-time data for their marketing, product placement and as an efficient buying tool and for consumers it will become the go-to app to discover, review and decide on products, ensuring they make the right purchase for them,” Slattery said.

## **Market opportunity**

“My sister, co-founder and COO of Beauty Buddy, Tracy Leavy and I previously co-founded a retail and e-commerce company together,” said Slattery. “However, we always had that ‘want’ to create a global business/brand that provided an everyday solution to a problem. It wasn’t until we came across that ‘problem’ when shopping for a make-up brush that we believed there was an opportunity to create a solution that currently did not exist on the market.

“We began to talk and research the market and ultimately discovered that the data we were set to capture gave us a competitive advantage and enabled us to fill a void as a dedicated beauty analytics company. There are companies who supply high level reports across all industries, but our competitive advantage is that we supply real-time data versus static data, providing brands with direct access to their customer and other advantages at scale.

“Our strong backgrounds in business development, corporate sales, retail, and project management is of huge advantage to enable us to lead our team of 10 and scale our business. We have a committed growing team, strategic partners and a strong panel of advisers who are working with us to deliver the vision of The Beauty Buddy.”

## **A beautiful community**

Slattery believes Ireland is an incredible nation for entrepreneurship and Ireland is a great place to begin a start-up journey.

“It’s fast-paced but there are several platforms and support programmes available to assist Irish start-ups to kickstart an idea, to grow that idea and to build a business. We received incredible support as part of Enterprise Ireland’s HPSU, New Frontiers programme, NDRC at Porter Shed accelerator programme, and the DCU Ryan Academy Female High-Fliers Programme.

“As the current Covid-19 world moves online, there are an unbelievable amount of business support platforms available from expert webinars, panels that are driving access to investors and VCs in Ireland and new networking opportunities that connect businesses – shortening processes and opening doors that might not have been available previously.

“Whilst we all navigate this new ‘normal’, the start-up ecosystem is no different and the strength

of Ireland's entrepreneurial spirit will create a future that other countries will aspire to."

The company is opening an investment round with a target of €1m.

"Our focus has been on growing, scaling and reaching set milestones before attracting further investment. We are very excited to move this forward and welcome all conversations."

## **Global ambition**

Slattery said that due to Covid-19, a literal world of possibilities for the work from home community has sprung up.

"We are proud and excited to be officially launching Beauty Buddy into the UK this month. We are constantly learning, testing, and trying new strategies that allow us to move at the speed we are now.

"There is also the time that goes into raising investment, whilst it is imperative, it depletes your time and distracts you from focusing on other elements of the business, which can be frustrating at times but ultimately rewarding. Whilst the human connection is missed thankfully Zoom opens new ways of attracting investment and ensures start-ups don't fall off the roadmap."

Her advice to fellow founders is to be nimble and overcome the economic disruption caused by Covid-19.

"Put yourself out there and go for it and don't let a pandemic stand in your way, history shows some of the greatest start-ups come out of times of uncertainty, when restrictions allowed the mind to refresh and give those ideas the time to grow. Being a start-up is tough, challenging and rewarding all at the same time.

"Once you set yourself goals and an achievable strategic growth strategy, do everything in your power to reach those goals, no matter how small or big of milestones they are. Remember, you can't do it all yourself so surround the business with a great, solid, dedicated and like-minded team who have the ability to free up your time, allowing you to focus on next steps and global ambitions.

"Take advantage of business programmes, awards and any funding grants, that are relevant to your business and will aid in achieving your goals and milestones. It is also important to surround yourself with advisors and mentors that are experts in their fields. Reach out to CEO's a few years ahead of you and learn from them, their mistakes, the choices they made and the opportunities that led to their success."

## **Embracing remote working**

The young company has found the challenges of Covid-19 are also an opportunity to be agile.

“Since Covid-19, two new technologies we have adopted are Zoom, our main form of communicating with our team and our customers, and Miro for our team brainstorming sessions, whiteboarding and planning post-its, etc.

“Our marketing team use Canva to design and prepare social media posts and Sprout Social to schedule social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook and twitter) and track interactions with posts. We use Intercom to interact with our customers via the Beauty Buddy App, and Google Analytics, Firebase and Data Studio to track and provide a weekly statistical overview of the app usage and marketing campaigns.

“Our tech team use Pivotal Tracker to capture, prioritise and manage the workflow. For tracking key tasks and for communicating with the team we use Trello, G-Suite, Slack and WhatsApp.

“We also have our own internal software we use as a team for different tasks.

“As new members join our team and as our business model grows, we continue to evaluate our tech tools and adopt them as and when we need them to increase productivity across the team and to improve in-app efficiencies.”

***Pictured at top: Sisters Tracy Leavy and Wendy Slattery***

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