



Keynote Speaker

Toni Ko

Founder & Previous
Chairwoman
NYX Cosmetics
and
CEO
Butter Ventures

Professional Biography

Toni Ko is the founder of the multi-million dollar cosmetics brand NYX, which was recently acquired by the largest beauty company in the world, L’Oreal. Discovering a gap in the cosmetics market between prestige brands sold in department stores and mass brands sold in drugstores, Ko created NYX in 1999, with the goal of delivering professional, richly pigmented products at affordable prices. Working as a one-woman show from a 600-square-foot showroom in California, Ko began selling a single item – makeup pencils. She impressively generated two million dollars in sales during her first year, and quickly grew to become a leader in the color cosmetics industry, gaining the respect of such retail giants as Target, CVS and Ulta.

Ko credits her family as the primary influence on her education in the beauty business, having worked in their family-owned beauty supply store in Los Angeles, which her mother opened shortly after they immigrated from Korea when she was 13 years old. By the time Ko was 25, she had amassed over a decade of experience in the beauty industry, and was ready to find her own niche. At the time of sale, NYX had revenue growth of well over 100 million dollars and is currently available in thousands of retailers in over 70 countries.

Ko has received numerous awards, including most recently, the Entrepreneur of the Year from the Asian Business Association, the Leadership Award from NAWBO LA this year, and the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Beauty Bus Foundation in 2013. Also in 2013, NYX was the WWD Beauty Inc. pick for Brand of the Year, a moment Ko heralds as one of her greatest defining moments within the industry.

This summer, Ko started the Toni Ko Foundation, where she will lend support to organizations that help children in need and those that empower women. Although the cosmetics industry is marketed towards women, Ko found that the majority of top executives are men. Therefore, she wants to empower women to have the courage to start their own businesses, and set higher goals to be the executives. Ko states, “The only way for many women around the globe to be more liberated is to become financially independent. I think it’s incredibly important to lead women in the right direction to achieve independence.”

She resides in Los Angeles with her husband.