


Business

cases 11 companies of varying size.

“There is huge potential for health and beauty products or cosmetics and skincare range to explore for Fiji,” says Investment Fiji’s Acting CEO, Kamal Chetty. “Our team of advisors have facilitated these companies with a range of business facilitation - right from approvals, requirements to packaging and hosted webinar and information sessions to promote this sector.”

Chetty believes there is significant room for growth: “Fiji has huge opportunities for value-added niche products in the health and cosmetics sector with international demand for

products made from noni, coconuts, turmeric and ginger.” In Fiji, the opportunities provided by tourism are also important, as spa services are an integral to the offerings of many high-end hotels and resorts. Destination weddings also drive demand.

“Fiji has had great success with its sales of virgin coconut oil and other beauty products due to the appreciation of natural skincare and cosmetic products. With the anticipated resurgence of tourism, there is potential entry points for organic products to be marketed at top resorts and hotel chains in Fiji,” Kamal says. 



FROM SEAWEED TO SPA

Nama Fiji is a business built on a Fijian delicacy more often associated with lunch than lotions, and the determination and energy of Debra Sadranu.

Sadranu came to Fiji in the mid-1990s. A trained beauty therapist, she started training local beauty therapists before establishing a chain of spas in luxury hotels and resorts.

She quickly realised that visitors “didn’t want to buy products that they could get back home, that were inflated in price. They wanted something that would remind them of Fiji and their holiday experience.”

She also identified the need for skincare products for

use by locals that were appropriate to the Fiji climate and skin types.

Sadranu worked with Australia’s James Cook University to create products using nama, a seaweed variety. In doing so, she created what she says is the first “organic hyaluronic acid”, and found a point of difference for Nama Fiji products in a very crowded and competitive product space. Women from Somosomo, Naviti in the Yasawa island group supply the nama, harvesting it through sustainable methods.

COVID-19 forced the company to stop production and close its spas and training school last year. Essence Group (the parent company under which Nama Fiji and Sadranu’s

other beauty and spa businesses sit) had sent a large shipment to the U.S. just before borders closed. Sadranu expects they will resume production towards

the end of this year or early 2022.

Sadranu's South Pacific Academy of Beauty Therapy train

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ing programs are about to ramp up again, with Sadranu saying

Business

way back to the U.S.

they are now ready to train beauty and spa therapists on COVID-safe protocols and provide general refresher training. "I think, at first it seemed a little bit daunting. How are we going to deliver spa ambience and personal wellness in this very clinical, sanitised, sterilised environment? But you know, we can do it, it's all about the delivery," she said of treatments post-COVID.

"At the end of the day, whether the therapists are wearing masks and face shields and gloves and everything is sanitised and sterilised, you can still have personal client care and personal consultation and give a treatment with the effect that's desired."

Nama Fiji products are widely marketed and distributed. Sadranu's San Francisco partners were introduced to her by a customer who had visited the Essence of Fiji transit

lounge (a facility close to the Fiji airport that offers spa treatments, a café and many other services for transit passengers) on his

She says those partners helped her rebrand Nama Fiji for the premium market and have just launched Nama Fiji "on a massive platform in Dubai which has over 2 billion outreach, covering, Southeast Asia, Europe, the UK, Australia and New

Zealand. So we've pretty much got global coverage." Sadranu's son has also launched a nama-based men's skincare brand, VS, and the company is releasing Nama Spa, a rebranded line aimed at combination skin types. Sadranu is very positive about the future, and the resilience of the Fiji economy and people. She says while the pandemic has been a horrible time, "in many ways it's also been positive because it has brought about so much change." Amongst the good she sees; a vibrant and growing small and medium enterprise (SME) sector, including in the beauty and spa space; opportunities for Fiji and the Pacific to refine their tourism offerings; and a refocusing on agriculture and aquaculture. 📺

The makers of the Loloma skin care range liken the experience of unboxing its product to opening a husk to find a coconut inside, with its distinctive golden ball packaging resembling its key ingredient, coconut oil.

It is this attention to detail and the desire to make using Loloma a sensory experience that has seen it grow from its Suva base to be offered on one of the world's largest online platforms, and recognised for its eco-credentials.

Purnima and Rajnil Singh were inspired to develop Loloma after looking for ways to treat their son's eczema. They used coconut oil, and then started to look at ways of treating the oil to increase its absorbency and refine its texture.

"After many years of research, we were able to design and build a unique machine that is able to standardise virgin coconut oil to achieve an ultra-light texture and reduced natural smell through a 100% chemical free process," says Purnima Singh.

Loloma was launched at the Auckland Baby Show in New Zealand in 2018 to positive feedback and is now available in the U.S. on the Amazon and Macy's online platforms. The product is also available in New Zealand and Taiwan, and the company is working towards exporting to China, Australia, Japan and Europe. A range of new products is due for release over the next few months.

The company has a strong foundation built on the Singh's previous business experience in logistics and cosmetics, and Purnima's business studies. She used skills developed



through her MBA program to conduct a large feasibility study and extensive market testing on the potential markets for Loloma. That led them to focus on Millennial parents and speak to their shared values of 'eco-conscious parenting'.

Differentiating Loloma in a competitive marketing, finding international distributors and securing

Amazon-approved warehouses to store the product were early challenges. And as with so many businesses, particularly during COVID, shipping costs and reliability have also proved challenging.

“Like most businesses, the COVID pandemic has had a negative effect with supply chains and distribution,” Purnima says. Despite these challenges, Loloma has continued operations throughout the pandemic, with Singh

stating: “Our vision is to elevate Fijian virgin coconut oil to be a premium product in the international market and to continue to be a sustainable source of income for our communities.”



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