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Trends in skincare – the eco experience

The purchase of skincare and cosmetics has always been a lifestyle choice. For most women (and men), the products they use on their skin say as much about them as the clothes they wear. Pioneer, statement-making scents such as Chanel Number 5 and Opium were the first to exploit this. Decades later, brands aligned their products with global concerns, such as HIV (MAC) and animal testing (The Body Shop).

A desire for sustainability

Today, if there is one issue that unites consumers across the globe, it is sustainability. The genuine desire to leave a minimal carbon footprint is game-changing every facet of our lives – from zero-waste supermarkets to ethical fashion, from eco-travel to passive housing.

In the case of skincare, the challenges of this new landscape are multiple. On the one hand, brands must make their customers feel good by offering products that are biodegradable inside out – from the formula to all components of the packaging architecture. On the other hand, it must continually strive to deliver new, engaging experiences for a consumer empowered by the information age, social media and a rising global consciousness. These challenges can only be met, or better still, anticipated, by brands working closely together with packaging agents.

Choosing the right partner

With packaging accounting for over 40% of total plastic usage, brands must ensure that their packaging provider adheres to ethical practices. So how can they do this? There are several checks and balances that offer the basic guarantees.

Firstly, and most obviously, read the company's CSR (corporate social responsibility) statement for their level of commitment on environmental impact. Enquire about what measures they have in place to ensure that the players in their own supply chain do the same, backed up with certification from one of the major governors such as Ecocert. Look at their catalogue; does it offer options for no-water formulas? If the company has its own team that is dedicated to researching renewable materials, greener processes and cleaner technologies, it is an assurance that innovation is a priority.

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One of the key drivers of Quadpack's new Design and Advanced Technologies department is developing sustainable packaging in tandem with investigating new materials and methodologies that meet brand requirements.

So, the good news is that today sustainability and creativity are more compatible than ever. Take the ethical Dutch company Teeez, whose paraben-free formulas come exquisitely dressed in vintage floral patterns. Or the finely-printed recycled cardboard used by Bleach London and Origins.

Companies such as the vegan-friendly 3INA invite Millennials to 'own' the brand via modular packaging architecture and in-your-face messaging, while prestige brands for the more mature user are delivering increasing sophisticated and sensorial formulas in packaging concepts that have high quotients of biodegradability, desirability and convenience.

Working in harmony

To achieve this level of harmony, it is vital that brand and packaging supplier work together every step of the way. Faced with short lead times, cosmetic product developers need to know that their new launches can hit the shelves not only in record speed, but also with the assurance that the product is respectful to the environment.

Smart, modular packaging, mix-and-match formats, digital printing and personalization can be achieved with recyclable materials and sustainable processes, but innovation must be built into the marketing strategy from the get-go. Striking the correct balance of engaging and green will take some effort, but it will make your customer happy. And the planet too.

– Julie Vergnion, Quadpack Skincare 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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