

# Luna Daily, microbiome balancing body care for all skin, even your most intimate

*As part of our quick fire questions series - or QFQs - we spoke to Katy Cottam, Founder and CEO at Luna Daily about connecting women to their entire bodies, destigmatising intimate care and building sustainable, profitable global growth.*

Temps de lecture : minute

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The idea for Luna Daily developed over 15 years, inspired originally by an experience I had as a teenager - after an intense course of antibiotics impacted my gut and skin microbiome causing me to have thrush. From that point on I wasn't able to use traditional body care products on my intimate skin, and resented having to use so-called 'feminine hygiene' products. These products carried with them 'what's wrong with her' associations along with embarrassment and shame.

Over a decade later working at the heart of the beauty industry as Global Head of Brand for Charlotte Tilbury, I had my lightbulb moment talking to a friend. Explaining my frustration that nothing had changed to eradicate this shame around 'intimate care' my friend opened up about her own experiences using these products - which were hidden at the back of her bathroom cabinet.

Two women, in very different stages of Womanhood, but both being let down by a lack of education, poorly designed products and damaging marketing.

I knew something had to change, so I gave up my job in the middle of the pandemic, and with the help of expert dermatologists and gynaecologists (the Collective), Luna Daily was born. No more having to keep harsh body products away from intimate skin, and no more hiding products in the cupboard. Head, vulva, knees, and toes, Luna Daily is microbiome-balancing body care for all skin, even the most intimate, and is designed for women and people with vulvas across all life stages from puberty, through motherhood, to menopause.

**Tell me about the business – what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers and so on?**

Luna Daily's exists to connect women to each other and their entire bodies. We're creating a new category of female wellness products.

Our mission is much greater than product innovation. My vision is to destigmatise intimate care altogether. We're doing this by building an educational and campaigning platform to improve education and awareness, with a live chat function with medical experts to improve education around intimate care.

We have just announced our launch into the US, via an exclusive deal with Sephora as the retailer's first UK intimate care brand both in-store and online. And after just one year we have secured significant retail distribution in the UK. In January '23 we launched onto Harrods.com and into Harrods Beauty as the first ever brand catering for intimate skin.



## How has the business evolved since its launch? When was this?

Luna Daily is just over one year old, so our evolution has been relatively short. Given the statistics about startups failing in their first year, I'm proud we've seen such brilliant growth here in the UK, and secured global retail distribution.

A lot of last year was taken up with fundraising, which wasn't easy given the market conditions, but we closed our round on Luna Daily's first birthday and I couldn't be happier with our investment partners *Redrice*, Joyance, Velocity Juice alongside our angels.

This is partly due to our deal with the team at Sephora, who really believe

in our mission and see the potential of this category and who increased their commitment with us three times.

## Tell us about the working culture at Luna Daily

We live by four key values. These aren't just something which you'll just see up on an office wall. These are living values, which are truly embedded in every person, every function, every consumer activation, every product.

- Inviting – We'll always try to be positive and inclusive, both within the Luna Daily internal team and with anyone we interact with. We're open to new ideas and ways of doing things. We have a business-wide coaching-culture, inviting different opinions, thoughts and approaches to make us the best we can be.
- Spirited – We're hugely passionate. We're excited about what we're doing, and we're hugely positive about the way that we're doing it. If it comes across like we enjoy what we do, it's because we do – and we hope you feel the same way.
- Direct – We don't mess about. We make decisions efficiently based on data and science, but also gut feel (also known as experience!).
- Thoughtful – We're deeply compassionate and considerate, kind and helpful, both with each other and with everyone else that we might partner with.

Put simply, we believe that powerful empathy is possibly one of the most important things that there is for making our working lives fulfilling and effective. These four values all work together, to create a welcoming, positive, and collaborative culture.

It's commonly known that start-ups can be intense and gruelling, and having experienced burnout myself, I want to ensure Luna Daily goes

beyond just supporting our team's mental health, but actually fosters positive brain health. Its woven into everything we do, from proactively including employees in our benefit options (which is how our 4.5 day work week came about), flexi working (from anywhere), every team member having both a mentor and a buddy, as well as proactive initiatives such as funding every single employee to become a Mental Health First Aider.

## How are you funded?

I originally raised via angels to launch the brand and we've just closed a £3M Seed round, which was led by Redrice and included Joyance, Velocity Juice.

## What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

We spent the entire first year fundraising. Everybody will tell you the funding process is brutal, and you pitch to hundreds. It's true.

In November 2022, I was eight months into the fundraising journey and people were encouraging me to close. I'd hit our initial minimum target and the economy was in freefall. Lots of investors were sitting on their hands. It was a really challenging time for me personally, I was burned out, and the company needed an injection of cash.

At the same time, Sephora increased their commitment three times - first from taking just two to three ranges online, then to adding our hero Spray to Wipes in stores, in-store, and then to offer us (unprecedentedly) space on the Next Big Thing wall - a huge stamp of approval and reflection of their commitment to us.

So, after being told we were just too early when I first approached them, I went back to my dream VC partner, Redrice, and I pitched them again - to

me it was clear that us breaking into America was an inflection point for the brand. Thankfully, they agreed, signing up on Christmas Eve 2022.

To have Joyance also join, which has a long-standing commitment to backing high-quality products that meet women's needs, is so incredible.

## How does Luna Daily answer an unmet need?

A devastating lack of awareness and education amongst women about their bodies, coupled with the products that women use on their intimate skin is creating a problem. 91% of women weren't educated about intimate washing routines at school and for 43% of women their washing routines are causing them to have a gynae issue.

Every 0.6 seconds someone searches 'how do I wash my vagina' - pretty shocking since it's the internal, self-cleaning part of the female anatomy, unlike the external vulva), and only 7% of under-25 year olds can accurately name the vulva.

By creating an entirely new category and building a platform for education we are providing all women with more choice, expertly designed products and innovations to help them care for their body and tackling the root cause of the issue - poor education and a lack of awareness.

## What's in store for the future?

Our focus is on sustainable, profitable Global growth, and my goal is to ensure that Luna Daily remains as accessible as possible as we grow. Accessibility means being where women are talking, sharing and shopping, and it also means doing everything we can to keep our prices as accessible as possible. Our focus is on winning in America as well as launching strategically with the right partners in new markets.

You'll also see us expand our NPD and develop world-class innovative products for women's bodies, but we will do so much more than just revolutionise the products.

I want Luna Daily to help normalise conversations around the vulva. Doubling down on our commitment to educate and support through information and campaigning will be a big focus. Ultimately, I want every woman to feel equipped to make the right choice for her body, to have access to the resources she needs to live the happiest, healthiest life.

## What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

Build an amazing circle of people around you. I took a moment to reflect on the outstanding people I had encountered throughout my professional career and set out to invite them to join our advisory board at Luna Daily. I reached out to heavyweights such as Sarah Watt (Director) (previously CMO at Charlotte Tilbury, Ex L'Oreal), Karen Raghavan (previously VP/GM at Benefit Cosmetics, Biossance), Ian Hardie (Global VP of Learning and Dev Sephora, LVMH), Vic Feebary (previously at Boots), James Houston (previously at Charlotte Tilbury, Dr Sturm, Pat McGrath, L'Oreal), and Johnny Heilbron (Redrice, previously at Thomas Pink, LVMH). Then set out to build a brilliant support team on the ground. Attitude over aptitude is key, and most importantly, a belief in your vision.

## And finally, a more personal question! What's your daily routine and the rules you're living by at the moment?

My big focus recently has been to double down on my values (the things that give you energy, drive, purpose in life) and whether I'm maximising them. It's so easy for startup life to become all consuming, and so

important to have things outside of work which bring you joy. My coach helped me identify I was lacking in 'fun' and 'freedom', so for me, it's been making sure I get out to gigs,, a ridiculously intense, all consuming workout several times a week (#RobinsWolfPack...if you Peloton, you know), hunting out the best Mexican (and Margs) with my best pal, or a long dog walk. No surprise that all these activities don't involve a phone / email being nearby!

Katy Cottam is the Founder and CEO of *Luna Daily*.

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Article by Katy Cottam