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Navigating make-up's new frontier

The make-up game has changed. The dynamic of 'fast fashion', where customers expect to see something new from their favourite brands on an almost weekly basis, has impacted the colour cosmetics industry. Even for large companies, the lead time from product development to launch has gone from two years to less than three months.

Now, not only do brands have to supply ultra-quick responses to market trends, but they have to do so within the framework of the certifications and legislation that govern formulas. It's an enormous challenge and one that is logically affecting the packaging industry as well.

Adaptable packaging solutions

Packaging providers must rise to the challenge on various levels. Firstly, their clients must have access to a wide-ranging catalogue of versatile, affordable and go-to solutions. Presenting these already filled with product allows buyers to see how it performs on the spot and enables them to make quick decisions. By working closely with fillers, a packager can ensure its solutions are validated with both formula and filling line.

This type of rapid-turnaround scenario is one of the reasons Quadpack's applicator tubes and pumps have become so successful, with brush, sponge and rollerball heads that can be filled with anything from lipgloss to blush and foundation.

Inspired customisation

Secondly, it is important to gain full leverage of materials and finishes. Brands need to stand out in a cluttered marketplace, and uniquely 'dressing' a stock item – personalising it with brand architecture and creating new accents to capture new markets – will do just that. Think of it as the way a high-street fashion retailer produces a best-selling dress in a different fabric and perhaps a change of sleeve; the form remains the same, but various finishes make it look completely fresh.

Smart packaging providers take the same approach: fusing standard catalogue items with their clients' identity and helping them extend their lines. In today's world, 3D printing and robotics can facilitate what were once expensive, semi-artisanal processes, such as metallic finishes, silkscreen and relief printing. Quadpack can finish compact plates with silicone, gel, wool, wood and even

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ceramic, for example.

However, this is not an 'anything goes' approach. Successful packaging concepts 'speak' to the customer, in their own language and with meaningful semiotics. Customisation is the new 'ready-to-wear' and clients should be presented with inspiration and options on the first meeting, again facilitating the reduced lead time now required to get the product to point of sale within the shortest possible time frame.

Trend influencers

Thirdly, we need to stay steps ahead of the trends. Who is influencing the consumer mind-set? Millennials are often said to be driving today's market, but so are other demographics, such as Baby Boomers and Generation X, whose references are further reaching and harder to define.

Fashion is the most obvious influencer and probably has the loudest voice, spoken through vloggers, brand ambassadors and the fashion media. But cinema, technology, architecture and interior design also drive trends – both macro and micro. For the Millennial and Generation Z markets, one of the major cues comes from digital culture.

Quadpack's response is a range of products with tactile, 'smart' gestures and integrated applicators, such as the Comb Tube for brow styling and Click Stylo, which delivers a precise dose of lipstick, shadow or concealer with a simple click. The beauty on-the-go trend is driving the demand for mini sizes and palettes, too, where users can mix shades and formulas in a mobile environment, while quick-fix blur sticks minimise pores either under or over foundation, anytime, anywhere.

Trend hot zones

Korea is currently the generator of Millennial make-up trends. Quadpack has its finger on the pulse with a local Korean office and a strong, long-standing partnership with Yonwoo. Nevertheless, other markets need to be monitored as well. 'Green' knowledge is at its peak and Australia and the US, two countries at the forefront of sustainable and organic make-up and skincare, are successfully tapping into this eco-chic zeitgeist.

Never before has make up and skincare had so many diverse cultural influencers. As packaging providers, we have the obligation to help our clients embrace these new challenges, and grow together in this exciting market.

– Sonia Cerato, Quadpack Make-Up Category Manager

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About Quadpack Industries SA

Quadpack Industries is an international manufacturer and a provider of enhanced packaging solutions for beauty brand owners and contract fillers. With offices and production facilities in Europe, North America, and the Asia Pacific region and a strategic network of manufacturing partners, Quadpack develops bespoke and customised packs for prestige, masstige and mass market customers. For more information, please visit www.quadpack.com.



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