

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR BACKGROUND IN THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY.

My journey in beauty began 'at the counter,' managing the front desk of a luxury salon and spa during college, which led to a sales role with Deborah Lippmann. This pivotal moment launched my career, and I soon worked with Chanel, then Laura Mercier, in freelance regional sales and as a makeup artist, all while completing my degree.

After graduation, I landed in recruitment, realizing a natural talent for identifying top talent. A move to New York City allowed me to blend my passion for beauty with recruitment, and since then, for nearly a decade, I've helped catalyze leading beauty and consumer brands by placing transformative leadership. I've had the privilege of partnering with beloved beauty brands such as Hourglass Cosmetics (Unilever Prestige), e.l.f. Cosmetics, amika, IGK Haircare, One/Size by Patrick Starr, Kate Somerville, Tricoci Salon & Spa, Pixi Beauty, and more.

“ATTRACTING INNOVATIVE TALENT STARTS WITH YOUR BRAND IDENTITY—CLEARLY DEFINING YOUR VISION, VOICE, AND MISSION

HOW DO YOU SPOT AND ATTRACT C-SUITE TALENT TO ENSURE LONG-TERM SUCCESS?

When recruiting for C-suite roles, I prioritize emotional intelligence (EQ) over IQ. While candidates at this level typically have the intellectual capability, the real differentiator is their ability to inspire key stakeholders—employees, partners, and consumers. Finding the right balance between founder-fit, investor-fit, and brand-fit is crucial. My process leverages data, AI, and a personal network cultivated over a decade to identify leaders who not only excel but make a transformative impact on the brand.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST HIRING MISTAKES EARLY-STAGE BEAUTY BRANDS MAKE, AND HOW DO YOU AVOID THEM?

Early-stage beauty brands often under-hire or over-hire, bringing in talent either too junior or too senior for the company's stage. Title inflation can also lead to mismatched expectations. Another pitfall is hiring without considering cultural fit—a candidate might look great on paper but clash with the brand's ethos. Additionally, hiring talent that's too expensive for the company's financial bandwidth or skipping thorough reference checks can create long-term issues. It's vital to balance experience, fit, and budget to avoid these mistakes.

HOW DO YOU ATTRACT AND NURTURE TALENT THAT DRIVES PRODUCT INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY?

Attracting innovative talent starts with your brand identity—clearly defining your vision, voice, and mission.

Nurturing talent begins on day one, with robust onboarding, growth opportunities, and an environment that encourages creativity. Offering the right tools and support is key, while creating a culture that values innovation and development ensures long-term success and retention.

HOW CAN BEAUTY BRANDS EMBED DEI INTO THEIR HIRING PRACTICES FROM DAY ONE?

Beauty brands can embed DEI by establishing clear values, using inclusive language in job descriptions, and expanding recruitment efforts to diverse talent pools. Implementing unbiased screening processes and creating an inclusive onboarding experience helps retain talent and build a more equitable workforce.

WHAT'S YOUR PLAYBOOK FOR ASSESSING TALENT TRACK RECORDS?

I focus on metrics like brand growth, EBITDA, and earned media value, alongside the individual's involvement in successful exits or transformations. The length of tenure is also crucial—typically, someone needs at least 1.5 years to make an impact. I also consider the company's reputation during the candidate's tenure to evaluate their ability to attract and retain talent, leveraging industry data platforms for a comprehensive assessment.

HOW DO YOU STRUCTURE COMPETITIVE COMPENSATION PACKAGES WITHOUT LOSING CONTROL OVER EQUITY?

Structuring competitive compensation without losing equity involves offering competitive salaries, performance bonuses, and phantom equity. This ensures employees benefit only in the event of an exit, minimizing dilution. Additionally, perks like profit-sharing, flexible work arrangements, and robust benefits can often be more attractive than equity, especially for candidates who've had equity that didn't lead to an exit.

HOW DO YOU AVOID OVER-HIRING OR UNDER-HIRING, AND WHEN SHOULD YOU LEAN ON AGENCIES VS. IN-HOUSE TALENT?

To avoid over or under-hiring, it's essential to define the company's goals and assess the team's current capabilities. Agencies are ideal for short-term, specialized projects, while in-house talent is best for long-term initiatives that require growth within the company. Balancing the fiscal impact of talent on the P&L is critical to avoid financial strain.



ANNABEL NORMAN
MANAGING PARTNER
NORMAN CONSULTANTS