

Sustainable storytelling



Writing for *Organic & Natural Business*, NATRUE'S Global Communications & Public Relations Manager, Paula

Gómez de Tejada, discusses the importance of sustainability and substantiation.



The UK beauty sector continues to demonstrate its economic and cultural relevance. Contributing £30.4bn to the national economy – 1.1 per cent of UK GDP – and employing nearly 697,000 people, beauty is embedded across high streets, salons, laboratories, advanced manufacturing sites and global headquarters. Within this landscape, natural and organic beauty is no longer a niche alternative, it is part of the mainstream conversation. Yet what is changing is not simply demand, it is the level of expectation.

Sustainability is no longer a differentiating factor; for many consumers, it is the baseline expectation. Shoppers are not just looking for greener options; they seek measurable impact, credible claims and accountability. In fact, 80 per cent of UK consumers are willing to pay more for sustainably produced or sourced goods. The search for low-impact alternatives continues to rise, but so does scrutiny. Brands are expected to demonstrate transparent sourcing, responsible manufacturing and verifiable claims – all without compromising the performance consumers expect.

Performance itself has become more central to the natural and organic beauty proposition, and brands need to prove this. Terms such as 'clinically proven' and 'science-backed skincare' are among the fastest-growing search drivers in the category. This reflects a shift: consumers no longer see natural formulations and scientific validation as mutually exclusive; they increasingly expect both.

This dual demand – sustainability and substantiation – is reshaping product development strategies. Ingredient storytelling alone is not sufficient;

brands must articulate how ingredients work, how efficacy is measured, and how environmental impact is reduced throughout the value chain.

Alongside this rational evaluation, a more holistic dimension of beauty is gaining traction. Beauty is becoming increasingly experiential, connected to mood, stress levels and overall wellbeing. Concepts such as 'neuroglow', which place the full sensory experience at the centre of skincare, highlight that texture, scent and colour influence not only how a product performs, but how it makes the consumer feel. Similarly, 'metabolic beauty' – supporting skin health from within through nutrition-linked or holistic approaches – reflects the growing integration of beauty and lifestyle, blurring the boundaries between topical skincare, supplements and wellness. Natural brands, particularly, are well positioned to innovate in this space and communicate responsibly.

Authenticity is another defining factor. In an era of heightened awareness around digital manipulation, 67 per cent of UK social media users believe retouched content contributes to body insecurities. Brands that embrace transparency, celebrate individuality and move away from overly filtered imagery are building stronger emotional connections. This shift is not purely aesthetic; it reflects a broader cultural movement towards honesty and realism.

Local sourcing and social impact are also gaining relevance. Consumers want to understand not only what is inside the product, but who benefits from its production. Community engagement, fair partnerships and regional supply chains are becoming central to the

sustainability narrative. Taken together, these developments suggest that natural beauty is evolving from an ethical choice to an integrated business model. Sustainability, science, sensory experience and social responsibility are no longer separate conversations: they are interconnected expectations.

For industry professionals, this evolution raises important questions: How can claims remain credible? How do we balance innovation with regulatory compliance? And how do we maintain authenticity while scaling? These are precisely the conversations that will shape the next phase for this sector. Events such as the international Natural Cosmetics Conference, taking place on May 20 in Berlin and organised by NATRUE, provide an important platform to explore emerging ingredients, upcoming regulatory developments and the broader direction of the industry – helping professionals stay attuned to the multiple levels at which natural beauty is evolving, from the ingredients we choose to the stories we tell and the experiences we create. Join us.



Paula Gómez de Tejada is Global Communications & Public Relations Manager at NATRUE, where she leads the

organisation's global communication, including the Natural Cosmetics Week campaign. Paula is passionate about promoting transparency in the beauty industry. In her role, she helps raise awareness of the NATRUE Label, which since 2008 has become synonymous with authentic natural products.