



Press release

Beauty start-ups KLARSKIN and BEARS WITH BENEFITS win Douglas #FORWARDBEAUTYChallenge

- The #FORWARDBEAUTYChallenge aims at discovering the most innovative new beauty brands and retail technologies
- Out of 100 applicants ten start-ups were invited to pitch their ideas
- KLARSKIN and BEARS WITH BENEFITS convinced with compelling founder stories and upbeat, customer-centric innovations
- CEO Tina Müller: “Our first #FORWARDBEAUTYChallenge brought us to a new level of engagement with founders and independent brands – and that is just the start.”
- KLARSKIN and BEARS WITH BENEFITS will get the opportunity to be listed and distributed internationally at Douglas - online and offline
- Special Jury Award goes to start-up SKIN MATCH for the best tech idea

Düsseldorf, 19 November 2018. Douglas, one of the leading beauty retailers in Europe, has announced the winners of its first #FORWARDBEAUTYChallenge: KLARSKIN and BEARS WITH BENEFITS.

The #FORWARDBEAUTYChallenge is a contest for budding beauty and retail technology entrepreneurs and start-ups, who pitch to win the chance to work together with Douglas and partner Schwan Cosmetics. The event took place over two days on 16th and 17th November, 2018, at Douglas Headquarters in Düsseldorf, Germany.

“We are excited to announce the winners of the first Douglas #FORWARDBEAUTYChallenge: KLARSKIN and BEARS WITH BENEFITS. Congratulations go out to both teams. What set them apart were their compelling founder stories and commitment to approach product development from a customer’s point of view. Our first #FORWARDBEAUTYChallenge brought us to a new level of engagement with founders and independent brands – and that is just the start. We are very much looking forward to collaborating closely with KLARSKIN and BEARS WITH BENEFITS to bring amazing beauty experiences to our customers, now and in future,” states Tina Müller, CEO of Douglas Group.

KLARSKIN is a beauty regimen focusing on a growing target group suffering from adult acne. The unique formulas are replenishing the gut and provide a glowing skin from within.

BEARS WITH BENEFITS are hair vitamins with biotin that come as gummy bears and support your beauty from the inside. With a holistic complex of active ingredients they strengthen skin, hair, nails and immune system.

The Special Jury Award goes to SKIN MATCH, a retail technology for the beauty industry that connects product and customer data to offer beauty product consultation online and in stores on the highest level. Douglas and SKIN MATCH will integrate the technology and run tests with the application. “Delivering relevant and transparent information for customers online is the key to winning their trust and loyalty for the future. I am really looking forward to working with Douglas to further enhance the shopping experience for customers,” says founder Estella Benz.

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Douglas received close to 100 applications from international beauty and retail tech start-ups to participate in the contest. Ten finalists were invited to participate in the event and pitch their product idea to a panel of esteemed judges comprising among others Douglas CEO, Tina Müller, Managing Partner of CVC Capital Partners, Dr. Alexander Dibelius, CEO of Schwan Cosmetics, Dr. Jörg Karas, Instyle Germany Beauty Director, Eva Jost, EVP E-Commerce & Omnichannel of Douglas, Vanessa Stütze, and Christoph Honnefelder, at Douglas EVP Assortment & Purchasing.

“The event was fantastic, and the calibre of ideas simply mind-blowing. Schwan Cosmetics is really looking forward to working together with Douglas and the winning start-ups KLARSKIN and BEARS WITH BENEFITS, in helping bring their idea to its full potential,” comments Dr. Jörg Karas.

On the first day of the contest, the initial ten entrants were shortlisted by the judges to a final group of six. On the second and final day of the contest, the finalists worked closely with a team of expert mentors to refine their idea, and repitch in a final presentation to the judging panel who selected the winner. The mentors were Viktor Balzer, Founder of Skinmade and Scientist at Fraunhofer Institute, Bernd Preuschoff, SVP and Global Head of Digital at Schwan Cosmetics, Dr. Lars Rüter, Founder of Skinmade and Head of Research at Dermatest, Ulrich Seitz, Managing Director at BayWa r.e. Energy Ventures, and Maru Winnacker, Partner at Super Group.

“Working with the finalist teams in such a fast-paced and thrilling environment was a huge highlight for me. I can’t wait to see how all participating teams will develop their businesses in the future,” states Dr. Lars Rüter.

The winning start-ups, KLARSKIN and BEARS WITH BENEFITS, will receive full commitment from Douglas in developing a partnership that realises their ideas to their full potential. This includes ongoing support and incubation from Douglas and the distribution of their products via Douglas’ international online and offline channels.

“We are so grateful to Douglas for this opportunity. BEARS WITH BENEFITS was inspired by beauty trends from the USA and South Korea, and now we have the potential to bring our idea to millions of people who love beauty, all over Europe,” state founders Marlena Hien and Laurence Saunier.

“It’s just amazing! I’m so excited to bring products that heal and nourish to more people with skin issues like I once had. I can’t wait to start working together and to tell our customers that we are bringing our scientific, high quality formulations to Douglas stores near them very soon,” commented KLARSKIN founder Antoneta Bursac.

“There is no doubt that the #FORWARDBEAUTYChallenge has given us unparalleled access to incredible innovations that will truly rock the beauty world. Our #FORWARDBEAUTY strategy is all about bringing the best beauty experiences to our customers, and this event is another great way to help us deliver on this goal. It goes without saying, the #FORWARDBEAUTYChallenge was a great success,” states Tina Müller, CEO of Douglas.

Douglas plans to make the #FORWARDBEAUTYChallenge an annual event, running the contest again in 2019.

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About Douglas:

Douglas is a leading retailer in the European beauty industry with about 2,500 stores and fast-growing online shops in 19 European countries. In the financial year 2016/17, the company generated sales of 2.8 billion Euros. Every day, around 20,000 dedicated beauty advisors strive to make their customers more beautiful and thus happier. Douglas has a portfolio of some 38,000 high-quality products in the areas of perfumery, decorative cosmetics and skincare. Providing excellent advice and a range of unique services, Douglas is one of the leading companies in the beauty market – both online and in stores.

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