

The makings of a mogul: Switch Beauty's Rabia Ghoor

 By [Lauren Hartzenberg](#)

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At just 14 years old, Rabia Ghoor started a makeup brand in her bedroom in Pretoria. With just two products, an Instagram page and the teen entrepreneur's determination to launch an innovative digital makeup brand, Switch Beauty was born.



Rabia Ghoor, Switch Beauty founder. Source: Supplied

Six years later and those two makeup products have expanded to 14, spanning cosmetics and skincare, and that Instagram page has attracted over 100,000 doting Switch followers. The online beauty store has also since expanded into physical retail, selling its wares at multibrand retail concept [Egg in Cavendish Square](#).

Switch community

Throughout her business's product development journey, Ghoor has leaned into the engaged online community of 'Switch babes' to crowdsource ideas and feedback from the very people who will be using the products.

As a makeup enthusiast from a young age, it was important for Ghoor to create products that she wanted to use herself. "I guess most makeup that's made isn't made by the user, that's what makes Switch special," she says.



Source: Supplied

Ghoor's vision was to build an accessible and desirable beauty brand with products that didn't break the bank but also delivered on their promises. Her efforts seem to have paid off, with Switch blooming into one of South Africa's most popular beauty brands, and the entrepreneur recently claiming the coveted [Forbes Woman Africa](#) Young Achiever award at just 21 years old.

Here, Ghoor fills us in on her journey developing SA's very own cult beauty brand.

■ ***You started Switch Beauty at just 14 years old. What inspired the idea?***

As a young makeup user and skincare enthusiast, I saw a gap in the South African market for a local beauty brand harnessing the power of social media to connect with its consumer – and so Switch was born.

■ ***What were the first few years of running your business like?***

Looking back it was absolutely shambolic for me to have been in business at such a young age, but if you'd have asked me then I would've told you I was having the ride of my life.

The first few years were intense and I always thought it had something to do with my age but the older I get the more I realise that life is just intense and age is just a number. It's still intense, I suppose you just get better at adjusting your frequency.



Source: Supplied

❏ ***To what/whom do you owe your entrepreneurial spirit?***

Definitely my father; he is the greatest tradesman I know. Also a high school dropout, he's had many failed businesses ventures and as a result, developed an incredibly thick skin, shrewd business acumen and unbelievable confidence.

❏ ***You dropped out of high school when the Switch business demanded more of your attention. Looking back on your decision, do you have any regrets?***

Absolutely zero regrets, everything I've ever wanted to learn since I've gone out and learned in practice. Also, don't underestimate the power of the internet in teaching yourself things – it really is our generation's greatest resource.

❏ ***How has the Switch business grown since its humble beginnings six years ago?***

We've gotten better, and faster at everything operationally and that's happened organically through practice. There is still so much to improve on and team Switch is learning every day.

swiitchbeauty



Source: Supplied



■ The Switch social media community seems to be utterly smitten with the brand. How have you gone about cultivating such an engaged audience?

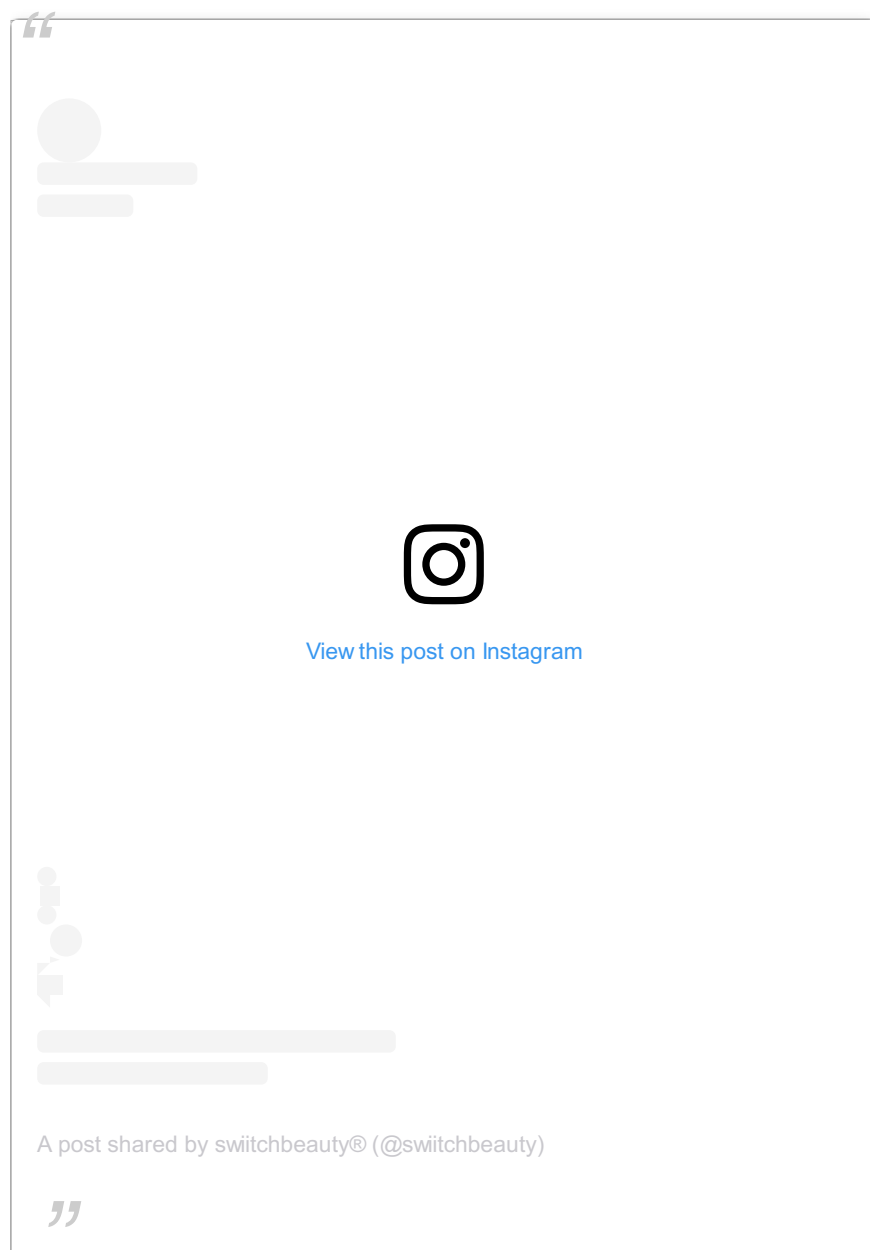
I think by treating social media as more of a communication tool and less of a marketing tool. People come onto Instagram to be engaged, spoken with and listened to – not to be sold stuff.

■ ***You’ve added quite a bit of skincare products to the Switch lineup in recent years. What inspired the expansion into this category?***

I’ve noticed a dramatic shift in focus within the beauty community where users are more concerned with taking care of their skin and much less concerned with covering it up. I’ve adjusted our product development strategy accordingly.

■ ***Switch often involves its online community in the product development process. Can you speak about the benefits of this approach?***

Anytime we’re working on anything, we’re working on it with the people who are going to end up using it, making it the most effective, valuable version of itself.



■ ***You recently started selling your products in physical stores such as Egg in Cavendish. As the founder of a digital native brand, what value do you see in physical retail?***

Egg is really pioneering experiential retail in South Africa making them the ideal partner for us. Consumers want so much more than to walk into a store, pay for things and walk out. Egg is offering them a personalised, curated and wholesome experience and we are so in for that chat.



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■ ***What have been some of the highlights of your Switch journey so far?***

I know it sounds cheesy but on a daily basis, I feel so overwhelmed by the love, loyalty and dedication we have been shown by our online community. The people on the internet really want to see Switch thrive and it shows.

The girls at the Switch office show me and Switch that exact same love, loyalty and dedication and I couldn't be prouder to work alongside them.

■ ***What is your ultimate vision for Switch Beauty, and what's next for the brand?***

I'd like to continue (with the help of our community) making things that do what they say they're going to do. We've got some very exciting product launches lined up for August so keep your eyes peeled! :)

ABOUT LAUREN HARTZENBERG

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