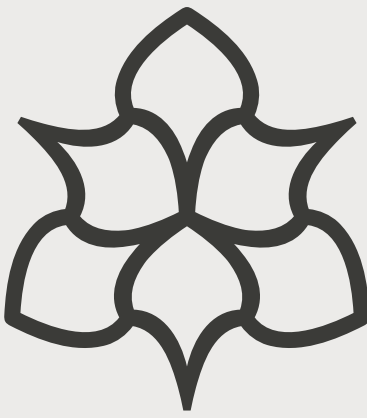


# POSITIONING CLINIQUE INTO THE CLEAN BEAUTY MOVEMENT

CARRIE WYNN-DURBIN

Fashion Consultancy Project  
BSc (Hons) Fashion Marketing



Manchester  
Metropolitan  
University

MANCHESTER  
FASHION  
INSTITUTE

CONSULTANCY NAME  
Kindroot Collective

## OUTLINE OF PROPOSED SOLUTION

Clinique's position in the skincare market has notably declined as consumers are becoming more aware of harmful ingredients in their products. The brand has come under fire for finding concerning levels of Benzene, a known carcinogen, and other harsh ingredients in its products (Saptha, 2024). As the clean beauty movement gains traction, companies that resist change are quickly losing ground. Brands prioritising transparency and sustainability are thriving, witnessing higher conversion rates and improved customer loyalty (Cosmetics Business, 2024).

In stark contrast, Clinique's market valuation has fallen from \$6.1 billion to \$4.8 billion (Statista, 2024), largely due to its adherence to outdated formulas and failure to meet modern consumer expectations. The post-pandemic era has heightened awareness of health risks, fuelled by expert opinions, consumer feedback, and major social media scandals (Drenk, 2024). To regain its competitive edge, Clinique must innovate by introducing an organic product line and revamping its marketing strategy.



“69% of Gen Z consumers worldwide are willing to spend more on health products that contain natural and clean ingredients.”

Clinique effectively addresses the needs of consumers seeking scientifically supported beauty solutions through a streamlined and straightforward three-step skincare regimen (Nast, 2024). Its primary demographic consists of women aged 22-34 worldwide, providing products aimed at preserving youthfulness and enhancing natural beauty. With a carefully crafted segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) strategy, Clinique successfully caters to a diverse global market. Concurrently, there is a notable increase in the demand for “Clean Beauty,” particularly among Generation Z and Millennials, who are inclined toward wellness-oriented products (McKinsey, 2024).

Global Revenue for natural and organic skincare (in billion U.S. dollars)



(Statista, 2023)

## INTRODUCTION

## INTERNAL & EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

## COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

Clinique's entry into the fiercely competitive Asian organic skincare market reveals both notable opportunities and considerable challenges, particularly when evaluated through the lens of Porter's 5 Forces framework (Porter, 2008), as illustrated in Appendix A.

Being a brand developed by dermatologists, Clinique possesses a unique advantage in an industry where consumer trust is paramount. Nevertheless, this competitive edge alone is insufficient to guarantee success. The rapid market expansion and the rising consumer preference for clean beauty has drawn established competitors, such as K-beauty brands Innisfree and Laneige, which have effectively leveraged affordability and ingredient-centric formulations. Furthermore, these brands excel in digital engagement, especially via viral content on platforms like TikTok (Business of Fashion, 2023). Consequently, Clinique confronts intensifying pressure from such brands that have already secured significant consumer attention.



### STRENGTHS

- Clinique consistently innovates with high-quality skincare products.
- Strong customer relationships that lead to high satisfaction and loyalty.



### WEAKNESSES

- Clinique struggles to expand beyond its core product segments.
- Lower R&D investment compared to competitors may limit innovation (Etter Louser, 2024).



### OPPORTUNITIES

- Clinique's deep market knowledge helps adapt to evolving consumer trends like organic skincare.
- Strong brand loyalty allows expansion into new markets without losing existing customers.



### THREATS

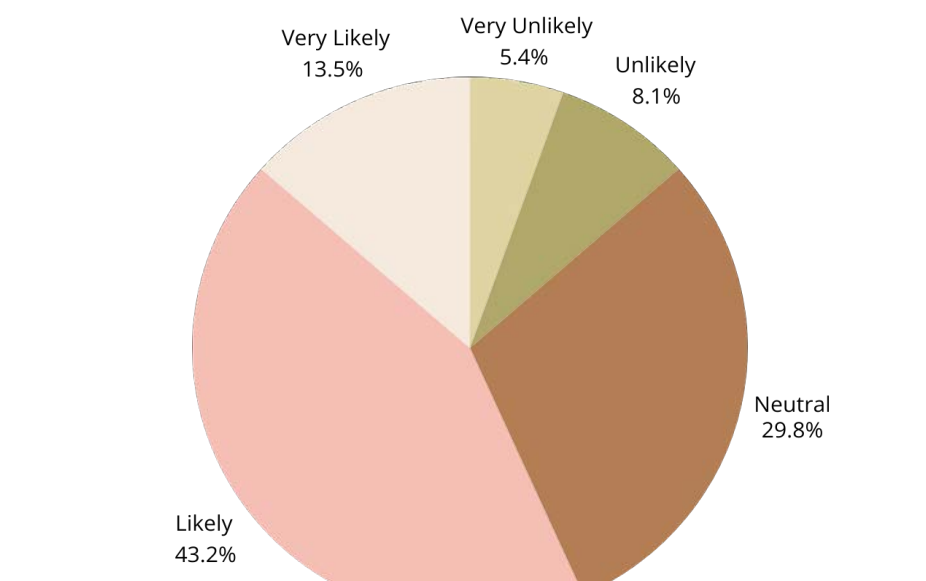
- Emerging “clean” skincare brands outpace Clinique with innovative products.
- High market saturation makes product differentiation challenging.



Based on the survey responses collected for this research (see Appendix B), there is a clear demand among consumers—especially those aged 18–24—for safer and more transparent skincare options. A majority of participants indicated they would be likely or very likely to purchase from Clinique if the brand transitioned to organic formulations. However, a significant number of respondents remained neutral, suggesting that persuasive efforts would be necessary to convert this segment. Trust also emerged as a key concern; most respondents rated their confidence in an established brand making an organic shift as a cautious 3 or 4 out of 5, indicating skepticism regarding the authenticity and execution of such a transition.

Primary concerns about synthetic ingredients included fears of breakouts, long-term health effects, and environmental harm. One respondent noted, “If they can cause cancer, I don't want them anywhere near my skin,” which resonates with the recent backlash Clinique has faced due to the presence of benzene in some products (Scott, 2024).

How likely would you be to purchase organic skincare products from Clinique if they shifted to organic ingredient formulations?



“If they cause cancer, I don't want them anywhere near my skin.”

## PRIMARY RESEARCH

## TARGETING & SEGMENTATION



Clinique's targeting and segmentation strategy should focus on consumers aged 18–24, particularly women, who prioritise value-driven, ethically conscious, and digitally proficient attributes. This demographic has emerged as a significant group in the primary research, see Appendix B. These consumers are influenced not only by the efficacy of skin care products and the transparency of ingredients but also by their emotional, social, and environmental values. Research indicates that 84% of Asian consumers expect brands to align with their beliefs before engaging (WGSN, 2024). Furthermore, a staggering 91% of South-east Asian consumers and 97% of Chinese shoppers actively evaluate brand ethics before making a purchase (WGSN, 2024).

Customer Journey Model (McKinsey, 2009)

### AWARENESS

Xiaohongshu, Instagram Influencers

### FINDABILITY

Searchable content, SEO, Jargon-Free Language

### REPUTATION

Two-Party Certification, Ethical Storytelling, Educational Resources

### CONVERSION

Mobile App, Exclusive Offers, Pop-Up Stores

### ADVOCACY

App Gamification, Social Share



(Pineau, 2023)

Value hacking and affordable indulgences significantly influence consumer behaviour, with 89% of shoppers seeking inexpensive yet enjoyable treats (WGSN, 2024). Clinique can capitalise on this trend through tiered loyalty rewards and exclusive discounts via a mobile app, enhancing both exclusivity and perceived value.

This approach aligns with the digital shopping habits of the target demographic, who frequently engage with mobile apps and discover products on platforms such as Xiaohongshu and Instagram (Vogue Business, 2024). By leveraging these insights, Clinique can cultivate deeper emotional connections and long-term brand loyalty, prioritising relationships equitably over mere transactions.

To effectively connect with this audience, Clinique should employ an intersectional targeting approach that delves into the emotional layers influencing purchasing behaviour, including eco-consciousness, skin sensitivity, and the pursuit of self-care. Additionally, it is crucial to acknowledge the intricate nuances of regional and cultural identities that shape consumer preferences (Lazar, Corbace, Lohani, 2024).

## OBJECTIVES



Launch the ‘Clean Confidence’ campaign for the Asian market by Q4 2025. Target 30 million impressions and a 35% increase in app traffic using SEO, localised content, and targeted promotions. Monitor progress with analytics tools.



Increase Clinique's revenue by 20% from \$4.8 billion to \$5.76 billion, by December 2026. This will be achieved through a focused marketing campaign for the new organic line, supported by strategic promotions, better distribution, and enhanced e-commerce. Success will be measured via revenue, customer acquisition, and campaign performance.



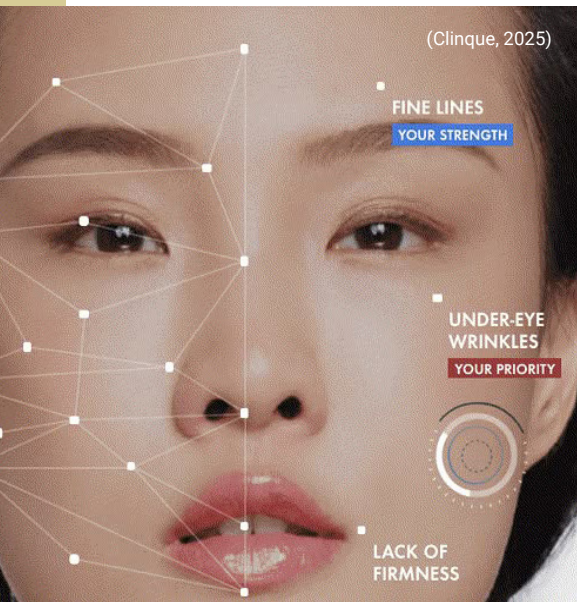
Increase Clinique's social media engagement in the Asian market by 50% in 12 months through an interactive campaign on ingredient transparency and sustainability. Track engagement metrics like likes, shares, and comments to fine-tune content strategies.

## STRATEGY



Clinique's strategy for the Asian market will prioritise clear communication of clean skincare ingredients, directly addressing the 18–24-year-old consumer's demand for transparency. This approach will drive the ‘Clean Confidence’ campaign, increasing app traffic, boosting social media engagement, and ultimately growing revenue by strengthening brand trust and loyalty, aligning with the key objectives.

## STRATEGY



### TACTICS

AI INTEGRATED APP

The ‘Clean Confidence’ campaign is set to revolutionise the launch of Clinique's new organic product line by harnessing the power of AI-driven programmatic advertising. This innovative, data-centric strategy employs real-time bidding (RTB) to ensure that Clinique delivers personalised content to distinct audience segments across Asia, tailored to their unique interests and behaviours. This level of precision not only enhances efficiency but also elevates regional relevance (Neeratali, 2023).

With super-app influence in Asia, Clinique will strategically place ads within platforms where consumers engage with beauty content, ensuring contextual relevance and seamless transitions from ad exposure to app interaction. From this, there will be a surge of traffic to Clinique's new app and a significant boost in brand visibility and consumer engagement in key markets.

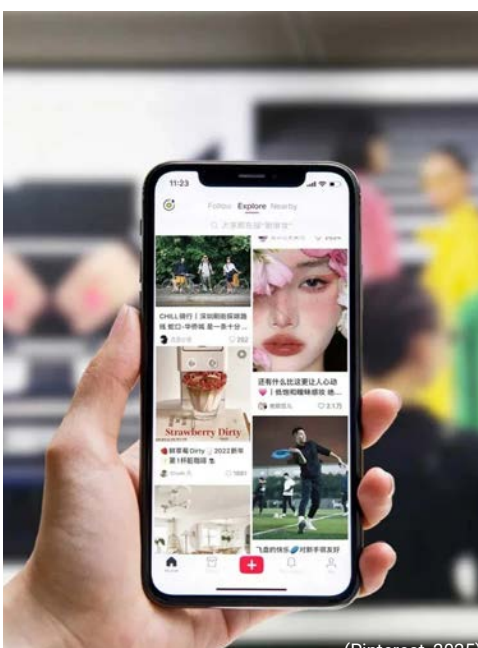


(Clinique, 2025)

“72% of APAC shoppers will spend more with companies offering seamless omnichannel experiences.”

(WGSN, 2024)

## SOCIAL MEDIA TACTICS



### REACH

To excel in Asia's crowded beauty market, Clinique must focus on visually driving social content. Content, Instagram remains essential, but with its algorithm now prioritising carousel and short-form video over reels, content must be optimised for these formats (Scott, 2024). While TikTok remains popular, recent engagement rate declines indicate it will be essential to diversify onto platforms like Xiaohongshu, where skincare consumers demand transparency and education (Scott, 2024).



### ACT

Creating an engaging educational series that simplifies the science behind organic ingredients is essential to meet the growing consumer demand for “proof science told us so” (WGSN, 2023). By incorporating humour, parody, and emotional storytelling, Clinique can turn complex scientific concepts into digestible content. It will not only meet the demand for more reliable but also encourage deeper engagement and sharing among audiences.

## SOCIAL MEDIA TACTICS



### CONVERT

As beauty sales soften and consumers increasingly seek value (Lazar, 2025), brands need to stand out not only through their products but also through a clear sense of purpose and proven effectiveness. The campaign should position Clinique as a credible and premium brand that prioritises science, safety, and long-lasting results, setting it apart from the trend of cheaper imitations. Collaborating with niche creators who genuinely incorporate Clinique products into their every-day lives, rather than promoting them through flashy haul videos, will foster a deeper, trust-based connection with potential customers.



### ENGAGE

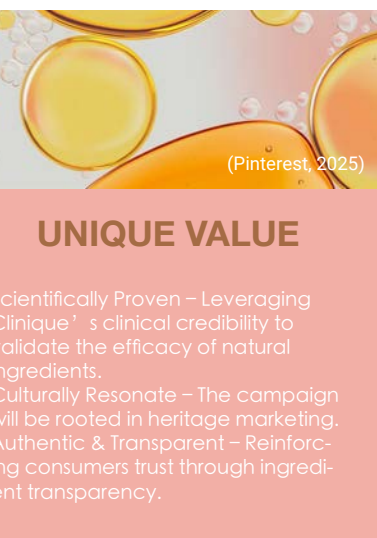
To keep users engaged, Clinique needs to adapt to changing platform algorithms and consumer habits. This involves a continuous process of testing and learning from interactions like likes, shares, saves, and comments, which can guide content development. Clinique should balance the needs of “visually online” users and those seeking to cut back on screen time (WGSN, 2023) by providing both quick, engaging content and in-depth experiences. A diverse content strategy featuring easy-to-understand ingredient explainers, detailed lifestyle product stories, and emotional narratives will connect with users throughout their skincare journey.

## VALUE PROPOSITION MODEL



### MARKET NEED

Asian consumers are increasingly seeking clean, natural and science-backed skincare solutions. Cultural authenticity and ingredient transparency are key drivers of purchasing decisions. Local and heritage-driven brands are gaining traction due to their ability to connect with traditional beauty practices.



### UNIQUE VALUE

Scientifically Proven – Leveraging Clinique's clinical expertise to validate the efficacy of natural ingredients. Culturally Resonant – The campaign will be rooted in heritage-inspired, Authentic & Transparent – Reinforcing consumer trust through ingredient transparency.



### COMPETITIVE DIFFERENTIATION

Western dermatological expertise with Eastern beauty traditions. A legacy of clinical authority, premium, science-backed natural formulations.



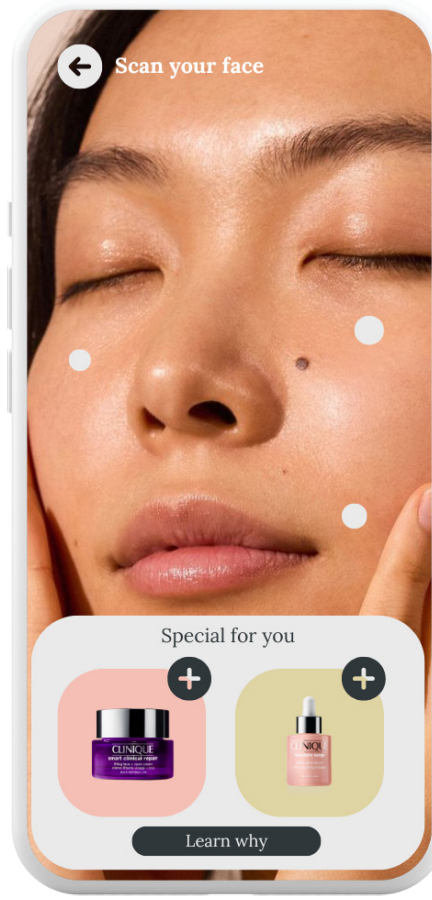
### KEY BENEFITS

Confidence in a science-backed, emotional connection through cut-edge technology. Transparency and authenticity address key skin concerns about ingredient claims.

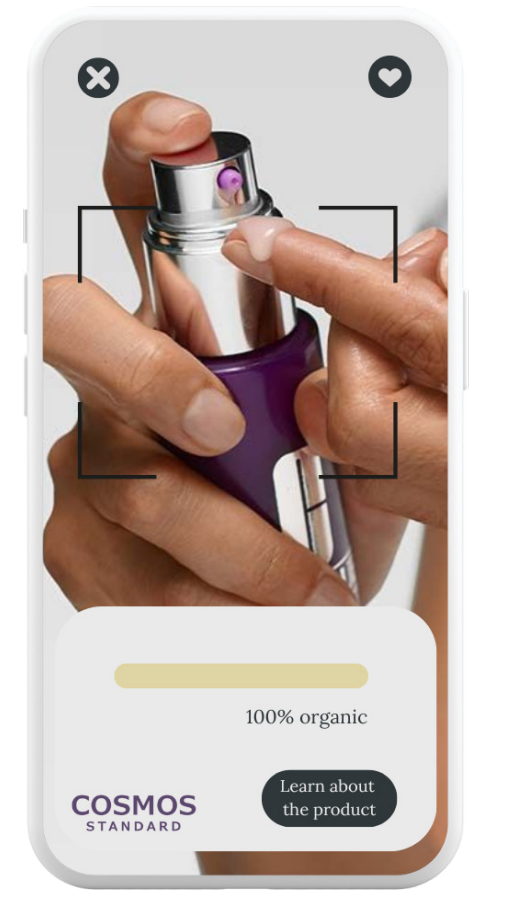
A robust value proposition enhances brand differentiation, fosters trust and promotes consumer engagement (Porter, 2017). This involves understanding a dual legacy of clinical expertise and natural efficacy for Clinique, appealing to scientifically minded and eco-conscious consumers.

The app will promise a 360-degree brand experience, allowing users to purchase products and educate themselves on the ‘Clean Confidence’ initiative, fostering sustained engagement and brand community development (WGSN, 2024). Clinique will integrate a ‘Skin Wellness Journey’ game into the app. Users will begin by completing a skin-type assessment quiz to identify their skincare needs. Based on their quiz results, they will follow a personalised path, learning about organic ingredients, COSMOS standards, and how Clinique's products can address their skin concerns. As users progress, they earn points, badges, and rewards, such as skincare tips and exclusive discounts.

The app will also encourage social sharing, allowing users to invite peers or compare progress. Survey findings support this tactic found in Appendix B, where 84% of respondents stated that product efficacy was a top priority in skincare purchases. Collectively, the app possesses the potential to deepen customer loyalty, elevate brand equity, and provide Clinique with valuable insights into consumer behaviours and preferences, improving its market position.



(Pinterest, 2025)



(Pinterest, 2025)