

Could coronavirus see a rise in sales for sustainable beauty brands?

Demand for eco-beauty products remains strong despite Covid, writes Tia Byer

As the Scottish economy rebuilds itself following a four-month closure of all non-essential shops, then nationwide redundancies, and a furlough scheme set to dramatically impact tax rates, one may expect the future of sustainable businesses to flounder. Whilst the worldwide interest in environmental living and green recovery took centre stage pre-Covid, many may question whether this initiative is still a priority.

Our present climate of sanitisation and increased hygiene practices, emphasises a need for single-use items such as disposable gloves and plastic cutlery in restaurants. Despite this, the need for sustainable living remains important for many Scottish brands, including luxury industries such as beauty.

For Moo Hair, an Edinburgh-based brand selling vegan hair products, the demand for eco-purchasing has increased since Covid-19. Owner, Suzie Gillespie says that following lockdown "there has been a shift in the nation's feelings about sustainable businesses but for the better".

She continues, "During lockdown, people saw the benefits on wildlife and nature with less traffic pollution and humans around." For Moo Hair, increased sales reflect a resurgence in the nation's commitment "to live more eco and sustainable lives". Offering cruelty and aerosol free products, Moo Hair also partner with One Tree Planted to contribute to biodiversity.

Lauren Ridgely, project officer of the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, explains that while the pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges for businesses, for some, it has highlighted new opportunities. "Covid-19 and lockdown has given many businesses the chance to review their environmental impact and sustainability initiatives and explore the opportunities to contribute to the green recovery for the city," she says.



↑ Organic beauty brands have seen an increase in sales

Moo Hair attests to this, having embarked on a branding review scheme that saw the company broaden and reinforce its green ethos. Owner Suzie elaborates, "we had time to build some great relationships with online ethical and sustainable retailers like Plastic Freedom (@plasticfreedom_)." Similarly, for vegan cosmetics brand Blushberry Botanicals, business went from strength to strength during Covid-19.

Located in Aberdeen, Blushberry Botanicals specialises in luxury plant-based and organic skin products. For owner and creator Lorraine Tait, the increased order demands

"It was like Christmas but without the time to prepare in advance"

were surprising. "During April and May, orders were

about two to three times more than they would normally be for that time of year, which was good but very tiring," she explains.

"I wasn't ready for it; it was like Christmas but without the time to prepare in advance." She adds, "It was quite challenging keeping on top of orders." The increase in demands for Blushberry Botanicals illustrates a change in consumer behaviour with growing interest in making conscious lifestyle changes.

Lorraine explains how the stresses of working from home inspired a mentality change amongst the nation.

"I think a lot of people have been reassessing their lives and starting to think about taking more care of themselves mentally, physically, and holistically.

"Using beauty products, particularly if it is something that's a wee bit of a luxury, not only does your skin good, but it does your mind good," she says.

Despite experiencing difficulties with distribution due to a restricted postal service, one thing that has remained constant for Blushberry Botanicals following Covid-19 is its eco-loving clientele.

"People are having to make their choices carefully from a financial point of view," explains the owner.

"But if you believe in using natural products that are

good for the environment, you are still going to want to do that to the best of your ability."

Looking ahead for the sustainable beauty industry, Suzie Gillespie of Moo Hair expects that "many people will still want to try and continue to live more eco and sustainable lives". She adds, "this isn't an issue that is going away so, I expect the importance of eco-living to increase in the nation's consciousness for the foreseeable future."