

## Retail Therapy:

### *Beauty Bytes*

2024

#### Transcript of Retail Therapy Episode 9

Nicola	<p>Hello and welcome to Bird &amp; Bird's Retail Therapy podcast – where we explore the trends, changes and legal aspects of the retail &amp; consumer industries.</p> <p>I'm Nicola Conway and I'm a Senior Associate in Bird &amp; Bird's R&amp;C team.</p>
Sana	<p>And I'm Sana Malik, I'm a Trainee Solicitor also at Bird &amp; Bird</p> <p>In today's episode: We're going to discuss what goes on under the hood of a marketing campaign for a beauty giant - Sephora. For those of you who somehow don't know who Sephora is - Sephora is a renowned international chain of beauty and cosmetic stores. They're owned by the LVMH Group. They offer a huge selection of premium skincare, makeup, and fragrance products. If you've not seen them online or at their stores, you may come across them via a whole host of a-list celebrities who sell their ranges their like Selena Gomez, Lady Gaga and Rihanna.</p> <p>We're thrilled to be joined today with Victoria Warner who is a Senior Social Media Executive at Sephora and we're so excited to learn all about what that role entails.</p>
Nicola	<p>But before we get started, we need to mention that this podcast is intended to be an open forum for conversation – it does not and is not intended to constitute legal advice. If you do want any legal advice, just reach out to us or your usual B&amp;B contact. We're all always happy to support you and your business however we can. Let's get into this episode...</p>
Sana	<p>Victoria, thank you for joining us! We had the pleasure of meeting you during the 2023 at a Sephora event which was associated with the launch of Haus Labs – thank you so much for including us we had a really great time; the food was really good as well!</p> <p>We'd love to kick off by learning a bit more about you and your role at Sephora. Could you share with us how you landed this role and what it involves now?</p>
Victoria	<p>Yeah. Thank you so much for having me, it's a pleasure to be here today. So I have been I the beauty industry for 5 years and I originally started my career in beauty at Cult Beauty which is an online E- Retailer and then moved over to Feelunique which we now know as Sephora. And my interest in beauty came from trying to see myself in the beauty industry versus fashion. So, I actually felt quite othered and marginalised by fashion as a whole and felt really interested in beauty because I felt seen and understood by it so I kind of had this urge to get into it, so I started in the social team.</p>

	<p>So that was kind of building out organic social content creation, copywriting, understanding campaigns and sort of social audience awareness and building online audiences specifically on TikTok when I started at Cult Beauty and understanding the Gen Z sort of customer as well, that was a really big part of my role. Now I'm at Sephora and I look after a lot of the social coms so everything that you see on our Instagram and TikTok, I help manage and keep it running basically.</p>
Sana	<p>That sounds amazing, I love your reasons for getting into the beauty industry and I hope that's something that is now changing as well in the beauty industry in terms of people being seen and the marginalised groups. I know that's something we discussed at the Haus Labs night last year when Lady Gaga introduced 51 shades of foundation which is just obviously insane for people who don't have you know one of three colours for their skin which is kind of what's used for other brands so that's amazing thank you.</p> <p>So, this is probably a big question! But what goes on under the hood of a beauty campaign or a new launch in terms of online socials?</p>
Victoria	<p>Well what goes on, were kind of an area of touch point for every sort of business team and we are there to wrap together the kind of product in a way that is digestible for social audiences and for campaigns and new launches its very much a creative thought process and understanding a product and understanding an audience and then taking it and putting it out there in a creative way especially if its new to market or something that people don't already identity with. It's a way of our sort of showcasing how a product can be used, looking at its efficacy and educating as well. Education is massive part of social media, and it really helps consumers see how to use products and how to get the best out of their products, especially with skin care. The skin care community online is absolutely massive, it spans literally every social platform and its an incredible educational tool on social media</p>
Nicola	<p>I think #dermtalk was one of the biggest trending hashtags for last year so that kind of relates to what you're saying about people are posting so much of it and also people are looking for so much of it.</p>
Victoria	<p>Absolutely.</p>
Nicola	<p>And I guess if its someone like Sephora posting or an actual dermatologist posting that's great education, but I think there's a lot of people posting and using that hashtag that probably shouldn't be!</p>
Victoria	<p>Yeah, I mean it's great. We've definitely, I as a user have seen so much more education coming from derms and industry professionals, which is so brilliant because it really cuts through the noise of audiences and the fact that anyone has access to social media. There are people qualified to talk about it that have their own social media accounts in which they educate people and it's like having your own kind of knowledge at home that you might not have access to previously which is really exciting.</p>
Nicola	<p>It is, and especially when I think the average price to go and see a dermatologist privately in London right now is around £200.</p>
Victoria	<p>That's just so inaccessible.</p>
Nicola	<p>It's just prohibitive for so many people so having these the same people online it kind of just democratises access in that way, it's great!</p>
Victoria	<p>Yeah, and also knowledge is power right so if you put the knowledge in the hands of people so that they know what to do with their routines, they can streamline, they can save money. You're able to create a routine that works for you, and I guess finding</p>

	<p>your own feet with what works for you and not buying every new product that comes to market and it's kind of a brilliant thing to be able to do for yourself is educate and then go from there.</p>
Nicola	<p>And you mentioned in the process of launching a campaign or some sort of initiative there's a lot of creative energy in that. I was at a Vogue Business event recently and there was a panel of three chief marketing officers, and they said exactly the same thing. They said our companies collect so much data and we do look at that data and it is very valuable. However, if the gut instinct says something different, we do something different. We don't just follow the data blindly which actually surprised me but maybe that's just my legal brain thinking. Like if I see data as the facts and actually trusting your gut in a creative industry is just so important to getting right.</p>
Victoria	<p>My takeaway from that, I completely agree. My takeaway would be that if you don't do anything new there is no mould, like there's nothing else to like...you have to do something new to know whether it works. So, if no one else has done it to be the first, even if it flops, even if it doesn't work, you can say you tried it and if it takes off then it takes off and that's how we feel about social. Sometimes it is throwing it at a wall and seeing what sticks and you can find and build new franchises and appeal to different audiences that you're not currently doing with the output that you're doing at that point. So sometimes you have to build new mediums and forms of content in order to be seen by new people.</p> <p>TikTok is a really great platform and a great place to start with as an app that hasn't existed for that long, and it has a space that hasn't existed for that long. It's a case of people trying new things and seeing what works and using that as a lily pad basically. But you have to take risk with social media and obviously not too risky, nothing obviously inappropriate. You still have to take in mind your brand tone of voice. That definitely one of the most important things with social is being that balance of brand tone of voice but also being allowed to take risks that might allow you to reach new people. You can't have one without the other because you still need to maintain your authority in the space as well which is important.</p>
Nicola	<p>Yeah, you're so right. And I guess if everyone's collecting similar data and making decisions on that data alone no one is going to be doing anything new are they?</p>
Victoria	<p>Yeah, I mean as an example, one of the best performing posts that we shared in December was a sausage dog wearing a Santa outfit. And if that doesn't tell you...</p> <p>(Nicola- Sold! Hahaha)</p> <p>If that doesn't tell you that there's ways to engage with your audience where, for me I look at our social page, almost like all of our social pages, I look at them almost a hub or a home for our audience. So we should be delighting, inspiring, entertaining - there's different pillars to what we should be doing as marketers its not just about selling product, it's about showing people that we're a hub for them to come and seek education to be delighted and inspired by the things that we do. Be sort of the first to do things. That's a real big part of being an innovator in the industry is being the first obviously creator or try new things. You both were at the Haus Labs dinner, and we had that incredible model show which we shared on social media. Its available to see on the Sephora social pages, but I guess the disruption is a real interesting part of what were able to do and achieve as well.</p>
Nicola	<p>That was an amazing experience actually because it was so impactful and I'm sure the videos great but being the room with the music in the background the context, as sana said, when we learned about the shade range and why Lady Gaga thought it was so important. It was quite moving in a way; I mean I've been to a lot of fashion catwalks before, and I don't think I've been to a beauty catwalk before, and I remember we sat quite near the front as well.</p>

Sana	I was quite emotional!
Victoria	Yeah, I was emotional!
Sana	Yeah, I know, we were sitting together Victoria, we got emotional because there have been so many – I mean I grew up Asian, so obviously having a different skin colour to some of my friends and I remember when we'd get kind of like beauty makeovers and, I think I shared this with you earlier Victoria, at like a party or something like that a lot of the times the makeup artist wouldn't be able to find any shade for me and I just felt so awkward and as a child or like a teenager you might not have the language to articulate what's going on there but during that Haus Labs performance, it was very like kind of performative art wasn't it? The runway, it just struck something I think in everyone there, but I think particularly for people who felt like they didn't fit a mould. So it was an amazing night to be a part of it that night.
Victoria	And you know people say that in beauty, the beauty industry there are brands that are so innovative in what they are doing that they are paving the way for like how other brands, the standards and how the brands can be better in certain areas or do other things. And beauty is definitely art and seeing things like that live, that sort of performance of it is a real testament to how beauty can be moving and life changing, and it really goes beyond the peripherals of being something that's skin deep or surface deep and it can transcend beyond that and make you feel seen and included and that's really important.
Sana	It's amazing, like were getting emotional just talking about it again!
Victoria	It's really important I think one of the things that I've often thought about in my role is how we have a duty to empower people and empower them to feel seen and heard and when their doing their own makeup in the morning to feel inspired and pick up things they've not tried or if they would like to try something new, feeling inspired to pick up something that they're not used to trying. It definitely can be putting a makeup brush in someone's hand if they want to do that. Obviously not for everyone, it can be a tool of self-empowerment for sure. And you know people say lipstick is like putting on a cloak for the day like an armour of some form and you know it can make you feel really good and like a different person, I definitely feel like that, if my brows are on, I feel like a different person!
Nicola	It's the same way we were talking about earlier about perfume as well. Perfume does something for me. It changes my mood it can make me feel more powerful if I'm going into a big business meeting, it can make me feel soft and relaxed if I'm going on like a date night or whatever.
Sana	I actually had a question. It was really interesting what you were saying Victoria about collecting data. You don't need to go into this in any extreme detail but as you know in your capacity with social media what are some of the key things you are looking for when you see industry disruptors or when you're taking a look at collection versus instinct? What are things that really stick out to you when you're scrolling through TikTok or just general data gathering?
Victoria	For me when I'm looking online to see what sort of cutting through the noise online sentiment. If people are talking about it and they're not in any way affiliated with like, they're not a beauty fan and their talking about it, that's how you know the industry has done something really cool. A really good example of that recently, is Fenty, you might have seen the A\$AP Rocky actually done the teaser for Fenty skins new lip balm and he wrote like a rap, like him singing it, him rapping it dropped a couple bars about the new lip balm and how it was coming and him applying it and I think that's a really like innovative way to bring him into it but also the noise online about that literally broke the internet, everyone was saying - this is so cool, like bringing him into it in a way that feels native and natural but also we've not seen him being part of Fenty Skin. That

	<p>capacity is so exciting and people sharing it so many people that I know were sharing it that aren't necessarily beauty fans or beauty lovers but they're music lovers or they just love this really interesting collaboration happening in that capacity.</p> <p>So for me, it's online sentiment and understanding people online, especially Twitter is a really great platform for it. Looking at the sentiment under the comment section of a post or if people have thread or a chain of talking about it is a great way to see the general response without looking at metrics. For metrics if you were looking on TikTok you would want to see you know your views your reach your standard levels of metric and engagement rate but one of the best things in terms of campaigns is online sentiment and whether it's positive or negative and what people are saying and if it has caused general disruption where people are sharing it and they're not from that community or space but they're talking about it.</p>
Sana	That's so interesting to hear
Nicola	I think that actually takes me to the next question which was going to be if you're working with a celebrity or another ambassador or a brand is working with celebrity or another ambassador how much of their own creative input would influence that project and I guess you sort of kind of just answered that with A\$AP Rocky who turned it into something that's about the lip balm about his world as well. We see it quite a lot in sports when people use sporting ambassadors, it just brings in different creative input which makes the output just so cool, just so different.
Victoria	In terms of celebrity brands and ambassadors I feel like some of the most successful when it feels native to the person that's making it and it comes from a place of aligning with them and their identity and it's really cool. I think obviously we were talking about Fenty and me as someone who, sort of I've just touched on grew up in the peripherals of beauty and fashion et cetera, and use makeup and my hair care routine to feel like myself, someone like Rihanna coming into the scene and launching with these incredible foundations and you know complexion ranges and understanding different skin tones as well as, not just shade range but the complex skin tones being a really big part of complexion products. It feels really natural because she's like a game changer and she's natural disruptor in what she does.
Sana	I guess like Sephora also backs up the celebrities they feel like are doing a good job in that area because Sephora is known to be associated with, like we said at the beginning, Selena Gomez, there's the Fenty, JVN with the haircare. You don't see that many other multifaceted operations like Sephora who are associated with this many celebrity backed products so it looks like Sephora is actually genuinely interested in the space where there's like a lot of collaboration like you said with kind of brands that are true to the celebrity as opposed to foisted on to them.
Victoria	It's really interesting- part of my job is getting to meet people as part events and also as part of, you know, if there is a brand, part of my job is to create social content sometimes with the brand founders again we're talking about authentic feeling partnerships and brands. It feels again like a natural Segway into sharing what they do in the day to day with the wider world, I think that authenticity is my key, understanding of celebrity brands and I think some of the best coolest ones, ones I really enjoy are the ones where it feels like something that is true to the person who made it and you can see that through marketing, through actual products themselves and even product names. One thing I really love about Rare Beauty is the product names are so positive, so they're all about light, joy, kindness et cetera and I think that's really cool as a such a massive brand but also to have such positive inspiring names and stuff I think really showcases the brand sort of ethos and who they are.
Sana	On the whole, do you expect to be working with influencers or brand ambassadors more or less this year?

Victoria	<p>So I work predominantly on organic social my kind of touch point in the space is through content so content creation I think influence marketing although I don't work in it and this would be an opinion of someone who works on the other side I think influencer partnerships are so crucial to talking to new audiences so as a brand you may have your audience which your trying to grow, influencers can be such an incredible sort of incredible gateway I should say into reaching people you've not directly spoken to in your communications and it's a brilliant way also to make long standing connections with people in the space as a business to showcase different products as they come and go</p>
Nicola	<p>So sticking with celebrities for a second for a second longer, we've seen a few celebrities and influences getting into hot water for making the wrong or not making any marketing disclosures when they're posting online, so for example forgetting to put the #Ad or the #Spon do you think coming into 2024, people have a better handle on legal and regulatory rules when it comes to what they should be putting in their posts or not really?</p>
Victoria	<p>I believe people do have a better handle on it and I think going back to the point we said about social media being a tool of the education. I have seen a lot more people online willing to call out but also provide education on what people should be doing. I've seen things recently about different brands and founders having to state that if they are talking about their own product they have to hashtag that as #Ad or a brand there's been a lot of discussion online about that as you as a founder and also if you're an influencer, which we seeing a lot more influencer and celebrity brands, how do you as someone who is at the helm of the brand also influence but also state your connections that product as the brand founder or owner and I definitely think the education with the advertising standards agency, people online is a lot of discussion about it. I mean there's new laws and new regulations that come with filters and not being allowed to essentially promote a skincare product or a beauty product with a filter on it as an advert which is I think it's really cool personally I think it's really great that we are moving to a place where we're trying to provide honest transparent information to people and I think that that's how we should be doing marketing, the product and its efficacy should speak to consumers not we should be relying on filters or edited sort of adverts because it's not real and we want to move into sort of real results and real skincare and real people.</p>
Nicola	<p>Yeah, I agree, and I think we mentioned about the filters and the ASA. They've also been talking a lot about how people, apart from our face and our hair, people affecting how their bodies look so people doing little nips in the editing apps and things and saying you know I used this cellulite cream and I used this corset for my waist or I use this workout supplement or whatever and if you're changing the image you're misleading consumers and it's a real problem because I think people who are very familiar with photo editing might clock that, but most people aren't. I can't tell a lot of the time when I see filtered content and I use filters myself on my personal Instagram. So yeah, it's an interesting topic.</p>
Victoria	<p>I completely agree with you and align with you on that. I think it's if you're someone that works in the industry it's really easy to pick up on, because I've been in the for over five years, I find it quite easy to see, especially social media, if a video has had like a feel applied to it or smoothing effect and you can see it when someone is present in a video and they move, the filter might snap or you'll see the edges of it or you'll see you know the overall quality of upload will be decreased and you'll think actually that might been through another app which is published which is further decrease qualities so it's been through an editing app, often the video quality will be severely decrease by Instagram or TikTok et cetera. There's some sort of natural skin movement- Free the pimple- there is an influencer her name is Lou I believe, but there is a movement online and influence movement around free the pimple and promoting natural skin because natural skin is beautiful and filters are really detrimental to the way other people feel about themselves too so it doesn't just impact the person that's posting impacts of much wider range of especially when we think about demographics</p>



	you know people logging on and seeing that and like you say aren't aware that the filters are on a piece of content they're kind of chasing a level of beauty standard or an ideal that doesn't exist because they're not privy to the fact that video has anything tweaked on it.
Nicola	yeah, and I guess what you were saying at the top about how the beauty industry is so great for making people feel included rather than othered, when we're using all of these filters that's the way to make a lot of people feel othered because they simply don't look like that.
Victoria	Exactly and that is kind of the complete opposite of what a lot of people in the industry a lot of marketers are actually trying to achieve a lot of people really stand behind the I speak for myself in this as someone who both is a native user of social media and has always been ever since I was like 13 years when Instagram came out. I genuinely believe that it's for the best that we see people in their most natural present way like that's the best we can ask for and if a product is really that great or if a makeup blush or et cetera is really that gorgeous then it will look beautiful applied without any tweaking, editing et cetera in a piece of video content film straight on and yeah I mean a really great example of beautiful, beautiful products, Tarte recently came out with these glittery shimmering they're called Maracuja lip oils and it basically broke the Internet because the person who was applying it was applying it and it literally looked like a disco ball on her. It was incredible and content like that where the product is so compelling and interesting. No editing is needed to make that product look insanely gorgeous it just does great so it's really nice to see that kind of natural side of content. I definitely think that people are holding account online in terms of the ASA.
Nicola	I've got one of those lip oils but not one of the sparkly ones I got the original ones and they're so good!
Victoria	They're so good! and now they come in glitter so it's like desk to dance floor vibes!
Sana	Yeah, that was really interesting Victoria. On the topic of kind of this natural leaning towards natural products and natural skin and showing the products with themselves. What do you think the new generation and new demographic Gen Z think about all of this? And have you seen any trends?
Victoria	Yeah, we know that Gen Z are consumers that look for the roots of the brands that they're buying, they look into the pillars of sustainability, they look into whether the product is vegan. They care a lot and are very passionate consumers in terms of understanding what the brand and the ethos is about and we can see I think really cool interesting brands like 'Youth to the People' they have a real cult following based off the fact that they have incredible values and they do so much in the industry as well as outside of it and culturally we've seen that Gen Z genuinely have a passion for brands not just in beauty but in terms of wider purchasing power have an interest in brands that do good for the environment around them as well as in the beauty space brands that make conscious effort for strive towards recyclable packaging. Products that are sustainably sourced as well so the ingredients, making sure that people are paid fairly and as well as inclusive marketing, I think that's for me as well as a marketer that's a super important signifier of a brand that cares about what they're doing, it's also the inclusivity of their marketing and looking at - who are they trying to reflect in their brand? Is everyone seen in their brand in the marketing that they sort of display and put out into the world is something that genuinely cares and sees people and to bring them into their kind of sphere of what they do?
Sana	Following on from that, Victoria - are different social media platforms more or less popular in different markets?
Victoria	So different social media platforms, if we are talking from my own experiences as a social media user, we know that different regions and territories such as China have

	<p>their own different kind of platforms and networks. For us in the UK, TikTok has been such a massive platform for brand awareness and also just expanding into new audiences. If you post something on Instagram, there's a sort of there's not much known about the TikTok algorithm in all honesty we can try our best to understand it but it's still there so much of it that is such a myth to people, there's still so much that I don't understand but there's a possibility when you post things for people that don't interact with beauty content in any capacity to see that piece of content on their for you page and that's kind of beauty of TikTok for us and like you know in London as well, Instagram is predominantly, I feel like, still the go to, she's that girl. Instagram is that girl to some degree. Most people have Instagram and not TikTok but actually the trends in recent years we've seen a lot more people get on board with a lot more people getting on TikTok even my mum is on TikTok which really tells me a lot about the popularity of it as a platform for people of different ages, different interest the most amazing thing about TikTok as well as someone uses it is it has a really specific algorithm that recognises the niche of content that you enjoy to push more towards you so the way it looks at your contents sort of feedback if you're scrolling through your page and you rewatch a video a few times and then you look at the comment section and then you engage with it. It recognises that you like that sort of content and pushes more towards you as a result so it's such a great way if you're beauty user to end up stuck in the beauty sort of community of TikTok and you're fed all this kind of interesting information et cetera and it really is a sensitive of algorithm versus that of Instagram where you know you kind of create your own bubble of who you follow, what you engage with. TikTok for me is my favourite platform for the discoverability aspect because like I say anyone can literally see you're in the world and it's really interesting how a video can blow up and the predominant user base of who has seen that video is based a different country or different territory to where you are. I think that's really fascinating to be able to see the metric side of that as well.</p>
Nicola	<p>Are we still watching beauty YouTubers or am I just showing my age by saying I do?</p>
Victoria	<p>I think YouTubers will always be here to stay- that's my personal opinion. I think that beauty YouTube back in the day I literally grew up watching pixie woo. Sam and Nick Chapman will like my OG people on YouTube and watching their tutorials, watching the way that they constructed their own make up and put it together was absolutely fascinating to me and I definitely think that although we have moved over to TikTok on the platforms where we're getting into short form content, that form, chatting get ready with me style content is definitely still an emerging theme on sort of different pieces of content we see overtime.</p>
Nicola	<p>I still watch Alana Rama think her name is Alana Davidson, but actually she just got married recently. I'm talking about her as though I know her. Alana Rama is her handle, and she lives in Canada and even though some of the makeup looks she does or some of the fashion looks she does are not something I would personally want to try out I just find it so enjoyable to watch even if she's just showing how she makes her protein cake in a cup. I just find her so nice to watch.</p>
Victoria	<p>I definitely feel like there was, YouTube was one of the kinds of biggest areas of influencer activity and sort of marketing in that era of the influencer via YouTube was very real in this country we have like Zoella, you know Zoe. Alfie Dayes, Casper Lee - there was a group of YouTubers. I'm going outside of beauty now that really kind of created this emergent influencer path through YouTube and now we have TikTok there's this whole conversation around attention span so like the average seconds watching a TikTok I think is like three seconds you have to make an impression when you're scrolling watching a TikTok I think three seconds you have to make an impression when you're scrolling. That compared to a 30 minute get ready with me style log on YouTube that is such a massive disparate difference of you know attention span but it's very much I think going back to that I know that TikTok are testing longer form content so obviously the watch time I think like I said is three seconds but they are slowly testing 30 minute I saw recently going up to 30 minute TikTok which is great because now if you watch you know Medieval history part 1 2 and 3 on your TikTok</p>



	<p>however you can actually watch it in one segment when they eventually merge that but I guess TikTok are trying to get in on that.</p>
Nicola	<p>I guess if they do both they're going to capture both audiences so that sounds quite smart.</p>
Sana	<p>And I think YouTube has adapted it's well the influencers on YouTube have adapted their style knowing that attention spans are different now and you can just get like of the crux of the products and how to use it or the how to method on TikTok so some of the stuff that I watch with beauty kind of influencers on YouTube kind of what you said Victoria, it's like get ready with me today or a day in my life or a restful Sunday or a morning with blah blah blah and so you'll have the showcase products whether it's like beauty skincare or the Gua sha or something like that, you'll see them throughout the morning kind of a slower pace and then there's a story and I think they build in the products into the story and that's how they capture both markets of people who are willing to watch the entire story of how use the product throughout the day and then you've got the quick snapshot on TikTok you linked to the same account and that we captured every type of demographic who's interested.</p>
Nicola	<p>You're getting both, you're getting everyone.</p>
Victoria	<p>Yeah, and YouTube adapted by creating shorts and created their own version so it's kind of I guess every platform for itself is trying to use behaviour data to understand what people are doing and then create reactive adaptive methods to do that so perhaps TikTok have seen that people are really enjoying this 10 minute for content and actually let's beater and just try and see if that works again, it actually comes what to we said about marketing earlier about throwing things at a wall and seeing what works. If the attention spam from you know we went from long form to short form, there's nothing to say in terms of trend cycle of how marketing cycles back to what we've done previously we won't go back for long form content and YouTube won't pick up again. It's also about the dedication to a person as well if you're really big fan of someone you watch them on any form of media or you know you go to where they post which if it's YouTube it's YouTube then you're watching 30 minutes you know videos like cat videos or organise my skincare shelf thing.</p>
Sana	<p>I will watch that for half an hour!</p> <p>I really love what you said earlier about kind of behavioural data, and I know we were speaking about this before we started recording but have you seen any trends that you've come across in your social media capacity that have been translated into Sephora shops or any of the other brands that you've worked at. So, we were speaking about kind of the lighting in the kind of behavioural consumer mindset that could have an impact on wanting to spend money, feeling confident or comfortable in that retail space have you seen anything that you've seen? Maybe online translate into the retail environment?</p>
Victoria	<p>You can look at that in a literal fashion so if a product goes viral, it sells out so there's like interest and demand. Interest is piqued by people when they see it and want to try it. One thing that I have found interesting as someone who works in social, in the Sephora store has a hot and social media counter which is a super cool way to see all the product on your for you page, on your Instagram feed, see them in real life play with them and they're all in one place that's a really cool adaptive way to kind of shop what you see on online but all in one area kind of makes it easy way to do so.</p>
Sana	<p>I love how it's all syncing together for the consumer experience.</p> <p>Are there any challenges that you think you might push up against in the upcoming year?</p>

Victoria	<p>So in terms of marketing challenges a lot there's actually been a lot of discourse online around trends and trend cycles. TikTok are calling it microtrends a lot of people are making commentary around the idea of micro trend so the clean girl aesthetic you know glazed doughnut nails, espresso make up, matcha manicures and things like that, these micro trends can surge obviously consumerism in a way where things are not sustainable and especially with TikTok being such an open platform that anyone can contribute to and you know create discussion, to analyse things like these micro trend is a really interesting part of it and look at you know where they come from, who they include, are they exclusionary of the people, kind of what is the kind of force behind the micro trend who gets to dictate what is trending and what's popular. I think that things fizzle out and one thing that I was thinking about is the aesthetic as an example is an aesthetic that leans into stripped back make up, stripped back hair routines, you know sticking your hair back et cetera, minimal make up but it actually takes as many products sometimes to look minimal and unpolished as it does to look necessarily polished or like wearing a full face of makeup and I think there's an incredible unique in that that we are striving for this clean this clean girl minimalism thrown together when it's not that at all, it's a curated selection of things that make you feel that way that lean into that aesthetic I think a lot of people are rightfully so are commenting on it and calling out things that they don't agree with or you things that should be.</p>
Nicola	<p>Your point on micro trends being slightly frustrating for brands and consumers alike is something that I've heard recently from someone else, a chief marketing officer, actually an alcohol company, who said to me that in their company they set a timeframe for doing a marketing campaign or even a post or whatever so let's say three weeks for a post six weeks for some kind of installation, and once they get to the end of that time period. If the thing they're doing is still trending, cool go ahead with it, if you can't wait that long before the trends already gone and it's no longer cool out because you're just jumping on every single little trend and can't even be trendy for six weeks you're wasting time investing in it anyway so I thought that was quite interesting because I think the attitude of a lot of brands is- oh look- this things cool, quick can we do it 24 hours? Can we jump on this in a week? But if you just sit back and wait and see, is it going to stick, is it going to stay, you might save yourself quite a bit of money and as you say, maybe just take a backseat on some of the micro trends, especially if consumers are not really reacting so positively to them anymore.</p>
	<p>And like we go back to the point around sustainability, you know the speed of which trying to create things to align with what in fashion what's in trend, what you know is in market, if it only serves that period of time then it's completely unsustainable right it's not a great place to be in and I think like I said people calling that out and talking about it online, creating discourse and rightfully questioning as well where the trends come from, who is making them what is kind of like the why? Where is it coming from? Where is it originating from? Also it's really interesting where we place power and who gets to say that's the next thing, I think people rightfully question that.</p>
Sana	<p>That sounds like a really big challenge.</p>
Victoria	<p>A really big challenge yeah.</p>
Sana	<p>And on the flip side, what do you think of some of the opportunities that you see coming up for this year?</p>
Victoria	<p>I think it's a really exciting time for beauty generally like it's for me. I always think I'm never going to get excited about another product like another eyeshadow palette and yet here we are. A brand recently came out with a set of these hybrids, absolutely gorgeous shimmering lid toppers which are just sort of like a translucent glitter that goes straight on top of any other eyeshadow you are wearing and transforms it and I've seen other things like that in the market, but because I'm such a magpie for glitter and a beauty obsessive, this is blow my socks off and yet I probably own two or three other things that I like that. I think it's really fascinating that beauty are constantly</p>

	<p>reinventing and rediscovering the way we use products and even recyclable packaging, I think something that I've been really keen to see is brands, especially things moisturiser, things that we replenish often in art sort of beauty arsenal, brands that are moving into like beautiful jars but then they have inserts for your moisturiser. Charlotte Tilbury do it with their magic cream and my mum is an avid magic cream lover, wearer, she absolutely loves that moisturiser and they do refills now which is really delightful because it means you can keep the most gorgeous jar and you get to refill it</p>
Sana	<p>Prada beauty is doing a lot in that space as well so the new advert that Emma Watson directed, she kind of shows how to refill the Prada beauty fragrance. I think it's called Prada paradox and so the paradox is it's never an empty bottle so you can always buy those refillables.</p>
Nicola	<p>That's a cool bottle as well they made it in the same shape as the triangle.</p> <p>We've got a lot to look forward to and I think that that's, particularly the bit you mentioned about recyclable packing, is going to answer a lot of consumer demand from what I've been seeing. So that all sounds really positive.</p> <p>Let's close the episode with a fun, light little question – Sana and Victoria, what's something that you purchased or were gifted recently and loved? It doesn't have to be a beauty item...but it can be!</p>
Sana	<p>So for me, it is a beauty product. It is the Laniege red Lip Tint that I'm wearing right now which no one can see on this podcast</p> <p>(Victoria-It looks great!)</p> <p>So I actually found this shade because it was the recommended shade for people who had seen To all the boys I've loved before that Netflix series and it was really smart the Netflix kind of like length the beauty aspect to the protagonist major Hollywood beauty scenes in that and they actually had like recommended make up products following some of the big stills that they used in the adverts so I'm a sucker for advertising because I went and bought it straight away and now I'm wearing it.</p> <p>What about you Nicola?</p>
Nicola	<p>It's very pretty first of all, I haven't tried these, I've had the Laniege sleeping mask, the vanilla flavoured one before and they smell delicious, and they make me kind of hungry.</p>
Victoria	<p>They've got a candy one now as well</p>
Nicola	<p>Is that the purple one?</p>
Victoria	<p>Yeah</p>
Sana	<p>Sounds good! Anything by Laniege is amazing, its incredible quality. Its one of my favourite and top, sold out, constantly sold-out Korean brands.</p> <p>What about you Vic?</p>
Victoria	<p>I've recently actually had someone use on me a Sephora collection eyebrow pencil and it might just be the best thing I've ever used in my eyebrows in my whole life. It's a cool toned pencil which I really struggle with because everything's super warm toned and its very purse friendly and affordable as well and if I only had one thing in my bag</p>

	ever, it would be that. That feels really boring because it's just an eyebrow pencil but it's not just an eyebrow pencil to me.
Nicola	Your eyebrows are fantastic, it's working.
Victoria	Thank you!
Sana	And Nicola what about you? I know you said that you were very excited to share.
Nicola	I have been holding this one in since December. I have been waiting for you to come on the pod to use this one. We've recorded maybe five other episodes, and I haven't said it. I had the Sephora advent calendar.
Victoria	Were you obsessed with it?
Nicola	I was literally obsessed with it. I don't know, I love an advent calendar anyway because I'm a Christmas person, so I get a chocolate advent calendar and I'm not going to stop. My boyfriend got me the advent calendar.
Victoria	Oh my God, great boyfriend, we love this. Such a star! Take note everybody.
Nicola	That's how I know we levelled up in our relationship!
Victoria	What was your favourite draw?
Nicola	I can't pick a favourite one!
Victoria	It opened so strongly; it was a neon candle I think was the first thing.
Nicola	Yeah, and it's a sleep candle, which as I talked about in the first episode, we spoke about I'm a bad sleeper, so I got the Beauty pro warming sleep eye masks and neon candles were a couple of the first ones. It was very well thought through and also some drawers had like two or three things in.
Sana	So what were some of your standout products then?
Nicola	Literally everything, there was like 36 products in there or more.
Victoria	Glow Recipe? Did you try the dew drops by Glow Recipe?
Nicola	I haven't gotten into that yet- the niacinamide ones?  (Victoria – yeah)  Yeah, I haven't gotten into that yet. Do you know what it was? I think it was just a reversion to childhood nostalgia. Like legitimately waking up and being so excited that you get a present. It's like Christmas day but for the whole month. I knew I would like it but I didn't know how. I mean, I haven't thrown the box away, I still have the box just to look at and be happy about
Victoria	As you should. I think you should actually recycle it yourself.
Nicola	Yeah, well it is cardboard, so it is recyclable but it's actually a pretty cool box too, its actually quite an attractive box to keep.
Victoria	I can't believe you've been holding on to that information since December. We saw so much positive traction online about it and obviously the value I think it was over £1000 I want to say, and it was, yeah it was a real.

Nicola	That wasn't the price by the way, that's the value. It was actually a massive bargain when you know that that's the price of the, I mean sorry, the value of the products. There's a lot of things in there that I will 100% repurchase. So some of the things that just misses it for me, and I'll give them to my family but a lot of the things I will rebuy again. So I know advent calendars get a bit of stick sometimes for saying things like oh you shouldn't be putting so many minis into the world and it's bad for the environment and whatever, but this one was mostly full-size products and a really good discovery thing for someone who is a beauty lover. I mean if you gave this to someone who was not beauty obsessed, they'd probably think its overkill, but for someone who is a beauty lover it was amazing.
Victoria	Yeah, there was an incredible amount of full sizes in that calendar because I was very lucky enough to unbox it several times for content, and it really was an incredible calendar. One of my favourite things in it was the One Size Setting spray. One size is such an incredible brand. It stands for one-size fits all and it's created by Patrick Starr and essentially this setting spray is so great that apparently Beyonce uses it and used it on Renaissance Tour. A lot of press came out last year basically from her team saying that that was a setting spray that kept her makeup in check on Renaissance Tour.
Sana	If it's good enough for Beyonce, then its good enough for us!
Victoria	Yeah, me on the central line sweating!
Nicola	It's like a continuous aerosol as well so it doesn't do that thing when it like spits at you. It's a delight!
Sana	Alright that's the end of our episode – thanks for joining us! We've got tons of interviews and discussions planned so please subscribe if you'd like more insights into the Retail & Consumer industries from us and our guests. Bye for now!



# Thank you

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