



We create chemistry

Member Spotlight

EXCEL Member Spotlight:



Lorena Lujan Rubio

Manager, Strategic Partnerships – Innovation
and Sustainability,

BASF Canada

Case study:

BASF's Indigenous Beauty Bootcamp



StitchCrew

BASF
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BASF's Indigenous Beauty Bootcamp

Lorena Lujan, Manager, Strategic Partnerships –
Innovation and Sustainability

BRENNTAG

Canadian Council for
**ABORIGINAL
BUSINESS**

**Seneca
POLYTECHNIC**

Program Goals

- To drive diversity, equity, and innovation in Canada's personal care industry through strategic partnerships.
- To foster a meaningful connection with First Nations, Métis, and Inuk (Inuit)-owned brands based in Canada.
- To empower and uplift Indigenous entrepreneurs driving these brands by providing hands-on-coaching and mentorship sessions led by industry experts, financial resources and other valuable in-kind contributions to further support their growth and success.

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Program Contributors and Collaborators

- **BASF**, the program leader, orchestrator, and main sponsor, provided invaluable personal care expertise and resources to ensure the program's success, as well as non-dilutive grants for selected founders.
- The **Canadian Council of Aboriginal Business (CCAB)** served as cultural advisors, sharing their knowledge on Indigenous communities, and helped to spread the word about the program through their extensive networks.
- **Brenntag**, the finale co-sponsor alongside BASF, offered distribution expertise and support during the virtual Bootcamp.
- **Seneca Polytechnic** hosted the finale and shared their vast knowledge of cosmetic science. They also contributed four capstone project groups to support the selected winners, providing assistance with formulation development, branding, and market launch of a new product.
- **StitchCrew** curated the program's curriculum and assembled a lineup of speakers for the three-day virtual Bootcamp, open to all applicants, from which the finalists were selected.



Bootcamp Content and Speakers

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- StitchCrew, organization dedicated to supporting early-stage entrepreneurs, who had successfully partnered with BASF in the US for two editions of the Inclusive Beauty Accelerator, led the development of the three-day training program offered to the 42 Indigenous applicants from October 31 to November 2, 2023.
- The bootcamp featured insightful sessions on topics such as branding, capital access, retail readiness and distribution strategies, among others, led by high profile speakers from the beauty and capital access space including BASF, Brenntag, CCAB, Cheekbone Beauty Cosmetics, Prados Beauty, Raven Capital Indigenous Partners, and Seneca Polytechnic.

**INDIGENOUS BEAUTY
BOOTCAMP**

WELCOME TO DAY 1

OCT 31ST AGENDA

11:00AM - Welcome

11:15AM - Cultivating Your Indigenous Beauty Brand: From Vision to Reality

12:00PM - Break

12:05PM - Going Global


12:50PM - Break

1:00PM - Keynote


2:00PM - Founder Breakout

2:45PM - Takeaways and Wrap Up


3:00PM - End of Day 1



CECE MEADOWS
Founder, Prados Beauty



CATHERINE COLLINS
Founder, Constellar Consultancy



JENNIFER HARPER
Founder, Cheekbone Beauty

**INDIGENOUS BEAUTY
BOOTCAMP**

WELCOME TO DAY 2

NOV 1ST AGENDA

11:00AM - Welcome

11:15AM - Brenntag Presentation

12:00PM - Break

12:05PM - Getting Retail Ready

12:50PM - Break

1:00PM - Capital Access Panel

2:00PM - Empowering Indigenous Beauty: Marketing Mastery for Authentic Brands

2:55PM - Wrap Up

3:00PM - End of Day 1



BRENTTAG



KEMPER BRENNAN
Founder, Bravura



BMO & RAVEN CAPITAL



DANTE BISS-GRAYSON
Founder, Sky-Eagle Collection

**INDIGENOUS BEAUTY
BOOTCAMP**

WELCOME TO DAY 3

NOV 2ND AGENDA

11:00AM - Welcome

11:05AM - D'lite - Market Understanding meets Science

11:30AM - Seneca - Combining Art and Cosmetic Science

12:00PM - LUNCH BREAK

12:30PM - Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business

1:00PM - Open Mic


1:20PM - Announcing the Finalists

1:25PM - Closing Remarks


FINALISTS ONLY:

1:30PM - Finalist Briefing

2:00PM - Pitch Training



MALLEEKA TIWARRII
Digital Services - NA, BASF



LILI CRETU
Account Manager, BASF



Toronto Pitching Competition

- At the end of the Bootcamp, six brands were selected to proceed to the final event, held on Nov 9 at Seneca, where the finalists presented their brands, sharing their business journey and impact on the community, to a panel of judges.
- All six finalists were honored for their accomplishments:
 - ❑ LODGE Soy Candles and Sequoia Soaps were each awarded grants.
 - ❑ Nuez Acres, Standing Spruce and Tribalure Cosmetics & Skincare were granted Seneca Polytechnic's Capstone projects.
 - ❑ Uasau Soap was recognized with both the grant and Capstone project.
- While the jury deliberated, we hosted a panel discussion on "Tradition and Sustainability in Personal Care" featuring representatives from CCAB, Estée Lauder, and BASF, and founders from Standing Spruce Farms and Nuez Acres.
- Following the announcement, a networking lunch was arranged, catered by Pow Wow Cafe, Indigenous catering brand and, furthermore, a guided tour was organized to explore Seneca Polytechnic's new personal care lab.



Indigenous Beauty Association

- Throughout the Indigenous Beauty Bootcamp, all participating Indigenous women entrepreneurs shared a feeling of isolation in the beauty industry. In response, after the Finale, the six Brand Finalists initiated discussions to formalize an Indigenous Beauty Association (Elders approved).
- The Indigenous Beauty Association aims to provide a platform for Indigenous women entrepreneurs to connect, support one another, and promote authentic, sustainable, and holistic beauty practices.
- The Association will focus on topics of interest and concern including representation, collaboration, ancestral knowledge, unity, and access to resources.
- They have already had their first meeting and are seeking funding to hire administrative assistance to get the association off the ground.



Key Takeaways and Lessons Learned

- Through strategic partnerships with Brenntag, CCAB, Seneca Polytechnic, and StitchCrew, we were able to bring the program to life and successfully launch our First Canadian Indigenous Beauty Bootcamp. Each partner brought their unique expertise and unwavering enthusiasm to the table, making it a truly collaborative effort.
- Aligning all the components and engaging everyone in giving the program visibility across our networks played a crucial role in the initiative's success, from inception to the final stages, particularly during the application process. Furthermore, providing ample advance notice to all stakeholders would be essential, ensuring that everyone has sufficient time to prepare and participate effectively.
- The feedback received during the bootcamp highlighted that the best part of the program was the opportunity to build a community and learn from other founders. Additionally, the entrepreneurs valued the expert sessions that provided excellent insights in various areas.
- The program provided a unique opportunity to foster a meaningful connection with Indigenous communities. It is essential to find a way to sustain this collaboration and not make it a one-time endeavor, as there is potential for continued growth and impact.





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