



CHANGEMAKERS

Meet a handful of Marinites who are transforming the world, one mission at a time.

WHAT IS A CHANGEMAKER?

This is someone who passionately takes creative steps to solve a social problem. Changemakers give themselves permission to take action and keep trying until they have made a difference. Meet our 2022 Changemakers.



Kimberly Shenk

REVOLUTIONIZING HOW CLEAN BEAUTY PRODUCTS ARE DEVELOPED AND PACKAGED

A surge in conscious consumerism turned the niche trend for “clean beauty” into a global multibillion-dollar industry, but how do we know when product claims line up with what’s on the ingredients label? Communicating that information to customers became Kimberly Shenk’s mission.

“I’ve been a data scientist my entire career, although I always had a passion for health and wellness,” says Shenk, who made her first foray into the beauty space creating better-for-you makeup and cosmetics company NakedPoppy in 2017. But it was being pregnant two years later that inspired her to learn more about what was in the products she was using. “I was shocked at how the industry operated back then. So many brands were putting things on the market but didn’t know what materials were in them or where they were being sourced, which I saw as a huge data problem.”

A former U.S. Air Force captain who graduated with a master’s degree from MIT, she started a career in tech as the head of data science at Eventbrite before co-founding her next company, Novi Connect (www.noviconnect.com), in 2019. Headquartered in Larkspur, Shenk’s 30-strong team researches data on existing products and finds verified ingredient suppliers to make the product development process transparent and sustainable. The business-to-business platform has helped big names in clean beauty — from trailblazer Credo and established favorite Milk Makeup to newcomer LYS Beauty — formulate and deliver ingredient-transparent products. Novi also works with beauty behemoth Sephora on its Clean at Sephora seal of approval.

Rob Bradman

“As the industry and consumer demand evolved, we’ve helped brands meet those stricter standards. A lot of our strength is partnerships with progressive retailers like Sephora and Target on their Target Clean icon,” she says.

As a groundbreaker, Shenk, who made the Forbes Next 1000 list last year and landed on Revved Digital’s Top 10 Female Entrepreneurs to Watch list in 2022, says the big topic has moved from ingredients (what’s in the product and its impact on human health) to packaging and single-use samples.

“We’re looking at the materials and packaging used to hold products and their impact on climate. Now we ask, “Where did you ship that from, where was it manufactured, and what is your carbon footprint?”” says Shenk. “So, it’s not just about what materials we’re using but the physical place they’re coming from and their impact on the environment. That is what the future is about, and it’s fascinating.”
— Keri Bridgewater