

E.L.F Cosmetics

Who We Are

Here at E.L.F. Cosmetics, we pride ourselves on being a leading American beauty brand renowned for our affordable, accessible, and cruelty-free skincare and makeup products.

Founded in 2004, we operate within the beauty and skincare industry and have established a strong reputation for delivering products that meet the mark of luxury products, minus the high price point typically associated with high-end brands. We pride ourselves on our availability to the average, working-class consumer. What sets us apart from the rest of the beauty industry is our green, vegan, and cruelty-free products. As one of the first digital disruptors in beauty (Rao, 2023), we have built a highly engaged community by leveraging social and digital platforms to drive consumer connection and cultural relevance. In addition, strong partnerships with retailers such as Target, Walmart, and Ulta Beauty support our continued growth (Washington, 2025). Our mission is to make the best of beauty accessible to every eye, lip, face, and skin (Washington, 2025), which will keep us focused on delivering sustainable, long-term values to our stakeholders.

Public Relations Situation

In August of 2025, we attempted to expand our market presence by naming comedian Matt Rife, alongside renowned drag queen Heidi N Closet, the new faces of our brand. The campaign itself was titled “Law Offices of E.L.F.INO and Schmarnes” and was supposed to parody personal injury law commercials. The pair acted as “affordable beauty attorneys” to take a dig at the higher-end expensive beauty brands that compete with E.L.F. Right after the

campaign was launched on August 11, 2025, our social media was swamped with negative comments and criticism. Many critics pointed out the blatant hypocrisy of a brand that promotes female empowerment and acceptance joining forces with a comedian who is notorious for his distasteful jokes. Nikkie de Jager (@nikkietutorials), a popular makeup artist and blogger, called for a boycott on E.L.F. products and went on to condemn our partnership with Rife, commenting, “You lost me.. Matt Rife out of ALL people?” (Pocharpon, 2025). Many of Rife’s “bits” can be deemed as misogynistic, racist, and ableist. Shortly after we launched our now infamous video advertisement featuring Rife, members of various social media platforms called attention to an extremely unpleasant comment he had made during his Netflix special in 2023. During the opening joke of his special, he said, “I feel like if she could cook, she wouldn’t have that black eye” in reference to seeing a hostess in a restaurant sporting a black eye. He followed this up with a comment on how he was “testing the waters” by starting the show with a domestic violence joke. Rife released what he considers an apology, but it was a link to a website that sells adult helmets for those with special needs (Tolentino, 2023).

Key Stakeholder Audiences

E.L.F consumers/target audience are people between the ages of 25-35, 82.44% of them being female (similarweb, 2025). Young women are at the heart of our brand’s success. This group specifically cares deeply about honesty, inclusivity, and authenticity, and they aren't afraid to call out brands that fall short or disappoint them. In the same breath, they’re also quick to spread the word when a brand does get it right and hits the target as they’re expected to, which in our case is adhering to our mission of being inclusive and empowering. Women of this

demographic use platforms like TikTok and Instagram to amplify both praise and criticism towards brands. This deems them not only loyal customers, but also powerful voices and influencers in terms of E.L.F's growth and perception moving forward.

Retail partners are another key element to E.L.F's reputation in the market, our stock prices, and our presence on store shelves. Stores like Ulta Beauty and Target are our largest stakeholders (Washington, 2025) and contribute to a large portion of our outreach and perception. Both these retailers profit from carrying E.L.F products, considering it's a leading high-quality and affordable brand. Our products are known for their availability outside of luxury stores like Sephora and Morphe, which makes our positioning at Target and Ulta Beauty crucial. If our brand is under criticism by the public, both these retailers will suffer low sales, and possible backlash for carrying our products. Our prominence at these retailers all depends on keeping sales strong and maintaining trust and a positive brand identity. Without that stability, our brand risks losing the confidence of the retailers who help store and distribute our products.

Core News

Our overarching message is about generating trust and doing better for our audience, while staying true to our mission. In our partnership with Matt Rife, our goal was to expand our market to his viewers and fans, which should have, in theory, helped us branch out to a wider audience. As we know, this backfired. To convey our message properly, we need to reiterate our values. We want to show genuine concern and empathy for those who were affected in a negative way through our partnership with Rife.

Benefit Statements

For our consumers, we want our statement to be “Our top priority is holding ourselves to our mission, which is deeply rooted in advocating for women’s rights, diversity, and authenticity. We hear you, and we want you to know that we are committed to our core values now more than ever. We are dedicating ourselves to working hard to regain your trust.”

For stakeholders, Ulta Beauty and Target, our benefit statement is “We understand that our recent campaign may have contributed to negative associations with your brand. We are taking decisive steps to uphold our own brand as well as yours. Our focus remains on asserting not only our foundational values, in conjunction with your partnership and trust in us.”

Tone of the Message

For our consumers, we aim to cultivate a stronger sense of awareness, specifically a deeper understanding of our brand’s values and foundation. We plan to achieve this through consistent and thoughtful messaging that reinforces who we are and what we stand for. By taking an ethos-driven approach, we hope to rebuild loyalty and empower our strongest supporters to become brand advocates. Ultimately, we want consumers to trust that when we say we are committed to doing better, we mean it, and to feel invited into a more positive and transparent brand experience.

For our stakeholders, we will be taking a logos approach. We need to convey a message to both Target and Ulta Beauty that raises awareness about our competence and our understanding of the crisis, and how we plan to contain it. The main goal here is to bring everyone’s focus back around to our overarching mission as a brand, and in turn, we’ll keep

damage to these retailers to a minimum, which will, in turn, keep us in a position where we can build back up to our once good standing with both.

Intended outcomes

Some of our intended outcomes would be improved public perception, crisis mitigation, and reputation repair. We want our audiences to believe in our mission, foundation, and authenticity just as much as we do. We understand that it will take a considerable amount of time to build back the reputation and brand identity we once held in the beauty industry, but we truly believe that with the correct messaging and dedication that it can be done slowly but surely.

As for crisis mitigation, we need to be quick and precise with our responses and messages. Our first order of business is to address the hurt our partnership with Matt Rife has caused, and to reassure our audiences that we hear them, we understand them, and we are doing better for them. We will also be mitigating this crisis to our stakeholders and working tirelessly to reassure them that our crisis containment will help put some relief on the backlash they are receiving due to their retail stores holding our products. We're hoping that once we start pushing out our messages and statements that the pressure of boycotts and accountability will subside, and we will be back on an upward climb.

Outreach

We are hoping to improve our public perception and reputation through brand advocates on social media. For us, brand advocates are the people who are loyal consumers of our product and have been with us for years. We trust that there are plenty of people who will still use our product to help rebuild our former image through their personal use and unpaid advocacy. These

people are not influencers but regular consumers who will help rebuild our reputation through word of mouth.

To further reach our audiences, we propose hosting a “Beauty for All” community pop-up event, which will take place at several Ulta Beauty retail spaces in three major cities: Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago. These events will be broadcast across social media platforms, including TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, to maximize reach. These events will feature open discussions with E.L.F. representatives, product demonstrations, and panels led by diverse female content creators and activists who align with our brand’s mission. Attendees will be invited to share their personal “beauty for all” stories through posts and #BeautyForAll, encouraging transparency, trust, and authentic engagement between our brand and the community.

This event will reach all our key audiences in meaningful ways. Consumers will experience firsthand our renewed commitment to inclusivity and ethical beauty, fostering trust and emotional connection. Our retail partners/stakeholders, such as Target and Ulta Beauty, will see that we are taking tangible, public steps to repair our image and strengthen our market position. It’s also our hope that in hosting this event outside of/within Ulta Beauty locations, we will play a part in boosting their sales and foot traffic, which would further bolster our relationship with them as business partners.

Writing Material Samples

1. Social Media Entry:

We've heard your voices
and we're listening.



♡ 4,542 💬 63 ↻ 52 🚩 113 📌

elfcosmetics At E.L.F., our mission has always been to empower every eye, lip, and face. We recognize that we fell short, and we're taking action to do better and be better for YOU!

Starting next month, we're launching our [#BeautyForAll](#) pop-up events! These will be open spaces outside of Ulta Beauty locations in Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago, where we invite YOU to join us for honest conversations, learning, and community. Real beauty begins with accountability and growth.

[#ElfCosmetics](#) [#BeautyForAll](#) [#CrueltyFreeBeauty](#)
[#MakeupForEveryone](#) [#Express YourELF](#)

2. Pitch Letter:



October 25, 2025

Lindsay Smith
People Magazine
New York, NY, 07008

Dear Lindsay,

In the wake of ongoing conversations around inclusivity and accountability in the beauty industry, E.L.F. Cosmetics is taking meaningful steps to rebuild trust and reaffirm our mission to make beauty accessible, empowering, and ethical for all.

I'm inviting you to cover our upcoming "Beauty for All" pop-up event. It will be an immersive, community-centered experience designed to spark honest conversation about representation in beauty while celebrating self-expression and diversity.

The "Beauty for All" event will launch on October 31st, 2025, at various Ulta Beauty locations in Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago. Each event will feature open conversations with diverse creators, beauty advocates, and E.L.F. representatives, all united by one mission: to make every voice in beauty heard.

In addition to panels and product demonstrations, attendees will be encouraged to share their personal "Beauty for All" stories using the hashtag #BeautyForAll, building an authentic online community conversation around inclusivity, empathy, and empowerment.

We would love for *People* magazine to attend and cover how E.L.F. is turning lessons learned into leadership within the beauty industry. Your reporting can help share this story of

accountability and transformation with readers who care deeply about diversity and ethical branding.

Please let me know if you'd like to schedule interviews with E.L.F. leadership, event participants, or creators. I'd be happy to arrange press access, event passes, and media materials for your team.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you and your participation in highlighting a meaningful shift in how brands can listen, learn, and grow with their communities.

All the best,

Hillary Wertenberg
Public Relations Manager
E.L.F. Cosmetics
Media@elfcosmetics.com | (616) 268-7672

3. Flier:

E.L.F. COSMETICS

BEAUTY FOR ALL

Pop-Up Event

Ulta Beauty Los Angeles
4550 W Pico Blvd

Fri. Oct. 31
12:00 - 5:00 P.M.

Interactive Panels, Live Demos, Open Discussion,
Photo Booths, Giveaways, and more!

Help us celebrate Inclusivity, Empowerment, and Authentic Beauty.

FREE ADMISSION

@elfcosmetics

4. Blog

Rebuilding Trust Through Transparency: How E.L.F. Cosmetics Is Putting “Beauty for All” Into Action

Written by: Stephany Smith, E.L.F. Media Ambassador

October 20th, 2025

At E.L.F. Cosmetics, we've always believed that beauty should be accessible, empowering, and inclusive for every eye, lip, and face. Since our founding in 2004, we've prided ourselves on being a leading American beauty brand that delivers high-quality makeup without the luxury price tag. But what truly sets us apart is our unwavering commitment to fostering diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility.

Over the years, our partnerships with retailers like Target, Walmart, and Ulta Beauty have helped make our products available to millions of consumers across the country. Combined with our strong digital presence, we've built a vibrant, engaged community that has helped E.L.F. become one of the first true digital disruptors in beauty.

Facing the Moment with Accountability

In August 2025, we launched a new campaign: “*Law Offices of E.L.F.INO and Schmarnes,*” featuring comedian Matt Rife and drag artist Hedi N Closet. The campaign was intended as a lighthearted parody of legal commercials, designed to celebrate affordable beauty in a playful, relatable, and relevant way.

However, the choice of spokesperson drew significant criticism. Many in our community felt our collaboration with Matt Rife conflicted with E.L.F.'s longstanding mission of empowerment,

inclusivity, and respect. We recognize that we missed the mark. As a brand built by and for strong, expressive individuals, particularly women who value authenticity and equity, we hear your voices clearly.

We deeply regret that our actions caused disappointment and frustration, and we're committed to making things right.

Listening, Learning, and Taking Action

Our consumers, 82% of whom are women between the ages of 25 and 35, are not only our most loyal supporters but also our most passionate advocates. You hold us accountable because you believe in our mission, and that's something we never take for granted.

In the spirit of growth and transparency, we're taking meaningful steps to rebuild trust and reconnect with our community. One of those steps is our upcoming "Beauty for All" pop-up event, hosted in partnership with Ulta Beauty in Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago.

Introducing: The "Beauty for All" Pop-up events.

Launching October 31st, 2025, these community-centered events are open to everyone and designed to spark real conversations about inclusivity, representation, and ethical beauty.

Each event will feature:

- Interactive panels with diverse creators and advocates
- Product demonstrations of E.L.F.'s fan favorite collections
- Open discussion spaces focused on empowerment and accountability
- Giveaways, photo booths, and social sharing opportunities using #BeautyForAll

This initiative reflects our promise to listen, learn, and act in alignment with our values. We want to create spaces where beauty lovers can come together, share their stories, and help shape the future of our brand.

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