



New U.S. Skin and Hair Care Products Address America's Diverse & Ethnic Melting Pot

By Amy Marks-McGee*

The Melting Pot

The U.S. is often described as a melting pot because of the diverse, multicultural mix of individuals. Today more than ever, the lines of ethnicity are blurred and individuals cannot easily be categorized by race. An August 2013 Op-Ed article by Kenneth Prewitt in *The New York Times*, challenged the U.S. 2010 Census Bureau's race question because it only offered five races: white, black, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Prewitt argued that "fast-growing population groups - (e.g. mixed-race Americans, those with "hyphenated" identities, immigrants and their children- and anyone under 30) - increasingly complain that the choices offered by the census are too limited. Further mixed race respondents argued that **the limited choice of race offered by the census was "even ludicrous."** According to the U.S. Census Bureau, between 2000 and 2010, there was a 50% (4.2 million) increase in the births of multiracial children! According to Packaged

Facts' 2012 report "Ethnic Hair, Skin, and Cosmetics Products in the U.S.," Hispanic, African-American and Asian population growth is far outpacing that of whites, with minorities expected to collectively be the majority of the U.S. population as soon as 2042.

Within the beauty segment, Packaged Facts reported "that during 2010, the ethnic hair, skin and cosmetics market grew nearly 13%, and during 2011 the market continued to grow to reach almost \$3 billion." Given the large and changing U.S. demographics, there are a diverse group of individuals with their own unique skin, hair and cosmetic needs. When combined with cultural differences this trend makes it difficult for consumer packaged goods manufacturers to create effective products that meet these varied consumer needs.

Curls Naturally

Curly, kinky, and frizzy are common descriptors used to describe textured hair. In the past few decades, there was an absence of easy to find, mass market products designed for textured hair. Additionally, straight hair was fashionable, leading consumers to spend time and money trying to straighten and remove their naturally textured tresses. To address this unmet need on how to maintain unruly curls, Michelle Breyer and Gretchen Heber of Austin, Texas launched Naturallycurly.com in 1998. Part of TextureMedia Inc., their website is self described as "the established platform connecting the world of curls, coils and waves." According to TextureMedia Inc., 60% of the population has textured hair. Luckily, there has been a plethora of textured hair care launches with a focus on curls targeted towards ethnic/multicultural consumers. For example, Mixed Chicks is a range of hair care products and accessories for women, men and children. The company describes the brand as "A curl-defining system for 'us'. Whether you're

black, white, Asian, Latin, Mediterranean, or any glorious combination of the above." Miss Jessie's Original salon in New York City and hair care line was founded by sisters Miko and Titi Branch who were born to an African American father and a Japanese American mother. Jelly Soft Curls hair gel, Crème de la Curl non-sulfate wash, and Crème de la Crème Conditioner are the company's newest products.

Julie Wilson, the Style & Beauty Editor for The Huffington Post Black Voices, reported that 2012 was the year "all about embracing, nurturing and/or transitioning to curly coifs" in her "Natural Hair In 2012: The Year Curly, Kinky And Natural Tresses Took Over The World" December article. This trend towards natural hairstyles has spiraled into the introduction of natural products without typical harsh, chemicals often used to relax hair. Jane Carter launched her first natural hair serum in 1992 and began expanding the Jane Carter Solution natural hair product line. The company's 2013 products include Hydrate and Restore ranges. Hydrate focuses on infusing moisture into the hair while Restore promotes hair growth and scalp care. Quench, a daily hydrator uses rosemary and sage while Grow Great Hair, a stimulator, uses ginkgo biloba and arnica flower extract. Kinky Curly is a natural, cruelty-free and vegan hair care brand for kinky, curly, wavy hair. According to the company, the products are made for any woman (or man) with thick, dry, frizzy hair and many of their satisfied customers are of Latino, Asian, Jewish and Caribbean origin. Additionally the company formulates products without alcohol, petroleum, silicone, mineral oil, carbomer polymers, wax, plastics, acrylics and parabens.

Camille Rose Naturals was founded in 2010 by Janell Stephens, a mother of five and a Vegan (does not eat animal products, eggs or dairy). The natural, vegan line features hand-made hair, skin and body care products centered on total health, beauty and wellness. Camille Rose Naturals Caramel CoWash Cleansing Conditioner is the company's most recent launch. It is formulated with rosemary, Witch Hazel, caramel extracts and oils. The product is free of sulfates, silicones and parabens.

Brian K. Marks is the man behind ethnic brands such as African Pride, 911 and Dr. Miracle's. He and his wife Nene Marks, a former model, recently debuted Nene's Secret hair care collection. The 7-SKU hair care line highlights an exclusive My Secret Recipe formula. The products are a proprietary blend of natural ingredients from Africa including Baobab oil, Kalahari melon seed oil, Ghana chocolate, Macadamia nut butter and African shea butter. SoftSheen-Carson's Dark and Lovely brand joins the natural movement with the launch of Au Naturelle, in 6-SKUs that are meant to hydrate and define "lovely locks" made with anti-shrinkage recipes containing mango oil and bamboo milk. Additionally the products are free of mineral oil, parabens and petrolatum.

SoftSheen-Carson also launches the Optimum Amla Legend hair care range in four products. All of these are based on Amla oil

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from India which is known for its hair rejuvenating properties. According to the company, the Alma fruit -also known as Indian Gooseberry-, is a Super Fruit rich in vitamin C, proteins, minerals and anti-oxidants. These ingredients nourish and revitalize both the scalp and hair fibers.

Face Time

A universal complaint for women of color is that makeup shades and colors do not match their skin tone. There are a handful of established U.S. brands such as Black Opal Cosmetics, Iman Cosmetics, Fashion Flair and Milani Cosmetics that specifically design color cosmetics to address this concern.

At the end of 2012 Iman Cosmetics launched IMAN Skin Tone Evener BB Creme SPF 15 in six semi-sheer colors. These products are formulated specifically for skin of color concerns including hyper pigmentation and discoloration. According to the company, to make the skin more uniform, the products contain a skin tone evener complex. The complex is enriched with acai, licorice and grape seed; and, to hydrate the skin, it also has kokum, almond, aloe, vitamins A, E, and C.

The Lip Affair Collection is set to launch with five new IMAN Luxury Lipstick shades in 2014: Hot, Scandalous, Taboo, Flirtatious and Kinky Pink. Color Splurge by Black Opal Cosmetics is a new range of color cosmetics in three applications - Lustre Gloss lipgloss, Patents Lips lipcolor and eyeshadow duos.

Milani Cosmetics is a U.S. brand that is designed to "mirror the nation's growing diversity and genuinely appeals to a myriad of demographics." Described as "True Instant Color," Color Statement Lipliner and Lipstick are recent introductions.

In June 2013, Fashion Fair, a forty year old black cosmetics company owned by Johnson Publishing renovated its "store within a store" at Macy's Herald Square department store in New York City. Known for their color foundations, the company created a custom blending bar that will analyze customers' personal skin care needs and create cus-

tom shades to match their skin tone. Desirée Rogers, chief executive officer of Johnson Publishing, stated "with darker complexions and multiethnic skin, there are so many different ranges of undertones, so it's much more complicated to find a foundation match. An increasing number of Middle Eastern, Latino, Asian, Indian, Caribbean, multiethnic and Caucasian women are shopping the brand. We don't want anyone to be turned away because we cannot match her complexion."

At the young age of 21, Kim Roxie, a black entrepreneur founded LAMIK (Love and Make-up in Kindness) Beauty in 2004. The company's tagline "Beauty is Revealed not Applied" follows suit with its mission to be "the first eco-chic makeup brand, including facial care and eyelashes." The products follow the natural trend and are paraben and fragrance free. They are packaged in post recycled paper components while the makeup brushes are vegan-friendly.

Next Frontier

New product opportunities for the future abound as the U.S. becomes a bigger and more diverse melting pot of multiracial individuals. According to Shannon Brown, an analyst for Packaged Facts, "Despite the huge number of Hispanic and Asian consumers in the US, the majority of ethnic health and beauty products target African-Americans...but the fact remains that US consumers of Hispanic, Asian, Arab and other racial and ethnic descent have their own product needs and preferences that are currently not being met in any substantial way by US health and beauty marketers." Thandie Newton, the British actress, and Kay Montano, a British celebrity make-up artist are launching ThandieKay.com, a new beauty blog about diversity, which they hope will be a unifying project appealing to all women regardless of age, skin color or nationality. In view of the changing population trend, thoughtful and successful marketing will be less about targeting a specific ethnic group, and more about solving problems for specific need states such as different skin colors and hair textures. ■



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