Detroit-based Beauty Entrepreneur Finds Success with Meijer

For the past dozen years, Detroit-based beauty entrepreneur Melissa Butler went from creating cosmetics in her kitchen to now, displaying her brand, The Lip Bar, on retail shelves across the country. Meijer was among one of the first major retailers to carry her products.

“At The Lip Bar, we say beauty should be easy, and that includes making our products easy to find for our customers,” Melissa said. “Our national partnerships are very important, but I wanted to be sure we were showing up in our home state of Michigan, as we have a large and loyal fan base here. Meijer's local roots and long-standing commitment to the needs of the local customer made it a perfect marriage. I know our customers like to support local businesses, and working with Meijer allows them to do that two times over.”

In 2012, after becoming frustrated with the beauty industry’s lack of diversity, inclusion, and nontoxic offerings, Melissa started making lipstick in her kitchen. She experimented with cosmetic chemistry and eventually left her job on Wall Street to expand The Lip Bar as a vegan, non-toxic, and inclusive beauty brand.

“When I started The Lip Bar, there was little to no conversation about inclusion in the beauty industry, and lines with large shade ranges were often laden with chemicals or incredibly expensive,” Melissa said. “I was not a makeup maven or an entrepreneur. I was just a consumer who couldn’t find what I needed.”

Growth has not always been straightforward. When Melissa appeared on “Shark Tank” in 2015, she received some tough criticism and walked away without a deal. The experience motivated her and she was confident to keep moving forward, knowing what her customers wanted.

“I converted a former party bus into a Lip Bar truck and drove it across the country to get products to new customers,” Melissa said. “I have worked countless festivals and trade shows, talking to customers for firsthand feedback.”

That vision has paid off. In the fall of 2023, she opened the brand’s flagship store in Detroit and since, has expanded beyond lipstick to include skincare, mascara and foundation.

“By remaining true to addressing the gap I saw in the industry, I have been able to succeed,” Melissa said.

Melissa recently began collaborating with our Supplier Inclusion team and looks forward to the growth that will come from the partnership.

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