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Interview: Siheon Keum at Jumiso HQ in Seoul

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HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Jumiso was founded in 2016 when Siheon, then a senior at Kookmin University in Seoul, already had a strong desire to become an entrepreneur. This motivation led him to start Jumiso alongside his brother. Fortunately, his university supported young students, which eventually led to securing funds through his school to kickstart his business. Keum recognized the rising popularity of Korean cosmetics in the United States at the time, which presented an opportunity he couldn't overlook, thus leading to the establishment of Jumiso.

The Jumiso logo, a delightful smiley drawing, accurately reflects the brand's name. "Jumiso" is a clever wordplay in Korean, combining "miso" (smile) and "ju" (make or give). During our conversation, Keum explained the reasoning behind these choices, stating, "We will make you laugh." Through their brand, they aim to impart positive energy to customers when they encounter their products.

When asked about the core values of Jumiso, Keum emphasized the importance of making people feel happy. **He perceives cosmetics not just as functional items but also as emotional products.**

To illustrate how this core value translates into their offerings, Siheon shared an example involving the launch of their new sunscreen. Each package contained confetti, which pleasantly surprised customers upon opening, generating joy and vibrant colors. Customers shared their reactions on social media, and witnessing their smiles brought happiness to Keum. He expressed, "This video is what we want to do," as it represents their aspiration to positively impact the world.

HOW TO STAY AHEAD OF TRENDS

Regarding their approach to research and development, Keum highlighted the significant value they place on customer feedback. **Through reviews, they gain insights on how to enhance their existing products and make them more refined.** This customer-centric research approach enables them to create products that truly cater to their customers' desires.

Inquiring about how Jumiso keeps up with the rapidly changing trends within Korean skincare and cosmetics, Keum explained that due to their status as a smaller company with limited resources, they focus primarily on perfecting the basics. He firmly believes that despite the abundance of trends that come and go, the fundamentals remain constant and enduring.

TREND (FORECASTS)

Regarding how Jumiso reacts to these trends in Korea's fast-paced market, Keum emphasized their unwavering commitment to focusing on the basics. He firmly believes that the core cosmetics and their ingredients remain unchanged amidst the constant flux of trends.

Jumiso is a brand that sells its products globally, so when asked about their motivation for expansion, Siheon shared his experience of visiting America in 2016. **It was during this trip that he witnessed the creative potential that arises from embracing diversity.** Inspired by this realization, he became driven to create more innovative offerings. For instance, the confetti packaging was an exciting new element for Jumiso, although it didn't garner much attention in Korea. Recognizing the global market's vast opportunities, Siheon felt motivated to expand his brand's reach.



A woman with dark hair, wearing a white top, is holding a small, clear glass bottle of Jumiso product. The bottle has a white cap and a label with the brand name 'Jumiso' and some Korean text. She is looking down at the bottle with a slight smile. The background is a soft, warm orange color.

SUSTAINABILITY AND FUTURE

When asked about their stance on sustainability and the environment, Siheon acknowledged the challenges of achieving complete sustainability, as it requires substantial investments and advanced techniques that they currently lack access to. While he values sustainability, he shared that they endeavor to incorporate recycled plastics into their packaging and do their best within their means.

Discussing the prevailing trends in Korea, Siheon revealed that clean and vegan cosmetics have gained significant popularity in recent years. However, he anticipates that this trend will eventually fade as many brands merely claim to offer clean or vegan products without genuine commitment. Instead, Keum believes that well-aging and slow-aging will become future trends, as the younger generation

Our conversation with Siheon was highly enjoyable, and he showed us amazing hospitality. We eagerly anticipate what Jumiso has in store for us in the future.

The key difference between selling in Korea and globally, according to Keum, is the higher standard required in the global market compared to Korea's reputation for efficient manufacturing. Convincing global consumers poses a greater challenge. Another distinction he noticed was the significance of social media in promoting the brand. Keum remarked, **"In Korea, they never care about what a brand says," highlighting the contrast with the overseas market**, where brand messages, founder stories, and vision hold more weight. While this was new to Keum, he embraced the opportunity as it allowed for a more personal connection with the audience. He considers sharing their story a fun and novel way to contribute to the community.

WHAT DIFFERENTIATES JUMISO

Despite being a smaller cosmetics brand, Jumiso chooses to focus on individual customers rather than relying on big influencers or celebrities. Siheon recognizes the potential of his brand and works tirelessly to achieve his dreams, stating, "We can do great things." Moreover, **he views the relationship with customers as more than a mere transaction, likening it to a friendship.**