

# Alleyoop CEO on Pop-Up Activations, Remote Photoshoots, and AR

## ARTICLE |

**Rimma Kats**

**B**eauty and body care brand Alleyoop has gotten creative these past few months. Under shelter-in-place orders, the company has had to change how it approaches marketing—working with content creators via Zoom, for instance, to put together a campaign.

We recently spoke with Leila Kashani Manshoory, founder and CEO of Alleyoop, about the challenges of remote photoshoots, the company's recent pop-up partnerships with Bloomingdale's and Verishop, and its foray into augmented reality (AR).

### **What inspired you to create Alleyoop?**

Alleyoop is named after the basketball reference, for when someone throws you the ball and you score. All of our products are made to help women score in whatever matters to them in their lives. We launched Alleyoop at the end of August last year, and our main mission to help women declutter and simplify their routine.

The beauty industry has [ingrained in] women that they need [more than they really do]. We went from a five-step morning routine, to contouring our full face, to baking [it all in]. The beauty regimen has just gotten out of hand.

**You recently announced the launch of pop-up shops with Bloomingdale’s and Verishop. What will the pop-ups look like?**

The Bloomingdale’s pop-up is an in-person experience within the New York flagship store. We wanted to really bring our brand experience to life, and Bloomingdale’s felt like a great partner now that more people are getting out and about.

Our second pop-up is with Verishop, an ecommerce destination. Though it’s online, we make sure that the customer ordering any of our products still gets the full Alleyoop experience.

**In addition to Bloomingdale’s, do you have other in-store presences?**

Alleyoop is in Ulta, specifically the body care products, not our beauty line. Ulta partnered with us shortly after we launched, and together we brought the brand to life nationwide. We’re also in Urban Outfitters.

**What are you hoping to gain from these pop-ups?**

A lot of data. Understanding our customers and how they perceive the retail experience will help us as we grow and think about our roadmap. We’re also using these pop-ups as a huge brand awareness play.

**Are these partnerships—and what you’re learning about your customer’s in-store habits—all building up to your own physical location?**

If I could give you a sneak peek into my vision board, you would see that there’s something on the horizon.

An in-store experience for me is really about minimalism and becoming more intentional about what I’m purchasing. What items am I actually using? How do we change the retail experience and help our customer be conscious of what she’s purchasing?

**Beauty brands were testing the AR waters a while back, and now that the technology has improved, many are getting back into it again. Is AR an area of focus for you?**

We were looking into using AR to create an efficient try-on experience: You pick a color, you put it on, and see how it looks. But as we started to test the AR experience, we saw that it wasn't picking up the user's natural undertones. What might look pink on me might look more orange on you. Users would see an inaccurate representation of what our products look like on.

That doesn't mean we're not keeping our finger on the pulse. But an AR experience needs to capture your natural undertones and our colors to give it that real effect.

### **Any lessons you can share about remaining agile amid the pandemic?**

We've had to get really creative with marketing. Even photoshoots have become remote. For Mother's Day, we created a really funny campaign that highlighted a pain point shared by many women—[juggling work with home life]. We set up the photoshoot through Zoom. It was a crazy experience, but we're lucky to have the technology at a time like this.

### **What did the Zoom campaign look like?**

We worked with our content creators to film the campaign from their homes. It took some back and forth, like "Show us your backdrop. Can you add more lighting? We sent you a mic—wait, that mic doesn't work. I'll give it a go again."

There were definitely a lot of hurdles, but at the end of the day, we spent a lot less time stressing over a video than we would have over a two-day shoot. I think we got good at shooting remote campaigns, and we'll probably do a lot more of them.