

Accelerating Brand Growth

An Interview with David C. Chung, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, iLABS

EDITORS' NOTE David Chung is a serial entrepreneur with more than 25 years of experience in beauty and skincare R&D innovation, contract manufacturing, and premium brand building. Chung continues to be inspired by his mother, Judith Ehm Chung, a Korean immigrant who helped establish Koreatown in New York City. In honor of her entrepreneurial and philanthropic spirit, he created the Judith Ehm Foundation to support public charities that help Korean Americans, Asian Americans, and the broader community with education, social services, and healthcare.



David C. Chung

COMPANY BRIEF iLABS (ilabus.com) is an innovation-focused, full service, global beauty company with a proven track record for award winning formulas and product development. The art and science of innovation is in the company's DNA. Through its worldwide network of talented chemists, scientists and creatives, iLABS brings authentic innovation and cutting-edge technology to every product it designs.

What was your vision for creating iLABS?

My vision for creating iLABS was to address a clear gap in today's fast-evolving beauty



iLABS facility in Mahwah, New Jersey

market. We believe global innovation is the true driver of brand success. From the start, our goal was to build a genuinely collaborative environment and one where clients feel supported, inspired, and empowered. By sharing new ideas and forecasting what's next in beauty, we aim to spark creativity and help shape the future of the industry.

How do you describe iLABS' mission?

iLABS' mission is simple: to give every client, large or small, the opportunity to succeed by opening the door to authentic, meaningful innovation. We help accelerate brand growth by providing the tools, programs, and expertise needed to compete confidently in today's fast-paced beauty landscape.

Will you provide an overview of iLABS' business?

iLABS is a global beauty innovation and product development partner offering turn-key solutions including R&D, formulation, manufacturing, quality assurance, filling, and packaging. We specialize in research and development, formulation, ingredient discovery, and innovation strategy, supporting brands from early concept through commercialization. Our business is built on flexibility, speed, and collaboration, allowing us to tailor solutions that meet the unique needs of each client and market.

How critical is innovation to iLABS' culture?

Innovation is at the core of our culture. It is embedded in how we think, work, and grow. We encourage curiosity, experimentation, and forward thinking at every level of the organization. This mindset allows us to stay ahead of trends, challenge conventional approaches, and consistently deliver fresh, relevant solutions for our clients.

Will you discuss the importance of maintaining an entrepreneurial spirit as iLABS has grown?

Maintaining an entrepreneurial spirit has been essential to our growth. Even as we have scaled, we have worked hard to preserve agility, speed, and a start-up mentality. That entrepreneurial mindset empowers our teams to take ownership, move quickly, and remain open to new ideas, which is critical in an innovation-driven industry like beauty.



How do you balance the use of AI and technology with the importance of maintaining the personal connection and human touch?

iLABS has always embraced new technologies, and our flexible structure allows us to integrate tools like AI seamlessly into our workflow. We use AI to support several stages of product development, from researching novel ingredients and navigating regulatory requirements to analyzing market trends and consumer interests. That said, R&D remains the heart of everything we do. AI will never replace our chemists or creative expertise. Formulation demands experience, intuition, and creativity. AI simply empowers our team to work faster and smarter, while the human touch remains our greatest strength.

What qualities do you prioritize when building teams in an innovation-driven environment?

We prioritize curiosity, adaptability, and collaboration. Innovation thrives when people are open-minded, willing to challenge assumptions, and eager to learn. Strong communication skills and a team-first mentality are equally important, as our best ideas often come from cross-functional collaboration.

What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers?

Stay curious and do not be afraid to ask questions. Seek out experiences that push you outside your comfort zone and expose you to different perspectives. Be patient with your growth, but proactive about learning. Most importantly, find work that excites you. Passion and dedication are powerful drivers of long-term success. ●