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Entrepreneurship in the Natural Food and Beauty Categories Before 2000: Global Visions and Local Expressions

by [Geoffrey Jones](#)

Abstract

This working paper examines the creation of the global natural food and beauty categories before 2000. This is shown to have been a lengthy process of new category creation involving the exercise of entrepreneurial imagination. Pioneering entrepreneurs faced little consumer demand for natural products, and little consumer knowledge of what they entailed. The creation of new categories involved three overlapping waves of entrepreneurship. The first involved making the ideological case for natural products. This often entailed investment in education and publishing activities. Second, entrepreneurs engaged in the creation of industry associations which could advocate, as well as give the nascent industry credibility and create standards. Finally, entrepreneurs established retail stores, supply and distribution networks, and created brands. Entrepreneurial cognition and motivation frequently lay in individual, and very local, experiences, but many of the key pioneers were also highly globalized in their world views, with strong perception of how small, local efforts related to much bigger and global pictures. A significant sub-set of the influential historical figures were articulate in expressing strong religious convictions. The paper concludes that by the 1990s it was evident that the success of entrepreneurial pioneers in building the market for green products created a new set of issues, especially related to the legitimacy of their businesses and of the concept of greenness.

Keywords: [globalization](#); [marketing](#); [Beauty and Cosmetics Industry](#); [business history](#); [consumer goods](#); [entrepreneurs](#); [environment](#); [food](#); [Food](#); [Globalization](#); [Business History](#); [Agribusiness](#); [Agriculture and Agribusiness Industry](#); [Beauty and Cosmetics Industry](#); [Consumer Products Industry](#); [Food and Beverage Industry](#); [Asia](#); [Europe](#); [Latin America](#); [Middle East](#); [North and Central America](#);

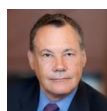
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About the Author

[Geoffrey G. Jones](#)

Isidor Straus Professor of Business History

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