

STARTUP

With Vedaeath's aromatherapy, this mother-daughter duo is inhaling the sweet smell of success

Athira A Nair posted on 26th March 2018



Vedaeath, which combines the herbal traditions of Ayurveda with the healing touch of aromatherapy, offers a range of cruelty and chemical-free products to consumers, spas, and salons.



At a glance:

Startup: Vedaeath

Founders: Divya Dinesh, Asha Dinesh

Year founded: 2015

Location: Bengaluru

Sector: Retail, health and beauty

Problem it solves: chemical-free skin and hair care products

Funding: Bootstrapped

The term aromatherapy was coined in 1930s' France to refer to holistic treatment methods using essential oils for physical ailments. In India, this tradition is yet to grow roots, as the health and wellness industry is ruled by inorganic products.

However, current options on the market do not suit everyone. Bangalore-based Divya Dinesh, 25, was one of them. Divya's sensitive skin meant that half the products available in the market caused irritation, including ones "made for sensitive skin".

This led to a search for **personal care products that did not hurt her skin**, which led her to aromatherapy. After learning aromatherapy, she started making her own blends of oils and using them as an alternative to moisturisers. Soon, she was giving her facial oil, hair oil, and pain relief oil to her friends and family. The positive feedback led Divya to realise the scope of such products.

With a bachelor's degree in international hospitality administration, Divya grew inclined to starting her own wellness brand. Tying up with an aromatherapy/Ayurveda expert with 27 years' experience, Divya and her mother, Asha Dinesh, launched Advantis Enterprises LLP. Under this entity, they launched 'Vedaeearth' products which use only natural and vegan ingredients, in 2015.

From knowledge to business

Veda stands for knowledge and, in this case, combines the age-old tradition of Ayurveda with the quintessential essence of aromatherapy to create products for the wellbeing of the human body. *Arth* in Hindi means meaning. "We give ancient knowledge a new meaning with our products. Hence Vedaeearth," Divya says.



Bootstrapped, Vedaeearth began with an initial investment of about Rs 1 lakh. Over time, more money has gone in.

At the launch, Vedaeearth started with a few retail stores in Bangalore along with their own website. "We even had beauty advisors at each store to explain how our brand is different and how our products work. But being in stores where other products are kept in shelves next to yours really doesn't speak for your brand; all that matters is the price. So, we decided to opt for an online approach instead," Divya recollects.

Currently, Vedaeearth's products are available on 11 websites, including Amazon, Qtrove, Nykaa, and Organic shop.

However, getting people to believe that oil is the solution to your problems – especially in a tropical climate like in India – was a major task.

"We talk about the benefits of the ingredients and the science behind how oils work. It takes time but in the long run this is the only way to truly capture the customer's heart and, of course, with **great customer service post sale**. You can't lose the customer after the sale," Divya says.

Good for people, good for animals

An animal lover, Divya detested products tested on animals. Vedaeath products are vegan - good for people and good for animals. She explains, "At Vedaeath, we do not test our products on animals. In fact, we test all products on ourselves while putting together the right mix of ingredients."



Vedaeath also runs a spa as an extension of their brand, and makes 95 percent of the products in-house.

"If we source products from vendors, we ensure that they also follow the same value principles as us - **being vegan and cruelty free**. We believe in giving genuinely good quality products and being transparent with our customers. All the oils were

tested even at the vendor selection stage as you find a lot of adulterated ingredients nowadays. This helped us in narrowing down good quality suppliers even though the cost was higher. But we want to give a good product," Divya adds.

Vedaeath is certified by PETA as cruelty free, and free of harsh chemicals, SLS, SLES, sulfates, parabens, petroleum, and mineral oils. They have also achieved GMP certification from the WHO and Ayush certification for product efficacy.

For health-conscious women

Vedaeath caters to women in the 18-60 age group, women who are conscious of what they put on their skin or hair and **keen to use chemical-free products**. "Our audience also understands the importance of using products not tested on animals," Divya adds.

Now active in the B2C segment in ecommerce, Vedaeath has also launched Vedaeath Lounge, which offers the experience of Ayurvedic Aromatherapy in the form of spa and salon services.

Vedaeath products range from Rs 300 to Rs 800 while the Spa and Salon Services are priced between Rs 500 and Rs 2500. The products include bath salts, soaps, essential oils, rose water, and more. The Lounge offers services specially curated for treatment of troubled skin and hair problems.

Healthy future

The Vedaeath team comprises close to 20 people with about 75 percent being women in R&D, operations, sales and marketing, and therapists at the Lounge. They are working towards turning profitable in the next three years.



"In terms of customer acquisitions and unit-wise sales, we have grown roughly 15 percent month-on-month since inception. **Our next step is to cater to international markets** like the US, Australia, and other Southeast Asian countries through ecommerce. As for Vedaeath Lounge, we plan to open more centres around Bangalore and other metros in the next one year," Divya adds.

The personal care industry is valued at Rs 19,000 crore. Vedaeath is targeting Rs 50,00,000 in GMV and 10,000 units sale for FY2019. More importantly, Divya reiterates, Vedaeath wants to want to educate women on the benefits of Ayurveda and aromatherapy.

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