

UPCIRCLE BEAUTY
DBA DESIGN EFFECTIVENESS AWARDS
FOR PUBLICATION

BRAVE BEAUTY RENEGADES

SKINCARE BRAND
TURNS CIRCULARITY
SUPERSTAR

MORE!

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"They helped us to find exactly the right look, feel and tone for our brand, giving us a solid platform on which to build future success. More than this, they made it look easy. Their support in transforming the brand from Optiat to UpCircle has contributed to turnover increases of 2400% since the relaunch"

William Brightman, co-founder, UpCircle.

OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT

Optiat was the first sustainable skincare brand to plug into the circular economy and use ingredients in their products that would otherwise go to landfill. After a successful crowdfunding process, they were ready to build their brand future and looked to us for support.

In skincare, being 'natural' is not a differentiator. Instead we chose to reinvent the category with the concept of 'All round' describing both the sustainable journey of the ingredients and the wider circular economy.

We worked as brand guardians throughout the project, creating everything from brand identity to packaging to digital, and coordinated with our creative collaborator to ensure a holistic brand experience online and offline.

Together, we renamed them UpCircle and built a new brand that can tell a richer, more consistent story, building a visual and verbal platform that speaks to their ethos and commands business-transforming results.

KEY STATS



INCREASE IN
COMPANY VALUATION



INCREASE IN
TURNOVER



INCREASE IN
RETAILER LISTINGS



INCREASE IN
CUSTOMERS AND
USERS



PER PRODUCT
AVERAGE INCREASE
PRICE POINT



INCREASED
AVERAGE SPEND
PER PURCHASE



NOW AVAILABLE
IN 30 COUNTRIES
GLOBALLY

DESCRIPTION

Back in 2015, siblings Anna and William Brightman had a thought: If they were throwing away a cafetière full of coffee grounds every morning, how much is going to waste from coffee shops?

A lot, as it turns out: 500,000 tonnes of coffee grounds go into UK landfill each year. So they decided to find a way to give those coffee grounds a new lease of life. And Optiat was born, offering coffee ground-based body and face scrubs with vegan and circular economy credentials, with pricing ranging from £6.99 to £14.99.

In August 2018, William and Anna appeared on Dragons' Den, where Tej Lalvani and Touker

Suleyman offered £50,000 for 30% of the business, with one condition: to improve the branding and packaging of their products, which were seen as inconsistent and confusing. But William and Anna turned down these offers and decided to go it alone.

Optiat had already identified this point and a rebranding project was underway with us, their creative partners. With investors and founders in the same frame of mind, the responsibility lay with us to transform Optiat into a visible, recognisable, and desirable brand.



OUTLINE OF PROJECT BRIEF

"We want the products in as many hands and homes as possible. We want to be the pioneers for natural and sustainable skincare, helping people understand that beautiful skin does not have to come at the expense of the environment."

William Brightman, co-founder, UpCircle.

The founders approached us with a brief to rethink every aspect of Optiat. The ambition was to:

- Streamline and unify the design and products to propel a cohesive and scalable vision.
- Focus on the brand's positive impact in the world, standing for something bigger than beauty alone.
- Allow the company to fulfil its range extension and growth potential.
- Jumpstart the company to become one of Britain's most promising sustainable beauty brands.
- Boast press-worthy and giftable aesthetics.



OVERVIEW OF THE MARKET

The UpCircle rebrand came at a flat time for the industry: personal care value sales, including skincare and other toiletries, were up just 0.6% value growth and suffering from a decline of -1% volume sales.

The skincare market itself was valued at £1,323.3m. The top four female skincare brands had shed £7.5m in 2019 alone. So UpCircle could not expect sales figures to benefit from an overall category surge.

SIZE OF DESIGN BUDGET

Redacted confidential data

SCOPE OF WORK

Naming / Visual identity / Tone of voice / Messaging / Packaging / Website / Range development / NPD developments / Social media guidelines / Marketing material

DATE OF LAUNCH

December 2018

COLLABORATIONS INVOLVED

Reed Words – Copywriting

Veerle Evens – Photography

Laura Hunter – Strategy





OUTLINE OF DESIGN SOLUTION

We met the UpCircle team just two weeks into their business journey and our first year as an agency. We're incredibly proud to have played our part in the continual growth journey of the first brand in the skincare category to plug into the circular economy and use ingredients that would otherwise go to landfill.

In skincare, 'natural' is nothing new. So our strategy was to evolve the category. We chose 'All round' as the core idea, which describes the ingredients' sustainable journey and heroes the power and fluidity of the circular economy itself.

The 'continuous line' embodies the circularity concept against an elegantly muted colour palette. Our collaborative partner renamed the brand UpCircle as a nod to the upcycled ingredients and gave the brand an uplifting tone of voice.

In the words of Charles Eames, "The details are not the details. They make the design." UpCircle is all about the details. So out went plastic bottles and in came recyclable glass jars. And we used GF Smith 'Extract' paper made from plastic-lined disposable coffee cups for business cards and promo materials.

The result is a consistent look and feel that unifies the company's products and a well-defined, profound brand story and values that improve the brand's focus. The clear and simple design approach for UpCircle ensures that the brand now sits comfortably among the new generation of beauty brands that are aesthetically tuned to stand out.

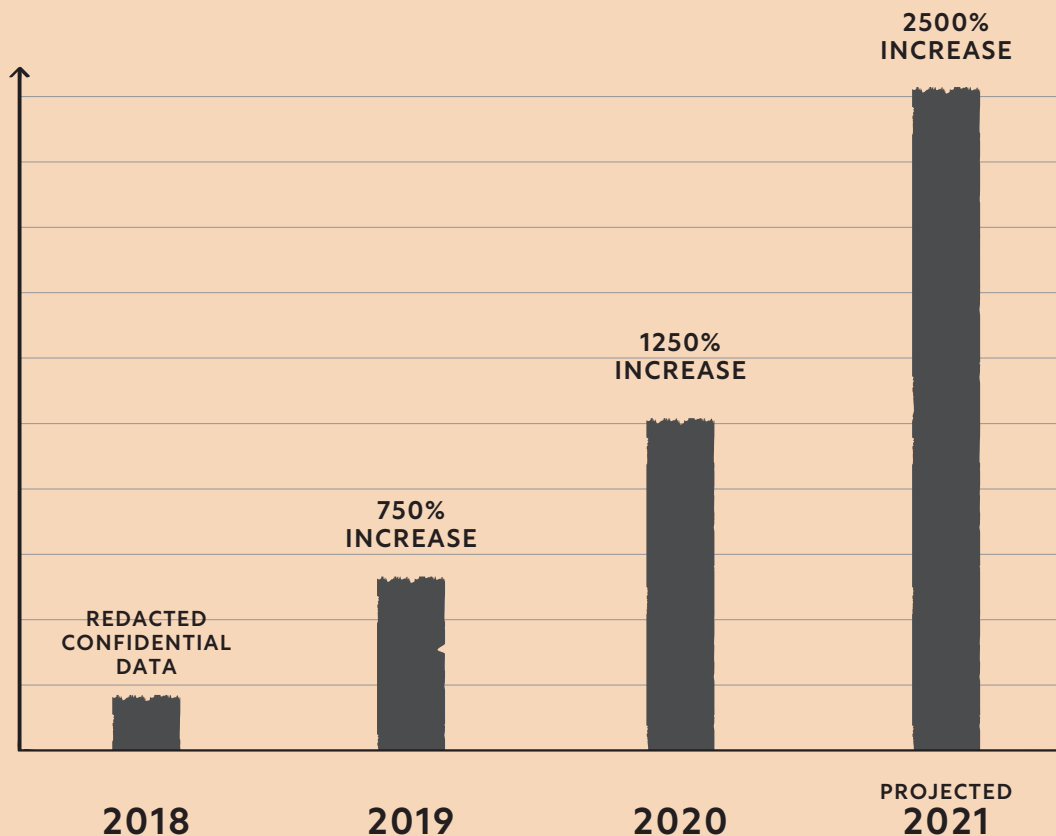


INCREASE IN SALES

From 2017 to 2018, as Optiat, the company turned over [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA]. But with the shift in brand to become UpCircle, in the first full year following the redesign, UpCircle increased turnover by 750%.

And then during the height of the pandemic, in 2020 turnover grew 160% compare to 2019. UpCircle is on track to at least double its 2020 turnover in the current 2021 financial year.

UPCIRCLE TURNOVER



PAYBACK PERIOD / ROI

The brand achieved a return on design fee investment in a phenomenal 4 days after launch, based on the huge uplift in sales revenues the year post redesign, versus the year prior.

INCREASED MARKET SHARE

As an independent brand not covered in Nielsen ScanTrack data, it's challenging to demonstrate increases in UpCircle's market share. However, the number of people who use or benefit from UpCircle exceeds increased by 525% following the redesign.

INCREASED MARKET DISTRIBUTION

Before the redesign, the brand was available in 300 locations. UpCircle is now available in 3,000 locations globally, with new stockists joining daily. This represents a phenomenal uplift of 900%.

The brand has secured listings with the likes of...



HIGHER PRICE POINT ACHIEVED

The UpCircle redesign enabled an average increase in price point of £3.29 per product. That's a higher price point of 36.6% achieved due to design alone.

CHANGES IN SPENDING PATTERNS

Following the redesign, the average spend per purchase has increased by a massive 77%, with no other changes in marketing activities. This

amounts to an increased spend of £14.45 per order, up from an average spend of £18.79 as Optiat to £33.24 as UpCircle.

INCREASED PROFITABILITY

Over the last year, the shift to online sales has seen turnover from direct-to-consumer sales increase and profitability.

Sales are now roughly split 60% B2C via UpCircle.com, versus 40% B2B to other retailers, both online and physical stockists. This is particularly impressive given that UpCircle gains a 30% higher profit margin on sales via their website rather than via stockists.

INCREASED CONVERSION RATES

Since the rebrand the brand has seen a significant uplift in website conversion rates, from 3% to ~5%.

EXPORT GROWTH

UpCircle is now available in 30 countries globally, notably including Australia, Denmark, France, Finland, Portugal and the U.S. That's an impressive export growth of 150%, from 12 countries at the time of the redesign brief.

YOU'VE GOT THIS



BUSINESS GROWTH

UpCircle has seen a 95% increase in net worth since the rebrand. The most recent valuation of the brand was 20 times larger than one given just before the redesign.

The company has outgrown two premises since the rebrand. The company now proudly resides in a covetable riverside location in the SW1 area of London and retains a railway arch used for storage and light industrial use, including manufacturing, as demand increases.

The business growth has allowed the company to invest in new equipment that helps them fulfil their plans: industrial dry heat ovens for their new packaging return scheme and industrial dehydrators for NPD plans with flower petals.

NEW REVENUE STREAMS CREATED

The increased interest in UpCircle since the redesign enabled the brand's range of natural, organic, cruelty-free and vegan product

offerings to encompass face scrubs, bar soaps and face serum in addition to the original body scrubs.

UpCircle's range before the redesign spanned seven SKUs. The brand has now grown to 26 SKUs, with seven planned product launches for 2021. That's an increase of 371% in range size.

INCREASED AWARENESS

UpCircle's activity on Google Trends has seen a significant uplift since the redesign too, with a 133.7% increase in people searching for UpCircle online since the redesign launched in December 2018, versus the term Optiat in the time since the company was founded, until the redesign. They are outperforming the term 'circular economy' on Google Trends by over 530% in the time since the rebrand, indicating that UpCircle is a pioneer in the drive of this vital movement.

“WE GET CONTACTED ENDLESSLY EVERY SINGLE DAY BY OTHER BRANDS AND INDIVIDUALS WANTING TO PARTNER WITH US ON ALL SORTS OF DIFFERENT PROJECTS, FROM SOCIAL AND PRODUCT COLLABORATIONS TO EVENTS.”

ANNA BRIGHTMAN, CO-FOUNDER, UPCIRCLE

PRODUCTION EFFICIENCIES

Ethical, sustainable, fair trade, organic ingredients cost more. It is also costly to produce handmade products in the UK. So it's especially impressive that UpCircle has managed to keep production in the UK whilst keeping up with consumer demand following the redesign



**PROUDLY
MADE IN
THE UK**

IMPROVEMENTS IN CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

UpCircle gets universally and exceptionally positive reviews, boasting over 7000 5* reviews and a covetable consumer rating across multiple unbiased review platforms:

Google

5★



Trustpilot

4.9

★REVIEWS.io

5★



BUYER TESTIMONIALS

*"We love stocking the UpCircle range. **The brand has come so far in such a short time and built a real cult following.** They're trusted as an authentically sustainable brand who make effective products that work and are presented with **a slick, appealing overall look.**"*

Karen Bingham of Tarn Replenished.

*"Our customer and staff feedback on the UpCircle products is always very positive. **Not only are the products great, but the branding is widely praised too.** We love what UpCircle do!"*

Rhona MacDonald of Neighbourhood.

SALES TEAM TESTIMONIALS

*"For the majority of the potential stockists that I reach out to, one of the first things they comment on is the **'beautiful packaging and branding'** – it has definitely helped from a sales perspective. **The branding does half of my job for me!**"*

Sophie Hatt, Sales, UpCircle.



MEDIA IMPACT & REACH

UpCircle is now the circular darling of the beauty industry: Forbes, Evening Standard, The Times, Good Housekeeping, Esquire, Financial Times, Hello!, Stylist, WWD, Vogue, Metro, OK!, Who What Wear, Balance Magazine, The Observer, Daily Mail, Glamour, The Independent, BBC Radio London and R29 have all covered the brand, spreading the message to a vast **185,305,020 total possible audience.**

Now the brand is more visible, the number of awards they're notching up is increasingly rapidly, and the silverware now includes:

- Anna, an UpCircle co-founder, was awarded prestigious Forbes 30 Under 30 status.
- The Independent Indy Best Buy – Face Moisturiser, Safety Razor and Chai Latte Candle
- BOOM Best of Organic Market Awards – Best of Organic Innovation Winner
- FSB London Ethical Green Business of the Year
- Cosmo Beauty Awards Winner
- Get The Gloss Beauty & Wellness Awards - Eco-Hero Winner
- Natural Products News 30 Under 30 – x5 winner
- Sainsbury's Beauty Awards 2020 winner

DIGITAL GROWTH & ENGAGEMENT

The brand now boasts a 90k-strong Instagram following, with engagement per post increasing by 1732% since the redesign. As Optiat, the brand averaged 150 likes per post, and the most recent post as UpCircle received 2749 likes.

FUNDING INCREASES

UpCircle has raised investment of £295k so far, with the brand credited as part of the appeal to investors.

JOB CREATION

Since the rebrand, the UpCircle team has increased by 700%, jumping from 2 to 14 employees between 2019 and early 2021.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPROVEMENTS

One hundred twenty billion packaging units are produced every year by the global cosmetics industry. Bucking this trend has been fundamental to UpCircle, and the brand has reduced plastic packaging by 100%, and decreased its carbon footprint with a "Return, Refill and Reuse" scheme for over 17 products, reinforcing UpCircle's commitment to sustainability.

REPURPOSING ACHIEVEMENTS

A critical point of difference for UpCircle is that each of their products is made with a core repurposed ingredient. No other beauty brand is doing what they do. Put simply, they are pioneering the by-product beauty movement.

UpCircle began its journey collecting coffee grounds from a single coffee shop. They now collect from 100+ coffee houses across London, and growing.

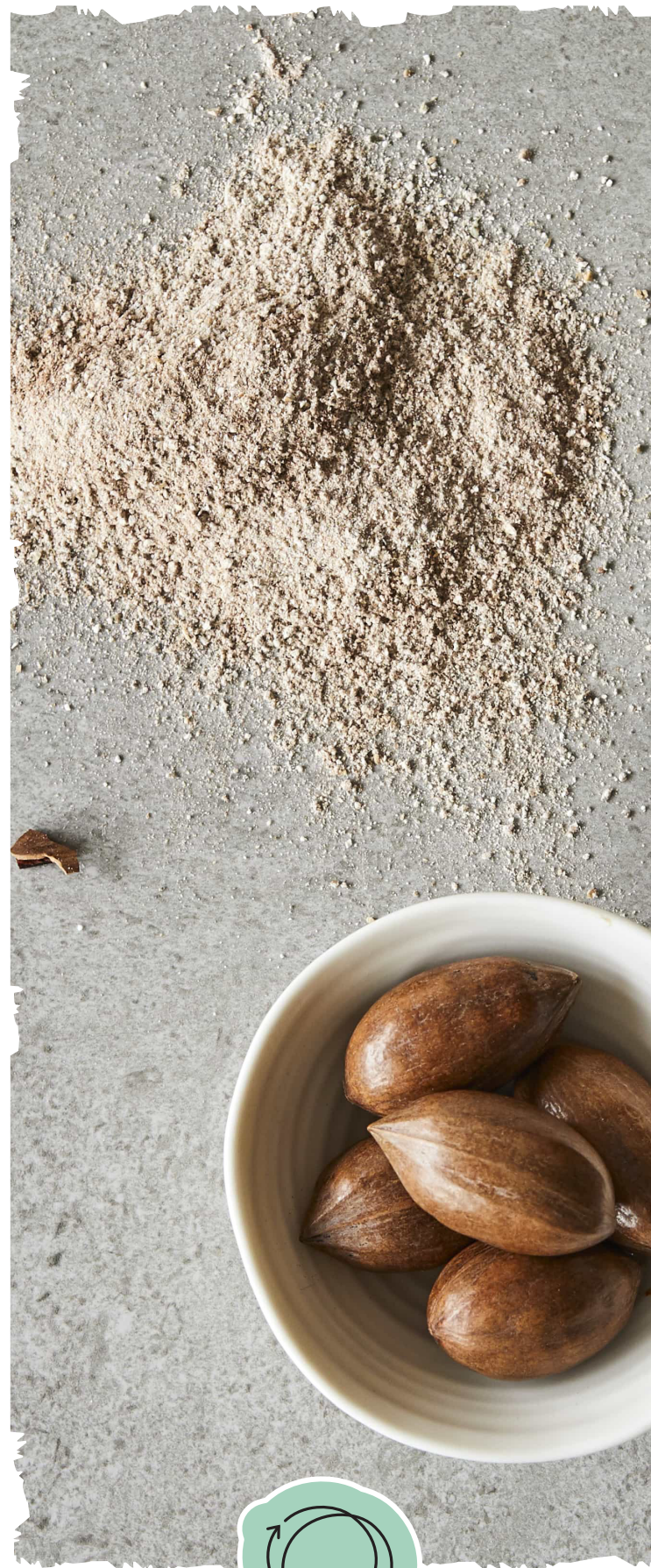
*"When coffee grounds are sent to landfill, they **rot to produce methane**. Our coffee range has **rescued over 350 tonnes of coffee** from this fate. Based on our current growth rates, we estimate that we will have saved an additional **1000 tonnes in the next five years.**"*

Anna Brightman, co-founder, UpCircle.

In 2020 alone, UpCircle's success has allowed them to expand their repurposed ingredient portfolio to 10 by-products from varied industries, including the argan, tea, juice, date, olive and wood industries. The circular economy impact can be seen in these impressive repurposing stats:

- Using the water of 8,000 mandarin oranges in UpCircle toner.
- Each batch of eye cream uses the extract of the leftover bark from approximately one red maple tree.
- Its body cream has rescued approximately 300,000 date seeds from being discarded.
- Each batch of soaps is infused with 2 tonnes of brewed chai spices.

In 2021 alone UpCircle have launched seven new products, saving more ingredients such as olives and blueberries from the food and drink industry. Next up, they're saving flower petals from florists and wedding venues.



“WE HAVE HAD NO NEW SUPPORT POST THE REBRAND IN COMPARISON TO PRE THE REBRAND. IT'S ALL JUST US!

EVERYTHING WE'VE ACHIEVED AS A BRAND WE'VE DONE ON OUR OWN.”

ANNA BRIGHTMAN, CO-FOUNDER, UPCIRCLE

SOCIAL IMPACT

The success following the rebrand has allowed UpCircle to donate to One Tree Planted, Amazon Frontlines and Rainforest Alliance, Refuge, The Stephen Lawrence Foundation, Mind, BLAM, Crisis, AKT and Luminary Bakery as part of their policy to donate £1 from every sale of their hand wash to charity.

The brand is adamant about using its relatively new platform to educate and inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs, eco-warriors and female founders.

OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS:

Anna Brightman, co-founder at UpCircle says:

"We have had no new support post the rebrand in comparison to pre the rebrand. No new mentors, investors etc. It's all just us!"

"For example, some people may assume, given what aired on TV, that we've been heavily supported by the Dragons after our appearance on Dragons' Den. However, despite receiving three offers of investment we ultimately chose to walk away from their offers. Everything we've achieved as a brand we've done on our own."

SOURCES

- Readership figures: <https://www.abc.org.uk/>
- Sales figures: UpCircle accounts
- Google Trends:
<https://trends.google.com/trends/?geo=GB>
- Social media figures: Instagram
<https://www.instagram.com/upcirclebeauty>
- Overview of the market: Kantar data 52 w/e 16 June 2019