

Taryn Gill's vision to build a household name in African haircare

 By [Lauren Hartzenberg](#)

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Taryn Gill left behind an established career in marketing, working at some of South Africa's largest media companies, to develop and launch her own haircare brand. The Perfect Hair was created to plug a gap in the local marketplace for quality, natural haircare products formulated with curly and coily hair textures in mind.



Now in its sixth year, the proudly South African brand is successfully tapping into the positive trend of women embracing their natural beauty, with products designed for natural curls and kinks steadily grabbing shelf space previously reserved for relaxers and other damaging chemical treatments.

Crafted to meet the needs of African hair in African climates, The Perfect Hair products use high-tech conditioning polymers and botanically-derived ingredients like mango butter, grapeseed and marula oil, and basil root extract to offer curl and coil care and control. All products are vegan and free from silicone, parabens, petroleum and sulphates, and sold in PET recyclable packaging.

Sunpac distribution deal

The Perfect Hair may have been started by Gill on a shoestring budget, but the brand has caught the attention of beauty distributor Sunpac, which recently concluded a deal with The Perfect Hair to scale the Johannesburg-based brand. Established in 1967, Sunpac is a trusted partner to retailers and brand owners, offering a full category management solution in personal care and beauty.

The strategic distribution deal is focused on pharma-retail, with The Perfect Hair products making their return to Clicks shelves. Through the partnership, the two companies aim to capture the trust (and spend) of black female shoppers looking to invest in quality, natural products.

Commenting on the deal, Sunpac CEO Shaun Laffer, says: "We are thrilled at the prospect of partnering with Taryn and jointly relaunching and then growing The Perfect Hair. The opportunity to connect with this consumer and serve with products that make a difference in their lives, is an exciting journey we are embarking on."



Gill will remain heavily involved in the brand's growth journey to ensure the continuation of a personalised approach to the range. Working closely with the experienced Sunpac executives, she is leading a team focused on brand, product development and marketing strategy.

Here, The Perfect Hair founder and CEO shares more on her entrepreneurial journey in the dynamic personal care space.

■ **Can you tell us a bit about yourself - your upbringing and career history prior to starting The Perfect Hair?**

Being brought up in a middle-class suburb in Durban, it was expected that your hair would be straightened, and that was the only neat option apparently! But I wore my curls naturally from an early age, and took serious flack for doing so.

After completing my BA in English and Literature, I joined Republican Press and so began my 20 year career in media, spanning writing, editing, marketing research and publishing.

When I got my first taste of life as an entrepreneur in the curl care space, it finally felt like I had arrived home in terms of purpose and fulfilment with work life

■ **What inspired you to launch your own natural haircare brand?**

There was simply nothing on the shelves for curly girls 6 years ago, when I was getting started. As they all say, find the gap...



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■ **How did you go about formulating The Perfect Hair products and getting them onto retail shelves. What was this process like?**

Long, and arduous! It took me 14 long months to get my first range to market: online and via Sorbet Candi & Co salons. Edgars followed shortly after that. It's a long and tricky road of bio-chemists, formulations, testing, packaging sourcing, marketing, route to market research, and finding the funds to make it all happen.

■ **How has your business grown since it launched?**

We have had good years and years when we got burnt - lessons learnt. At this point our joint venture with beauty distributor Sunpac has put us on a path for rapid acceleration into a retail strategy with Clicks, as well as developing more product lines together to ensure successful scaling of The Perfect Hair to reach more consumers, faster. It's the perfect partnership for us.

We as a brand made a decision to take a partner like Sunpac in order to scale. It is profitable for both of us as I am a marketer and brand developer specialist and they are distribution pros.

■ **As a female entrepreneur of colour, what is it like to be a businesswoman in your sector?**

Being a woman, a black woman, with no formal FMCG retail experience, a sole entrepreneur trying to ply her trade in a busy and saturated category like natural hair care, can be daunting and feel like a David and Goliath scenario everyday. It requires resilience and a belief in what you have built as brand foundation. Also, finding the right partner to scale with is key.

■ **Are there any female figures who have had a particularly positive influence on your life?**

My mother.

■ **The natural and curly hair-focused haircare market has exploded in recent years. What do you think is driving consumers (women particularly) to embrace the hair they were born with?**

As my lecturer at GIBS once said, "you are not selling hair care, you are selling self-love". Natural beauty is the embrace of who we are without wanting to conform or submit or change to a standard imposed by others.



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■ **What is your ultimate vision for The Perfect Hair?**

To be a household name in African beauty.

■ What advice do you have for other budding female entrepreneurs this Women's Month?

Get started!

Visit [The Perfect Hair online](#) for more info, and connect with the brand on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

ABOUT LAUREN HARTZENBERG

Managing editor and retail editor at Bizcommunity.com Cape Town apologist. Dog mom. Get in touch: lauren@bizcommunity.com

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