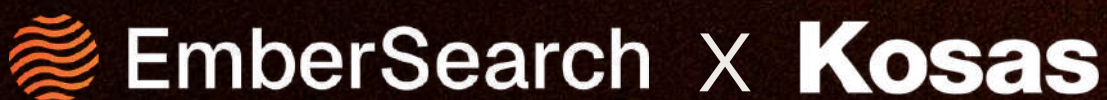


Case Study

How Kosas hired its CFO in 8 weeks



Chief Financial Officer /
Chief Operating Officer Placement | 2026

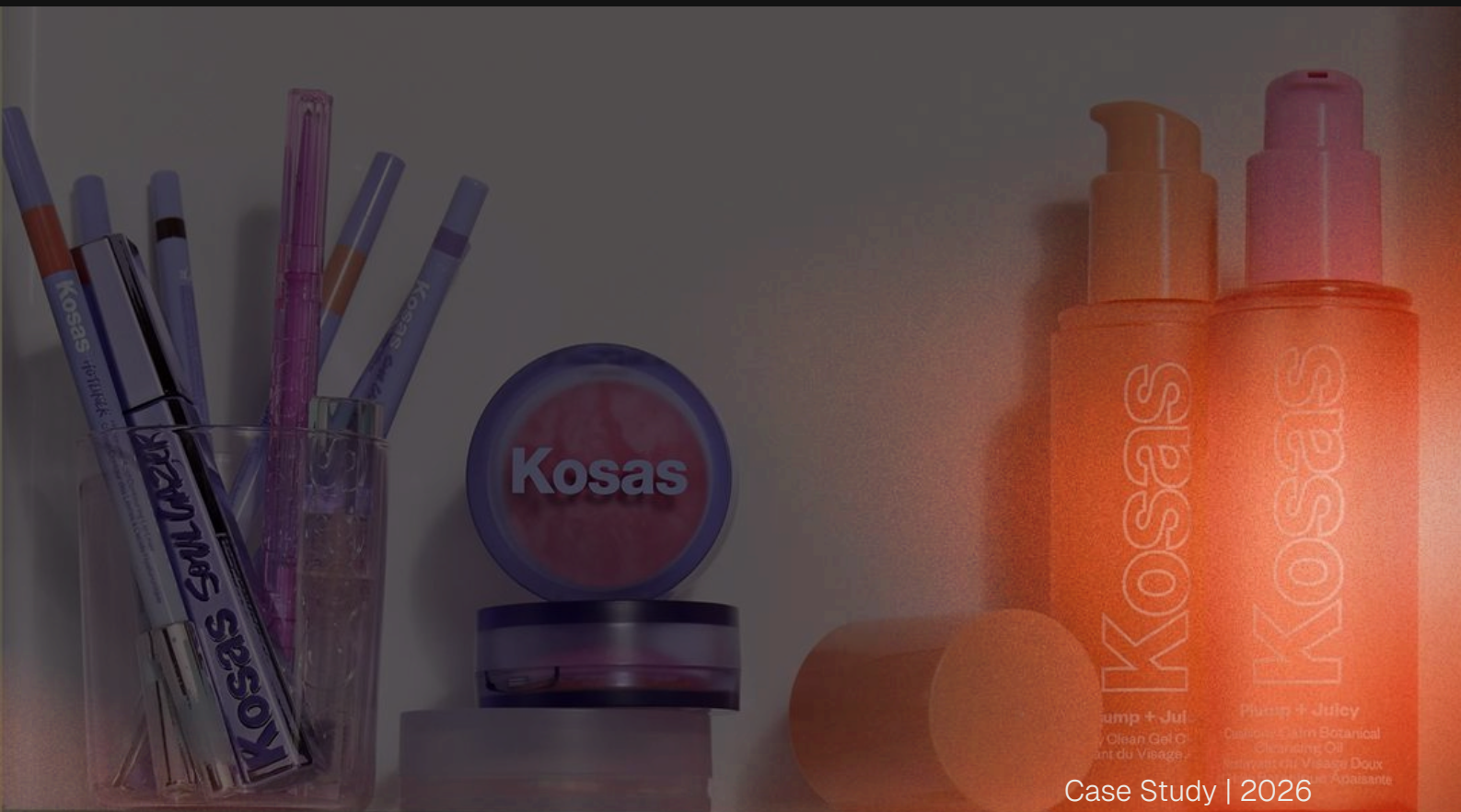
About **Kosas**



Kosas is a PE-backed beauty brand, backed by VMG Partners, building through its next phase of growth. This was Ember's second search for Kosas, and the relationship was already in place.

The brief was more challenging than the first. Kosas was mid-transition, with its COO stepping into the CEO seat and the outgoing CEO moving to the board. The company needed someone who could run finance and operations together: own the numbers, lead the existing finance team, and also drive the operational side of the business, including growing Kosas on Amazon and supporting its retail expansion into Europe. They wanted someone with extensive beauty experience, had operated in a lean, fast-moving environment before, and who understood what it takes to prepare a business for a transaction.

That hire had to be agreed and signed off before a fixed board deadline.



The challenge



Kosas needed a CFO/COO right as the business changed leadership at the top. Its former COO was moving into the CEO seat. Its outgoing CEO was moving to the board.

The company needed someone who could run finance and operations together: own the numbers, lead the existing finance team, and also drive the operational side of the business, including growing Kosas on Amazon and supporting its retail expansion into Europe. Real transaction experience was a strong plus given a potential sale on the horizon.

That made the brief narrow: finance and operational leadership, extensive beauty experience, based in Los Angeles, and comfortable working across a company and its investors at the same time. And it came with a hard stop. The hire had to be agreed and approved ahead of Kosas's board meeting.



How we work

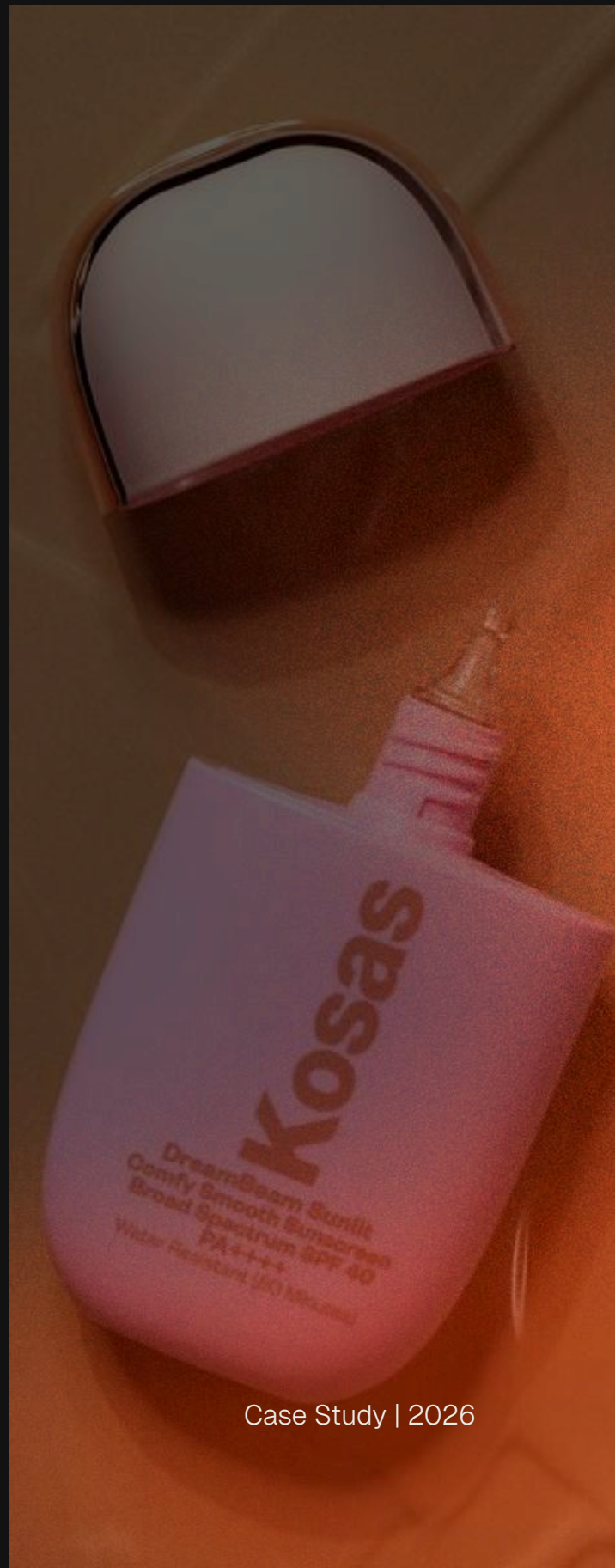


Ember already knew Kosas, and already knew which CFOs in beauty and consumer were worth calling. Daniel and Theo built the search around finance leaders who had both the operational range and the transaction experience the role demanded.

They worked directly with Kosas leadership and Investors throughout, running every candidate conversation themselves.

That's how Ember works every search, not only this one: no handoffs, and no fee beyond the upfront retainer unless the search succeeds. For Kosas, that meant Daniel and Theo staying hands-on with every conversation, until the board deadline was met.

Ember also advised Kosas on how to structure compensation around the coming transaction. Rather than a flat equity grant, they recommended a defined transaction bonus tied to the 12-to-24-month horizon; giving senior candidates a clear view of the upside from the outset, and giving Kosas a stronger hand in negotiation.



The search in numbers



145	_____	Candidates mapped and approached
79	_____	Candidates engaged in conversations
37	_____	Ember screens conducted
7	_____	Candidates shortlisted for interview
5 days	_____	From start to first introduced
70 days	_____	From kickoff to signed offer
May 1, 2026	_____	Confirmed start date



The result



Ember placed Darren Summers as CFO/COO.

Darren brought direct experience across beauty, finance, operations, and M&A. As CFO/COO at Vegamour - a roughly **\$150 million** prestige hair-care business - he helped double revenue in 24 months. Before that, he was CFO at Unilever-owned Kate Somerville Skincare.

Earlier still, as Senior Director of Finance at Unilever Prestige, he covered an eight-brand portfolio including Dermalogica and Murad, with responsibility for M&A evaluation and integration - including the Tatcha acquisition.

That gave Kosas exactly what the brief demanded: CFO/COO-level leadership inside a high-growth beauty business, and direct, hands-on experience of the transaction work still ahead.

What It Means

A CFO/COO hire made mid-transition isn't just a staffing decision - it's a bet on who steers the business through the next 12 to 24 months of change. Darren gives Kosas's new CEO a finance and operations partner from day one, and also someone who already understands what a transaction process demands.

The search hit the board deadline. Darren's May 1 start date was confirmed while Kosas was still completing its CEO transition, proof the two processes could run in parallel without either one slowing down.

In their words



"Dan and the Ember Search team delivered again. This was the second search they've completed for us, and once again, they made a tough finance leadership hire feel clear and well managed."

We worked with Ember on our CFO search and they understood exactly what we needed. Dan and Theo were thoughtful, proactive, and kept the process moving without us ever having to chase. Their network is outstanding, and they were able to quickly introduce us to a strong group of CFOs.

We ended up making a hire I'm genuinely excited about. I'd recommend Ember without hesitation to any founder or operator looking for a strong finance leader."



Taryn Montes
CEO, Kosas



Work with Ember



Work with Ember

Ember Search. 28+ years combined experience. 250+ searches completed. \$4B+ raised by placed candidates.

One discipline. No handoffs. Daniel and Theo, on every search, until it's done.

If you're making your first serious finance hire, this is who you call.



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