

# The Foundation Of Your Brand



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# Introduction



ADVOCATES FOR INCLUSION IN MEDIA

We are **Advocates for Inclusion in Media** (AIM)- a group of strong leaders working to change the conversation about diversity and inclusion in the media industry. We want to show brands how vital it is to promote inclusivity at all times, along with the simple fact that your social media can either make you or break you.

The following case study is a comparative analysis highlighting the powerful impact social media can have on a brand, as well as the emerging importance of inclusivity in the beauty industry. We will take a look at recent foundation releases by both Tarte Cosmetics and Fenty Beauty, and analyze what was done the right way when representing a brand, and what was done in a way that caused a detrimental impact.



## The Rise of a Naturally Glam Empire

**Tarte Cosmetics** was founded in 1999 in New York City by PhD student Maureen Kelly, who wanted to create makeup that was both natural and glamorous. Over the years, it has thrived as a hugely popular and relevant makeup company. They offer a vast range of makeup products, and they pride themselves on the fact that they don't test on animals. Tarte products are made without parabens, mineral oil, synthetic fragrances, gluten, and other harmful ingredients.

# Shaping Up to be Controversial

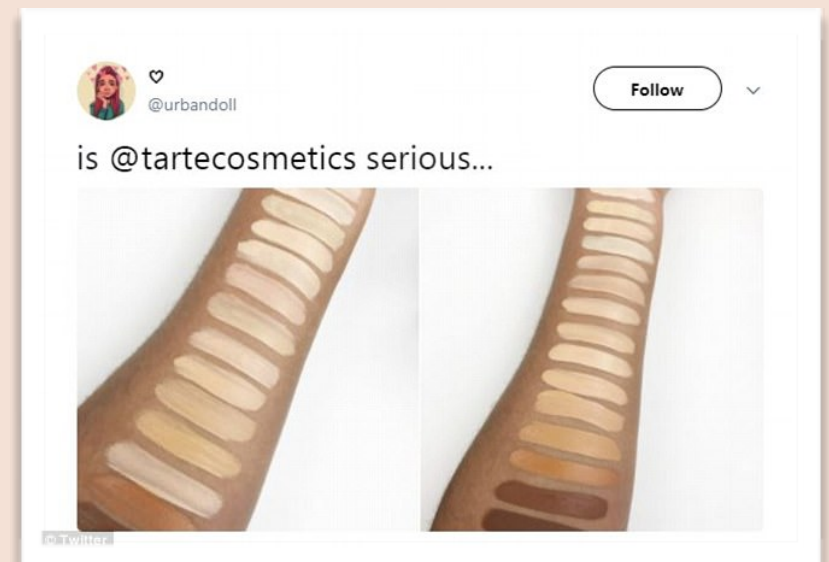
In 2018, **Tarte Cosmetics** released their Shape Tape foundation. Shape Tape had previously been available as a popular concealer, and beauty fans had been waiting on the edge of their seats to try out the new product. However, the foundation didn't live up to expectations. A picture showcasing the limited shade range went viral very quickly. The vast majority of the 15 shades were for light skinned complexions, with extremely limited options for darker complexions. Upon the release of the line, Tarte did not announce that they would be releasing more Shape Tape shades to offer more options.



# Angry Emojis Aplenty

Shape Tape's lack of inclusivity of darker shades resulted in an immediate and un-ignorable uproar on social media. Thousands of people took to sites like Twitter, Instagram and YouTube to express their outrage towards Tarte for releasing the foundation. Many posts and videos received extremely high engagement. For example, famous YouTuber Jeffree Star's [video](#) reviewing the foundation and calling out Tarte for their lack of shade options, received 5.7 million views. There was also disapproval from the community that Tarte directly ignored. "Black Girls React to Tare Shape Tape Foundation" by Jackie Aina, received 4.9 Million views, and that reflected the vast dissatisfaction with the brand and the foundation .

## Examples of Tweets:



# Let's Kiss and Makeup

Thanks to the many voices who spoke out about Shape Tape, Tarte knew they would have to publicly address the controversy. Their public apology was released, in typical digital age fashion, as an Instagram story.

Tarte let their audience know they would be coming out with ten more shades, suggesting that had been their plan all along. They claimed that the only reason the initial launch didn't include all of the intended shades, was due to darker shades being harder to produce than light shades, and that they'd been in a rush to get the product out to the masses. Tarte turned off the option to comment on their social posts, further angering their audience by taking their voice away.









## **The Apology (posted to Tarte's Instagram Story):**

*"It may be too little too late, but we can assure you this was not meant in any kind of malicious way. We all just got so caught up in #shapetapenation and seeing your tweets asking for it... We wanted to get the product out as fast as possible, & we made the decision to move forward before all the shades were ready to go. We know there is no excuse, & we take full responsibility for launching this way. We lost sight of what's really important in this industry, & for those who feel alienated in our community, we want to personally apologize. We're doing everything in our power to bring those unfinished shades to market as fast as we can, at any cost. We CAN and WILL DO*

Eventually, Tarte decided their best course of action would be to pull all Shape Tape foundation stock from shelves and start from the beginning. The following year, they released Face Tape foundation, offering 50 diverse shades. Tarte stated publicly that Face Tape was the product they “should have released in the first place.”

## Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off

Tarte lost an incredible amount of money as a result of this controversy by having to halt production and start from scratch. Though the Shape Tape debacle will forever taint their legacy, Tarte still receives a very high annual revenue, estimated to rake in about 35 million a year.

RANK	COMPANY	LEADERSHIP	CEO SCORE	EMPLOYEES	TOTAL FUNDING	REVENUE
		 Maureen Kelly Founder & CEO	79/100	193	\$0	\$35M
1		 Lewis Farsedakis Co-Founder & CEO	62/100	20	--	\$8M
2		 Wende Zomnir Co-Founder	80/100	425	--	\$363.9M
3		 Shelly Sahi Founder & CEO	68/100	36	\$100K	\$5M



## Whatever You Do, Don't Do That

Though Tarte attempted to hit the reset button on Shape Tape, it is strikingly they were doomed from the moment the product was released without a diverse shade range. "It's about doing the right thing," said Maureen Kelly at the NYC editor launch event. "Regardless of how much it was selling or regardless of how many shades we added to it, it didn't erase how it started."

The story of Shape Tape tells us that social media has tremendous power to negatively impact a brand, and to call organizations out for injustice - whether or not that injustice was intentional or simply a gross oversight. It's important to note that prior to publicly promoting and launching new products, it is a brand's responsibility to closely examine the current social climate, and consider possible negative perceptions.





# FENTY BEAUTY

## The Foundation of Fenty Beauty Foundation

**Fenty Beauty** was created by celebrity/singer Rihanna in partnership with LVMH, Kendo Brand's beauty incubator. The brand launched in September of 2017 with the motto, "Beauty For All". This motto has been echoed by their wide range of products. Rihanna's mission was to include all skin tones and undertones, particularly by creating shades that would match darker skin tones. The release of their Pro Filt'R foundation in that same year fulfilled this mission, as it included 40 different shades (has now reached 50 shades).

Fenty Beauty has since released a range of products

in addition to the Pro Filt'R foundation, and has continued to uphold the same ideals they had from the start.



# Fighting Inequality with Shade Range

Upon its launch, the motive of Fenty Beauty has been to fight against the lack of inclusivity in the beauty industry. Ever since makeup was created, lack of inclusivity has been an issue, and continues to remain a problem even in this century. The lack of broad shade ranges when it comes to foundation has been a particular issue that hasn't truly been addressed. That is, until Fenty Beauty was created. Consequently, it is because of this crisis in the beauty industry, that Fenty Beauty

## Paving the Way with Foundation

In relation to the issues within the beauty industry, the founders of Fenty Beauty knew something had to be done to combat it. Rihanna has a dark complexion and would thus be no stranger to the lack of inclusiveness in shade ranges.



This, and the existing social awareness of lack of inclusivity, formed into the 40 shade line released by Fenty Beauty. This is the first time a cosmetic line released shades that can fit such a vast range of skin tones and undertones.



## 40 Shades of Inclusivity

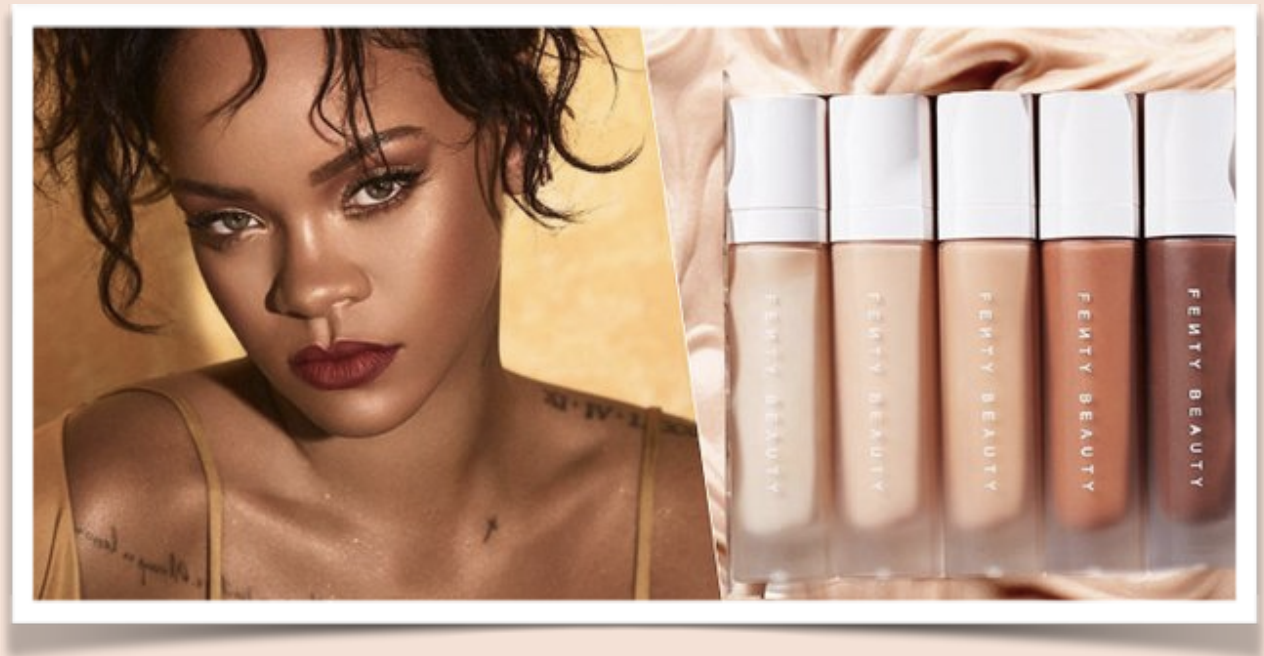
As previously stated, Fenty Beauty originally released 40 shades when they launched the brand. The strategy used to combat the lack of inclusivity was by including a large variety of shades that would match darker skin tones, compared to lighter skin tones. This addresses the issue with cosmetic brands that include more shades for lighter skin tones, compared to darker ones. Sandy Saputo, chief marketing officer at Kendo Brands, said, "From the beginning, our founder Rihanna was very clear that absolutely no one was to be excluded."

Fenty Beauty's approach to marketing is "showing not telling", which is evident with products. They have never used the word "inclusive" in their messaging, as their way of normalizing something that has not been normalized in the beauty industry.

Fenty Beauty had the largest impact on social media when it originally dropped. Not only is Rihanna a huge star, but she has a large online presence and fan group. Relying on social media as Fenty Beauty's main form of awareness of the brand, was thus a logical choice. Saputo says their marketing team had to "break and disrupt all the traditional marketing rules and carve a new path." This is evidently true with their presence on social media, and consequently their large engagement rates as a result.

## The Fenty Effect

Fenty Beauty caused a "Fenty Effect" - the chain reaction of brands launching more inclusive shade ranges in response to the positive uproar the brand received. This has ultimately changed the industry's approach to foundation, and makeup, as a whole.



# It's All in the Numbers

In the first 40 days that Fenty Beauty launched, the brand generated \$100 Million. One year later, their annual revenue reached \$570 Million. Today, the entire operation is estimated at more than \$3 Billion. Not only has their profit shown growth, but their social engagement has as well. When they launched, their Instagram account gained an average of 13,000 followers a day, and has clocked in at a 10.41% engagement rate. Fenty Beauty now has 9.1 Million on Instagram, 567,000 on Twitter, 651,000 subscribers on YouTube, and their numbers are only growing. Each platform utilizes content that focuses on inclusivity, while also creating a brand story.

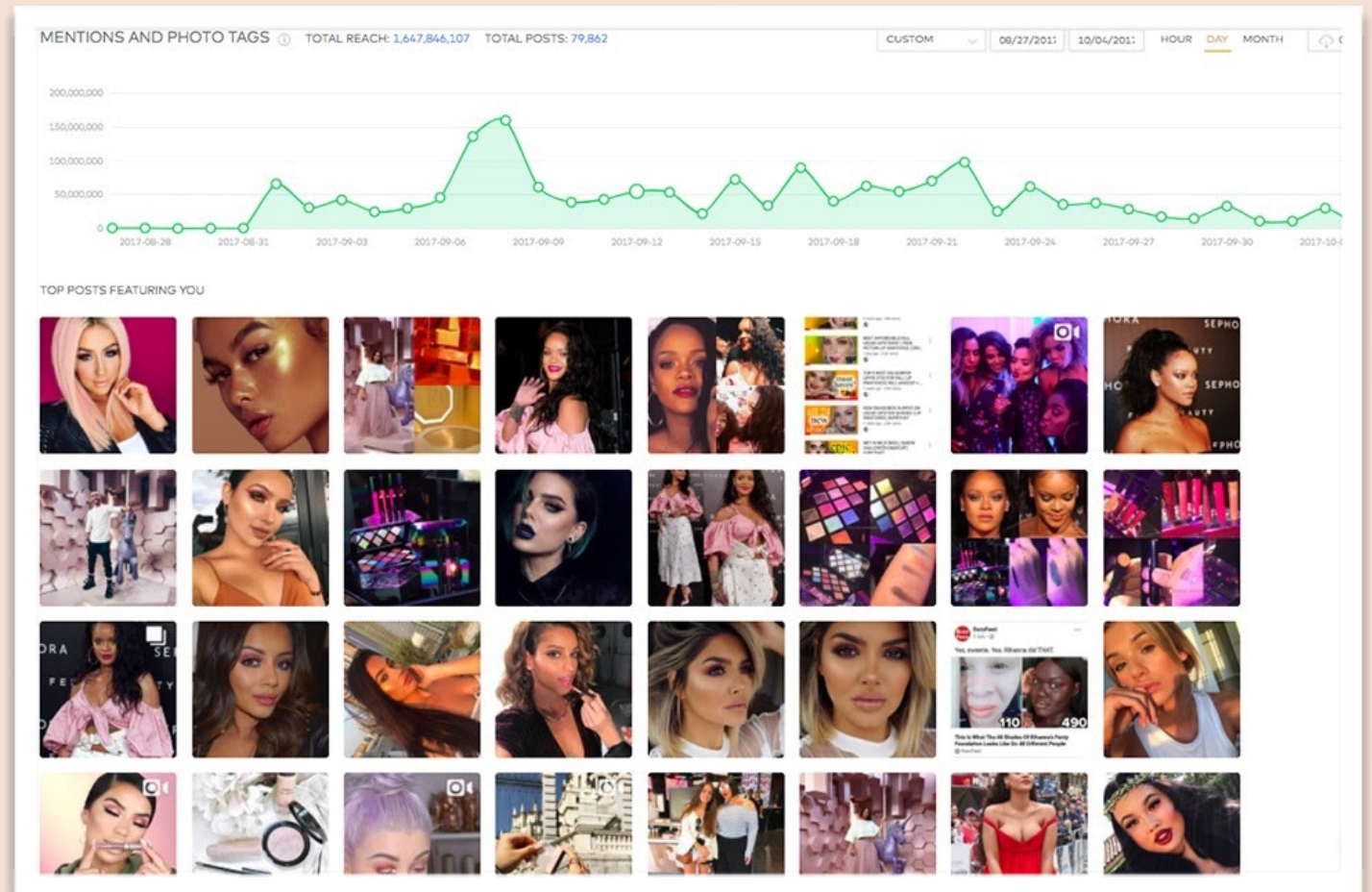


**Engagement Metrics:** Fenty's Instagram

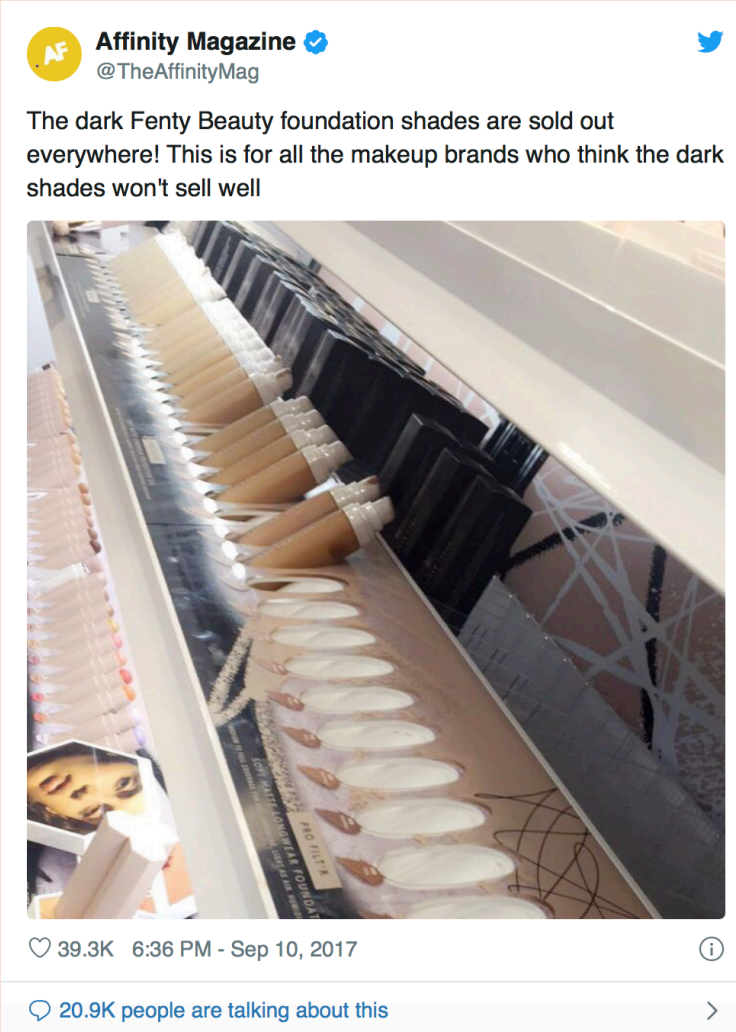
# Blowing up the Socials

As stated, social media is the platform that truly propelled Fenty Beauty from its launch. When the public got their hands on the Pro Filt'R foundation, the response was outstanding.

This scatterplot shows Fenty's social metrics, including mentions and photo tags from the public:



Below are examples of public tweets that highlights the inclusive nature of the brand:



The response on YouTube was also very prevalent. A **review video** by YouTuber Nyma Tang received 11 million views. Thousands upon thousands of positive reviews appeared on all platforms surrounding the launch.



# Inclusivity Pays Off

Fenty Beauty continues to be a thriving cosmetic company and supplies products for every skin tone. It is clear with this brand that they are very socially aware and “in tune” with their audience and what their audience believes in, hence the overwhelmingly positive response from the public.

It is key when running a social campaign, to become informed on the history and issues surrounding your product (if any), and ensure you are not playing in to any negative associations.





## THE TAKEAWAY

It is clear from the comparison how social media can help or hurt the livelihood of a brand. It is also clear that inequality exists within the beauty industry. Using media as a way to voice the injustice that occurs, such as lack of inclusivity in the beauty industry, is a great way to address the concerns that exist.

For brands, we suggest: staying socially aware, examining the current social media climate before launching, recognizing what your brand can do to stay inclusive, discussing the issue on inequality instead of dismissing it, recognize the impact you have on audiences within social media platforms, and understanding that how you interact online has a direct impact on trust and support of your brand.

**AIM.**

ADVOCATES FOR INCLUSION IN MEDIA

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