

Talking beauty standards and the business of content creation with Ofentse Lekwane

 By [Lauren Hartzenberg](#)

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Ofentse Lekwane is a 32-year-old operations manager and budding social media influencer advocating for more diversity in the beauty space.



Ofentse Lekwane. Source: Nivea

Hailing from the mining town of Bapong and currently residing in Pretoria, Lekwane was awarded a top 10 spot in Nivea's Skinfluencer search in 2020.

Skincare brand Nivea launched the countrywide search last year, giving 10 emerging digital influencers a platform and the tools and skills needed to launch a career in the influencer marketing space and contribute to the creation of quality skincare and beauty content in South Africa from a diverse range of voices.

As the skincare brand tallies the overwhelming response to its 2021 influencer search, with the top 50 being announced on 10 November, Lekwane reflects on the year-long journey as a Nivea Skinfluencer saying, "Being chosen as one of the top 10 Skinfluencers in 2020 gave me the opportunity to bring diversity into the beauty space, share my skin challenges and debunk myths about albinism. It has been so rewarding to be part of a movement that redefines societal beauty standards."

Here, Lekwane shares more on her influencer learnings and ambitions, and the promising evolution of beauty ideals she's witnessing and championing through her social platform.

 ***As an advocate for more diverse representations of beauty, what does this term 'diverse beauty' mean to you?***

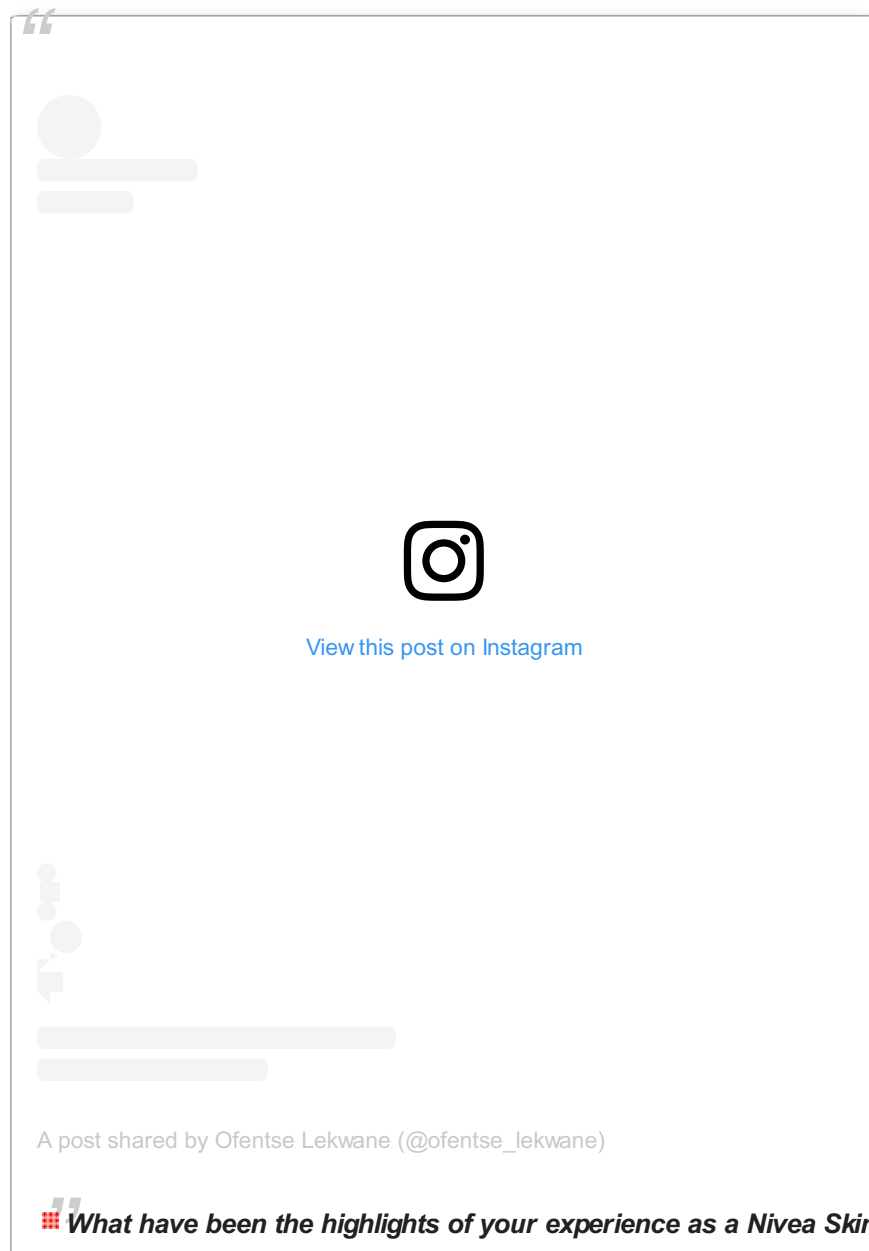
It means not having a 'mould of beauty standards for people to fit into' but instead embracing the nuances of human features, the different details, the different expressions of beauty and allowing people to be who they are without the

pressure of conformity.

■ ***Now in your early 30s, how have you witnessed mainstream beauty ideals evolve as you've grown up?***

I grew up not being embraced as 'beautiful' and instead being thought of alongside any and all negative stereotypes that I care not to indulge in. Then all of a sudden, the world opened itself up to new thoughts, new faces and new ideas and my face became 'likeable' and even gorgeous to some.

I can't pinpoint a specific moment to this evolution but I know now that my standout features, the very same ones that were previously not accepted as normal, are now doted upon and being seen.



■ ***What have been the highlights of your experience as a Nivea Skinfluencer?***

Meeting the rest of the Nivea Skinfluencers and making friends with them. These ladies are a bunch of feisty, beautiful women and sharing space with them was amazing. We felt like a tribe.

■ ***During your Nivea Skinfluencer journey, what have been some of the key lessons you've learned about the business of content creation for a social audience?***

It's not a game and there is learning to do. What we see as pretty pictures and mood boards on Instagram is, in fact, a series of well thought out, curated and creative works of self-expression from content creators. It takes time, commitment, creativity and a winning attitude to be so good and so consistent all the time. I'd like to give a huge shout-out to all local content creators for making their mark.

❏ ***Can you touch on the responsibility that influencers have when communicating with their followers, considering the impact this could have?***

I think all people with a public platform should always strive to make their platform a positive expression of life when it is possible and helpful to do so. So, while things don't always have to be perfect, I think their perfection should sit in the authenticity of the messages, the content, and the stories being shared with the public.

On the other hand, I do realise that the challenge with social media is that, while it feels like a 'competitive sport with spectators, a field and all the makings of a sport', it unfortunately does not have a set of rules we can all work and take cues from. So, it is a tough space to play in and the learnings will likely be hard along the way.

While I think we can set standards for responsible social media behaviour, we should also allow the people who participate on this medium to make some mistakes while giving them room to learn.

❏ ***What do you view as the key tools of your trade as a beauty influencer?***

- Good backgrounds are the hardest but 'make or break' tools for me.
- Then, I know now that my light game needs to get much, much better. So the sun is starting to be my friend - a bit :)
- And lastly, a creative mind can make magic out of simple things.

❏ ***How do you unplug?***

Music is my go-to plug to unplug. I also do a lot of journaling and listening to my thoughts. Then, time outdoors also helps me a lot - I love going to parks, although I have not been there in a while I intend to get back to that very soon as it's almost summer.



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■ **What are some of your must-have products in your beauty and skincare arsenal?**

- Sunscreen - Nivea Sun Protect & Moisture SPF 50+ Moisturising sunscreen to be exact
- Sanitiser is now a thing for all of us I suppose
- My skin tone allows me to play around with lipsticks so you will catch me with two or three in a bag all the time.
- Then, did I mention sunscreen :)

■ **What's next for Ofentse Lekwane?**

I am trying to encourage Nivea to make me a full time ambassador because I am *obsessed* with Nivea products, so holding all thumbs for that :)

I am also fully embracing the other opportunities that come with having been a Skinfluencer, such as talking to brands, refining my content creation and trying to learn from some of my role models. But effectively the idea is to continue on this journey, to always advocate for varied beauty standards and concepts and to keep inspiring others to put themselves out there while also being brave myself.

ABOUT LAUREN HARTZENBERG

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