

“BASIC”

QUESTIONS TO INSPIRING MINDS

—

Interview series



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A conversation with...



Marie David

**Associate Director at  kenvue
since 2022**

I've known Marie for over 10 years now. We worked at J&J (now Kenvue), though never on the same brands or categories: she was a “Baby care”  expert for a long period of time.

Marie is someone who brings calm and clarity. She's composed, grounded and has a strong sense of priorities.

We even shared an office for a while. And although our paths have since diverged, we still meet up for lunch from time to time. Because beyond being a colleague, she's also a friend.

What brought you into the cosmetic industry?

I actually ended up in cosmetics somewhat by chance...

What I really wanted was to work on product development that impacts consumers in their daily lives but I didn't necessarily plan to focus on cosmetics. In fact, I started my career developing household products (shoe polish, floor and furniture cleaners).

It was only later that an internal opportunity in my company introduced me to the world of cosmetics and I've never left it since. That was 17 years ago!

What do you find most meaningful,
inspiring or are passionate about
cosmetic products?

What I love most and what aligns with my original passion, is that these are everyday products for our consumers. But what seems like a small gesture can actually play a crucial role in their lives.

We sometimes receive deeply moving testimonials from people whose lives have been improved thanks to our products, especially those dealing with atopic skin, acne, and other conditions.

There's no better recognition than that of the people who use our products.

How do you showcase the science behind your products and what challenges do you face in this process?

Today, because I work mainly on global brands, my role is to relay the science already developed by our global innovation teams and translate it locally to reach our customers and consumers in the region. This involves influencers, media events, scientific presentations to retailers and healthcare professionals, product efficacy demos...

The biggest challenge is prioritization: training local teams to carry that scientific message in the markets and for brands that are not always a strategic priority.

Can you think of a product or innovation that was particularly well-communicated or inspiring?

I liked the recent campaign in North America for their **Neutrogena** Ultra Sheer sunscreen range, showcasing John Cena to highlight the « invisible finish ».

It's a brilliant way to get people's attention, generate conversation and break away from the usual stereotypes of beauty-only representation. That said, I know I'm very biased when it comes to scientific campaigns. I tend to see through the disclaimers and wording of claims, differently from a "regular" consumer would.

Is there a misconception you often face and would like to correct — internally or externally?

The race for high-percentage ingredient claims.

Too often, it becomes a shortcut that replaces true science. The efficacy of a product comes from the formula as a whole, not just one or two highlighted ingredients.

In fact, great ingredients can be more effective at lower concentrations when the formula is well designed and vice versa.

What advice would you give to someone early in their career? Or something you wish you had known sooner?

Keep things in perspective.

In every company I've worked for, I've sometimes had to make compromises or implement decisions I didn't fully agree with. But in cosmetics, we need to maintain a sense of perspective: we're working on everyday products, with no life-or-death consequences.

Never sacrifice your mental health over frustration or disagreement and if it ever reaches that point, change to better align with your own values.



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