

INNOVATION Acceleration

The increasing challenges of ‘new today, gone tomorrow’—brought about in part by rampant Internet exposure—have sped up the demand for innovative packaging in the beauty world. Here, highly regarded industry trends experts and top packaging innovators share their thoughts on how brands and suppliers are syncing componentry, technology—and effective partnerships—to best drive new product success.

A world-renowned architect designs a stunning fragrance bottle, while a metal coatings company provides a solution for the nail care segment. In today’s fast-paced beauty business, some of the most innovative packaging structures and finishes result from gleaming artistic talent and cutting edge technology from seemingly unrelated industries.

While packages such as these can tend to capture attention with their “wow” factor, many notable packages in the cosmetics and skincare arena stand out for their streamlined simplicity and impeccable functionality and usability.

Innovative packaging has always driven the cosmetics, fragrance and personal care market and as competition gets stiffer, brands’ desire for something new and different has escalated. Along with the considerable and daunting pursuit of creating packages that will

capture attention—and dollars—comes the added burden of an ever-decreasing timeframe for launch. And while the Internet has propelled sales of beauty products to new levels, the vast influx of products vying for attention from all reaches of the globe also shortens the length of time that anything can remain “new.”

Brands and suppliers are meeting the challenges of today’s fast-paced market by focusing on a variety of innovative packaging techniques, from componentry to production.

A New Way of Thinking

Amy Marks-McGee, of Trendincite LLC, notes the complexities of an innovative package in today’s global market.

“Innovative packaging evokes a ‘wow’ response and often creates an experience and interaction between the end user and the product. It can create a point of difference particularly on the shelf if the category is inundated with similar product offerings and end benefits. The aesthetics of a package can get the consumers’ attention and if the packaging makes the application easier to use or the experience more enjoyable, it can motivate a repeat purchase. On the other hand, if a package looks exciting, but is awkward to use, it can prevent a repeat purchase.”

Dr. Benjamin Punchard, senior global packaging analyst, at Mintel Group Ltd., tells *Beauty Packaging* that packaging innovation has many different ways of going beyond “wow” in expressing itself.



The sculptural cap and bottle for Donna Karan’s Woman were designed by world-renowned architect Zaha Hadid.



Clarins Skin Illusion, a joint effort by HCP and Cosmogen, completely integrates a kabuki brush into the container.



“I often see ‘wow’ packaging on the shelf,” says Punchard, “something that stands out because of its size or color or design. But that’s not really what I think of when I’m challenged to define *innovative packaging*. When I think of innovative packaging, I think of those packs that challenge or change the relationship I have with the product. That might be making me think about product attributes that I would not have considered being important before, or how I could use the product in a way or at a time that I haven’t before.”

He says sometimes these can be the simplest of things, even simply using an existing pack type in a new way. For example, he recalls when fragrances first leveraged roll-on packaging. Rollerballs, he says, “were easy, fast and discreet—particularly discreet as you don’t leave a cloud of fragrance behind you.” He notes another “innovative” advantage of roll-ons: “This also provides a scent at a great price point while retaining margins for producers.”

Fragrance Feats

Of course, the visible “wow” doesn’t hurt either, and time after time proves to be the initial, most effective connection with the consumer—especially when it comes to fragrance.

Marks-McGee says “Innovative fine fragrance bottles, which are memorable and recognizable, such as Jean Paul Gaultier’s torsos, Gwen Stefani’s Harajuku Lovers, and Donna Karan’s DKNY Be Delicious apples often create a following and are frequently collected because of their signature style and uniqueness.”

Such will undoubtedly be the case with Donna Karan’s latest fragrance launch, Woman, from The Estée Lauder Companies (ELC). The highly sculptural bottle and cap

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were designed by Zaha Hadid, an accomplished Iraqi-British architect.

Veronique Gabai-Pinsky, global brand president, Aramis and Designer Fragrances, BeautyBank and IdeaBank (ELC), further describes what makes the packaging of this fragrance unique—beyond being designed by a world-class architect.

“Zaha Hadid was inspired by the curvature of a woman’s body: voluptuous, mysterious and irresistible to the touch,” says Gabai-Pinsky. “The result is a sculptural silhouette that reinforces the individuality and sensuality of a woman.”

What sparked the partnership between the two creative designers? Gabai-Pinsky explains, “Donna Karan adores and respects Zaha as a woman, an artist and a friend. Zaha led the creative process to design a bottle that represents that individuality and sensuality of a woman.” While Gabai-Pinsky notes that Hadid is known for her exceptional innovations in architecture and design as seen most recently at the London Aquatics Centre for the 2012 Olympic Games, she says this was Zaha’s first time creating a fragrance bottle. “Initially conceived from a woman’s sculptural sensibility,” says Gabai-Pinsky, “the bottle is further shaped by functional and ergonomic considerations. However, these determinations remain secondary to the overriding formal language of the design that explores the essence of woman.”

While the design is museum-worthy in appearance, it was not an easy package to produce.

Henry Renella, senior vice president Estée Lauder global package development, explains: “This design created very interesting challenges for us. Quality and performance can never be compromised in any package that we offer our consumers. Firstly, several of our suppliers did not think it could be molded. We worked very hard at tweaking the design for manufacturability while making certain we did not lose the intended design. We also faced challenges in making the glass and bottle match perfectly. The design lends itself to be picked up by the cap, and finding that very tight range where the cap did not come off when being picked up but still was easy enough to take off by our consumer was not an easy task. Secondly, getting the glass bottle and plastic cap to match in color and in depth to create a piece that looked like one flowing design took many trials before we were all satisfied.”

The result is not only innovative, beautiful and collectible, but also fits perfectly with Karan’s visions and ideologies.

“The packaging for Woman is an evolution and a modern interpretation of the language that Donna Karan has always spoken, says Gabai-Pinsky, “one that connects the world of art and sculpture with fragrance.” She explains that it’s part of a heritage that began with the creation of the “iconic” Cashmere Mist bottle in 1994, which was designed by Stephan Weiss, Karan’s late sculptor husband.

Nailing An Industry Need

While the fragrance category excels at structurally sexy bottles, other beauty categories rely more on function—but that’s not to say they can’t be pretty, too.

In the fast-paced category of nail care, which is undergoing phenomenal growth, in part due to the do-it-yourself market, new launches, with new product technology, such as nail strips and crackle finishes have become almost expected. When long-wearing gel polishes took salons by storm, it was only a matter of time before they became a DIY phenomenon. The only problem was, with formulas so sensitive to light, how could they be sold at a retail level?



Through its precise color matching technique, Bottle Coatings can virtually replicate the color of the polish inside the bottles.

Powder coating is typically used in the metal and architectural industry, but it has recently been altered and reinvented and achieved new life in the gel nail polish category, as it guards the sensitive formulas from light.

Shivie Dhillon, president of Bottle Coatings, a division of Los Angeles-based Sundial Powder Coatings, says, “We never imagined the cosmetic industry needing the protective and chemical resistance properties that are inherent in powder coating. When we crossed industry lines we quickly realized that the cosmetic industry would not be able to assist us in what they were looking for.” He says that outside of saying things like, “smooth, glossy and block out the light,” they left it up to Bottle Coatings to find the solution. “We had to develop methods and processes to quantify how much light, or more accurately, what wavelengths needed to be blocked.” Bottle Coatings now has specs that describe various gloss levels, chemical resistance and smoothness.

The patent-pending UV protectant coating creates an adhesive bond between the powder and glass, which Dhillon says is no small feat, considering there is no natural electrostatic attraction there. He says, “This unique, innovative process ensures precise coverage for full protection, while also eliminating concerns about streaking or uneven distribution that causes unbalanced bottle weight.”

Powder coating, on the whole, says Dhillon, offers a greater shelf life than liquid coatings, works more reliably and, because of the technique used, preserves the original diameter of the bottle neck threads. Because powder coating is an eco-friendly solution, he says nail polish manufacturers can also tout this environmentally safe process for their industry.

Form And Function

Dhillon describes innovation as “addressing everything from staying a step ahead of current trends to disguising function inside the form.”

Function and technical expertise also play major roles at Cosmogen, which provides global solutions that combine packaging and applicators. The company has been a leader

in initiating the trend of multifunctional packaging—hold, apply and care—such as with its successful Squeeze’N range, in which tubes can be combined with many kinds of applicators that adapt themselves to the formula.

Denis Richard-Orliange, Cosmogen’s general manager, says packaging reflects the spirit of a brand. While brands are continuously trying to amaze their customers to keep them loyal, he says, “One of the solutions is to make them feel unique while developing adapted and intimate products, as if they were made for them only.”

However, he says habits are changing rapidly and favorite products become rapidly obsolete. This means new products are needed more often to satisfy this desire for change. But the change, he says, is quite subtle: Consumers want to keep both the markers that reassure them while changing. “This is a big challenge for brands and suppliers,” he adds.



Arkay Packaging’s elegant carton for Marchesa

New Is Not Enough

And the advance has to be real. No longer is the word “new” influential enough when touting an innovative product. And a creative carton, too, is now often key to increased value-add and consumer perception.

Mitchell Kaneff, chairman/CEO, Arkay Packaging, says, “There was a time when just putting a ‘new’ label on something was a

good selling tactic, but with today’s increasingly savvy consumers, it is not so influential anymore. I believe consumers now have higher esthetic IQ’s and are not fooled just by text saying something is ‘different’ or ‘new’—they want to see that it’s different.” Kaneff adds that innovative packaging “brings the senses alive with tactile, visual, cerebral, and emotional appeal—all connecting the consumers to the product in a positive way.”

Kaneff observes that as the population ages, “We are seeing greater innovation particularly in the area of skin care and makeup.” Trends, he says, are toward more complex designs and seeking increased value-add: “printing,

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packaging and finishing techniques accentuate the newness and freshness of the product being sold.”

Joe Cicci, president Color Optics by Arcade, also sees a trend toward upgrading secondary packaging. “Innovative secondary packaging requests go beyond unique graphics and decoration,” he says. “Unusual package shapes and constructions with different substrates are becoming more frequent requests.”

When it comes to decoration, he says that technology has helped the resurgence of foil decoration with the cold foil process by allowing the ability to foil and print in the same operation providing the affordability over traditional methods.



Arcade and Color Optics have jointly created PreScent, a unique folding carton package that incorporates the product scent into the carton itself.

The accuracy and stability of Arcade’s scent technologies and the quality execution of production by Color Optics have combined to create the packaging experience called PreScent—a unique folding carton package that incorporates the product scent into the carton itself. The package allows the potential customer to experience the scent without an extra sampling component being attached. Cicci explains that this technology also re-enforces the “clean floor” policy in many stores. PreScent can also allow for cross marketing, providing a convenient sampling experience of a different product on the inside of the carton.

Speed It Up

As noted earlier, in addition to always trying to break new ground, industry suppliers and brands have also been faced with the mounting pressure of accelerated launch sched-

ules and the complications of an Internet marketplace with new products that are at everyone’s fingertips.

Kaneff notes, “Products are launched to market quicker and quicker these days, so impact needs to be just as fast—and decisive.”

Key to success is a close working relationship with the client.

“Our best partners are our customers,” says Kaneff. “They team up with us to utilize our expertise, technology and insights in developing the perfect packaging for their product. There is a synergy between us, which guides the entire process. This collaboration is vital, producing the cost-effective solutions and innovation the customer is looking for—hopefully even exceeding their expectations.”

Cicci of Color Optics by Arcade, agrees: “A good exchange of requests and production capabilities between creative design, package development and the capable supplier drive the innovation for the package.”

Richard-Orliange expresses a similar sentiment. He says Cosmogen’s R&D, marketing and innovation team anticipates trends and drives R&D with the goal of always more and faster innovation. “On the other side,” he says, “cosmetics brands have a consumer’s view thanks to market studies or surveys.” So it’s imperative that they work together. For, as he points out: “Once the idea of a new concept has been accepted, it is still necessary to implement it technically and qualitatively, in tight deadlines.”

Marc-Andre Houx, president Shya Hsin Packaging North America, says, “Innovative packaging has always been important for our industry, but what has changed is the increased time constraint brands are under to be the first to market with their new concepts.”

Complicating the matter, he says, is that innovative packaging is always long in the making: “It takes time to jump from a concept to a validated system that actually works—and by works, I mean yields a solid marketing, scientific and economical product.”

To succeed, he says, it requires capital, time and planning. So requests for innovative packaging are now coming well ahead as a top partnership factor for brands to select their suppliers of the future.”

However, Houx says, “The paradox is that Internet communication propagates, in a matter of days, news of an innovative product in all the world meccas of consump-

tion. So what is innovative today will not be seen as such as long as it would have been a few decades ago. Therefore, the amount of projects requiring innovative packaging is constantly increasing.”

To be new and unique, Houx says innovative packaging has to give a brand a true edge over its competition, giving them time and resources to finance the next ones before competition catches up again. He says that time gap has to be a minimum of three years, “which seems to be a typical very minimum cycle for what is needed to put to market such an invention, from concept to re-purchase.”

But sometimes things have to happen much faster, and a close partnership can also prove extremely beneficial to all parties when time is of the essence. Such was the case with glassmaker Pochet’s delivery of Pink Friday, Elizabeth Arden’s new fragrance launch from rapper sensation—and now, new “American Idol” judge—Nicki Minaj.

Gerald Walle, president, Pochet, explains: “Innovation is not only about being creative, but also executing a launch in extraordinarily tight schedules.” He says Elizabeth Arden faced such a challenge when it acquired the Nicki Minaj license in June 2012 and needed to execute a highly visible launch with hundreds of thousands of bottles in the retail channels by mid-September. “All the components presented complex and interdependent challenges,” says Walle. “With the cap finalized just days earlier by Arden and Qualipac, Pochet got the green light to start bottle development with a requirement to ship hundreds of thousands of bottles only nine weeks later. Thanks to intense and effective cooperation between Arden, Qualipac and Pochet, and a high level of risk taking from all participants, development and production all happened on schedule for cap and bottle, and

shipments actually completed ahead of schedule.”

Walle adds: “The Nicki Minaj launch demonstrated more than ever that close partnership between all partners on the project was essential to succeed in shortening development timelines, yet also benefit all the upcoming launches.”



Pochet offers a new engraving technique applied directly into the molds.

Known for Innovation

Some packaging suppliers strive to accelerate innovation by being very proactive.

Anthony DeMarco, executive vice president HCT East Coast, says, “While many brands have their own creative and design teams in house, HCT is known for its innovation.” He says, “Our customers have come to expect new innovations consistently.” At HCT, he says, “We also tailor some of our innovations to specific brands.”

Customers of Pochet rely on its long history of innovation in fragrance packaging.

“Texture,” a recent innovation, stimulates the senses by applying visual and tactile impact to glass flacons, made possible by applying a new engraving technique directly into the molds. According to Pochet’s marketing director Lucie Ray-Lalanne, the intricate engraving process offers a degree of finesse 5X greater than what’s currently available on the market, and opens endless possibilities of customization. Patterns are sharp and accurate and can be used on any area of the bottle, including the whole surface, or specific parts, such as logos and lettering. Texture can also simulate

materials ranging from pebble-grained leather to woven rattan, and more, or illustrate abstract patterns, following the customers’ creativity. Decoration techniques, including lacquering, tampo-printing and metallization can be used to enhance the impact of texture engraving even more.

The Proof Is in the Applicator

As Arkay's Kaneff noted earlier in this article, there is currently strong innovation in the area of skin care and makeup. While this is evident in the cartons chosen, it is also obvious when it comes to a wide range of new and innovative applicators on the market.

Mintel's Punchard explains: "Innovations can change how you use the product, and the best that I've seen aim to help consumers get just the right look for them. We've seen a range of mascaras that have 'personalizable' effects in the brush. For example, Calvin Klein CK One Mascara has an adjustable, multi-look brush that expands or contracts for on-demand volume, length and definition. Providing that 'application help' in another way, Urban Decay's Book of Shadows IV [designed and produced by HCT] provided eye shadows in a case that transformed into a makeup suite complete with mirror, speakers and a platform for the consumer's phone to play 'how to' videos."

Clarins Skin Illusion illustrates another packaging trend of late—a joint effort by suppliers. The project was a close collaboration between HCP and Cosmogen. The pack was developed by HCP. It reveals a geometric design, which completely integrates the kabuki brush created by Cosmogen. The kabuki is composed of a short and dense tuft, designed in line with the product formula for a perfect application and optimal coverage. A specific and functional handle goes directly into the cover after use. It proves to be very handy especially when traveling.

What makes it unique? Cosmogen's Richard-Orliange says the concept of the integrated brush is unusual, and involved a technical expertise.

"Keeping the brush in the case meets high standard specifications," he says. It is held by rings gripped onto the aluminum handle. The formatting and mastering tolerances are very precise and involve technical expertise. Once integrated into the pack, the brush provides a harmonious and aesthetic appearance, making it a beautiful package.

We all loved crayons as children and that may have been the impetus behind the current craze for the easy-to-use chubby pencils—no mess applicators for cosmetic and skin care packaging that can pop into a pocket or purse. They can even be developed as hybrids, serving two functions such as moisture and color.



ICS offers chubby pencils that are airtight, watertight, retractable, top fill or back fill, in a variety of sizes and material options.

"Chubby pencils are a very versatile packaging option that is not only great for lip and eye products, but also for other formulations such as blemish balms, corrector sticks with SPF and other skin and face products," says Susanne Nichols, ICS CEO.

ICS has many chubby pencil options available including pencils that are airtight, watertight, retractable, top fill or back fill with a variety of sizes and material options.

"The airtight chubby retractable pencil has a sleek look and feel with a friction fit cap that sits flush along the barrel and no overhang," says Nichols. "It is a great option for lip balms, lipsticks, cream eye shadows, cheek sticks, concealers and more volatile formulations that require an airtight fit."

A bonus feature with this airtight pencil is there are four cap shape options and end cap options in either PP or aluminum. Caps are available with flat top, aluminum or plastic or rounded dome plastic top caps. The barrel and spiral inner thread is PP and the godet is POM, which offer good compatibility with a variety of formulations.

All chubby pencil options from ICS can be customized with a variety of finishes and decorations and the top cap, end cap or barrel can all be color matched to match the formulation.

Shya Hsin has also been active in creating new packaging technology for applicators, particularly with eye pencils and mascaras.

Houx says the fully automated manufacturer combines, in house, "a very high expertise level in mold design and

applicator concepts.” He says that over the last few years, Shya Hsin has brought to market unique new lip-gloss, mascara, lipstick and pen applicators “at both class mass and select market global brands.”

Shya Hsin has also been active in developing dual containers or dual ended packaging, responding to a convenience of use or requirement for mixing formulas. The company has also developed an over molding technique of plastic over metal or other alloys in “an automated, fast, precise and efficient way, that allows mass brands to develop packaging that looks very high end.”

And when it comes to really meeting the needs of individual consumers—Shya Hsin is working on an application technique that will allow the end consumer to customize the formula’s effects to their choosing, or to the configuration of their body features.

Simple, Functional, Practical—and Good for Travel

Marks-McGee of Trendincite LLC, also sees a packaging trend in dual- or multi-functionality, as well as small travel-sized or individual dosed packaging that address consumers’ needs for convenience and on-the-go behavior. As an example, she cites Philosophy’s Full of Promise treatment duo. Uplifting Days and Volumizing Nights features a straightforward package; one side is a morning treatment marked by a sun graphic and the other side is a night treatment marked by a moon graphic.

The collection premiered in Au-

gust, and is one of the first airless, dual-ended components to be launched in prestige skin care. Sheri Brode, senior manager package development, Philosophy, says the innova-

tion was created to optimize product shape and usability, while functionally being able to dispense the breakthrough formulas in an airless manner. She says, “The dual-ended design



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Shya Hsin has been active in creating new packaging technology for applicators, particularly eye pencils and mascaras.

extends the effectiveness of singular airless components to deliver a compelling, intuitive day and night routine.”

According to Brode, the treatment duo required the creation of tooling that was not yet commercialized. “We encountered resin and tooling challenges,” she says. “In addition, decoration initially proved difficult, as we had to carefully situate messaging in concert with the placement of air holes in the middle of the package. It necessitated a team effort across packaging, engineering, manufacturing and R&D.”

The airless component is a special polypropylene blend, with a polypropylene cap and pump assembly.

Also in the innovative “on-the-go” category, Marks-McGee points out Grand Central Beauty’s S.M.A.R.T. Skin Perfecting Mask, which offers what the brand calls “a unique convertible container,” which features a travel dish, four mask powder capsules, four booster vials, a



Philosophy’s Full of Promise treatment duo required the creation of tooling that was not yet commercialized.

spatula and a band, all packaged in a large plastic tub. For a portable, single-use application, users fill the travel dish with one capsule, one vial, and a spatula and secure it with the band. The capsule cap also serves to measure one dose of water as part of the mask formula. (For more on Marks-McGee’s thoughts on Innovative Packaging, please see www.beautypackaging.com).

Both Full of Promise and Grand Central Beauty’s Mask are great examples of product and package that combine to suit consumers’ needs.

HCT’s DeMarco sees a growing trend in this area. “Innovations where the product and package work together is a trend that has a lot of our focus. We are working on a number of new packages with this concept,” he says.

“Sometimes innovations are not always a complicated package,” adds DeMarco. “Bringing simplicity to packaging can be quite innovative in itself.”

He says when a customer wanted all that a woman fits in her cosmetic kit to be housed in a compact, Laura Mercier’s Get Up and Go was born. Lipgloss, eye shadows, blush and mirror are all contained in one sleek, easy-to-use compact. “Simple idea; innovative compact,” says DeMarco.

Grand Central Beauty’s S.M.A.R.T. Skin Perfecting Mask features a unique convertible container.



Good Advice

Simple structures, “wow” effects, supplier-brand relationships...all have their place in producing innovative packaging.

But, in the end, perhaps those looking to innovate should follow a tip from Mintel’s Punchard: “So my advice for those looking to innovate? Think about how consumers interact with your product or packaging, and then aim for ways to disrupt or challenge that.” *l*