



# **ELISE BURNETT BOYD**

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# ABOUT ME

I've built my career at the intersection of practitioner experience, consumer psychology, and product strategy, working with beauty and wellness brands that need clearer information to make confident product decisions.

- 15 years (and counting!) in the Beauty Industry
- Licensed cosmetologist, stylist educator, curly hair specialist, and former makeup artist with hands-on experience testing thousands of products on diverse clients
- Dual bachelors degrees in psychology and sociology with an emphasis on consumer behavior and decision-making
- MBA + marketing concentration, bringing strategic rigor to consumer insights and research
- Brands I've supported have been featured in Essence, Allure, Byrdie, The Tease, and Refinery29.



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**Mission:** This work exists to help brands make the product decisions that matter before development resources are committed with evidence, not assumptions.

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**Vision:** An industry shaped by thoughtful founders, meaningful products, and lasting connection between brands and the people they serve.

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# THE DECISIONS THAT SHAPE SUCCESSFUL PRODUCTS

Before a formula is created, brands must determine whether a product should exist, what role it plays in a consumer routine, and what performance it must deliver to be credible in its category. These decisions shape everything that follows, from ingredient architecture and claims territory to how the product is evaluated once prototypes exist.

## **Does this product have a meaningful place in the market?**

Every product is built within a category that already contains established routines, expectations, and competitive benchmarks. Before development begins, brands must decide whether the concept addresses a meaningful gap in the market and whether their target consumer will actually choose it. Understanding consumer behavior, competitive positioning, and whitespace determines whether the product has a legitimate role to play.

## **What should this product be and for whom?**

Before formulation begins, the product itself must be clearly defined. Brands must determine who the product is for, what problem it solves, how it fits into a consumer's routine, and what performance it must deliver to earn repeat use. These decisions establish the requirements that guide formulation, claims, and positioning.

## **Does it perform as expected and earn its place in someone's routine?**

Once a prototype exists, the question shifts from concept to performance. Brands must determine whether the product actually delivers on its intended promise in real routines, across diverse users and environments. Evaluating performance outside controlled conditions reveals whether the formula meets expectations, how it compares to existing products, and whether it is ready for launch or requires refinement.

# HOW I WORK

## The Kulima Product Development Methodology

Most product development decisions ultimately come down to three questions: should this product exist, what exactly should it be, and will it deliver on its promise in real-world conditions. My work is organized around three core capabilities that address these decisions at different stages of development. Kulima operates between founder vision and formulation, ensuring the right product strategy is in place before lab and manufacturing resources are committed.

### Consumer & Category Insight

Where is the opportunity?

Consumer & Category Insight helps founders understand the category, the consumer, and the competitive landscape before committing development resources. This work examines consumer behavior, market dynamics, competitive offerings, and emerging trends to identify meaningful opportunities and better understand the audience a product is designed to serve.

Through category analysis, consumer research, social listening, competitive benchmarking, and opportunity assessment, this phase helps founders move beyond assumptions and make more informed decisions about where to focus development efforts.

### Product Strategy and Evaluation

What should we build?

Product Strategy & Evaluation translates insight into a clear product direction. This work evaluates whether a concept addresses a meaningful consumer need and defines the expectations required to bring it to life.

The result is a structured product development brief that outlines positioning context, ingredient direction, performance expectations, and development priorities so formulation partners can begin development with greater clarity and alignment.

### Product Performance Analysis

Does the product deliver on its promise?

Product Performance examines how a product behaves once prototypes exist and evaluation can begin. Through professional assessment, consumer testing, comparative benchmarking, and performance analysis, this phase helps founders understand how products perform, how consumers perceive that performance, and where refinement may be needed.

The goal is to evaluate whether the product delivers on its intended purpose, supports its positioning, and is prepared for launch.

# PRODUCT STRATEGY SESSION



**Get expert perspective before making your next product development decision.**

Not every challenge requires a full engagement. Sometimes founders need a knowledgeable sounding board to evaluate an idea, troubleshoot a development obstacle, review a concept, or think through the next step in the process.

The **Product Strategy Session** is a focused advisory engagement designed to help founders and product teams gain clarity around a specific product development question. Whether you're evaluating a new concept, preparing to engage a lab, reviewing prototype feedback, or refining product direction, the session provides an opportunity to discuss challenges, explore options, and identify practical next steps.

Brands receive a strategic review of their specific situation, tailored recommendations, and a written summary outlining key insights, considerations, and suggested actions.

**Essential for:** Founders and product teams seeking expert guidance, second opinions, or strategic direction at any stage of product development.

# BEFORE THE LAB



## Enter formulation with a clear product strategy.

Many founders begin development before fully defining the product they want to create. As a result, formulators are often asked to solve problems that haven't been clearly identified, performance expectations remain undefined, and development becomes more expensive and time-consuming than necessary.

Before the Lab is a strategic product development intensive designed to help founders clarify what they are building, who it is for, and how it should perform before formulation begins.

Through consumer and category analysis, competitive benchmarking, concept evaluation, and product strategy development, this engagement translates ideas into a clear product direction. The outcome is a structured development roadmap that helps founders and formulation partners move forward with greater alignment and confidence.

Brands receive a comprehensive product development brief outlining consumer insights, positioning context, ingredient direction, performance expectations, claims territory, and development priorities. The engagement also includes strategic guidance on competitive products, category expectations, and opportunities for differentiation.

### Deliverables

- Consumer & Category Insight
- Competitive Benchmarking
- Product Positioning Direction
- Ingredient Architecture Guidance
- Performance Targets
- Claims Territory Exploration
- Product Development Brief
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**Essential for:** Founders preparing to engage a chemist, launch a new product, or expand an existing product line.

# INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP



## Strategic support throughout the product development process.

Product development rarely follows a straight line. As concepts become prototypes and prototypes become products, founders are faced with a series of decisions that influence performance, positioning, consumer experience, and long-term success.

The **Integrated Product Development Partnership** provides ongoing strategic support throughout development. Acting as a thought partner and advisor, I help founders evaluate prototypes, interpret testing feedback, assess competitive products, refine product direction, and navigate key development decisions as they arise.

Rather than engaging support at isolated points in the process, this partnership provides continuity from development through launch preparation, helping teams maintain alignment between consumer needs, product goals, and performance expectations.

Support is customized based on the needs of the project and may include product strategy, prototype evaluation, competitive benchmarking, testing oversight, consumer feedback analysis, and collaboration with formulation and development partners.

### May Include

- Product Strategy & Evaluation
- Prototype Review & Feedback
- Competitive Benchmarking
- Product Performance Assessment
- Consumer Testing Strategy
- Consumer Feedback Analysis
- Lab & Development Partner Collaboration
- Product Education Support
- Ongoing Advisory Meetings

**Essential for:** Founders actively developing products who want experienced strategic guidance throughout the development process.

# CUSTOM ENGAGEMENTS

These engagements draw from the same capabilities used throughout my consulting work and can be tailored to support founders, product teams, formulators, and brand partners at any stage of development.

## **Consumer & Category Insight**

Available services may include:

- Social listening and sentiment analysis
- Category landscape and competitive analysis
- Opportunity and whitespace assessment
- Consumer segmentation and target user profiling
- Consumer interviews and focus groups
- Concept testing and feedback analysis
- Market research interpretation

## **Product Strategy & Evaluation**

Available services may include:

- Product development brief creation
- Product use-case definition
- Product positioning strategy
- Concept refinement
- Ingredient architecture guidance
- Performance target development
- Claims territory exploration
- Competitive benchmarking

## **Product Performance Analysis**

Available services may include:

- Prototype evaluation
- Comparative product benchmarking
- Professional testing coordination
- Consumer testing coordination
- Consumer perception analysis
- Sensory and performance assessment
- Testing results interpretation
- Product refinement recommendations

## **Education & Strategic Support**

Available services may include:

- Product education frameworks
- Professional education materials
- Internal team training
- Product storytelling support
- Consumer education resources
- Retail and partner education
- Founder advisory support

Custom engagements are scoped based on project needs, timeline, and objectives.

# ALIGNED PARTNERS

I work with beauty founders, product teams, and brand partners who need greater clarity when making product development decisions.

Some clients engage me at the concept stage to evaluate opportunities, understand consumer needs, and define product direction before investing in development. Others bring me in before formulation begins to create product development briefs, establish performance expectations, and ensure development is guided by strategy rather than assumptions.

As products move through development, I help teams evaluate prototypes, interpret consumer feedback, assess competitive products, and better understand how products perform within the broader category.

Whether supporting an early-stage founder preparing for a first launch or an established brand expanding an existing portfolio, my role remains the same: helping teams make informed product decisions through consumer insight, product strategy, and performance evaluation.

# IS THIS RIGHT FOR YOUR BRAND?

## **Is This Right for Your Brand?**

This work is a fit when you're navigating decisions like:

- Is this product concept worth pursuing?
- What opportunity are we solving for?
- Who is this product actually for?
- How should this product perform?
- How does our concept compare to what's already in the category?
- What should we prioritize before entering formulation?
- Does this prototype deliver on its intended purpose?
- What feedback should we trust, and what should we do with it?
- Is this product ready to move forward?

## **You'll get the most value if you:**

- Are open to strategic discussion and objective feedback
- Want to make informed product development decisions
- Are willing to challenge assumptions and explore alternatives
- Recognize that successful products require both consumer understanding and product expertise
- Need additional product development perspective that doesn't currently exist within your team

## **This may not be the right fit if:**

- You've already made final decisions and are only looking for validation
- You're seeking formulation services or cosmetic chemistry support
- You need immediate answers without time for thoughtful evaluation
- Your team already has dedicated expertise in consumer insight, product strategy, and product evaluation

# WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

The value of this work isn't found in reports, presentations, or recommendations. It's found in better product decisions and stronger products.

## **Confident Product Decisions**

You have a clear understanding of the opportunity you're pursuing, the consumer you're serving, and the role your product should play within the category. Decisions are guided by insight, strategy, and evaluation rather than assumptions.

## **Clear Product Direction**

Your formulation partners have a defined target to build toward, including performance expectations, positioning context, and development priorities. Everyone involved in the process is working from the same strategic foundation.

## **Products That Deliver on Their Promise**

You understand how a product performs, how consumers perceive that performance, and where opportunities for refinement exist before larger investments are made.

## **Reduced Development Risk**

Potential issues are identified earlier in the process, helping to avoid costly missteps, unnecessary reformulation, unclear positioning, and product decisions that are difficult to reverse later.

## **Stronger Consumer Alignment**

The product is built around a meaningful need, supported by a clear understanding of the consumer, the category, and the expectations it must meet to succeed.

## **Greater Confidence at Launch**

Rather than hoping a product resonates, you move forward with a clearer understanding of its strengths, limitations, positioning, and potential within the market.

# CASE STUDY

**The Barb Shop** is a styling product line built for short hair, a category historically underserved by mainstream haircare brands.

## **The Challenge:**

The Barb Shop needed products that delivered professional-level performance for everyday users — people with short hair who'd been overlooked by an industry built around long, straight styles. The stakes were high: if the formulations didn't work across diverse hair types and styling techniques, the brand risked launching products that couldn't deliver on their promise, damaging credibility in a community that had been let down by mainstream brands before.

## **The Work:**

I partnered with The Barb Shop throughout product development to evaluate prototypes, benchmark products against competitive alternatives, and assess performance across multiple hair types and styling approaches. In addition to product evaluation, I provided strategic input on positioning, consumer experience, and product communication to ensure the products delivered on their intended promise.

## **The Outcome:**

The Barb Shop launched with a stronger understanding of product performance, consumer expectations, and category positioning. Performance insights gathered throughout development informed product refinement and helped create a product experience aligned with the needs of the community it was designed to serve.

Founder Sheena Lister has described our partnership as "**critical to brand growth and innovation.**"

The Barb Shop logo features the word "THE" in a small white circle on the left, "BARB" in large, bold, orange letters in the center, and "SHOP" in a small white circle on the right, all set against a white background.

# CASESTUDY

**Soft Rows** is a textured haircare line designed for versatile styling, supporting natural texture, heat styling, and protective styles without forcing consumers to choose between performance and hair health.

## **The Challenge:**

The brand was built to address a gap in the textured haircare market: products that support multiple styling approaches while meeting the performance expectations of textured-hair consumers. Beyond formulation, success depended on helping consumers understand what each product was designed to do, how it fit within their routine, and how to achieve the intended results.

## **The Work:**

Our collaboration began in 2022 during early product ideation, where I identified product gaps and unmet needs in the textured hair market based on professional experience and provided insight on consumer behavior patterns and purchase drivers specific to textured hair products.

In 2024, the focus shifted to performance communication. I created stylist-led product demonstration content that linked formulation science to real-world results, developed educational video showing how products perform across different hair types and styling techniques, and translated technical product benefits into consumer-friendly language that builds confidence and understanding.

By 2025, we'd developed a comprehensive product education strategy: a framework for communicating product performance across all customer touchpoints, content pillars that explain what products do, how to use them, and why they work, and reusable education architecture that now serves packaging, website content, and retail partner training.

## **The Outcome:**

Soft Rows established a clear foundation for communicating product performance, usage, and differentiation within a competitive category. By aligning product strategy, consumer understanding, and education, the brand was able to create a more consistent product experience and stronger connection with its target audience.

Founder Quani Burnett described the process as "**one of the most inspiring and aligned strategic efforts in the brand's development.**"



# SUCCESSFUL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT BEGINS LONG BEFORE A FORMULA IS CREATED.

The decisions made during concept development, product strategy, and evaluation often have the greatest influence on a product's long-term success. Bringing structure to those decisions helps teams focus resources, reduce uncertainty, and build products with greater purpose and intention.

**If you're preparing to develop, refine, or evaluate a product, let's begin with a conversation about your goals and the decisions in front of you.**

