

Porsche She's Electric – Emma Lewisham

22/08/2025 Porsche Cars Australia profiles some of the country's most successful driven women who are charging to the front of their respective fields.

Emma Lewisham goes against the grain. Spend time with this high-achieving skincare entrepreneur from New Zealand and it quickly emerges that conforming isn't her default setting. It's not that she's deliberately unconventional; quite the opposite, as her natural charm and elegance confirm. But when it comes to the industry status quo and herd-like thinking, she instinctively charts her own course.

"I've always been driven to challenge convention," she says. "I enjoy solving problems and challenging established practices that don't serve their intended purpose."

This independent drive has served her well, as her global corporate career as a senior business executive and business show. She says it stems from her childhood and growing up with a grandmother who was one of New Zealand's first female CEOs.

“She was also a self-made entrepreneur and worked incredibly hard. Both of my parents ran businesses together. This is the environment I grew up in.”

It helps account for why her namesake skincare business, Emma Lewisham, is accelerating up the steep side of the US $450 billion global beauty industry. Her intense drive has propelled some bold life-building decisions, including the choice to forgo a high-flying career most people would walk on hot coals to achieve.

Driving to the front

Starting out, her university studies in science – and later business and law – sparked a deep interest in economics, marketing and statistics and the desire to apply them in the real world. Driven by a genuine love of learning, she's continued to build on that foundation, most recently completing postgraduate studies in biochemistry and physiology at Harvard.

“I always raised my hand for any real-world experience working in actual businesses."

Her abilities and calm temperament had her quickly ascending a Japanese technology company, building an impressive corporate career in a culture that valued intelligent creativity and new problem solving methods.

“Working for a Japanese firm ingrained in me the essentials of craftsmanship and quality. It also taught me to have genuine respect for the products you bring into the world and the responsibility of what happens to them long after they leave your hands.”

As one of the company's few female senior executives, Emma was en route to becoming their first in-country CEO.

But it was her natural ability to connect unrelated dots that set in motion what has become one of Australasia's most impressive business success stories.

“A large part of my career involved understanding sustainability and circularity practices,” she says. “That knowledge elbowed its way to the front of my mind when my doctor told me to stop using conventional commercial skincare products. It made me take a closer look at the items I was using. Their packaging looked luxurious but my research revealed that the product inside wasn't up to par.

“So I turned to natural skincare products, only to discover they were not desirable to use and came at a compromise. The textures were unpleasant, the fragrances off-putting, and the packaging uninspiring. . It felt like a compromise, as if you could never have natural, high performance, luxurious products that were truly sustainable – all at once. I didn't accept that."

“That was the gap: What if we could create natural products that were good for our bodies, that felt

beautiful to apply, and were highly effective – by this I mean evidence-based and rigorously grounded in science – as well as truly luxurious and desirable? And what if we did it as a business underpinned by ethics and excellence?

Launching a skincare brand

“I had a co-founder, Kimberley Morrison, who worked with me. We had to keep our day jobs so we worked every evening, weekend and holiday for the three years it took to bring the Emma Lewisham brand to market.

Then Emma got a tap on her shoulder.

“My Executive Chairman and his team in Japan wanted me to begin training as a Director, the path to becoming a CEO. I had to choose either my safe corporate career or bite the bullet with Emma Lewisham.

“I declined their generous offer. At that point I had no income, only the belief I had something unique to offer the world.

“There was no going back. You have to go all in. If you have a Plan B, then Plan A will never work.”

Most people would run from the stress of that decision, but not Emma. She knew the opportunity staring at her.

“Many skincare products on the market were out of step with what people wanted,” she says, leaning in. “A lot of women my age want products that are good for them and good for their bodies. They don't want a compromise between performance and luxury. That was the key – I could see nobody had correctly achieved that altitude with natural products.”

The idea of taking on some of the biggest names in skincare and diving into its vast underpinning physiology and science would be daunting for even the toughest entrepreneur.

Not Emma.

“Skincare is quite involved, given the complexity of cellular responses in human skin and its connection to the rest of the body. It’s like a Da Vinci code, which is why we need physiologists and scientists involved in designing the products we make.”

Unsurprisingly, Emma Lewisham takes a fundamentally different approach to the rest of the industry – one that has been acclaimed as genuinely revolutionary by global retailers, press, and the scientific community."

“Our product formulations are anchored in a genuine scientific understanding of skin,” she says. “We fundamentally differ from others in the industry because we challenge skincare formulation conventions. Our products exist in an entirely new paradigm – one that biomimetically works with your skin’s cellular pathways, repairing issues at the same biological level where they occur while simultaneously preventing future concerns.”

She continues, “Unlike traditional products that focus on single star ingredients, we put the problem at the centre of the product’s development. . This methodology produces pioneering results, which we validate through world-leading independent testing at both in vivo (clinical) and in vitro (laboratory) levels, proving nature’s ability to deliver superior results.”

Emma has also used her innovation-first approach to address the skincare industry’s wider issues. She’s pioneered a circular designed (refillable) model to minimise unnecessary virgin materials, divert packaging waste from landfill, and reduce packaging-related carbon emissions by up to 74 percent. The Emma Lewisham brand is a certified B Corp and was the world’s first climate positive certified and 100% circular designed beauty brand, with over 200,000 refills sold and 120 tonnes of carbon emissions saved to date. Their sustainability practices have garnered endorsement from globally renowned environmentalist, Dr. Jane Goodall.

The drive to succeed

Emma’s focus on her mission is laser-like.

“I’m driven by offering people skincare products that genuinely work for them and that don’t compromise their health,” she says. “This is purposeful and meaningful work. It’s also a great example of how a company can operate ethically and grow commercially. For us, the two go hand-in-hand. It’s the business model of the twenty-first century.

“So much of the Emma Lewisham business is about how we go about it, not just what we create.”

It’s hard not to be impressed. Emma’s expression intensifies when she touches on the wisdom that has come from her steep journey as an entrepreneur.

“You can’t buy it. You have to learn it and earn it,” she says. “For example, 10 years ago, I wish I wasn’t afraid of having those harder conversations. These exchanges are always kind and respectful and they’re often pivotal when it comes to our results.”

Like her innovative packaging program, you can tell her wisdom gets cycled back into use. When asked about performance, it’s obvious it doesn’t get stored in a vault.

“It’s about giving your absolute best and always aiming to improve. It’s what I do every day.”

Charging and recharging

Emma's approach to life and work would deplete most people. Add in the magnitude of her business commitments and her determination to succeed becomes even more remarkable.

"I have some daily non-negotiables so I can work at this level," she says. "I don't drink alcohol, I eat whole foods and I avoid extra sugar. I'm strict on my coffee intake. I go to sleep every night at 9:00 PM and sleep for nine hours. I exercise every day, I don't watch a lot of TV and I read a lot.

"In life and work, no one's going to save you. You have to own it. If you want to change your outcomes, you need to do it yourself."

Her advice to build discipline is simple.

"Get on with it. Even when you don't feel like doing it, do it anyway."

Replenishing is a vital tool for anyone working at this level. For Emma, sleep and exercise recharge her batteries.

"They're really important. I'm also a family person. I have a young daughter, so my weekends are just with her and my husband and my good friends."

Staying ahead

A big part of Emma's success is mastery of change, and it stems from when she chose her emerging business over her corporate career.

"Pivoting from technology to skincare meant I had to upskill with new knowledge and establish how to apply it for success. I took the skills I grew during my technology career and made them work in my business. Porsche has done exactly the same with vehicle electrification. It's still a Porsche, regardless of how it gets its power."

Emma says her 'how' also makes it into every product she sells, emphasising it's the most important place she applies her hard-won knowledge.

"When you are formulating with 25 really active natural ingredients you need to stabilise them in a formulation and do it in ways that give them a feeling of luxury. That entails a lot of complexity, which is where the craftsmanship and art come in."

She could easily be referring to the Porsche Macan, a car she says, "also embodies innovation, excellence and quality."

"There's a real genuineness to Porsche's craft. Like our products, so much thoughtfulness clearly goes into these cars."

woman with drive

woman with drive is an online content platform from Porsche Cars Australia that celebrates and empowers women with inspiring and vibrant stories. woman with drive has published a number of stand-out campaigns, including the Women at PCA Series. It also brings together Australia's trailblazing women at Porsche's annual Woman with Drive event during the annual Formula 1® Australian Grand Prix.

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