

Florence Adepoju, better known as 'Flow', is a true entrepreneur. At 22 years old and with ABSc (Hons) Cosmetic Science, the trailblazer set up her cult beauty brand MDMflow. With her bold range of lipsticks, inspired by the glamour associated with hip-hop music and street culture, Flow has single handedly created one of the most innovative beauty brands in the modern era. It's clear to see why Forbes included her in their 2018 Top 30 under 30 Podcast series. MDMflow is already stocked at Boots.com, Harvey Nichols and Nasty Gal and sends a very clear message: be you, loud and proud. Flow is also part of Speakers Corner 30 Under 30 Rising Stars.

Flow has always had a passion for STEM subjects. She had always planned to be a pharmacist, until a summer job on a make-up counter allowed her to realise she could combine her two passions – science and make-up and become a cosmetic scientist. After seeing a YouTube video of cosmetic science students at the London College of Fashion formulating foundations, Flow made a passionate application for the BSc (Hons) Cosmetic Science and she was offered a place on the course on the spot.

During her time at London College of Fashion, Flow worked part-time as a beauty assistant and was exposed to several luxury brands. While working for these brands she became obsessed with a particular niche in the market. Established make-up giants weren't experimenting with new technology, and they weren't producing exciting and inclusive colour palettes that worked on Black and Asian skin.

As part of her dissertation, Florence had to put together a hypothetical business plan and social media campaign. "I got a bit carried away with it", she admitted. Once she had qualified with BSc (Hons) in Cosmetic Science at London College of Fashion, her provisional plan turned into reality when she applied for a business grant from the university, which she used to set up a lab – complete with scales and moulds – in her parents' garden shed in Essex.

Flow says, "I read somewhere that Henry Ford built his first car in a shed, so I figured if he could build a car in a shed, I could make lipsticks in a shed". Those lipsticks became her first best-selling line.

Since launching MDMflow, Flow is on a mission to address the lack of women in science and to promote STEM careers to school girls across the UK. She was recently selected as a UN Mentor for International Day of the Girl Child. As well as increasing the numbers of women in STEM careers, she is extremely passionate about promoting diversity in the beauty industry. Her dream is "that in the next 10 years, the beauty industry will be so transformed that anyone from anywhere can walk into a store and everything will be available to them" and when Lena Dunham 'fangirls' you and orders every single one of your lipsticks, you know you're on to something good...