

Everything
You Need to Know About

FORMULATING BEAUTY AND PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

For Indie Beauty Brands



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Our indie guide on formulating beauty and personal care (BPC) products gives you the latest insights, innovations and industry-led recommendations on producing your next stand-out formulations.

In our everything-you-need-to-know guide, we take a snapshot look at:

Formulation for Indies

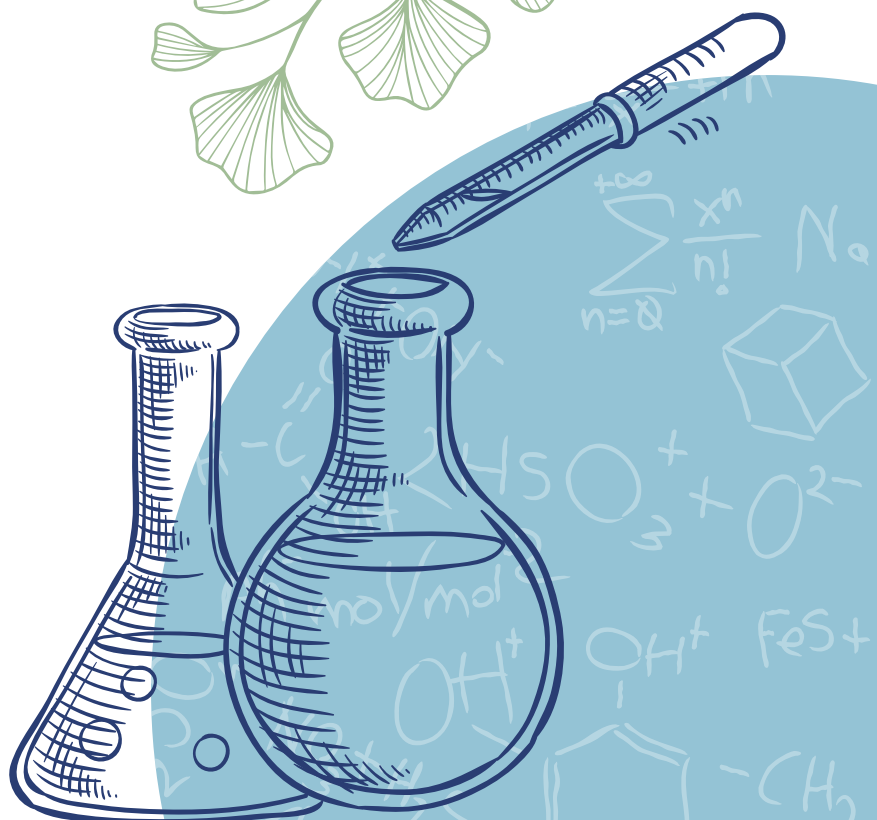
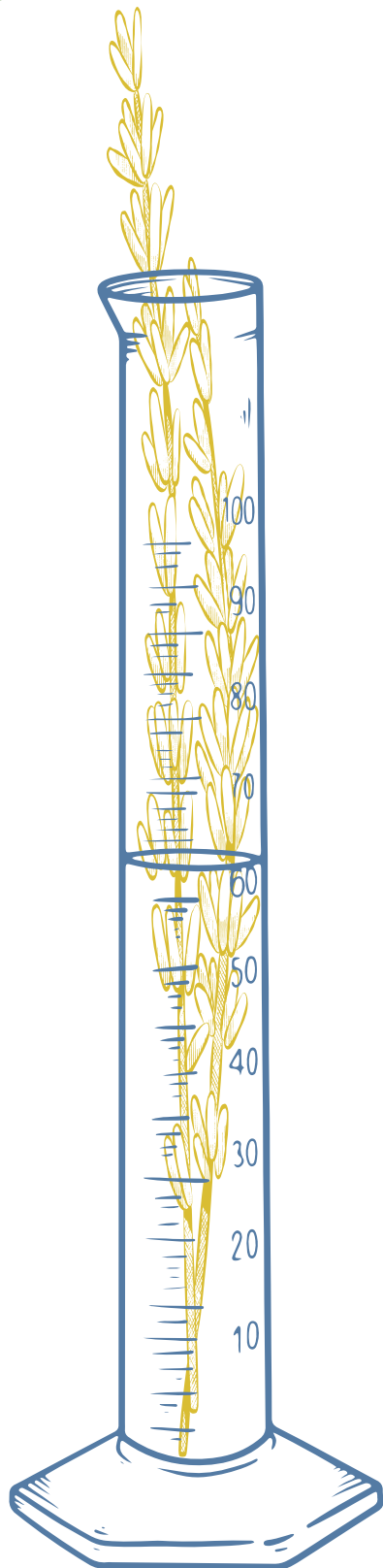
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CREATE YOUR NEXT STAND-OUT FORMULATIONS



The Formulation Landscape for Indies

Many of the greatest collaborations in life are part art, part science. A splash of creativity and a dash of technical come together to create beautiful things that are both appealing and functional. Great partnerships, innovations, and the beauty and personal (BPC) industry combine art and science.

People may become BPC founders and create their own collections because they want to develop product formulations that look and feel good, and that also deliver results.

You may have an appreciation of beauty and beautiful things. You may want to bring more joy to people's lives through self-care and sensory items that feel good. You may have launched your own brand after exploring and finding a solution to your concerns and want to support other BPC searchers by telling them all about it. You may have spotted a gap and need in the growing BPC market. You may want to make the innovative BPC space even better. You may have decided to create your own BPC formulas, in part, due to all of these.

One thing is sure: Purposeful, meaningful, conscious beauty is here. And BPC is expanding. Despite post-pandemic uncertainty, the BPC industry grew by 16% in 2022 compared to 2021 and generated over \$100 billion in revenue worldwide¹.

BPC is never stagnant, it's always active. Nor is it one-size-fits-all when adopting creative and technical elements. And indie brands, which make BPC the exciting, creative and consumer-led space it is, are no different.



Growing your beauty and personal care (BPC) brand

After launching your first formulation or initial collections and tasting success, you'll likely want to continue with that creative momentum and meet today's consumer needs with your next range.

You may be asking questions like:

- How can I grow beyond my current ranges?
- How can I enter new segments?
- How do I expand my offering?
- How can I raise brand awareness?
- How can I differentiate and stand out?

Indie BPC brands' formulations evolve, with new trends, regulations and challenges constantly shaping and shifting the landscape. Each BPC range requires research to understand how regulations, standards and demands have changed, what the relevant supply chain considerations are, and how these impact your formulation and the production process of your latest range.

Formulating products can be both rewarding and intimidating for indie BPC entrepreneurs. Yet, with the right knowledge and resources, developing your BPC products is not only achievable, it's empowering.

Whatever your reason for exploring, creating and launching your BPC brand, product formulation is where science leads. From the seed of an idea to research and development (R&D) to formulation, the entire process involves respect for science and an understanding of how it shapes your finished BPC product. Scientists are, therefore, naturally instrumental in developing your efficacious formulation.





The role of a BPC scientist

"The main role of a BPC scientist involves creating formulations that we all use in our daily lives," says Kumpal Mehta, Applications Team Leader at Croda.

BPC products for daily use include:

- Items for the shower and bath, including body wash, shampoos and conditioners
- Skin care products such as moisturisers, body butters and facial serums
- Sun care protection products
- Makeup goods like lipsticks, foundations and eyeshadows

"It's extremely creative and really relatable since we all know what our pain points are with certain products that we've used, and we're able to make formulations that we would happily use ourselves," Mehta shares.



Efficacy leads

Today's BPC consumers are highly informed and highly expectant. Consumer values, transparency, innovation, new products, and brand discovery drive BPC shoppers and dominate decision-making factors. In the post-pandemic era, consumers want confidence in the credibility of product claims, and assurance from their chosen brands that the items they invest in are worthy of their time, money and application. They want results.

To help consumers select products, they want brands to provide more information about the ethical nature of their operations, policies, and products. Consumers care about BPC brands' processes, the ingredients they select and how they source them, how well they perform, and the holistic health and wellbeing benefits the entire brand and its products strive to provide.

With such an avid appetite for BPC products, competition is high. Efficacy and experience indicate whether consumers will continue to use your product, engage with your brand, explore other products in your range, become loyal fans and even brand advocates – or abandon them to look for others.

Today's BPC indies need to consider the global landscape when formulating their collections. An increasing and collective consciousness around ethical product development and a backlash against PR "washing" has led to increasing consumer demands for access to value-driven formulations that seek to protect people, communities, and the planet.

New technologies, philosophies, approaches, and other discoveries such as biotechnology, transparency, and sourcing standards have influenced how BPC brands think about formulations.



Where science and technology intersect

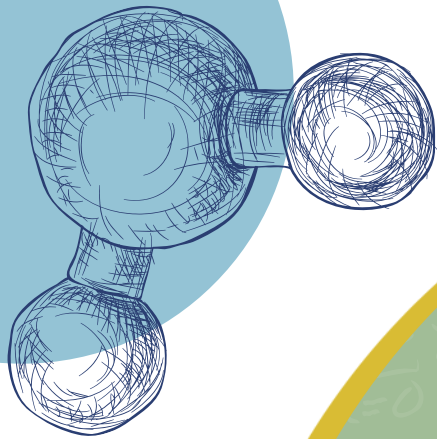
In the age of advancement, science and technology deeply intersect in BPC formulations.

"BPC is one of those industries which has been relatively slow to adopt technology, but it's been rapidly changing over the last couple of years," says Yashi Shrestha, Head of Science and Research at [Novi Connect](#).

"The focus for its intersection is rooted in enabling brands to navigate different regulations, standards, and requirements to make informed product decisions that support their journey toward sustainability," says Shrestha. *"Where tech has come into play is understanding those rather nuanced restrictions and then discovering, procuring and using ingredients and packaging that validate that the brand's positioning is compliant with their desired standards,"* Shrestha adds.

Today, tech is also being used as a way for industries to provide education. With rising awareness comes rising expectations from consumers' chosen BPC brands and products. Consumers are looking for more transparency and information around not just what's absent from formulas but also what's present to make it special, good or efficacious.

"Many companies and retailers have leveraged tech to translate much of that science to more layperson's terms to help make purchasing decisions easier," says Shrestha.



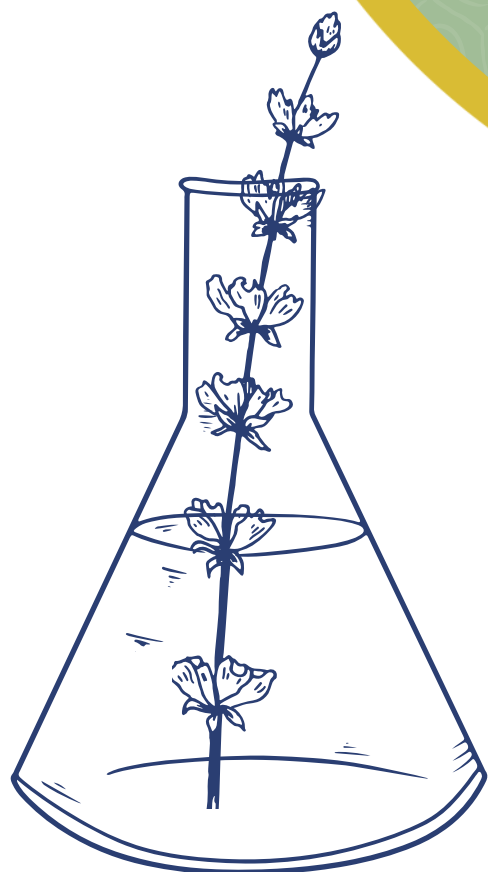
What Makes a Good Formulation?

Let's start with what a formulation is. A BPC formula is effectively the recipe or mathematical formula that you follow to create your finished product. A formula considers the ratios, percentages or weight-based list of ingredients needed to make the desired end BPC products. A BPC formulation also considers the techniques and methods used in production.

A good formulation will centre on efficacy, quality and sensorial attributes.

After all, these reflect what consumers want indie brands to answer and deliver with their BPC formulations, which often revolve around asking:

- Are you transparent about what's in your formula?
- Are you following trends, or are you using ingredients that have been clinically tested?
- Are you using valuable materials or multifunctional components and not just using filler ingredients?
- Are your ingredient claims backed by data?





Formulating products: The basics

The BPC formulation process involves:

- Knowing what your target audiences want. Ask yourself, what is the problem you are trying to solve?
- Understanding the regulations, standards and any other considerations in the countries or regions where you will sell your products
- Selecting quality raw materials in specific quantities and relevant applications
- Ensuring your formulations are safe and stable

With the help of experienced formulators, product developers and manufacturers, indie entrepreneurs and BPC brands can take their formulations from concept to finished product. And, most importantly, ensure they're ones users will love.

"To curate something that will be beneficial for your customers, you first have to research the problem you are attempting to solve," says Chelsea Lewis, Founder of [My Mommy Wisdom](#). *"It is good to research what your customers are in need of and find ways to provide solutions,"* Lewis continues.

STABLE, SENSORIAL
AND ABOVE ALL,
SCIENCE-LED



1. Science-Led

First and foremost, efficacy makes a good formulation. *"Performance is a non-negotiable, always,"* says Shrestha. Efficacy means how well the product works, how effectively it achieves the results it says it will, and how well its claims on front-of-packaging labelling and marketing materials align with its efficacy. As more research into [efficacy](#) and specific areas, such as combining [active antioxidant substances](#), has grown, so has the importance for BPC consumers to make effective products.

For indies that means understanding the science of the skin and hair to create a BPC formula that contains the best possible materials in exact quantities for the specific application. It means creating and managing the formulation process in the best possible way to meet consumers' expectations and achieve the best possible results. Understanding what materials are most suitable, how the active ingredients should interact, and ingredient compatibility is also crucial.

"A good formula achieves the greatest efficacy when it fits within the customer's guidelines, goals and allowed budget," says Jennifer Hurtikant, Chief Science Officer at [Prime Matter Labs](#). Every developed formula goes through a specialised process, and a contract manufacturer (CM) helps to create the ideal product.

Indie BPC brands often work with a CM to develop their BPC ranges. Speaking on how it works, Prime Matter Labs shares that it will consider the complete application process, including details such as what time of day it will be used and whether makeup is applied before or after the product is applied to the skin.

"First, we dive deep to understand the brand's ethos and the purpose of the product they want to develop," says Hurtikant. *"We then present the best ingredient actives for the customer to choose and identify the best format for optimal delivery of the actives to the skin,"* Hurtikant adds.



75%

of Spanish consumers agree that beauty brands should provide more scientific evidence to validate the claims they make about their products.²

2. Stability

"A good formulation is one that is stable, meaning that it can last on the shelf for one year without any changes in appearance, pH, viscosity, or performance," says Mehta.

"If a product makes certain claims, like colour protection in conditioners or anti-ageing in facial serums, we want to make sure that these claims are validated, and the products perform the way they are expected to," Mehta adds.

Validating claims can be made by applying one of two methods:

- An in-vitro method, which involves using instrumentation, or
- An in-vivo method, which uses panellists to review the product and share perceptions of the product's effectiveness and results

Stability or preservation testing is an important attribute, Novi Connect's Shrestha shares, *"to ensure there's substantiation behind what's out there in the market".*

"We hear of many formulas that have, let's say, an ingredient touted and marketed but at less than the recommended use level," says Shrestha. "Make sure this is avoided, and instead, it is used at levels that will work for the different benefits it is tested for," Shrestha adds.

It's critical to integrate sustainability thinking at the ideation phase, which is when intentional decisions around ingredients, packaging, and testing should be discussed. Once it is at the R&D phase, formulators can use these guardrails to focus on creatively bringing the desired product to commercialisation.

"We complement in-vitro testing with our on-site Product Evaluation Center (salon), where our licensed cosmetologist can evaluate the same products on human panellists, so we can ensure that performance is consumer perceivable," says Mehta.

Formulation in action: When it comes to hair care formulations, Croda's North American Innovation Headquarters in Princeton, New Jersey, US, is the company's Hair Care Center of Excellence. The site contains a product validation and claims substantiation lab, which includes instruments that measure a variety of hair care claims like breakage, colour fade, shine, combing, and softness.





3. Sensory

In today's BPC industry, part of a formulation's appeal is in its users' experience. Texture, appearance, and smell are vital checks consumers make when choosing their products, and so are key considerations when making your BPC formulations. How a formulation feels on the skin or hair strongly indicates whether a consumer will use, reuse, recommend, and repurchase a product.

The 'feel-good' factor of BPC is championed by consumers and industry experts as an important part of the decision-making process. 91% of German consumers find it comforting to use familiar BPC products³. 84% of Indian consumers agree that using BPC products makes them feel good about themselves.⁴

Advances in formulations typically impact the marketing language used to promote the finished products. If we're given the option between formulations that are lightweight or thick in texture or smooth or grainy, we'll likely opt for lightweight and smooth. It gives the sense of being gentle on the skin, pleasant to touch and wear, and subtle to others.

Some questions to ask when formulating your BPC products:

- Does your target audience want fragrant or fragrance-free products? If fragrant, which smells appeal to them?
- Do they want low or high spreadability?
- Do they want a silky or cushiony texture?

"In addition to stability, formulation sensory is a key attribute to consider because the way a product feels and performs is what will bring customers back to repurchase," Mehta relays.



How to Choose your Ingredients

Learning to source and analyse ingredients to decide which ones to select in your BPC formulations is a must, yet it can be an overwhelming part of the process. Many indies may partner with a CM or ingredient supplier, who has an in-depth understanding of ingredient integrity, to support them in producing their BPC formulations.

Ingredient research isn't a chore for BPC consumers, many consider it fun. Today's consumers enjoy discovering and learning about the ingredients that go into their products.⁵

Formulation in action: *"When developing new products, I try to stick to my base or 'holy trinity,' which is a set of ingredients I can use to formulate any type of product," says Lewis.*

The My Mommy Wisdom founder explains that she uses the base ingredients and then branches off from them to curate new products. *"This process is helpful because you don't have to reinvent the wheel each time you formulate something new,"* Lewis shares. *"It's also helpful because you know that the base ingredients are effective because you already utilise them in other products,"* Lewis continues.

73%

of Chinese women who are interested in beauty ingredients say it's fun to learn about different ingredients in products.



Top 5 tips to choose your ingredients

1. Research the must-haves

Choosing your ingredients is an integral part of formulating your BPC products. Research before you settle on your selected ingredients and formula to ensure your finished products are safe, effective, and reliable. Not only do your chosen ingredients need to satisfy these factors individually, but they also need to work in harmony and complement one another.

Consumers actively research BPC ingredients. 53% of US BPC users research ingredients to understand the effectiveness of products better.⁶ 47% of Indian consumers strongly agree that it's important to research ingredients to ensure they're safe.⁷

2. Active benefits

Whether you're producing skin care, hair care, makeup, fragrance or sun care, it's crucial to pick your ingredients according to the specific application and function of the product you want to create.

Consumers look for ingredients that work well and align with the product's intended purpose. *"I typically select my ingredients based on their benefits,"* says Lewis. As My Mommy Wisdom formulates products for the baby care segment, Lewis shares: *"I only use products that are safe and gentle for babies and pregnant women."*

After selecting ingredients, it's time for the founder to begin formulating. *"I start testing ingredients and measuring how much of each to use,"* says Lewis. *"I try to use the most beneficial ingredients as the active ingredients, then supplement as needed,"* Lewis details. My Mommy Wisdom makes its formulations with shea butter, cocoa butter and mango butter as its base ingredients. Each butter has its unique properties, so it's easier to add additional ingredients when making products.

3. Sustainability

Today's shoppers are highly aware of the world, the importance of protecting and preserving it and their role in it. They want indie founders to select and source ingredients with this environmental consciousness at the forefront of their minds. BPC brands need to consider their ingredients' sustainable credentials and how, when combined, the finished products may affect the environment.

4. Quality

The quality of ingredients is critical to the success of a BPC formula. *"Ingredient quality plays a huge role in overall product performance and sensory, and it's important to choose ingredients with data behind their claims,"* says Mehta. *"We at Croda are proud of our ingredient quality and formulation knowledge and are excited to help support indie brands as they begin their formulation journey,"* Mehta shares.

5. Start at the finish

From the perspective of scientists, CM and ingredient suppliers, choosing ingredients starts with the project brief. Scientists, formulators and manufacturers will ask:

- Are we trying to create a light, spreadable, low-viscosity emulsion?
- Or a heavy, nourishing, thick cream?
- Do we want something with anti-ageing benefits?
- Are we creating a cruelty-free formulation?
- Is it a vegan formula?
- What sensory attributes do you want it to have?

"We choose ingredients based on the deliverables of the project, like the targeted sensory profile, any claims that are being made, and based on ingredient restrictions, such as sulphate-free, silicone-free, vegan suitable," details Mehta.



82%

of global consumers state they try not to be harmful to the environment. Their BPC decisions reflect a growing, collective environmental consciousness.⁸



The A-Z of Product Development

With over 100 years of experience in BPC product development, we know what it takes to create effective BPC products that reflect what consumers want from their chosen skin care, hair care, makeup, sun care and fragrance products.

Here are our insights, tips and best practices for designing BPC formulations when creating a new product range.

Action plan

Preparing to produce your next range may induce nervous laughter, motivation, excitement, and pangs of panic or uncertainty. An action plan is like a breath of fresh air, providing clear direction and aims. Set out your goals, the smaller action steps you're going to take to achieve them, timelines, considerations, and supplier information or requirements (if you have them).

Ideally, do this before you begin, but if you've already started, don't worry. Implementing an action plan during your formulation process will help you understand where you are, how far you have to go, your priorities, and your next steps.

Benefits

What are consumers most looking for from their BPC products? How will my formulation meet these needs? What value will my formulation give to my target audiences?

Claims

Understand the claims you want to make and meet with your formulation. *"Instead of just thinking that you want to create a 'clean' product, know what is meant by that,"* says Marni Dexter, Applications Manager at Croda. Is a certain percentage bio-based, vegan, biodegradable? Ask if these are necessary components of the product.

"Certain terminology can mean different things to different brands, and it is important to understand their expectations and which ingredients can be used to meet them," says Dexter.

Design and Development

Understanding the design concept behind your product formulation is vital. As competition in the BPC market continues to grow, having a clear product development process can set you apart and help you stay on track to produce a stand-out product.

Efficacy and Experience

Will the active ingredients prove effective and provide results? Does the product do what it says on the tin? What sensory attributes appeal to users?

Formulation: Features and Functions

A good formulation is the foundation of a successful beauty product. Even the most innovative products must meet the right technical requirements to enter the market, deliver results, and meet the needs of your target audiences.

Consider all attributes of your formulation, including safety, efficacy, stability, sensorial attributes, user-friendliness, and sustainability. When developing a new beauty product, it's essential to ensure your formulation works and is suitable for its intended purpose.

Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs)

Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) are an important part of product development for BPC brands. GMPs provide guidelines for BPC brands to follow to ensure their products are safe and effective. Product safety and traceability, record keeping, processes and procedures, and quality control are examples of GMP requirements.

Humectants, Hyaluronic acid, Hair care

Knowing the language associated with BPC product development helps to remove any fear of formulating. Access an online glossary or speak to your ingredient supplier or CM to get the lowdown and tips on terminology.

Ingredients

Learn about your ingredients, the ratios they should be mixed in, and the raw material sourcing methods you want to sample and implement. Different ingredients may have different sustainable sourcing considerations, processing methods, specifications, and certifications.

"Definitely talk to your supplier," says Mehta. Gather information on how they may have different specifications or perform differently and their quality despite coming from the same source.

Join a Community of Expert Formulators

Find an indie BPC community and trusted partners and suppliers to talk about CM, ingredient supply, claims, regulations, standards, packaging and marketing.

Keep Going!

Building your BPC brand can feel challenging and a lot to take on. Remind yourself that you're creating something to be proud of and that provides value and beauty to people.



Lab

Consider your setup, what you need to formulate and the process itself. If you're working with a CM, ask them what they require from you and which production elements will be handled in a laboratory setting.

Market Research

Carry out thorough market research to gain accurate insights into your consumers' needs and trends.

"I conducted a lot of focus studies before launching my products," says Lewis, Founder of holistic skin care and hair care brand, My Mommy Wisdom. "As eczema is so sensitive, I wanted to curate a formula that could cater to those with the most severe form of eczema," Lewis notes.

Sharing insights on developing her Everyday Relief Moisturizer formulation, which is her best-selling product, Lewis shares: *"I felt that if my product could provide aid to the most delicate form of eczema, then it would do well for those with mild to moderate eczema."*

New Product Development (NPD)

New Product Development (NPD) is an integral part of the product life cycle management process for BPC brands. NPD involves developing and introducing new products to the market to meet consumer needs, compete in the market, and help meet business objectives.

NPD activities include ideation and concept development, prototyping, market testing, and launching. The process of developing new products requires close collaboration between marketing, research and design teams. The goal of NPD is to create value for consumers by delivering innovative, competitively-priced products that meet their desired needs.

Opportunity

There's never been a more exciting time to be in BPC. You're about to create your next range. Just a little reminder to celebrate that! Maximise this time and your opportunity to develop beautiful formulations that bring positivity to the people looking for them.

Packaging

Explore ideas for your collection's front-of-pack labelling and packaging. Consider the design elements you want to incorporate to communicate your formulation's claims.

Increasingly, consumers want beauty products and packaging that are sustainable. Communicate your sustainability claims on your beauty labelling clearly to connect with your target audiences. Develop these ideas to help make your product stand out on shelves, in digital shops and on social media.

Quality, Quantities and Questions

Quality control is one of the top considerations when creating your BPC products as your formulations need to meet your consumers' demands. From the formula to packaging, conduct testing to ensure your product is safe, effective and appealing.

Quantities are also important to consider as your formula's production needs to meet demand sufficiently to manage cost and time.

Ask questions to your CM and ingredient supplier throughout the development process to identify any areas of improvement and make sure your formulation stays on track.

Regulations

Regulations are a key component of product development for BPC brands. The regulations for what ingredients can and cannot be used in products vary between countries, states and regions. Therefore, it's critical to research and comply with the regulations of the regions, states and countries you plan to sell your products in.

Testing must also be done to ensure that all formulation components comply with the necessary regulations. The testing stage is especially important when products are being shipped across borders and require special documentation to ensure they abide by the laws of the importing country.

Safety, Sensory and Sustainability

All products should be rigorously tested to ensure they are safe for consumers and comply with safety standards. Safety testing involves assessing formulations to check they avoid potentially hazardous ingredients and don't cause allergic reactions, and look for the presence of animal-derived components (if you're formulating a vegan product).

The sensory attributes of a formulation are increasingly popular among consumers. BPC products may contain fragrances and essential oils, just make sure every sensorial decision is made with your consumer in mind. For example, as much consideration needs to be given to pleasant scents as it does with identifying and avoiding potential irritants.

BPC brands need to consider the environmental impact of their products and strive to create products that minimise the ecological footprint required to develop them. Sustainable ingredient sourcing, biotechnology, and avoiding animal testing are examples of how BPC brands may increase the sustainability of their formulations.

Technology

BPC tech remains prominent in formulations. Brands, CMs and ingredient suppliers continue to invest in tech to develop their ingredients and overall brand and product offerings. Biological advancements are ready to create the next era of BPC launches with proven efficacy.

Use (Intended)

What value is your formulation intended to provide? Is it a skin care, sun care, makeup, hair care, body care or fragrance product? Is it designed to be a cross-category fusion innovation? What have you developed it to do?

Voice of your Customer

In all stages of formulating your BPC products, you need to know your customer's voice to ensure your finished products accurately reflect what they want to see from your BPC products. Develop your formula with their voice and needs at the forefront and carry this throughout your production process.

Working Together

Positive, supportive, and effective teams can make all the difference when formulating your BPC products. Clear roles, timelines, and objectives help keep your project on track and provide opportunities for collaboration, which take you closer to meeting your goals.

Xfactor

Ask, what makes your indie brand unique? What makes your product formulations stand out?

Yes!

You're nearly there. The finish line is in sight. Get ready to put your finished formulas and polished products in front of your consumers.

Zealousness

We're finishing on a high! Zealousness is the state of being passionately devoted to something – a quality that indie BPC entrepreneurs put into their ranges. So if things go wrong along the way, trust in your zealousness. You'll see it in others, too, when you meet the right CM, ingredient supplier, and brand consultant for your brand.

Cross-category Fusion Innovation

Today's formulators are exploring new, novel, and next-generation creations that cross BPC categories and fuse innovations from more than one segment. These creative formulations blur the once-visible boundaries between skin care, hair care, makeup, fragrance, and sun care.

Building on the popular trends of multi-functional and multi-generational BPC products that cater to more than one result and person, multi or cross-category formulations take ingredients, sensorial effects, and the effectiveness of multiple segments and fuse them together.

It's a smart move for BPC. With individual categories forging strong reputations with consumers – skin care accounts for approximately 24% of the global BPC market and hair care takes up 18.2% – combining them together is likely to garner further attention and appeal from consumers eager for cross-category innovations.

Let's look at how formulators make new products that cross BPC categories and discover what combinations can create effective results and captivate consumers.



Creative cross-category concoctions

"Cross-category formulations are very popular and continue to gain interest," says Hurtikant. Consumers will see these products throughout BPC in skin, hair, body, sun and colour cosmetics. "Cross-category formulations are especially fun to formulate and they're becoming more popular with consumers who don't want to spend extra time on their skin care routines," says Mehta.

Multifunctional products have grown recently as busy lifestyles prompt simple yet effective routines and results. *"Covid-19 also demonstrated greater consumer desire for products that do more with less and are more cost-effective,"* Hurtikant details.

Make the most out of the cross-category era and your opportunity to enter it.

With any NPD, formulators need to be aware of the latest trends and consumer preferences, experiment with different textures and ingredients, and assess their products' efficacy to ensure they provide results. Ultimately, an innovative and effective formula will help to define a company's unique offering and set them apart.

By testing various combinations, indie brands can create unique products that appeal to their target audiences. With so much to do when launching a new range as it is, knowing the cross-category formulations that are possible from scientific and trends perspectives saves you stress, valuable time and money.

Multi-generational products interest families looking for personal care items that can be shared and lead to effective results. *"In the BPC industry, products that can be used for everyone in the home are most appealing,"* says Lewis. Developing her brand on cross-BPC segments, Lewis details: *"I wanted moms to feel comfortable buying products that not only they could apply, but also their children could use."*





Varying scientific stages and considerations are product-dependent

"The scientific process for cross-category formulations, and formulations in general, is finding the fine balance between efficacy, sensory and stability," Mehta shares.

Scientists, formulators and manufacturers may need to follow different scientific stages and considerations depending on the BPC product the brand is creating. Skin care, sun care, hair care, colour cosmetics, and personal care formulations may require different processes.

"Creating a sun care formulation with a high SPF that is non-whitening, applies and spreads nicely, and leaves the skin feeling moisturised needs to be carefully developed when selecting ingredients and inclusion levels," details Mehta.

"Regulations can also play a role, and sun care is a good example of where criteria are very different from other applications due to the sun care filters used," says Dexter.



Complementary combinations for cross-category formulations

In answer to whether any combinations work particularly well in terms of efficacy, “Yes”, Dexter confirms. *“We have found that certain ingredients can work together at differing ratios to create unique textures, and some ingredients can help to deliver other materials to the hair or skin more effectively,”* says Dexter.

“Conversely, certain ionic products cannot be used together because they are incompatible, such as anionic and cationic materials, for example,” Dexter adds.

Formulation Fusion in Action:

Ingredient integrity is at the heart of cross-category fusion innovation, with BPC consumers looking for sought-after formulations that deliver multiple benefits.

1. [EltaMD](#) brought its sun care-skin care innovation UV Elements Broad-Spectrum SPF 44 to the market. The product is known for its hydration properties due to the inclusion of a popular skin care ingredient, hyaluronic acid.
2. [C'est Moi](#) Gentle Mineral Sunscreen Lotion Broad Spectrum SPF 30 combines sun care and skin care to provide a lightweight and gentle formulation, particularly appealing to consumers with sensitive skin.
3. [Saint Jane](#) released its skincare-makeup hybrid formulation. The lip gloss combines colour cosmetics with beneficial ingredients for the skin, such as hyaluronic acid, plant extracts, vitamins, and CBD oil.
4. [It Cosmetics](#) launched its full-coverage CC cream, which merges the makeup and skin care segments. Promoting a simple makeup routine, the cream offers primer, anti-ageing serum, moisturiser and colour corrector benefits.
5. The Skinification of Hair is a whole trend dedicated to the infusion of skin care and hair care. [Dr Barbara Sturm's](#) Anti-Fall Hair Scalp Serum, [Uklash's](#) Hair Growth Serum, and [Vegamour's](#) ENSO Overnight Hair Restoring Mask are just a few examples.

Cross-category formulations that feature ingredients and benefits typically associated with skin care are very popular. *“With skin care, most ingredients provide a duality of benefits and can be used to offer relief for various ailments,”* Lewis shares.



Data details development potential

"Cross-category formulations are where data is so powerful" says Shrestha. "Oftentimes, formulators approach ingredient suppliers with one project or one specific claim in mind", Shrestha adds. "This approach may limit the different ways a brand markets its product because they don't have access to the data from suppliers," Shrestha continues.

When that data is readily available, technology can, Novi's Head of Science and Research, Shrestha, says, *"enable discovery of innovative materials and support the creative design of formulas"*.

Tech can support indie formulators by not limiting ingredient use to one specific range or function. It can empower formulators with information on applicability and recommended use levels for the different formulation types they are developing. Tech can also provide data and substantiation documents for ingredients that prove their relevance for different product types. The approach can help indie brands build their inventories, which is *"readily interchangeable no matter what"*, says Shrestha.

In this way, formulators and manufacturers want adaptability because now they can order larger quantities and use those materials across different product lines versus having to exclusively buy one ingredient, which could be very expensive and wasteful.



Separating Fact from Fiction

Fear can dampen even the most reading-and-raring-formulator, stopping or slowing down the formulation process. As this fear often comes from myths, we want to debunk some of the biggest myths around BPC formulation so you can formulate without fear.

Let's uncover some of the most common myths around formulating BPC products.

Biggest scientific myths around formulating products

1. They're simple to produce

"The biggest myth in formulating BPC products is that they are easy to make," Lewis emphasises. "A lot of my friends think formulating skin care, and hair care products involves throwing things in a beaker and giving them a mix, which is definitely not the case," agrees Mehta.

There are many factors to consider when formulating BPC products, including:

- The science behind ingredients
- How they interact with each other
- What you want your finished products to look and feel like

"Yes, we do mix things in a beaker, but a lot goes behind that mixing," Mehta adds.

2. They're quick to produce

Your skin is the largest organ of your body. Not scientifically testing your products can result in some individuals having negative side effects and reactions. *"It is critical to take your time when formulating BPC products because if not, the results can be harmful to your customers," Lewis relays.*

It takes time to create a formula. *"Many corners are turned, especially when there's a timeline crunch," says Shrestha.*

3. You don't need to measure ratios/ingredients

Accurately measuring the components that go into your products is vital to create consistent formulations that consumers repeatedly buy, share the details with their friends, and shout about on social media. *"Properly formulating measurements is key, and factors like melting point status can make a tremendous difference in the consistency of your products,"* says Lewis.

4. You don't need a clear plan

Having a clear, robust, yet working product development plan that enables you to follow necessary criteria, cannot be underestimated. It is important to *"fully understand there is a process to be followed to mitigate risk"*, says Shrestha.

5. Natural ingredients are always better than lab-created ones

"We hear if it's natural, then it's safer, or if it's synthetic, it could be more unsafe, which is inaccurate," says Shrestha. If an ingredient comes from the soil, like clays, for example, they may have a high risk of being contaminated with heavy metals.

Brands can combat these views and concerns by testing and exploring whether a purification process exists to reduce the number of contaminants. *"With synthetics, especially now, there's more push towards bioengineered ingredients or safer synthetics or plant stem cells, which can be more sustainable given that they're not using vast amounts of land and are therefore preserving the biodiversity of the plants used,"* says Shrestha.

There is growing potential for lab-created biological technologies as the use of precision medicine and customised healthcare makes its way into the BPC industry. Check out our comprehensive ebook for everything you need to know about natural and lab-created ingredients. Simply email indiebeauty@croda.com to get your copy.



6. Technology takes more information than it gives

Technology can provide extensive data to BPC brands, informing you about the ingredients you plan to use in your formulations. *"There are so many ways to position an ingredient,"* says Shrestha.

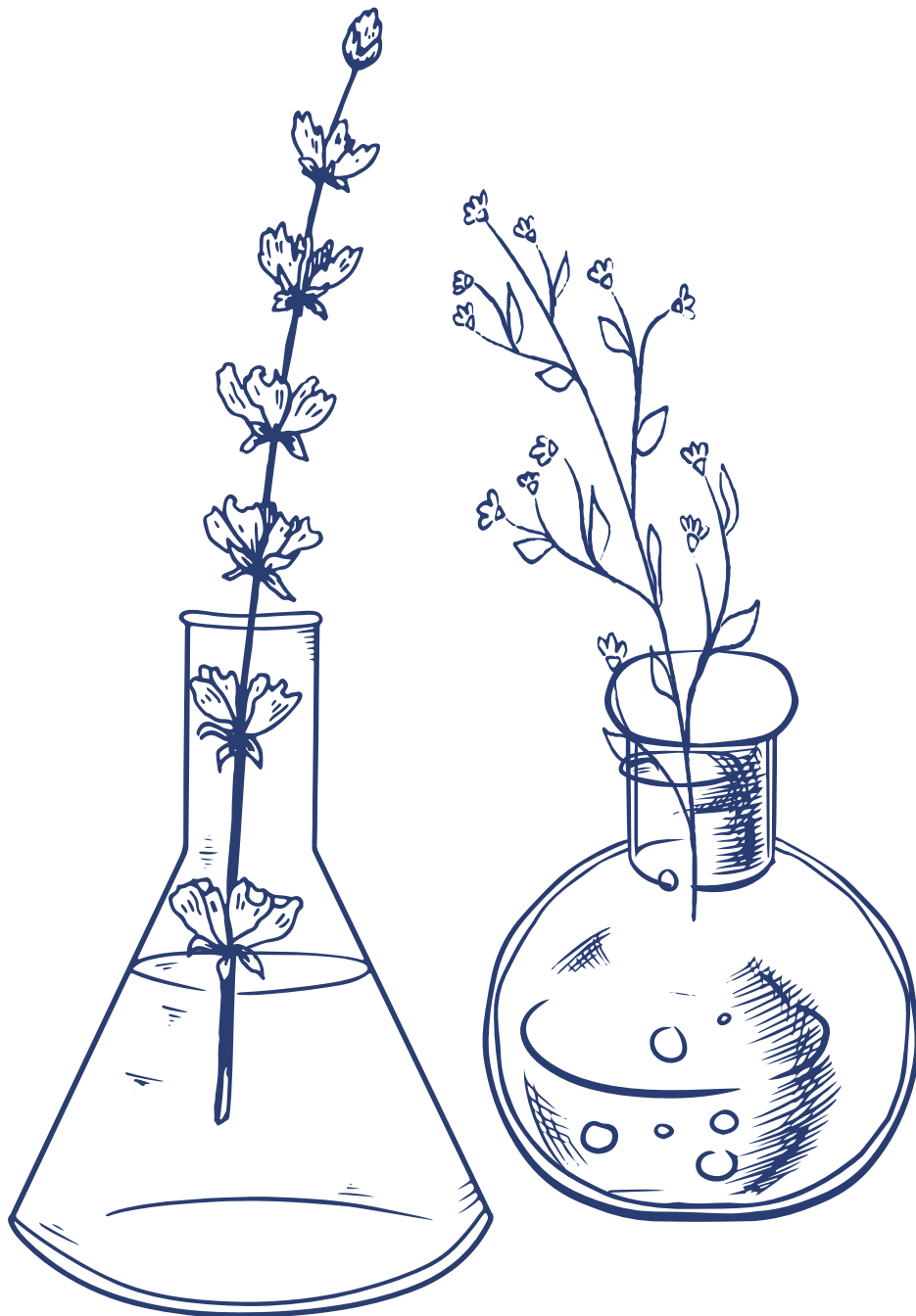
With tech, providers can educate and inform consumers by saying: 'You're using this ingredient which is an alternative to a synthetic version, but that comes with other shortcomings, and this is how you can combat it.' Or, 'here's an ingredient that is synthetically produced, but it may be more sustainable because it's using less water'.

7. There's not much difference between ingredients

Before formulating your BPC range, it's useful to develop an understanding of ingredient diversity. *"People often think just because an ingredient is the same for two different products on their shelf, [it] doesn't mean they come from the same source; they may have different specifications or perform differently,"* says Mehta.



WHERE EFFICACY
AND EXPERIENCE,
SCIENCE AND
SENSORY,
TECHNOLOGY AND
TEXTURE, MEET





What do the Regulations Say?

Researching and understanding claims, certifications and requirements when making global and regional products is paramount to ensure they get past the formulation stage, meets approval requirements, and reaches your online shops and physical shelves.

Running your indie BPC brand comes with enough to-dos. Understanding the relevant sections of applicable legislation and how these vary from region to region is challenging, and a sizable part of your formulation process. Specific regulations and laws apply to the production and sale of BPC products, and vary depending on where you're planning to sell them. It's important to familiarise yourself with these regulations, keep on top of updates, and adhere to them to remain compliant.

Look out for guidance issued by regulators to ensure your formulations adhere to any changes they make. In January 2023, the UK, for example, updated its [guidance](#) on regulations that apply to cosmetic products being supplied in or into Great Britain.

Doing the necessary research and consulting with a legal professional can help you understand relevant legislation and ensure your formulations meet the applicable standards and regulations. Trusted partners such as CMs and ingredient suppliers can direct you to relevant legislative guidance.

"If we're formulating for global compliance, we have to look at individual regional registration requirements and ensure that all of our ingredients are compliant," says Mehta. "Some customers also have certain brand ingredient restriction lists that we have to comply with, which can make our ingredient toolbox limited," Mehta details.

Understanding regulations, standards, and guidance

The US [Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) offers regulatory guidance. *"I recommend going through FDA regulations before launching your products,"* says Lewis. *"You want to ensure you are using, soliciting and labelling products properly,"* Lewis adds. In Europe, the [European Cosmetics Commission](#) issues information on regulations.

Understanding the regulatory requirements of different markets and how these vary is critical, as their stipulations are not always the same. For example, the European [cosmetic ingredient database](#) is known to be significantly stricter on permissible ingredients for formulations. The European Union (EU) has [banned](#) over 150 times more ingredients than the US for use in beauty formulations, resulting in the EU prohibiting a total of 1680 ingredients, as of December 2022, for use in BPC products.

When selecting and researching ingredients, My Mommy Wisdom leans on [Cosmetic Ingredient Review \(CIR\)](#) and [Environmental Working Group \(EWG\)](#). *"Both are wonderful tools for reviewing ingredients and sharing their benefits,"* says Lewis.

Tech can also help indie formulators understand regulations and standards by taking interpretation out of the process. For example, Novi works directly with retailers like Sephora, Credo, and Target. Through its relationships, the tech provider knows what upcoming regulations and standards are set to impact BPC brands and what new updates are due. By aggregating these insights, tech providers can work with indie brands to inform you and help dissect your formulations.

For example, let's say a formulator is interested in an ingredient and is following its development. A regulation change requires anyone to use that ingredient at a specific per cent or to not use it for specific applications. *"We can send that information to those users to say, 'You're interested in this ingredient. There's an update, FYI,'"* says Shrestha.

When BPC brands use tech, the information-gathering approach becomes more proactive, whereas the *"current state of the industry's more reactive as indie brands only know this information much later"*, says Shrestha. Formulators then have to go back to the drawing board or panic at the last minute. Using tech proactively helps brands alleviate the worry associated with many of these standards and entrust third parties to support and provide up-to-date information.

There are also different standards around sustainability, such as organic certification and inspection body [EcoCert](#) and the (COSMetic Organic and Natural Standard) [COSMOS](#), which scientists and manufacturers need to verify their chosen ingredients against. *"A lot of this background work needs to happen with the ingredient selection before a formulation can be put together in the lab,"* says Mehta.

Sharing Stories from the Scientist's Seat

Peering behind the laboratory curtain and getting access to first-hand insights from top scientists at the forefront of BPC formulation innovation is rare and invaluable. That's why we're exploring how scientists handle formulations and the process involved in formulating a new product range.

The R&D process behind BPC formulations

Marni Dexter, Applications Manager at Croda, shares her expertise, insights, and top tips for producing your next breakthrough BPC range.

Before even going to the bench, several things need to be considered, including the format, application, performance claims, regulatory, global compliance, sustainability needs, and any ingredients/chemistries that must be avoided in the particular BPC formulation we're producing. Once this is decided, the ingredients are chosen and the formulation can be developed on paper.

It's unusual for a formulation to be perfect on the first try, so at least a few iterations are usually made to optimise the formula and its performance. Issues with sensory performance and stability are the main reasons scientists and manufacturers may need to reformulate a product during development.

From start to finish, creating a formulation can take anywhere from 3.5 to six months or even longer, depending on the complexity of the formulation and expected performance. Formulation stability takes three months, so a formulation made in a few weeks is a quick turnaround. Some formulations will need to be remade after performance evaluations which could drastically lengthen the completion time. Formulation stability at different temperatures must be conducted before the formula can be finalised and promoted.



Biggest scientific challenges when formulating a new range

Before formulating your next range, it's important to know the scientific challenges you're likely to face so you can work to actively avoid them. Having awareness of these potential hurdles means you can research, utilise tech and reach out to trusted partners for support in navigating and overcoming them.

Here are some of the biggest scientific challenges indie brands can experience when formulating BPC products:

1 Supply chain issues

Novi's Head of Science and Research, Shrestha, describes the supply chain as a *"challenge that's been hard to navigate"*. Amid disruption and uncertainty in BPC supply chains, brands have been extra cautious and attentive to their ingredient deliveries.

Indies have had to ensure their selected ingredients arrive at a time that makes sense for their launch timelines. To further limit risk, brands have also had to have backup ingredient options to replace any formulation components that are hard to access or are severely delayed.

2 Claims harmonisation

"Many interpretations exist, and it is hard for the formulators and consumers to know precisely what it means," says Shrestha.

3 Working with only a CM

"There's a lot of demand and a limited number of manufacturers," says Shrestha.

"Contract manufacturers are great to have, but the process of finding manufacturers can be difficult," says Lewis. *"Most manufacturers want you to have already tested your formulations and/or have a minimum quota,"* Lewis adds.

4 Prioritising formulations

From scheduling to securing timelines, understanding your priorities during the formulation process is vital, as is the prioritisation your partners give to your BPC range.

5

Transparency over roles in the supply chain

"It's crucial to ask, 'with that technology, who is responsible for verifying all the details a brand is trying to make?'" says Shrestha.

Key considerations include:

- Who is responsible for certain risks and decisions?
- Who is 'the face of the formula'? Who is choosing the materials?
- Who are the manufacturers procuring these ingredients?

"Taking responsibility for ensuring what's being said is substantiated is critical," adds Shrestha.

6

Managing competing priorities

Regulations, efficacy, and sustainability are often key considerations for indies today. However, depending on the market and your goals, these may contradict one another. Ingredients are not always the most sustainable. Brands may need to change ingredients to comply with regulations and important standards. Work out your must-haves and nice-to-haves before starting your formulation to ensure your products are compliant and can enter the BPC market.

7

Rigidity of process

Rather than a specific process involved, understanding the necessary criteria for a formulation *"definitely helps"*, says Dexter. *"You can then design the formula with that in mind and try to hit some of the other 'nice to have's' if possible,"* Dexter adds.

8

Staying in tune with your target audiences

Each new product collection needs to explore consumer needs to ensure your formulations reflect what consumers want from their skin care, hair care, sun care, makeup, and fragrances. Basing your formulation on previous insights without seeing how your target consumers' needs have changed and how trends have evolved risks creating a formulation that fails to reflect these accurately.

Formulation in action: *"The biggest challenge in formulating a new range of products was my audience,"* says Lewis. *"My initial brand has a very niche market, so curating products outside what they may be accustomed to can be a gamble,"* adds Lewis.

"I like to survey my most loyal customers prior to making any new formulations," Lewis details. *"I want to know if there is a need for what I want to make,"* adds Lewis. *"I have learned the hard way and have had to discontinue products that were no longer selling due to the consequence of not having consulted with my customers prior to making them,"* Lewis explains.

Making Formulations with Trusted Partners

Contract manufacturers (CM), ingredient suppliers, tech providers and brand consultants can play a vital role in helping BPC brands create formulations that stand out.

Contract Manufacturers

Using a CM to assist in product development can be hugely beneficial. It can save on cost, time and resources, enabling businesses to focus on other aspects of the development process. Enlisting the support of a CM allows BPC brands to focus on their marketing and sales strategies while the CM focuses on product formulation.

CMs offer their expertise and experience to manage the development process from start to finish, allowing BPC brands to reap the rewards of a successful launch. CMs can also provide critical feedback and advice throughout the product development journey, providing a valuable resource for BPC brands by giving support, accuracy, and peace of mind.

Check out our comprehensive ebook for indie BPC brands for everything you need to know about contract manufacturing. Simply email indiebeauty@croda.com to get your copy.

Ingredient Suppliers

"For ingredient suppliers, finding the most cost-efficient ingredient shouldn't be the focal point. You may have to spend more based on the result you are trying to yield," Lewis says. "It is helpful to test out different ingredient suppliers so that you can measure the product's effectiveness and availability," Lewis notes. "You want to make sure you can gain access to your ingredients whenever you need them and that they will be available," shares Lewis.





Tech Providers

"By working closely with CMs and ingredient suppliers, we get to be at the forefront of introducing technology to many of these manufacturers," says Shrestha. "But you'd be surprised how much of it's still telephone and emails," Shrestha adds.

Partners can provide a clear understanding of what ingredients an indie brand uses in terms of their availability, inventory and lead times, and what other innovations are out there that can support formulations.

"Suppliers always want to be in front of the formulators, essentially being in front of the brands," says Shrestha. Manufacturers are constantly looking for innovations to support brands. "But it's been relationship-based, and it's been around whom I know and whom I can call and ask for this information versus understanding the entire landscape of the industry," Shrestha shares. Tech can help improve the seamless communication and connectedness within BPC and democratise access to data and knowledge.



Brand Consultants

With the help of a brand consultant, you can ensure your formulations and finished products meet your branding objectives and target consumers' expectations.

"Knowing your value proposition and communicating it to your desired consumers is a crucial part of raising awareness and getting your products into their hands," says Natasha Spencer-Jolliffe, Creative and Communications Director of beauty marketing company, [Lion Spirit Media](#).

Are you meeting your target audience's needs? Does your proposed product formulation reflect consumer demands? Consider the problem you're trying to solve with your formulation. Look at the more comprehensive brand values your consumers want from their chosen products and communicate these to help you stand out from your competitors.

"Today's consumers are conscientious about what their chosen brands care about and how these are depicted in their formulation processes and finished products," Spencer-Jolliffe continues.

Authenticity is not a nice-to-have, it's how you build trust and loyalty. *"Consumers can smell fakery, any sort of PR 'washing' a mile off, and want to know that the stories and transparency-led claims you make about your sustainability, inclusivity, supply chain management, ethics, and all-round way of working match their values and calls for honesty and consciousness,"* Spencer-Jolliffe adds.

Advancing Formulations with Accessible and Progressive Technologies

Tech is everywhere in BPC today. BeautyTech and PersonalCareTech are available throughout the BPC sector to empower consumers and indie brands. It has become an essential tool for staying ahead of the competition, driving innovation, and providing consumers with the best products and services possible to meet their needs.

Indie brands benefit from the insights that data provides and use them to inform their formulation decisions. They can also leverage new tech advancements in the lab to influence ingredient choice and finished products. With the rise of technology in BPC, consumer confidence is also growing.



34%

of UK skincare users would be interested in using formulas personalised to their needs.¹⁰

BPC tech is diverse and far-reaching

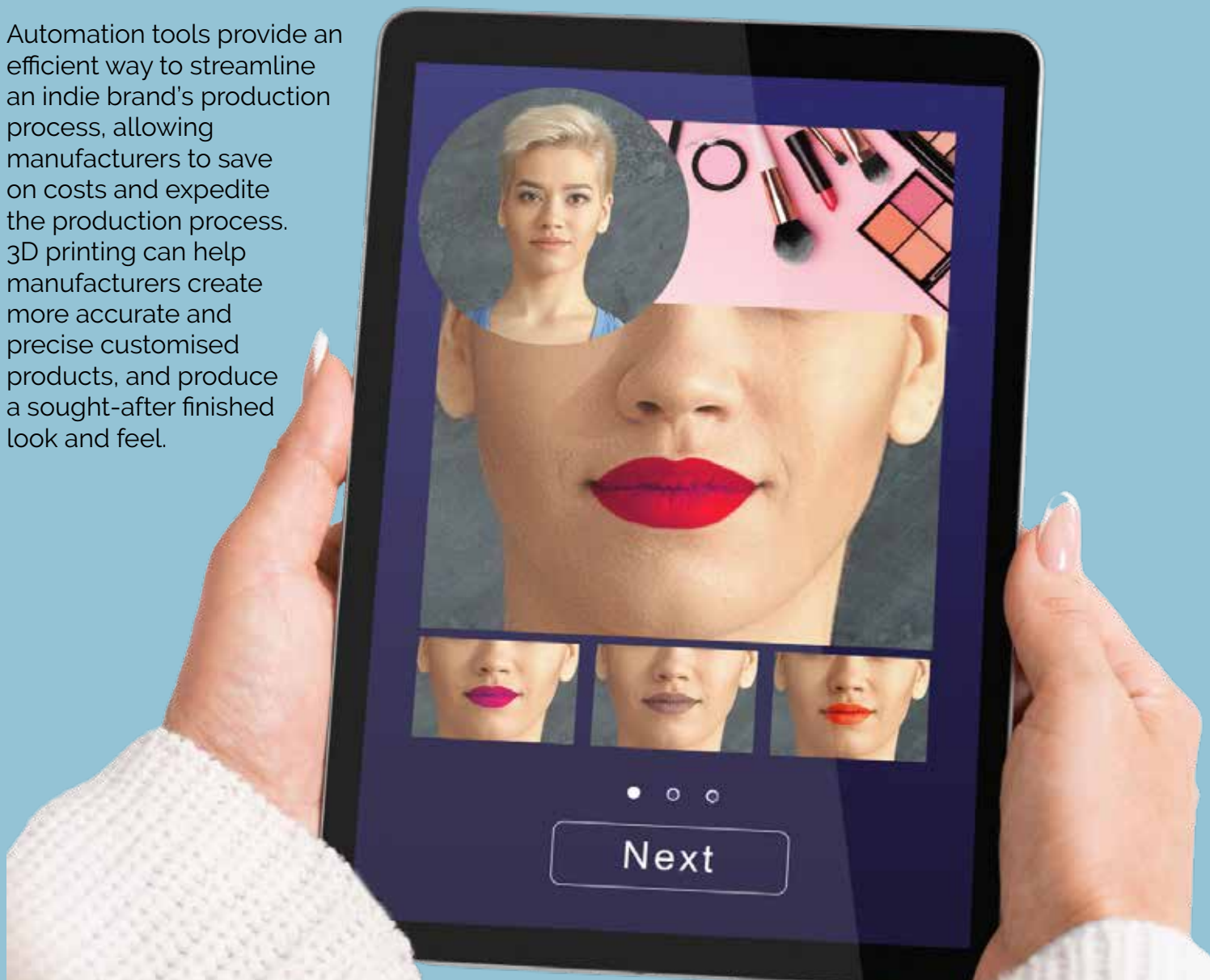
From artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR) to automation tools, blockchain, and biotechnology, there are a plethora of exciting and advancing technologies employed and enjoyed in BPC product development.

Not only is data science pulling together industry insights, but new lab-based technologies are changing how we formulate BPC products. Genetics, nano-technology, micro-scales, particles, cellular biology, biopharmacy, biofabrics, biomimicry, and biotechnology are all examples of tech contributing to today's BPC formulations.

"Technology plays an intricate role in assisting with formulations because of the accuracies technology provides," says Lewis. "You want to ensure each of your batches makes the same exact formulation every time, regardless of how large or small your batch is, as it's important to ensure it's not compromised," Lewis adds.

Interaction, efficiency, and precision are driving the use of technology in BPC. AR technologies, for example, can help simulate a product on consumers virtually and provide a more interactive experience.

Automation tools provide an efficient way to streamline an indie brand's production process, allowing manufacturers to save on costs and expedite the production process. 3D printing can help manufacturers create more accurate and precise customised products, and produce a sought-after finished look and feel.



A new beauty tech era

Here's how the role of technology is shaping and signifying a new era in BPC:

1. Transparency

"First, for indie formulators, the biggest challenge is accessing more sustainable materials," says Shrestha. Whether it's the overall quantity, the minimum order quantity, or the pricing, it can become entirely unattainable for many indie formulators. For example, through their relationships with multiple suppliers, Novi has leveraged technology to make materials more accessible to indie brands by commanding stronger purchasing power.

Tech can also help indies navigate relevant regulations and retailer policies that brands may aspire to be on. It can help these formulators understand what not to use in their formulas and how this affects their performance. For example, a retailer may stipulate as a requirement, or a brand may say, *"I don't want to use anything that's animal-derived"*. The first step is understanding what chemicals are potentially animal-derived, so you can ask questions about what ingredients to include in your formulas.

Within Novi's science and research team, Shrestha confirms a vast amount of research is done on understanding all of the ingredients and chemicals used in the BPC industry to find the most applicable and effective for the specific formulation proposed.

Let's take our previous hypothetical example of creating a formula without animal-derived ingredients. *"We call it a hazard list of materials that are potentially derived from animals,"* says Shrestha. From there, tech providers can ask: 'What suppliers can you use now that have substantiated the origin of those materials to make sure you're compliant with that policy?'. *"Then that becomes just one standard the indie brand needs to follow,"* Shrestha details. Tech can help these formulators navigate that complexity.

Brands can communicate with transparency via science and technology to establish product safety. Teaming up with sustainability marketing technology provider, [Provenance](#), shopping destination British [Cult Beauty](#) has launched Cult Conscious, a tech platform that uses blockchain technology to verify the authenticity of product claims such as sustainability and ethics.



2. Product knowledge

Tech can accrue and deliver quantitative knowledge and qualitative insights to give indie brands a deeper understanding of how to approach new formulations.

"Quantitative is more accessible, but there is a huge opportunity for getting data from consumers," says Shrestha. For example, during formulation, one of the first things a formulator will do is look at its benchmark standards. During this part of the process, formulators will review other products on the market that they will also test out to get inspiration for developing new products.

"Acknowledging how different formulas and ingredients work will enable brands to better market their products, understand what testing panels to run, and what claims to make," says Shrestha. *"There is a lot of information that today's technology has not tapped into yet, to make product development more streamlined,"* Shrestha adds.



3. Process and progression

Understanding how to gather accurate and comprehensive information on supply chain regulation and sustainability without succumbing to overwhelm or burden may be a key concern when formulating BPC ranges.

AI-led tech can help indie formulators manage the formulating process. *"The formulators get to focus on what they're good at,"* says Shrestha. *"It's the creativity and science, working on the bench and not having to spend hours chasing after this documentation, asking raw material suppliers about their compliance,"* Shrestha adds. *"Even when they order samples or procure materials, they can still decide how long it will take,"* Shrestha continues.

Tech can narrow down the playground of suitable and effective materials that indie brands can use for their formulations. Brands can focus on researching, exploring, and testing those specific ingredients.

Novi, for example, is set up to ingest hundreds of thousands of documents from different raw material suppliers. As a result, the BPC tech company needs to be more structured as this data is in various formats. It can be one extensive dossier of a hundred pages to multiple separate statements from other suppliers. *"We take all that unstructured data and make that into a standardised format, which is searchable and filterable,"* says Shrestha.

4. Comprehensive

Today's BPC tech tools may only focus on a single function within a formulation, such as regulations or procurements. *"They don't speak to each other, which has been a challenge that we've heard a lot from our partners on the formulation manufacturing side,"* says Shrestha.

"There's a massive appetite from all of these players to integrate technology into their workflows," Shrestha continues. As recently as five years ago, Shrestha says there was *"a lot of resistance and comfort with using an Excel sheet or going the old-school way of emailing or making phone calls"*. Now, there's more appetite for modernising this as the world becomes more technology-driven.

"We're seeing the emergence of some technology in this space, but it's still quite fragmented," says Shrestha. LogTech – the marriage of logistics and technology – aims to improve and disrupt standard logistics services by adding tech. *"Discovery tools for many ingredients exist, but now there needs to be a way to see if it's compliant or what the price is and transact within those marketplaces – it's still new in terms of prevalence,"* says Shrestha.

In BPC tech, there's also *"a huge opportunity to help track progress towards sustainability, measure goals, see how far any brand or any formulator is towards achieving them and reporting actual data"*, says Shrestha. Today, there's the ability for tech to support all sides of the ecosystem, whether it's a retailer, brand or formulator.



Top Formulation Questions to Ask

BPC brands should gather as much information as possible from their CM, ingredient supplier and other trusted partners. Knowledge is power, after all.

Here are the leading questions to ask to understand the science and the strategy behind formulations to ensure you get a quality product.

Contract manufacturers

- Start by asking a potential manufacturer if they already have a comparable formula or product that resembles yours. *"This is helpful because you want to ensure whether they are familiar with making products like yours and that you can test their knowledge on how your ingredients work,"* says Lewis.
- What is your experience working with similar ingredients and formulations?
- What is your manufacturing process?
- What is the intent of the formulation, and has it been tested to prove those claims?
- What testing do you offer?
- How do you ensure each batch is consistent and accurate?
- How do you ensure quality control and safety standards?
- What is the timeline for delivery?
- What are the minimum and maximum order quantities you can fulfil?
- How will you handle post-launch revisions and modifications?
- How much will it cost, and how will you charge for your services?
- How do you handle customer feedback and ensure the customer is satisfied with the end product?

Ingredient suppliers

- What is the purpose of each ingredient in the formulation?
- Are your services and ingredients compliant with local health and safety standards?
- What is the safety and efficacy of the ingredients you are providing?
- What is the sustainability impact of your formulation and the ingredients used?
- What types of preservatives do you use in your formulas?
- How do you measure the effectiveness of your ingredients?



10 Steps to Formulate your New Product Collection

Formulating BPC products requires a comprehensive approach. Here are 10 steps to help you create your next product collection, both in short and in more detail:

In short:

- 1 Know the sector (as it is today)

- 2 Consider your target market

- 3 Decide on your desired product characteristics

- 4 Follow local regulations and industry standards

- 5 Set up a reliable production process

- 6 Choose your base ingredients

- 7 Conduct quality control checks

- 8 Perform safety testing

- 9 Design your product packaging

- 10 Create marketing and sales strategies

In detail:

1

Know the sector (as it is today)

Researching current BPC trends is essential to formulate your new product collection. Look at what is currently trending in the industry, what your competitors are doing and what your target audiences want. Use analytics to determine what potential customers are looking for. Analyse your past sales data to provide valuable insights into the type of products and designs you can incorporate into your collection.

2

Consider your target market

Research who might be interested in your product and think about how the collection can best meet their needs. Look at other similar products and how your collection will stand out.

Focus studies and groups help ensure you're actively reaching your audience and that they're seeing the results that your product is designed to accomplish. *"The focus groups were very telling and revealed to me that moms, especially first-time moms, were very intentional about what products they used on their children,"* says Lewis.

The indie founder discovered they wanted safe ingredients they could pronounce. *"Moms were more likely to use over-the-counter products than steroids or prescription meds on their children,"* Lewis found.

3

Decide on your desired product characteristics

It's essential to select the right materials and components to ensure your collection meets the desired consumer requirements. Tech can help indie brands navigate the process and select applicable ingredients.

4

Follow local regulations and industry standards

Explore the geographical markets you want your product to launch in. You'll need to understand the legal requirements of the markets you intend to sell in to ensure you comply with all applicable regulations, standards, and requirements for certifications.

5

Set up a reliable production process

It's important to have the right system to ensure your products are consistently high quality and delivered to market on time. Start by identifying a reliable production team and the necessary resources and materials to create your products. Then clearly define your production process, from the steps you need to make the product to the packaging and delivery. Decide on the quantities of each product you want to produce.

"When it comes to manufacturing, make sure the target costs, lead times, and quantities required are all applicable, so there aren't any shocks at the end of the process," says Shrestha. "That blend of the brand, the procurement team and the R&D team can then make those decisions that are more streamlined versus the fragmented approach often seen today," Shrestha details.



6 Choose your base ingredients

Your base ingredients will be the foundation of your finished product, so be sure to pick durable and reliable ones. Consider the materials and craftsmanship you're using. Focus on creating unique pieces that will grab attention, deliver results and create a buzz.

"When it comes to ideation, that's where a lot of the ingredient discovery is happening," Shrestha says. At Novi, for example, the team is working to discover innovation and inspire brands and formulators to say, "There is this amazing new ingredient that, say, Croda has created, and it has all these benefits and properties and it meets the policies you care about". Indie brands can then create their product line around these insights.

7 Conduct quality control checks

Make sure your products are of good quality and are reliable. Creating prototypes and testing their quality is essential. Have a list of criteria that need to be met, and make sure each item goes through this same process to meet your necessary criteria.

Quality control is a great way to ensure each product is reliable, consistent, and will meet customer expectations. It will also help you identify potential problems before they occur and allow you to address them quickly and efficiently.

Testing, shelf-life testing, and preservation are essential to ensure your formula works. Perform safety testing before introducing any new product to the market to ensure the product is safe for users and the environment.

"You want to make sure your product ingredients do not spoil, mould or expire because they will lose their effectiveness and could cause sickness to your customers," details Lewis.

Think about the shape, size, colour, and materials you want to use. Sustainable beauty packaging is highly sought after in today's market by eco-conscious consumers, resulting in a growing number of indie brands choosing sustainable options to house their BPC creations in.

Consider the messaging you want to convey your brand values and grab people's attention. Include any unique features or details and your claims on front-of-pack labelling.

Marketing and sales strategies involve researching and analysing the current market and carefully crafting a plan to promote your products.

Consider the target demographic, potential competitors, budget, and other relevant factors. Once you have a strategy, you can begin to craft marketing materials and launch campaigns to reach your customers, including advertising, public relations, and events. Measure the success of your efforts to adjust and refine your strategy as necessary to continue to engage with potential customers and create a loyal following.

Endnotes

1 Statista: [Cosmetics industry, statistics and facts](#)

2 [Global Beauty and Personal Care Trends 2023 report](#). Source: Mintel Global Consumer, Beauty, Personal Care and Household, September 2022; Mintel Reports US, Beauty Influencers, 2021

3 [Global Beauty and Personal Care Trends 2023 report](#). Source: Mintel Global Consumer, Beauty, Personal Care & Household, March 2022; Mintel Global Consumer, The Holistic Consumer, September 2022

4 [Global Beauty and Personal Care Trends 2023 report](#). Source: Mintel Global Consumer, Beauty, Personal Care & Household, March 2022; Mintel Global Consumer, The Holistic Consumer, September 2022

5 [Global Beauty and Personal Care Trends 2023 report](#). Source: Mintel Reports China, BPC Ingredient Knowledge, 2022; Mintel Reports US, Ingredient Trends in Beauty and Personal Care, 2021

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