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Beauty trends to look out for in 2024

Quadpack's Marketing team shares a distillation of the key trends in the beauty market in the year ahead

The world is facing mounting concerns from climate change and global conflicts, to resource shortages and the rising cost of living. We are all affected in some way or other, each of us adapting in different ways. In the face of a seemingly bleak scenario, the future is actually looking bright. Younger generations are focused on making things better in the most personal way possible – all the while being hyper-connected.

The trends now emerging reflect the diverse responses to the current global environment and the changing ways in which we think, feel and consume. Quadpack's Marketing Lead Marcie Bardauil comments: "It's all about being hopeful for the future. Beauty brands are adapting to the new reality and packaging has a crucial part to play. As soon as you see it or touch it, you begin a relationship with the product and the brand."

Trend 1: Made for me

The world is changing, and so are we – all of the time! We are becoming "Generation Flex". Why be pinned down by a fixed identity when, tomorrow, you might feel differently? After all, tastes in fashion, cosmetics and even politics evolve. Or you might have various personas simultaneously, both online and in real life.

This radical changeability demands ultra-personalisation. Artificial intelligence (AI) is presenting all kinds of opportunities for beauty brands, from digital diagnostic tools and virtual fragrances, to in-game launches. Shops become experiential spaces, for trying out products you then buy online. Brands connect with their target in new, memorable ways, with pop-up stores, festival events, podcasts and influencer involvement.

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What does this mean for packaging? Packaging can support this trend by delivering memorable and mindful experiences. It can be tech-enabled, connecting with online programmes that track your skincare evolution or that pre-select products specific to your needs. Unique formats can be designed to allow mix-it-yourself formulas. Above all, it should appeal to the senses. Haptic packaging can be endowed with audible closures, special shapes and colour-changing or textured finishes. Soft-touch packaging can hint at the feel of the velvety formulas contained within, or a glossy look can reflect glossy products.

Trend 2: Blue

The ocean is the inspiration for more of a movement than a trend: blue beauty. Oceans are considered as a resource to protect, as a source for ingredients and as a creative influence. According to the United Nations, “oceans feed us, regulate our climate and generate most of the oxygen we breathe.” It is also one of the Earth’s largest unexplored territory, inspiring legends of mermaids and other fantastical sea creatures.

Protecting the oceans is critical and being addressed in various ways. Ocean Bound Plastic (OBP) is preventing plastic waste from reaching the waters, although waste retrieval remains a big challenge. Beauty brands are coming up with waterless products and microplastic-free and reef-friendly formulas, but the potential for “blue-washing” is a risk. Ocean-derived ingredients like micro-nutrients from algae are becoming popular, harvested in sustainable ways.

What does this mean for packaging? Packaging, if it contains plastic, must also be microplastic-free and preferably recycled from OBP. Blue beauty can be inspired by the ocean with marine-themed decoration, a blue and green reflective colour palette, water-like finishes or “way-out-there” textures like seapunk neoprene or “mermaid” scales.

Trend 3: Quiet beauty

As consumers prioritise wellness, overconsumption is rejected and we see a return to basics. When making purchasing decisions, consumers ask themselves, “Do I really need it?” and “Do I really need a new one?” Nevertheless, they are willing to pay more for quality. Where purse strings are being tightened in other areas, prestige makeup is unaffected.

Quiet beauty emphasises simplicity and efficacy. Less becomes more. B Corp beauty brands are

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focusing on what really matters. And skincare becomes the new makeup, favouring natural, nude looks and a healthy glow. In this space, brands offer essential but high-quality ingredients to deliver justified value to consumers, who are more informed than ever. There are opportunities in accelerating the power of the mind-body connection and the transformative potential of psychodermatology and neuro-cosmetics. AI helps, here, too, in boosting efficiency and accelerating product development.

What does this mean for packaging? Packaging can protect high-performing products and natural ingredients with airtight designs or airless technology. Reuseable formats, using no extra plastic to create the refill, tie in with a conscious mentality and offer great value for money, as consumers want sustainable solutions that last longer. Noble materials like ceramic and wood fit well here. The look-and-feel is one of timeless elegance, a kind of artisanal aesthetic, with minimalist lines.

Trend 4: Oasis in dystopia

Volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous: it's a VUCA world. Young consumers, however, are working towards a "protopian" future, where life continues to improve a little every day. It is true that we are facing global challenges, but we have also made progress, for example, in water treatments, green constructions, renewable energy and sustainable food or material alternatives. It is an uplifting mindset, that embraces technology to blend the familiar with the futuristic, always through an ethical perspective.

Consumer pressure and brands' own sustainability goals are driving companies to improve their impact. In beauty, brands are launching products that respond to the world's issues with waterless formulas, advanced sunscreens and climate-adaptive solutions that help the skin adjust to the environment in real time.

What does this mean for packaging? Alternative packaging materials support the protopian vision of the future: biocomposites like Sulapac, recycled plastics, wood, aluminium, leather, cement, terracotta, cork and so on. Climate-adaptive formulas will benefit from some kind of protection, from barriers or airtight/airless formats. This trend demands a moody, dusky look with organic, but also brutalistic shapes. Metallic finishes and materials can help add that futuristic touch.

Trend 5: Looking for eternity

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The 60+ population will nearly double by 2050. As we live longer, the way we age is becoming more important. The focus is on prevention rather than cure, with holistic health and beauty routines. Science has proven that epigenetics (referring to lifestyle and environmental factors) are directly linked to skin longevity. Our cells are continuously exposed to a long list of harmful stressors, such as poor diet, lack of sleep, pollution and UV radiation, which can lead to health issues and rapid ageing.

Consumers “young and old alike” are looking for accredited beauty solutions: evidence-based supplements and treatments in the ongoing pursuit of youth. In parallel, our constant digital presence in video conferences, selfies and social media have given rise to a wide array of non-invasive aesthetic therapies and “tweakments”™, from cryotherapy to needle-free fillers. 2024 will see the big brands joining the niche brands who kicked off the trend.

What does this mean for packaging? Depending on the formula or treatment, packaging can be designed to help deliver on the claim, for example, by mixing actives with serum in a two-in-one pack or by adding a cold-touch applicator. Mini vials will offer effective solutions for mono doses. Aesthetics are pure, clean and laboratory inspired, while new creative concepts for nutri-cosmetics containers may, in turn, transform the look of the traditional “pill jar”™.

[Click here to download a complete copy of Quadpack’s 2024 Beauty trends eBook.](#)

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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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