

CREATIVITY MEETS CONFIDENCE: *JAPAN'S LIFESTYLE* *INDUSTRY SHAPES ACCESSIBILITY*

INNOVATIVE LIFESTYLE BRANDS SPARK CONFIDENCE AND TRANSFORM ORDINARY MOMENTS INTO EXTRAORDINARY REFLECTIONS OF PERSONAL IDENTITY. *By Daniel de Bomford and Bernard Thompson*

Creativity is a fundamental part of human nature, and the ability to be creative is born from the confidence to experiment. From childhood, self-expression fuels play and art, and each act ripples through cultures until the waves become unignorable and transcend boundaries.

For many, the combination of creativity and confidence is realized through cosmetics, and cosmetics manufacturer pdc aspires to make it accessible to its customers. Company President Keiji Fujii explains: "Our goal is to create products that simplify our customers' beauty routines without compromising on quality or results." Products like its "Pure Natural" lotion simplify routines by combining steps while delivering outstanding results.

Though cosmetics are associated with women, cosmetics manufacturer BCL makes skincare accessible to everyone, regardless of gender, through its comprehensive range of unisex products. President Kazushige Omura describes beauty as not just physical but something that enriches people's lives. With the influx of tourists for Expo 2025, Osaka, BCL hopes to capture some of that attention to gain more global customers as they expand. "Our brand concept is to get more people to adopt their morning face mask habits, and this remains the core message we want to convey," he says.

Fashion label Mother's Industry is embracing gender inclusivity and personal expression through its designs. President Nobuaki Sasano explains the vision: "The idea is to create a peaceful mind of the wearer, providing them with freedom of the senses." This philosophy fosters more than just style—it offers an emotional connection, inviting wearers to experience fashion as a form of inner peace, authenticity, and self-discovery beyond traditional gender boundaries.

Accessibility also relies on quality tools, where OEM brush manufacturer Usui Brush shines. Long a market leader in cosmetic brushes, it has successfully pivoted into making high-quality synthetic brushes as the cost of natural fibers has skyrocketed. President Yoshiaki Usui doesn't want partners to be intimidated by Usui Brush's quality. "I would like the companies that want high-quality products but are put off by high prices to know that there is always a chance to work with us," he says. He adds that he wants to provide affordable, high-quality brushes so the next generation of artists can understand their potential and will be inspired to continue developing their skills.

Early childhood is the seedbed for confidence and creativity. Toy manufacturer People Co. fosters the foundational curiosity for these traits with its unique "1curiosity" range for young children. Company President Masato Kiribuchi explains: "If a child's need to explore and discover isn't met through play, their development may be hindered."

With sights set on the future, companies like these will continue to lead the way in developing creativity and an inclusive culture not just in Japan but for the entire world.



Apparel by Mother's Industry

USUI BRUSH: SETTING A NEW STANDARD IN BEAUTY AND ART

USUI BRUSH PREPARES TO INCREASE INTERNATIONAL MARKET SHARE WITH ITS RENOWNED QUALITY BRUSHES, REPLICATING THE QUALITY OF NATURAL HAIR WITH NEW SYNTHETIC TECHNOLOGY.

By Daniel De Bomford, Cian O'Niell and Sasha Lauture

Markets evolve and change over time. For brush industry leader Usui Brush, the natural hair market shrunk, and access to the high-quality materials that set it apart became more competitive. In response, it has become a leader in synthetic fibers to continue its market dominance. Already controlling a large share of the mid- to high-end art and nail brush market domestically and abroad, Usui Brush is looking to solidify its presence in the affordable sector with its quality brushes.

President Yoshiaki Usui explains how its R&D can emulate the quality of natural hair such as Kolinsky or weasel, which are becoming increasingly costly. "Our expertise and ability to create new brushes according to the needs of our customers is definitely one of our core strengths, which makes us a great match for any company looking for OEM manufacturers," he says.

Mr. Usui sees the company's future in affordable brushes where it currently has less of a hold on the market. Brushes have trended towards synthetic fibers, where Usui Brush's strength lies, giving them an edge. Another core strength is its manufacturing, where its

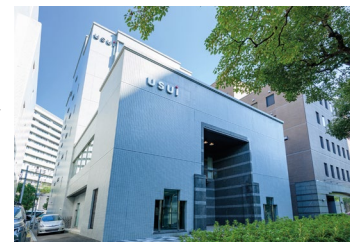
products are handmade. It has many craftsmen with over 20 years of experience and an internal education system to maintain the level of expertise for generations to come. Mr. Usui sees the high quality in unison with reasonable pricing as a draw for international partners to work with Usui Brush.

Mr. Usui says that by elevating the quality of the market while managing prices, it will naturally grow. As new customers pick up brushes for the first time, he hopes that Usui Brush's products will nurture them into the next generation of artists.

USUI BRUSH Inc.



<https://en-usuibrush.usuigroup.com>





COSMETIC ALCHEMY BY pdc

pdc CORPORATION IS TAKING ITS COSMETIC AND SKINCARE INDUSTRY-LEADING FORMULAE AND SUSTAINABLE HEART TO THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET, USHERING IN A NEW ERA IN BEAUTY AND PERSONAL CARE. *By Daniel de Bomford and Cian O'Neill*

Cosmetics are modern-day alchemy. Whether to enhance beauty, shed years, or boost confidence, cosmetics are part of everyday folks' rituals and relationships with the world. For over 33 years, pdc Corporation has been a part of people's daily rituals, providing cosmetics and skincare for people across Japan and working to simplify their routines.

President Keiji Fujii says that pdc has always prioritized both convenience and performance. "Our goal is to create products that simplify our customers' beauty routines without compromising on quality or results," he explains. For example, its "Pure Natural" line combines lotion and milk lotion, combining two skincare steps into one while ensuring effectiveness.

While the skincare and cosmetics market continues to grow, especially in the antiaging sector, there are significant opportunities to capture abroad, leveraging the reputation of J-beauty brands. With a relatively small domestic organization, pdc is looking for partners to work together with and bolster its position in foreign markets. Mr. Fujii explains, "That's why we seek strong distribution partners abroad—not just as buyers of our products, but as strategic partners who can collaborate with us to develop effective marketing strategies." Localizing products for different markets can be difficult, and pdc carefully considers how factors like bathing routines, skin types and UV exposure influence regional demand. "Understanding these regional differences allows us to tailor our approach and develop the right products for each market while maintaining the synergy between skincare and cosmetics in our overall business strategy," he says.

Sustainability is becoming essential to doing business internationally, and pdc has pioneered selecting high-quality ingredients that are fully traceable. "Beyond simply natural ingredients, we ensure that all components are fully traceable," Fujii says. He describes how sustainability has been a central pillar of pdc's philosophy for years, as evidenced by its refillable products, which are still not commonplace. As pdc continues to expand and evolve, Fujii sees it growing into a market-oriented company that provides the products people need for daily rituals.



"At our core, we always prioritize both convenience and performance."

Keiji Fujii

President, pdc, INC.

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"By 2030, we at BCL seek to dominate global beauty as the ultimate 'Total Beauty Provider' by expanding our reach and driving overseas sales to new heights."

Kazushige Omura, President, BCL

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Discovering BCL: Japan's Skincare Innovators

Japanese cosmetics firm BCL is looking to Expo2025 to find new international customers and create beauty that goes beyond aesthetics and enriches their lives. *By Daniel De Bomford, Bernard Thompson and Paul Mannion*

BCL is a pioneering Japanese cosmetics firm dedicated to creating innovative skincare and beauty products that enhance daily routines, enrich lives and spread happiness. President Kazushige Omura speaks to his company's truth: "Our core concept is to bring joy, en-

tertainment and peace of mind to consumers and to enrich the experience with products, not just the beauty of appearance."

Standing out in such a competitive space presents its challenges, but BCL is looking beyond the typical cosmetics consumer to spread that joy to new people. Its Saborino face mask has succeeded in the Japanese market, and research shows an increasing number of men adopting skincare routines. "Our products are unisex, so in a way, we've already created a product that appeals to men," Omura explains. BCL aims to capture some of that success globally as it continues to expand. "Our brand concept is to get more people to adopt their morning face mask habits, and this remains the core message we want to convey," he says.

With Expo2025 fast approaching, Omura says the company plans to leverage the large influx of international visitors to increase brand awareness as part of its global strategy. Omura sees Expo2025 as a strategic yet powerful opportunity to generate brand awareness through influencer marketing and selling customized packaging for Expo2025, which he believes will create a buzz amongst international consumers. "Our strategy starts in Japan and aims to achieve local production overseas by the end

of 2026," he says. Beyond simply marketing products, BCL seeks to position itself as a "Total Beauty Provider" across major global markets by 2030 and increase its overseas sales ratio.

Looking even further ahead, the company is also innovating in new areas of beauty technology. "Furthermore, we plan to add beauty appliances to our portfolio, approaching beauty

KANSOSAN



Saborino

"I believe that beauty cannot be achieved through cosmetics alone. That's why I also prioritize inner beauty," Omura explains. To that end, BCL is broadening its approach to beauty, integrating wellness into its portfolio. "In response to the growing global interest in Japanese cuisine, we will be expanding into the supplement business starting in 2024," he says. This reflects BCL's commitment to holistic beauty, recognizing the connection between health and appearance.

as a comprehensive and holistic category," Omura adds. This expansion underscores BCL's ambition to evolve beyond traditional cosmetics and create a multi-faceted beauty experience.

With the pandemic, BCL saw a significant increase in online sales; however, customers still prefer to touch and try products in brick-and-mortar stores. With this broad approach to sales, BCL is showing the initiative and putting itself forward as a partner in people's daily routines. It is supporting people in their habits that create a more vibrant, healthy and beautiful life.

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