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FROM MUMBAI TO THE WORLD STAGE

Vaishali K Shah's Global Vision for Beauty Education

Anjali Sharma | The CEO Magazine

The beauty industry in India has long struggled for professional recognition and structured career pathways. **Vaishali K Shah**, Founder of LTA School of Beauty Pvt. Ltd., has been at the forefront of changing that narrative, building one of the country's leading beauty education institutions over the past two decades. In a conversation with The CEO Magazine, she shares her journey of empowering students, setting global standards, and transforming beauty education into a respected, skill-driven profession.

TCM: Tell us about your entrepreneurial journey so far and the roles you've taken across sectors.

Vaishali K Shah: My journey began with a vision to give professional recognition to the beauty industry. In 2005, I founded LTA School of Beauty Pvt. Ltd., which has since grown into one of India's leading beauty education institutions. Over the years, I've served as Chief Expert for WorldSkills International and IndiaSkills, mentoring young talent to represent India globally. As an International Examiner with CIDESCO and Internal Quality Assurer for VTCT (UK), I've worked to align Indian training systems with global standards. With a background in Foods & Dietetics and Business Administration, I've combined scientific understanding with strategic leadership to build a brand rooted in skill development, quality, and empowerment.



Vaishali K Shah
Founder - LTA School of
Beauty Pvt. Ltd.

TCM: What inspired you to establish LTA School of Beauty?

Vaishali K Shah: When I started LTA School of Beauty in 2005, I had one clear belief: that beauty professionals deserve the same respect, structure, and recognition as any other skilled sector. At that time, beauty education in India was largely informal. There were talented young people everywhere, but very few had access to quality training or a structured path to turn their passion into a livelihood. My journey didn't begin in beauty, though. I started as a dietitian in hospitals, a respectable, white-collar job, but I felt something was missing. I wanted to create a deeper social impact. That's when beauty struck me as a field that could truly empower women, particularly those from modest backgrounds, to achieve financial independence with dignity. For me, beauty has never been just about appearance; it's about confidence, livelihood, and empowerment. That insight became the seed that grew into LTA School of Beauty.

TCM: What were the early challenges in building this institution?

Vaishali Shah: The early years were full of challenges, convincing families that beauty could be a serious, sustainable career, creating a structured curriculum where none existed, and finding qualified trainers. Back then, the idea of

"beauty as a profession" wasn't widely accepted. To address this, I focused on credibility and global standards from day one. We partnered with world-renowned institutions like CIDESCO (Switzerland), CIBTAC and VTCT (UK), and Pivot Point International. These associations became our benchmarks and helped us build a foundation of trust and excellence.

TCM: How would you describe the LTA training model and its impact?

Vaishali K Shah: At LTA, we go beyond technical training. Our curriculum builds professionals, not just beauticians. We integrate technical expertise in skin, hair, makeup, and nails with soft skills like client service, communication, ethics, and entrepreneurship.

Over the years, I've watched thousands of young women walk into our centres nervous and uncertain and walk out confident, accomplished professionals. For me, success is not the number of certificates we issue, but the number of careers we create. We are also deeply involved with government skill initiatives like IndiaSkills and WorldSkills. I have had the honour of representing India as Chief Expert internationally, and out of six global competitions, four Indian representatives have been from LTA. These achievements are a source of immense pride.

TCM: Tell us more about LTA's operations and clientele.

Vaishali K Shah: LTA School of Beauty currently operates across multiple verticals – B2C, B2B, and B2G.

- In the B2C space, we train freshers and upskill existing beauty professionals with international qualifications.
- In B2B, we provide end-to-end beauty retail solutions through our Recruit-Train-Deploy (RTDM) model.
- Under B2G, we collaborate with government agencies for national skill-building initiatives.

We work with some of India's most respected brands, Unilever in the FMCG segment and Tanishq in retail. We also provide grooming and audit services to several premium brands (some under confidentiality).

Today, we are a team of around 150 professionals, headquartered in Mumbai, with eight training centers across Maharashtra and Gujarat. Through our network of trainers, LTA has a pan-India presence, empowering students across the country.

TCM: What leadership principles define you and your organisation?

Vaishali K Shah: Leadership, for me, is about facilitation, not control. I see myself as someone who empowers others to discover their strengths and purpose. Our organisation is deeply rooted in our seven core values, Respect, Supreme Customer Orientation, Honesty, Trustworthiness, Passion for Excellence, Attitude to Gratitude, and Positivity.

At LTA, these aren't just words on a wall; we recognise and reward team members who exemplify them. I always tell my students that while trends come and go, timeless professionalism will always outlast temporary glamour. Ethics and consistency are as important as creativity.

TCM: You've been a key figure in India's beauty skill ecosystem. How do you stay ahead in such a dynamic industry?

Vaishali K Shah: The beauty industry evolves constantly from sustainability trends to new technologies and client expectations. For us, staying relevant means staying ahead. We continuously update our curriculum to include emerging topics like skin science, sustainability, and digital transformation. Our faculty and technical teams undergo international exposure and training to bring global best practices back home. But beyond innovation, what keeps us grounded is our purpose to raise professional standards in India's beauty industry and create respectable, skill-based career pathways.

TCM: How do you define success after two decades of impact?

Vaishali K Shah: Success, for me, isn't about revenue or awards, though we've been recognised by industry and government bodies many times. It's about impact. It's when a student tells me, "LTA changed my life." That's my true reward. I take immense pride in our graduates who are now salon owners, brand trainers, and technical heads across India and even those representing our nation in the WorldSkills competitions. Their success stories keep my passion alive. Our goal now is to take LTA across India, expanding both physically and digitally. Quality education should reach every corner of the country, and technology will help us achieve that.

TCM: As a woman entrepreneur, what message do you have for aspiring women leaders?

Vaishali K Shah: I'm proud to be part of a generation of women entrepreneurs rewriting the rules of business. Women bring empathy, adaptability, and emotional intelligence, qualities the new era of leadership truly needs.

To every aspiring woman entrepreneur, I'd say: Start small but dream big. Surround yourself with people who share your values and stay grounded in integrity. There's never a perfect moment; create your own. And never stop learning.

When you empower a woman, you empower a family and a generation. Beauty education has given me the means to contribute to that empowerment, one student, one dream, one success story at a time. ■