



Get to know Patti Pao, Founder/CEO, Restorsea

**P**atti Pao embodies the spirit of an entrepreneur. She graduated summa cum laude from UC Berkeley and earned her MBA from Harvard Business School. Having started her career in the beauty business and launched more than 400 products for top brands including Avon, Elizabeth Arden, Guerlain, and Peter Thomas Roth, she has been at the forefront of game-changing product developments.

While hiking through the pure fjords of western Norway, Patti toured the largest salmon hatchery and became transfixed by the hatchery workers' hands. While their faces betrayed their age, their hands looked much younger. The workers' hands were consistently submerged in water; Patti discovered that the secret was a novel enzyme hidden in the post-hatching water. This enzyme dissolves the egg shell membrane, creating an opening that enables the salmon fry to swim through unharmed. On human skin, the enzyme only dissolves dead skin cells leaving living cells intact.

Patti recognized an opportunity to create an innovative anti-aging skincare line around this proprietary ingredient, Aquabeautine XL, that provides the same benefits as other leading anti-aging superheros without harsh side effects. Fast forward to 2020, and the range of 17 Restorsea products is anchored by this proprietary (20-year exclusive rights) and patented (35 issued) enzyme released by salmon fry during the hatching process.

Wendy Lewis talked to Patti to learn more about her journey to skincare success.

# WOMEN IN AESTHETICS

The Groundbreaking Original Series from Industry Vet Wendy Lewis

## WHO WERE SOME OF YOUR MENTORS?

My dad, Yih-Ho Michael, was my mentor. He was an entrepreneur and visionary who founded and took three companies on the Nasdaq. My mom, Joanne, is the smartest person I know (with the greatest collection of Chanel), and embodies the way we all want to age by maintaining her youth and beauty and her mind. My co-founder, Muneer Satter, is also a great mentor to me. The universe gave him the ability to see six moves ahead of everyone.

## HOW DID YOU GET YOUR START IN THE AESTHETICS FIELD?

I always wanted to work in beauty and fashion. In 1987 when I graduated from Harvard Business School, no one believed that an HBS grad wanted to be in the beauty business. I was able to leverage the HBS extensive and active alumni network, and my job search led me to meet some of the most interesting people. I ended up getting 10 job offers the day before final exams. I accepted a position with Avon Products because I felt that their business model, which revolved around producing a brochure every two weeks, would provide sufficient structure to help me learn the business. While at Avon, I was fortunate to be guided by three of the greatest dermatologists of the 20th century: Drs. James Leyden, Sheldon Pinnell, and Albert Kligman. These physicians taught me everything I know about skin.

## WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR WOMEN WHO ARE RISING STARS?

In the Chinese culture, the number 8 stands for good luck and good fortune. So, I try to incorporate it in everything I do, including Restorsea's fish logo. Here are eight lessons I learned on the way to launching Restorsea (*read this article at [ModernAesthetics.com](http://ModernAesthetics.com) to get more on each tip*):

1. Don't Get Stuck in the Box. I

found the greatest ingredient I have ever seen, literally, by accident.

2. [Politely] Stalking is OK. As an entrepreneur, time is your enemy. You can't afford to wait around for someone to get back to you.
3. Don't be Afraid to Put it out There Even if it May be Half Baked.
4. But, You Still Need to Write Your Business Plan.
5. Be Ready with an Elevator Pitch. Having a well thought out and concise business plan with a supporting financial model will enable you to do this; I found it helpful to write out the highlights and rehearse, rehearse, rehearse.
6. Know that Your Business Plan Will Be Wrong. Business plans provide general direction but, because startups are ever-changing, I make it a practice to rewrite our business plan every four to six months.
7. It is Very Hard to Take Other People's Money. It is easy to take the money, but it is very hard and stressful to lose it.
8. Help People Just Because.

## HOW WOULD YOUR COLLEAGUES DESCRIBE YOUR MANAGEMENT STYLE?

I think they would say that I am very hands-on. I found that in order to be effective, I need to be able to pull all of the levers. This enables me to be able to constantly improve. So, I do everything except batch, fill, and assemble the products.

## NAME A QUOTE OR QUOTES THAT BEST DESCRIBE YOUR PHILOSOPHY

My father's greatest advice; "Do what you love, don't do it for the money."

My mother's best advice; "Keep going no matter what and look your best at all times."

My Restorsea co-founder Muneer Satter's best advice; "When you are in a hole, just stop digging." ■