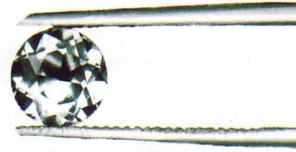


drinks business

INNOVATION FORUM II: ASPIRATION & LUXURY

ASPIRATION



GREAT EXPECTATIONS

How do you turn your brand into an object of desire? Speakers from the worlds of drinks, skincare and property share their experience. *Julie Sheppard reports*

Beauty school

The second speaker to take to the platform was Sarah Brown, MD of organic skincare company Pai Skincare. Having spent eight years building other people's brands, working as international PR manager for E&J Gallo, as well as for high-profile clients such as Nike and Barclaycard, Brown decided to launch her own brand earlier this year, aiming for the luxury market.

"How do you create a brand from scratch?" asked Brown. She began with a set of company values. "There were four values that I focused on, the first of which was quality.

A premium brand has got to be built on products that stand out, that are of really high quality and that also stand up to scrutiny." The second value was integrity. "Believe it or not there are actually no organic regulations in the cosmetics industry. So any brand can slap the word 'organic' or 'natural' on their label, regardless of the content of their product," said Brown. "So I sought out third-party certification and accreditation just to give my brand that added credibility." The third core value was "straightforwardness" and the final value was "to be

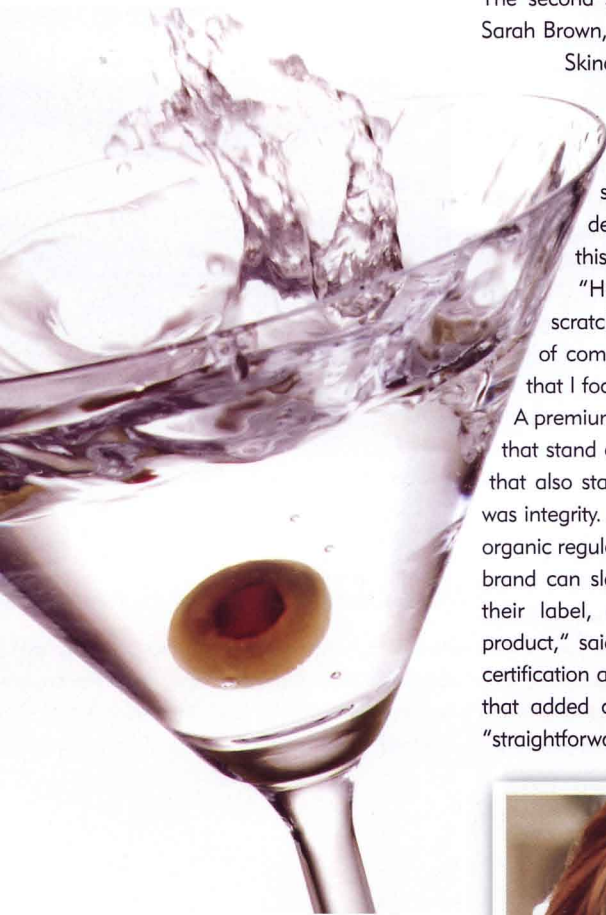
ethical". "I used those values to build an emotional connection with the consumer," said Brown.

Choosing a brand name that encapsulated these values – "pai" is the Maori word for "goodness" – Brown then opted for an ultra-premium look and feel for packaging and ensured that her communications about the brand were "uniform and consistent". Having built the brand, Brown then took a "simple but effective" approach to promoting it. "I started out by seeking endorsement from leading beauty editors in the national press. The positive coverage that I got from that then helped to drive my retail strategy," she added.

"I targeted very high-end, quality retailers that reflected and complemented the brand and the luxury proposition," said Brown. "So it's now just about driving those retail sales, keeping the PR momentum going and the media strategy."

Brown finished her presentation by looking at the lessons that the drinks industry can learn from industries such as hers. She compared the launch of Pai to the launch of New Zealand wine brand Cloudy Bay. "The producers used quality and exclusivity to brilliant effect to create a cult product," she said. Like Pai, Cloudy Bay wines are a quality product, marketed by third-party endorsement and with controlled distribution. "They restricted supply to drive demand," explained Brown.

"So how do you build an aspirational brand?" concluded Brown. "You need to create a great product, one that will stand up to scrutiny and really deliver on promise. You need to create company values that are going to strike an emotional chord with your target consumer. And finally you need to communicate that brand proposition brilliantly."



Sarah Brown

Sarah Brown is the MD of Pai Skincare, a luxury, organic skincare company, launched in January 2007. She developed both the brand concept and product formulations. Pai was voted best product in *Grazia* and has featured in *Sunday Times Style*, *Tatler*, *Marie Claire* and numerous industry publications. Previously, Brown worked at Ernest & Julio Gallo, initially as UK & Ireland PR manager and later as international PR manager across 92 markets. Prior to that, Brown was an account director at Lexis PR.