

Exploring One Year Of The Women-Led Boddess.com

By **Hitanshi Kamdar** (<https://www.grazia.co.in/author/hitanshi-kamdar>) | March 2, 2021, 17:56 IST

Boddess is amongst India's leading beauty-tech retailers. With a focus on personalised product curations, state of the art gadgets, and a tech-infused experience, Boddess has quickly established itself in the digital sphere. The brand has women empowerment embedded in its DNA and this is reflected in its approach to marketing and advertising as well. As the e-comm portal celebrates its one year anniversary, we spoke to its founder Ritika Sharma to understand what makes a brand flourish, the importance of technological innovations, and the future of the beauty business.



Ritika Sharma, Founder and CEO of Boddess.com

GRAZIA: What was the journey of completing your first year in the middle of a pandemic like?

RITIKA SHARMA: As a new multi-brand beauty speciality retailer, it's been an incredible one year journey with our growing team every day. We created a niche with the aim to democratise premium and luxury brands in India and are now meeting our customers through our omnichannel network; the web at *boddess.com*, our recent app launch and our upcoming flagship and independent stores slated to launch April 2021 onwards.

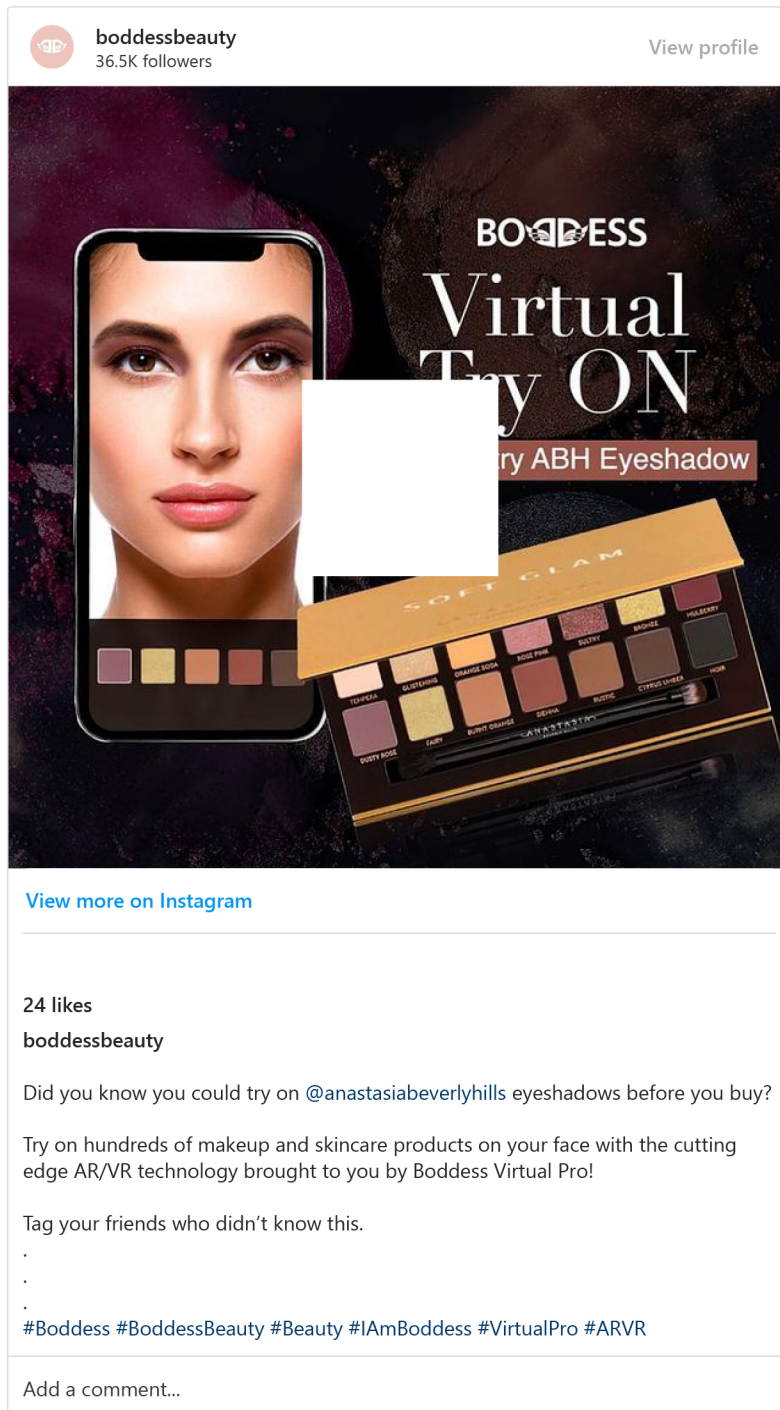
As a company, we built an experiential and premium positioning towards beauty retail with a platform led by services, expertise, technology and digital integration. We build brands through our tools, our influential community and our curated brands who live at the heart of our business. We stand proud as we are a venture dreamt, led and executed by women as we continue to grow our vision. We are thankful to our customers for their faith and trust in us, and for the incredible fan following. We always aim to strengthen our relationship with our customers, our influencer community and our brand partners. We have also been overwhelmed with the response received from celebrities and editors in the industry as we work towards sustained growth and momentum.

G: How important are technological innovations and advances in order to achieve digital success?

RS: The importance of technology in everything, from managing our supply chain to ensuring timely delivery to personalisation is how we make sure that every customer has a unique buying experience that is tailored to their skin type, purchase history, and demographic.

At Boddess, we also realise the need to strengthen and enrich our customer's digital journey that matches the experience in retail stores. We launched our Personal Virtual Consultation with our head skincare and make-up artists to give consumers recommendations on the right foundation colour, beauty tips or even finding a skincare product that works for their needs. Online consultations have provided an alternative to retail in-store consultation especially when customers are exploring luxury and premium brands and product ranges.

Future opportunities for integrating technology in beauty are also abundant. From virtual trials, digital catalogues for social selling and 3D printed makeup tools, to customised cosmetic and skincare product requests in one click and 3D face masks and voice-based technology; these are all in the pipeline across beauty startups and large organisations.



G: What changes have you observed in the beauty business over last year?

RS: We have seen the shift to online beauty purchases and an openness to try new international brands. Consumers are also more willing to experiment with new products. Another thing people have been increasingly concerned about is the safety of the products.

Women today are looking for products tailored for Indian skin and ingredients that are skin-friendly with harmless ingredients. There is a visible shift towards high-quality product ranges and 'natural' brands. Minimalism is also another trend gaining momentum. Most customers are not interested in following a 10-step regime on a daily basis. They prefer investing in limited high-quality products that provide emotional benefits and a 'feel-good' factor. Brands that value kindness, empathy and compassion are also preferred.

G: Is Indian beauty buying finally tuned in to the digital buying wave?

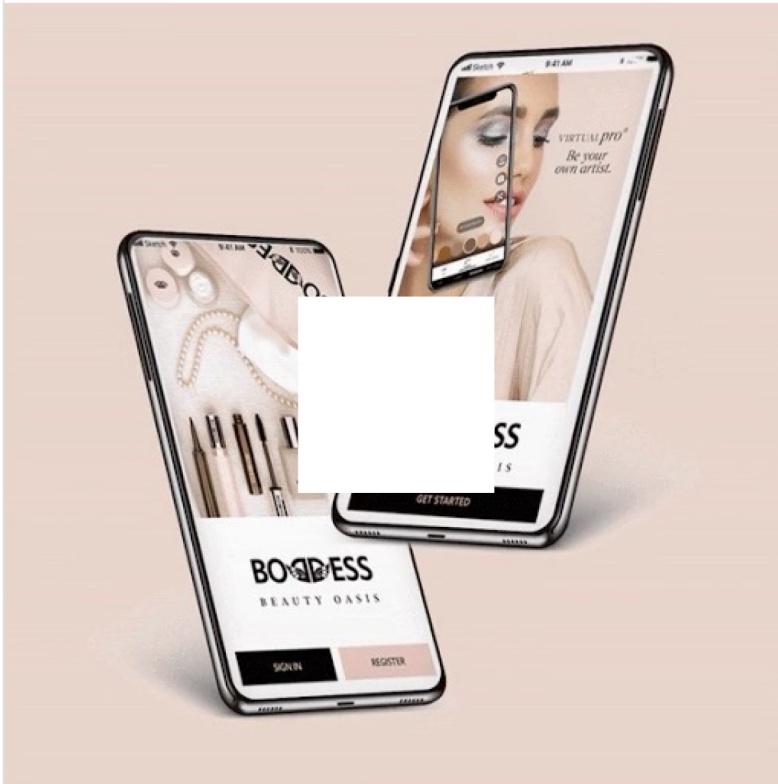
RS: It's halfway there, however, it's definitely not reached its potential. This is especially because the industry is so used to physical touch and the feel of a product. Making product decisions online, especially for premium and luxury products is difficult for consumers, even though they are aided by AR/VR technologies.

We aim to make most of the technology through our Virtual Pro (Skin Diagnostic and Make-Up Try-on tool) allowing customers to try on products and receive personalised recommendations. Soon, customers can expect to tune in to a full digital commerce experience through an omnichannel lens this year.



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G: Boddess seems to have women empowerment as a core value. Could you elaborate on how it aims to spread the importance of self-care and indulgence to women across the world through beauty?

RS: I think part of being empowered is having the ability to put yourself first. Whether it's in your career or your personal care needs, it's about having the confidence to invest in yourself and treat yourself to what gives you joy. I think the Indian culture or more broadly the Asian culture has historically reprimanded women who put themselves first or indulge in beauty by branding it as narcissism. At Boddess, we're dismantling that notion by celebrating Indian beauty and diversity. While we do this through our products and brand philosophy, we encourage our Boddesses (customers) to join us in this movement with whatever they do in life.

G: How does your message of empowerment translate to your marketing and advertising language?

RS: I think empowerment and Boddess are synonymous to begin with. The DNA of this brand was created to empower every consumer, every Boddess it came across. We don't conform to idealised yet harmful beauty norms; we celebrate every size, colour, fashion sense and trend. We believe beauty lies in one's choices, not in what one sees in the mirror, which is why we are judicious in choosing brand partners because we want to ensure they share the same values.



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G: Where do you see the beauty business heading in the future?

RS: I see the beauty business being much more democratised in the future. In fact, the future essentially is already here because our customers are already dictating campaigns by demanding campaigns that look and sound like them. This makes me incredibly happy because growing up when I'd see women who looked nothing like me on poster boards I'd feel disheartened. That's not the case anymore and I'm excited to see the future generation of beauty enthusiasts really come into their own.

The beauty industry has been resilient over the past decades with generations of loyal customers and the rise of digital platforms and marketplaces. The pace of innovation with new products and brands is at an all-time high. The entry barrier is lowered and the only way to outshine competitors is to be simply brilliant both on product and communication fronts.

G: What are your future goals for Boddess?

RS: Boddess is set to launch its retail flagship towards the end of 2021 with experience-based stores. Our platform is also set to launch exciting premium portfolios and more exclusive international beauty and wellness brands over the next three months. We aim to get more trendsetting D2C, celebrity brands, local portfolios and fast-growing makeup and skincare ranges across the globe on to our platform. We aspire to change the way people discover beauty and grooming. Forming a real connection with customers, solving their curiosities and equipping them with the right tools and education is important to us.

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