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The Rejuvenation of Skin Care Packaging

As three major trends impact today's skin care packaging, brands and suppliers are developing new ways to stand out in a crowded market.

Written by Leah Genuario, Contributing Editor

While certain beauty categories have faltered over the past few years, there's one that continues to gain strength. According to market research group Euromonitor International, the U.S. Skin Care Market has grown 17.2% from 2004-2009. As brands scramble to bring to market high-powered formulations, they also turn toward packaging that will effectively communicate brand goals, showcase product efficacy—and hopefully, claim a larger stake in a growing market.

To this end, three major packaging trends have emerged within skin care: medical looks, prestige tastes, and the need for packaging that performs.

Medical Look



Silkscreening and hot stamping can instantly upgrade a package, as demonstrated by the decoration on Rexam's 4-oz double-wall jar with flip-top closure.

products simply merge together without shelf appeal. When everyone starts to get on the same wagon, something needs to change to establish an individual identity."

For brands that choose to pursue a competitive advantage, Santana advises, "Get attention through shapes, earth-friendly materials, and decoration." He also sees a trend in merging "a clean, modern look with attention-grabbing colors."

Brazilian Peel by Advanced Home Actives is one product that successfully maintains a clinical feel while infusing individual style through shape and color. Bucking the white/silver color scheme trend so prevalent, the packaging is outfitted in bold hues of green and blue.

"The package graphics evoke a natural yet scientific message: green for nature and blue for medical/science. Advanced Home Actives is committed to delivering new products based on naturally effective ingredients and innovations in cosmetic and skin care science," says Mac Smith, founder. Another innovative element to the Brazilian Peel packaging is its use of syringe-like devices. The single-use, patented packaging has several advantages. It keeps two formulations—the peel and neutralizer—separate until the time of



37 Extreme Actives chose a luxurious look for its packaging.

Americans (and global consumers) have waged war against fine lines, sun damage and saggy skin. Contributing to the anti-aging arsenal, skin care brands offer a number of skin care products aimed at mitigating problems. Along with tantalizing ad copy and doctor endorsements, brands also tap into packaging to hint at clinical results.

"We are seeing a big trend in clinical looking packaging," says Jeff Hayet, executive vice president for global sales, WWP. This look, he says, is typified by streamlined shapes from top to bottom, white colors and strategic use of silver.

Rexam Closures has also seen a trend in clinical packaging. Common packaging elements for a clinical look include "uniformity throughout the product range utilizing white or clean, neutral packaging that conveys a level of sophistication," says Matt Marshall, global product manager. Surfing under skin care at Sephora.com quickly reveals the large number of brands that have bought into this clinical-look strategy. But as more and more products embrace medical-inspired packaging, some suppliers wonder if it's also the time to re-examine the popular trend.

"Ironically, the clinical look and feel, despite emphasizing efficacy and optimum product performance, is more often than not a turn-off for many customers—especially when confronted with so many similarly packaged brands claiming to do similar things," says Rebecca Goswell, global creative director, HCT Packaging.

"With so many marketers adopting a clinical or medicinal look, when you place these products on the shelf, nothing really stands out," adds Hiram Santana, director of marketing and new business development at CSI LLC. "Most of these

processes reduced new product quality risks and provided commercial-scale manufacturing capabilities out of the gate, adds Smith.

Packaged with four weekly treatments, the outer carton stands vertically to create larger graphics space for the Brazilian Peel logo. Specially designed carton diecut "feet" enable sturdy display of the vertical load.

Will the clinical trend—in its traditional definition—remain strong in the future? At least one supplier sees a recent shift. "Based on the projects we've been working on, we have seen a change moving away from the clinical look with several of our customers. Simple graphics are being used to provide brand recognition, but the package chosen for the specific product line has had a more upscale rather than a clinical look," comments Rebecca Holland, marketing director, Kaufman Container Company.

Prestige Trends



The packaging for Brazilian Peel communicates efficacy while also infusing individual identity.

There are two parts to the prestige trend: luxury projects with high price points, and mass products that look luxe.

Regarding the first, market researcher The NPD Group has noted that prestige skin care dollar sales have edged up 7% in the first half of 2010, as compared to the first half 2009. "The results so far this year are quite encouraging, especially when we see that total skin care has not just surpassed the results of the recessionary year 2009, but has almost surpassed the pre-recession year of 2008. New launches, excluding gift sets, are up almost \$20 million more than first half 2008, and specialized facial treatment products are up almost 60 percent compared to 2008," says Karen Grant, vice president and global industry analyst, The NPD Group, and a member of Beauty Packaging's Board of Advisors.

Sold at Neiman Marcus, Dr. Macrene Skin Results 37 Extreme Actives sets the bar high for prestige packaging design. Its outer set-up box opens like a lotus flower, revealing a heavy, frosted glass jar and a mother-of-pearl spatula in a velvet pouch. Foil printing and a rich color scheme ranging from champagne to silver to matte chocolate brown communicate luxury. Designed by The Design Spot, the packaging recently captured an American Graphic Design Award.

Prestige skin care's attention to packaging detail is not uncommon. "High-end skin care brands are constantly increasing their spending in decoration," says Alex Silberstein, regional sales manager for Mega Pumps. "The dual wall is an example. The bottle is inserted in a clear SAN/PET overshell and gives the product another dimension. Another example is the aluminum overshell."

The Look of Luxe

Although mass brands don't often have the same packaging budgets as prestige, advances in packaging technology, as well as some design creativity, can still give brands the look of luxe for less.

Jan Wilson, vice president of development for Taiki, has noted a blurring of the line between prestige and mass products within skin care, driving growth in "the masstige category," she says. "Many mass brands have changed strategy to align with this momentum. They are adding new products to their existing line or changing the look to a more upscale design."

A great way to enhance packaging is to focus on smart decoration. "If a customer is using a stock container, decorating techniques are always a great way to take a more standard container and give it a customized appearance," says Holland. Kaufman sees foil or metallic accents—like hot- or roll stamping—as a way to create an upscale look. The company also spray-coats custom colors onto standard bottles for another enhanced look.

Several suppliers also noted the use of labels as a more economical alternative to creating luxe looks. "Labeling and over-labeling are a clear trend. It is a relatively inexpensive way to get a multi-color look. These can be in-mold labels, heat transfer labels and pressure sensitive labels. The pressure sensitive labels allow the brand owner to use a single package and create several different SKUs from a basic unit," explains John Lamie, managing partner, Asia Dispensing.

With the mass-market brands, Silberstein of Mega Pumps says, "The best balance between time, price and aesthetic is the label." He adds, "The innovations in the label are perfectly in line with the market needs in terms of quality, price and in terms of environment."

In response to this trend, Kaufman has recently acquired a steam tunnel to perform heat shrink labeling. "The advantages of using heat-shrink labeling include the ability to label over compound curves, to decorate very unique shaped bottles and to offer 360-degree display areas with graphic interest," says Holland.

Are there mass brands that have moved into prestige territory? Goswell of HCT Packaging mentions two mass brands, Olay and Laboratoire Garnier, that have innovatively used "packaging design to capture the imaginations of the thousands of customers defecting from department stores to shop in more effective retail outlets."

Package Performance

Yes To, a line of hair and skin care products fusing organic fruits and vegetables with mineral elixir, recently teamed with airless dispenser manufacturer Mega Pumps to offer Yes to Carrots Daily Facial Moisturizer. The brand—with a 97.3% natural formula—enjoyed product protection, precise dosing and the reduction of waste by choosing airless technology for its packaging.



Padtech AS has developed a single-use packaging and dispensing system called the TransMit.

many skin care brands are searching for packaging that also enhances product performance. There are two main drivers at the forefront of this trend.

The first has to do with formulations, notes Lamie of Asia Dispensing.

"Performance packaging is what it is all about...lower preservative levels and active ingredients all combine to increase package performance demands."

Second, package performance is driven by consumer desire. "Packaging quality and performance is a component of the overall product experience. A positive or negative initial experience with a package could impact the overall impression of the product within," says Marshall of Rexam.

"Product performance is essential for a brand's continued success and our dispensing solutions need to enhance the customer experience. The package's pump performance is key in the second moment of truth—if the pump doesn't perform, the second purchase is at risk," says Eva Martin, MWV's marketing manager in Europe for personal care products.

As was the case with Yes To Carrots, dispensers often play a role in skin care packaging's performance.

"A continuing trend is for the primary package to offer a unique dispensing action and/or applicator," says Wilson of Taiki. "Beauty and skin care brands are highlighting these innovative dispensers in their advertising as an equal part of the product story, which includes formulation and package benefits."

For example, Taiki developed a triple roller ball for the Olay Regenerist anti-aging product line. Working in tandem with the eye cream, the delivery system "cools and massages the eye area," says Wilson.

In another application innovation, Padtech AS has announced it has developed and patented a single-use packaging and dispensing system enabling consumers to apply actives without getting any of the actives onto their fingers. According to the company, the TransMit pad is comprised of multi-layers of materials with a "pocket" to protect a user's fingers. Layers include a storage layer for filling and storage of the active; a custom layer that comes in contact with the surface; a utility layer enabling a soft edge; and a top and bottom sealing layer that allows for complete protection and shelf life.

Airless dispensers are also strongly represented within the skin care market. "There is a rising demand for airless products," agrees Martin. To meet this demand, MWV, for example, has introduced a range of airless dispensing systems based on its patented Rolling Below Technology, an innovation that eliminates contact with metal springs by utilizing a silicone, single-component piece.

Package performance enhancements don't have to be related to the dispensing system, however. For example, last year WWP launched an anti-microbial additive that can be added during plastic molding. And supplier Taiki noted the introduction of "dial-up 2-phase skin care products/packages, in which the consumers can increase one product proportion over the second product," says Wilson.

Finding the perfect marriage between packaging that looks appealing and still performs to expectation can be a challenge. As Santana of CSI LLC cautions, "It is not easy to truly get something that will be effective in the hands of the consumer because there is a fine line between effectiveness and novelty to just sell a product." For longevity, he says, "Quality and compatibility should be engineered into components from the very start."

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