

CASE STUDY: RHODE BY HAILEY BIEBER

How to Build a Billion-Dollar Brand by Actually Understanding Women

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In May 2025, e.l.f. Beauty announced they were acquiring Rhode, the skincare brand founded by Hailey Bieber, for \$1 billion.

Let that satisfying number sink in for a second.

A brand that launched in 2022 with just three products. A brand that sold exclusively through its own website. In less than three years, they've gone from zero to \$212 million in net sales, direct-to-consumer only, with only 10 products.

E.l.f.'s CEO Tarang Amin said something that every marketer should tattoo on their forearm: "I've been in the consumer space 34 years, and I've been blown away by seeing this brand over time... I didn't think that was possible."

So what made Rhode different from every other celebrity beauty brand that launches, gets some buzz, and then quietly disappears from Sephora shelves two years later?

Rhode didn't just sell skincare. Rhode understood female buyer psychology at a molecular level. And whether intentional or not, they executed almost every principle I teach about marketing to women.

Let me show you exactly what they got right.

THE FOUNDATION: SOLVING A REAL PROBLEM WOMEN ACTUALLY HAD

Before Rhode launched a single product, Hailey Bieber had spent years sharing her skincare routines on social media. She wasn't manufacturing interest, she was responding to it.

Hailey Bieber launched Rhode Skin in June 2022, motivated in large part by her personal skin journey. Having previously shared her struggles with sensitive and acne-prone skin, including perioral dermatitis, Rhode is dedicated to "simplifying many of the mysteries and complex narratives behind efficacious skincare" and creating "go-to essentials."

This is the first principle of marketing to women that most brands miss: **Women don't want more, they want better.**

Rhode's rise is particularly notable in an industry saturated with celebrity beauty ventures. Rather than relying solely on Bieber's fame, the brand carved a niche by aligning with the "clean girl" aesthetic and the "skinimalism" trend, offering a curated selection of skincare essentials that resonated with consumers seeking simplicity and efficacy.

Rhode launched with three products. Three. In an industry where brands routinely debut with 15-product lines and "complete systems" that overwhelm buyers before they've even started.

This is **Anti-Overwhelm Sequencing™** in action. The number one reason women abandon funnels (and brands) is cognitive overload. Too many options. Too many decisions. Too many paths.

Rhode said: Here are three products. They work. That's it.

Simplicity is the heart of the Rhode marketing strategy. Rather than flashy campaigns and complex packaging, Rhode embraces minimalism.

CERTAINTY ARCHITECTURE™: SELLING PREDICTABILITY, NOT POSSIBILITY

Here's what most celebrity brands get wrong...

They sell aspiration. "Get skin like Hailey Bieber!" "Unlock your glow!" "Transform your routine!"

That's possibility language, and women don't buy possibility, women buy certainty.

Rhode's entire positioning was built around predictability.

What sets Rhode apart in a crowded celebrity beauty brand landscape is that the products truly deliver. In an industry often criticized for influencer-led "cash grab" launches, Rhode stands out for its quality as much as its style.

The brand philosophy wasn't "become someone new." It was "here's exactly what you need, and it works."

Bieber set out to create a brand centered around her skin care philosophy of "one of everything really good."

"One of everything really good."

That's **Certainty Architecture**™ in six words. Women don't want 47 serums and the anxiety of figuring out which one to use. They want to know what's the one thing that works? Rhode answered that question before anyone even asked it.

This is why Rhode's products kept selling out. Rhode's initial product launch in June 2022 saw all Peptide Lip Treatment shades sell out within three days, with a staggering 440,000 people on the waitlist.

440,000 people on a waitlist for lip treatment, because women trusted they were getting exactly what was promised.

THE SIX EMOTIONAL BLOCKERS: HOW RHODE CLEARED EVERY GATE

In [The Female Funnel Bible](#), I outline six emotional gates a woman must clear before she can even evaluate your offer logically. If any gate stays closed, the sale dies.

Let me show you how Rhode addressed all six:

Blocker #1: "Do I feel understood?"

Women won't buy from someone who doesn't "get" their experience because generic pain points don't work.

Rhode nailed this because Hailey Bieber wasn't performing skincare expertise, she was sharing her actual journey with problem skin.

Hailey Bieber sits at the core of Rhode's identity. Her image and personal style shape how the brand is perceived, making it feel less like a product line and more like an extension of her lifestyle.

Much of this comes through how she integrates Rhode into her daily life. From quick routine videos and casual Instagram stories to behind-the-scenes moments, the products appear in ways that feel genuine rather than staged.

This is Reassurance Copy and Identity Copy working together. Women watching her content thought: "She deals with the same stuff I do. She gets it."

Blocker #2: "Is this safe for me to trust?"

Women are biologically wired to assess threat before opportunity. If your marketing feels pushy, aggressive, or "salesy," women interpret this as UNSAFE and exit.

Rhode's marketing stands out because it doesn't feel like marketing. Influencers who received gifted products weren't required to disclose them as ads, leading to posts that felt more organic and genuine. This approach resonates deeply with Gen Z and younger millennials, who value authenticity over salesy content.

No countdown timers, "ONLY 3 LEFT!" manufactured urgency or aggressive CTAs screaming at women to BUY NOW.

Just genuine content that **let** women make their own decisions.

These posts weren't overly polished or scripted but showcased influencers using Rhode products in real-life scenarios, from morning skincare routines to everyday makeup looks. This authenticity helped establish trust with audiences, making the brand appear relatable and approachable.

Blocker #3: "Will this give me predictable results?"

Women buy certainty, not potential. They want to know exactly what they're getting, exactly what results to expect, exactly what the process looks like.

Rhode's product names tell you exactly what they do: Peptide Glazing Fluid. Barrier Restore Cream. Peptide Lip Treatment.

Without any clever wordplay, abstract promises or all that BS.

Rhode capitalizes on the "skinimalism" trend, using fewer products for radiant skin. This aligns with consumer shifts toward low-maintenance routines and aligns Rhode's messaging with broader wellness and simplicity trends in beauty.

The message was always: This is simple. This works. You don't need to figure anything out.

Blocker #4: "What will my life actually look like after this?"

Women need to emotionally inhabit the future state before they can commit to it. Vague outcome promises don't work, but specific, felt-sense descriptions do.

This is where "glazed donut skin" became genius positioning.

Hailey Bieber didn't merely put her name on Rhode, she became its strongest brand ambassador. She evangelized "glazed donut skin" as a skincare trend that went viral on TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. Rhode was no longer a product line, but a movement.

"Glazed donut skin" isn't a product feature. It's a feeling. It's a visual. It's something women could imagine on themselves before they ever bought anything.

This is Vision Copy at its most effective. Rhode didn't say "improves skin texture by 40%." They said "glazed donut skin" and let women picture exactly what that would feel like.

Blocker #5: "Do I feel supported in the process?"

Women are more likely to fear failure, judgment, and looking stupid. They need to know they won't be alone if things don't work.

Rhode built community from day one.

Rhode's audience tends to be loyal, community-driven, and socially active. They follow Hailey Bieber's skincare routines, repost brand content, and participate in viral moments.

Rhode built a scalable network through encouraging fans to share their "get-ready-with-me" routines and creator collaborations.

Women buying Rhode weren't just getting products, they were joining a community of women who were all figuring out the same thing together. That's Support Copy and Belonging Copy working in tandem.

Blocker #6: "Does this align with who I am?"

Women filter purchases through identity compatibility. "Will doing this make me the kind of person I want to be?"

Rhode's positioning allowed women to integrate the brand into their existing identity. You didn't have to become someone different, you just had to want healthy, glowy skin.

Consumers aren't just buying lip gloss or skin serum, they're buying an identity.

Rhode resonates with aesthetic-focused minimalists who prize simplicity, self-care, and transparency in beauty.

The identity Rhode offered wasn't "become a glamorous celebrity," it was "become the best, most natural version of yourself." That's an identity almost any woman can integrate.

THE TRUST LOOP SYSTEM™: WHY RHODE CREATED CUSTOMERS FOR LIFE

Trust isn't built in a single moment, it's built through a loop that must be continuously reinforced.

The team behind Rhode understood this intuitively because they didn't try to convert cold audiences with aggressive sales tactics. Instead, they ran people through the Trust Loop multiple times before ever asking for a purchase.

Stage 1: Initial Recognition

Women encountered Rhode through Hailey's personal content, seeing products integrated naturally into her routines. First loop initiated.

Stage 2: Validation

They saw influencers and creators they trusted using the same products, sharing genuine experiences. Second loop.

Stage 3:

Permission They watched tutorials showing how simple the routine was. "I could do this." Third loop.

Stage 4: Proof

They saw thousands of other women sharing results, creating user-generated content, building social validation. Fourth loop.

Stage 5: Safety

The minimalist product line and transparent positioning removed perceived risk. Fifth loop.

According to Glossy, Rhode ranked number 1 in year-over-year earned-media-value-growth of U.S. skincare companies and number 1 in engagement growth in the category. But only about 15% of creator posts mentioned Hailey Bieber specifically, proving the strength of the Rhode community itself.

Keyword being: **community**.

Only 15% of posts mentioned Hailey directly. The brand became bigger than the celebrity because the Trust Loop had been run so many times that women trusted Rhode itself, not just the famous face behind it.

This is how you build a billion-dollar brand. Not by pushing for instant conversions, but by running people through the Trust Loop until buying feels inevitable.

EMOTIONAL LOGIC™: WHY RHODE'S "SIMPLE" STRATEGY WAS ACTUALLY SOPHISTICATED

Most marketers think simple means unsophisticated, but Rhode proves the opposite.

The Female Buying Framework shows that women don't buy from logic first, they buy from emotional logic. The sequence goes:

1. Emotional Resonance ("I feel seen")
2. Emotional Safety ("This doesn't feel manipulative")
3. Emotional Permission ("I'm allowed to want this")
4. Logical Validation ("Okay, does this actually make sense?")
5. Emotional Confirmation ("Does this still feel right?")
6. Social Validation ("What would others think?")
7. Final Emotional Check ("One more gut check")
8. Purchase

Most brands jump straight to step 4 so they lead with features, benefits, ingredients, clinical studies.

Rhode led with emotion every single time.

Rhode's real strength lies in understanding what younger consumers value: authenticity over traditional advertising, and this approach is evident across its social media presence.

In a survey by Intersect of 268 Gen Z respondents, 86% cited 'branding and marketing' as the reason they were drawn to the brand.

86% said branding and marketing.

Not product quality, price, or celebrity association.

The emotional architecture came first, then the logical validation (the products actually work) came second. That's the correct sequence for female buyers.

THE PROOF STACK: EMOTIONAL TRANSFORMATION OVER METRICS

When Rhode shared customer proof, they didn't lead with numbers, instead, they led with emotional transformation.

Rhode strategically targeted Gen Z and Millennials aged 18-34, zeroing in on a young, affluent demographic immersed in social media.

The proof wasn't "10,000 units sold," it was thousands of women sharing their "glazed donut skin" results, their morning routines, and their genuine experiences.

Rhode generated \$248 million in earned media value in 2024, up approximately 366% year over year.

\$248 million in earned media value that's not paid advertising. That's women voluntarily talking about the brand because they genuinely connected with it.

This is what happens when you build proof around emotional transformation instead of revenue screenshots. Women share experiences, not statistics.

COMMUNITY-BASED GROWTH: BELONGING OVER HIERARCHY

In [The Female Funnel Bible](#), I explain the biggest difference in how men and women respond to marketing:

Men buy hierarchy. "Upgrade to VIP and be in the top tier." Women buy belonging. "Join the inner circle and be part of something deeper."

Rhode built belonging from day one.

"Rhode is a brand where consumers will camp out overnight, wait 14 hours in a line for a pop-up in LA, not just for the product, but to buy into the entire lifestyle of the brand."

Women weren't buying lip treatment, they were buying membership in a community. They were buying an identity, and belonging.

Consumers, especially Gen Z consumers, will identify with a company's ethos when it's a personal ethos, and they'll find it easier to trust the recommendation of an influencer when that person has not only been in charge of developing but also genuinely uses and believes in the product.

This strategy makes buyers feel seen and heard, strengthening community loyalty and generating authentic word-of-mouth marketing.

THE BILLION-DOLLAR OUTCOME

Founded in 2022 along with Michael D. and Lauren Ratner, Bieber's brand racked up \$212 million in net sales in its last fiscal year, which ended in March.

Rhode had total sales of \$212 million in the year ended March 31, 2025, and the products will launch in Sephora later this year. The deal is comprised of a \$600 million cash payment, \$200 million in shares of e.l.f. stock, and a \$200 million earnout that would be payable over three years based on hitting performance goals.

E.l.f. CEO Tarang Amin told Fortune he sees the brand as having "real staying power." "So that is the thing that we believe has real staying power: her instincts, her aesthetic, her vision for this brand."

Three years. Ten products. \$1 billion valuation.

Not because Rhode had the best ingredients. Not because they had the biggest marketing budget. Not because Hailey Bieber is famous.

Because they understood how women actually *buy*.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Rhode didn't use manipulative tactics, countdown timers or fake scarcity. There was no aggressive urgency or "BUY NOW OR REGRET IT FOREVER."

Instead, they used:

- **Anti-Overwhelm Sequencing™**: Three products at launch, ten products three years later
- **Certainty Architecture™**: "One of everything really good" instead of overwhelming choice
- **The Trust Loop System™**: Multiple touchpoints building trust before asking for purchase
- **Emotional Logic™**: Leading with feeling, validating with logic
- **Community-Based Positioning**: Belonging over hierarchy
- **Identity-Aligned Messaging**: "Become the best version of yourself" not "become someone else"

The results speak for themselves: in 2024, Rhode recorded 45% year-over-year growth in Earned Media Value and built a community of over 4 million followers across Instagram and TikTok.

91% of women say marketers don't understand them.

But, Rhode became a billion-dollar brand by being one of the 9% who actually do.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Rhode proves that when you actually understand female buyer psychology, you can build something worth a billion dollars in less than three years.

Not through aggressive sales tactics, or through manufactured urgency, or through pink-washing or performative empowerment, but through genuine understanding of how women think, evaluate, trust, and buy.

That's the entire game.

And most of your competitors still haven't figured it out.

This guide is just the foundation.

For more content about Making Marketing to Women Great Again, join my Telegram group below.

Telegram: t.me/linafahizul

See you inside.

– Lina Fahizul

P.S. If you found this valuable, share it with one other person who's struggling to convert female buyers. The more people who understand this, the better marketing gets for everyone.

P.P.S. If you want to work with me, DM me on [Twitter](#) or [Telegram](#) and let's get to work. Not free or cheap.

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