



# KPMG IMPACT Podcast

## Greenvines

### Welcome to our KPMG IMPACT Podcast.

I'm Ruth Lawrence, Senior Executive with KPMG Impact, for KPMG Australia (a global initiative designed to build a more sustainable and resilient future).

*Before we begin our conversation today, I would like to acknowledge that many of us are meeting on land of our first nation's people. I would like to pay my respects to Elders past, present, and emerging leaders and recognize their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture.*

Each month KPMG IMPACT is highlighting different Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and this month, we will be highlighting SDG 12: responsible consumption and production.

Today I have great pleasure in speaking with Maggie Sun, the Public Relations Manager at Greenvines — a clean skincare brand from Taiwan and certified B corp. We will be speaking about Greenvines' extensive journey towards sustainability and the message they seek to spread throughout their business.

#### Ruth Lawrence:

Welcome Maggie — it's lovely to speak to you today.

#### Maggie:

Hi Ruth, I'm really happy to be here. Hi everyone.

#### Ruth Lawrence:

**Could you tell us a little bit more about Greenvines?**

#### Maggie:

Greenvines is a clean skincare brand from Taiwan, originally started off with living sprouts, but then took on another mission to transform skin rituals into sustainable outcomes. We believe that, the more you know, the less you need, and that clean should begin with simplicity.

We do this by returning to a much simpler skincare routine consisting of 2 steps using water and oil based products, forgoing the use of creams or lotions containing chemical emulsifiers, and avoids more than 2,700 questionable ingredients from our formulation.

In short, when we start to take care of the skin we're in, we are also taking care of the world around it.

#### Ruth Lawrence:

**How did the founders become interested in living sprouts and green beauty?**

#### Maggie:

Greenvines was founded by three college classmates. After working years in the finance industry, Harris, Evelyn and Jack wanted to leverage business to drive changes toward sustainability. Inspired by Dr. Lin Pishia, Harris' mother, also a renowned environmentalist, scientist, and entrepreneur, they started off with living sprouts, but then gradually moved towards skincare.

So why the skincare market? The skincare market is oftentimes flooded with ambiguous information and overconsumption, yet at the same time this is also an opportunity to stir up a change towards a more sustainable approach when it comes to skincare.

Dr. Lin's 20 years of research forms the cornerstone of Greenvines' approach to clean skincare. The similarity between the surface of plants and human skin, and the damaging effect many commonly found ingredients in the cleansing and cosmetic products have on the plant surface, has led to Greenvines' dedication to break the mantra of "more" when it comes to skincare, and to reset our skin to its healthiest state by simplifying both steps and the number of ingredients that go into our products. That's how it all started, the journey.

**Ruth Lawrence:**

**Why did the business decide to adopt a certified B corp/B lab model?**

**Maggie:**

In order to see the change you wish to see, you must seek for growth and expansion, as the bigger you are, the greater influence you have. While Harris was studying in MIT, he witnessed brands with purposes being acquired by big companies, and so was troubled by the dilemma between growth and holding on to Greenvines' original belief.

Inspired by Patagonia, Seventh Generation and other B Corp brands, becoming a certified B corp seems to be the way out to use business as a force for good. This is a new kind of business that redefines success, balances purpose and profit through high standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability.

In 2015, we became the third certified B Corp in Taiwan.

**Ruth Lawrence:**

**When was the business founded and how big is it now?**

**Maggie:**

We were founded in 2010, so we just celebrated our 10th year last year. With approx. 100 employees, while e-commerce is our primary channel, there are currently nine brick and mortar stores in Taiwan. We also wanted to bring forth Greenvines' clean beauty movement to more consumers outside of Taiwan. Aside from Hong Kong and Malaysia, which we already made a presence, Singapore and the United States are also included in the market expansion roadmap.

**Ruth Lawrence:**

**What has been the appetite for green beauty and sustainable social enterprises in general in Taiwan?**

**Maggie:**

Both are actually booming in Taiwan. Not only does Taiwan have the most certified B Corps in Asia, a total of 29, but also according to a social innovation survey conducted by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, we found out that 70 percent of Taiwanese support the idea of social enterprise.

As for the appetite for green beauty, clean skincare is definitely a trend that cannot be ignored. We conducted a survey last year on the attitude towards clean beauty, and among the eighteen thousand respondents, over 90 percent agree that the environment and skincare products are not mutually exclusive, and that skincare products should do good to both skin and the environment.

**Ruth Lawrence:**

**What do you aim to achieve through Greenvines?**

**Maggie:**

From a larger perspective, we want to sprout more alternatives in life; in other words, make people realize there is always an alternative that serve as a better option compared to the status quo.

To be more precise, what we aim to achieve in the coming year is to create:

- 5 international brands that holds influence over hundreds of thousands of households
- 200 distinctive choices, which could go beyond skincare to many other solutions
- 300 meaningful career opportunities

**Ruth Lawrence:**

**What have been some of the challenges Greenvines has experienced as a social enterprise trying to scale up?**

**Maggie:**

I think it is the constant balance between growth and aligning to the original purposes, which took forms in many aspects of business decisions. Some examples:

We purposely tried to slow down our brick and mortar expansion so to make sure that every single touchpoint fully delivers the brand's belief.

We have a very limited product SKU of 22 products, compared to most of the international skincare brands' hundreds of products. Not only because we wish to focus on the skin's true need, and simplify the skincare routine, but also to deliver a message that using things you don't need, no matter how good they appear to be, could actually end up being a problem.

**Ruth Lawrence:**

**I know there are many innovations at Greenvines, are there any that you are particularly proud of?**

**Maggie:**

There are a few I want to share. The first is one of our most well know products. The Absolute Moringa Facial Oil.

This is not only 84 percent of our consumers' very first face oil, but also a 100 percent fair-trade face oil that gives back to communities by adopting pre-harvest financing methods. We help to create the largest organic Moringa farm in Africa, and by the end of 2019, we have helped more than 7,000 farmers, and witnessed 4–10X increase in income.

21 Days of Green, a Citizen Participation Campaign.

Believing that going "green" should be something everyone joyfully enjoys, for five consecutive years, we partnered with NGOs to initiate "21 Days of Green", a campaign inviting consumers to complete one simple eco-friendly action for

21 consecutive days, such as giving up on a purchase today, unsubscribe a newsletter you rarely open, and finishing up the last grain of rice. We are quite proud to have accumulated more than 160,000 green actions for Taiwan, and received positive feedback from participants telling us that because of this campaign, they have a clearer picture of the actions that could be done as an individual.

**Ruth Lawrence:**

**What do you think has helped Greenvines in its journey so far?**

**Maggie:**

The inspiration Dr. Lin has on Greenvines as a mentor. Knowing that whatever products we make, it is all about reimagining the practice of skincare, the meaning of cleansing, and our relationship with the environment. This not only serves as the ultimate guideline when it comes to product innovation, but a belief deeply rooted in the minds of our founders and many of our co-workers.

**Ruth Lawrence:**

**Can you share with us a bit about Greenvines' experience working with KPMG and what was valuable from that?**

**Maggie:**

We've joined KPMG in Taiwan's Buying Power program, which is a platform that features innovative products from social enterprises, and encourages purchase from other corporate entities.

This program is not only particularly helpful in increasing visibility among corporate entities, but increases the willingness of purchase and enhances brand credibility as well. We've seen a 10 percent increase in purchase amount in certain sales channels, as well as other forms of co-op purchases, such as receiving co-op enquiries from lodging partners and luckily entered the final assessment process.

**Ruth Lawrence:**

**We are coming to the end of our podcast, Maggie, what is the take-away message you would like to leave our listeners with?**

**Maggie:**

As author Anna Lappé once wrote, "every time you spend money, you're casting a vote for the kind of world you want." As a relatively young clean skincare brand, we do believe the skin could be a place where personal choices surface bigger outcomes.

**Ruth Lawrence:**

Thank you so much for your time today, Maggie. I'm sure all our listeners will be inspired to think about how they can make more sustainable choices in their own lives.

My guest today has been Maggie Sun, the Head of Public Relations at Greenvines. Thank you all for listening, I hope this discussion has encouraged you to think about how our own small choices can have a great impact on our planet and our future.

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