

First Impressions

Packaging experts explain what it takes to ensure that your products stand out on shelf, at home and in the customer's mind.

Tom Branna • Editorial Director

GET READY. Get set. Impress. Industry experts say people only have seven seconds to make a good impression. Packaging must work even harder, as consumers spend just three seconds eyeing store shelves before deciding on that skin cream, lipstick or perfume. Obviously, the clock is ticking for fast-moving consumer goods; the right packaging not only catches the consumer's eye, in many instances it can close the deal, too.

Yet whether a product wins or loses on shelf, isn't a matter of chance—it's a product of competency. There are certain elements that make some packages work and others fail.

"There is so much packaging innovation out there," observed Eileen Higgins, a beauty industry consultant who, before opening her own business, was VP-global product development at Avon Products. "Women want multipurpose, portable packaging that is slim and sleek."

According to Amy Marks-McGee, founder of Trendincite LLC, a consulting company that helps clients cull through, distill and translate pertinent trend information into tangible products, great packaging that is eye-catching and well-received by consumers must fit three criteria: One, it must fit the brands' concept and message; two, it must communicate the benefit or function; and three, it needs to be memorable.

"With this in mind, if a product has great packaging and attracts a consumer purchase, but it does not meet expectations and does not deliver the benefit or the applicator is difficult or messy to use, the consumer may be disappointed and not repurchase," explained Marks-McGee.

Not all personal care products get purchased on store shelves. When it comes to direct-selling, a lot of deals are closed in the consumer's living room or at her kitchen table, and that requires a more intimate connection between the product and the purchaser.

"It's about the experience and the relationship that the customer has with the consultant—that's our moment of truth," explained Marie Swisher, VP-brand development, Mary Kay Inc. "Packaging has an important role to play, but it is really just one part of the equation that includes performance, experience, engagement and connection. Every decision we make in packaging is designed to reinforce the story behind the product. We strive to

put products in consumers' hands that really enforce the product's message."

One such package is TimeWise Repair, a line that addresses the signs of aging skin. The TimeWise Repair packaging is an elegant pink, with touches of silver.

"It's a premium look," said Swisher.

TimeWise Repair utilizes airless technology in jar products, which is new for Mary Kay. The line, like many other Mary Kay



Ambuja represents art, molecular science, design and cosmetics.

lines, is available in a complete box set, which clearly illustrates how all the products work together, according to Swisher.

Another is Botanical Effects, which is targeted to a younger consumer and is all about easy beauty, according to Swisher. The packaging reinforces the natural positioning, with tubes made



TimeWise Repair has an elegant look and airless dispensing.



The color of the product shines through in Iman's packaging.

from post-consumer recycled material and cartons made from 100% recycled material.

"Consumer segmentation is important," explained Swisher. "TimeWise is for those with early to moderate anti-aging needs, TimeWise Repair is for older consumers and Botanical Effects is for younger consumers. Together, we have met all of their skin care needs."

Gimme Some Skin

Frederick Bouchardy, founder of Joya Studio, a New York City-based creative collective, summed up the successful skin care package in a single word: "clean."

"Obviously, consistency and exciting design are key, but I think a chic, clean concept is the hallmark of effective skin care packaging, precisely because it should communicate the effectiveness of the product," explained Bouchardy. "For me, nobody does this better than Legart Forschungs Atelier."

The patented packaging of Legart Forschungs Atelier's 100% organic skin care brand Ambuja really communicates the quality of eco-luxury beauty products, according to Ina Dimsky-Legart, executive director of corporate communications. "Moreover, it epitomizes the perfect amalgamation of art, molecular science, design and cosmetics."

Ambuja, derived from Sanskrit, means lotus and evolution and symbolizes purity, perfection and eternity, according to the company.

For Marks-McGee, however, standout skin care packages remain elusive.

"Although the skin care market has been launching new products, there aren't many that stand out for their packaging," she told HAPPI.

She did single out new additions to Unilever's Axe line as interesting. The Axe Deep Space Chill Out Shower Gel is housed in a silver, metallic-like plastic bottle that fits the concept and supports the cooling ingredients of tiger balm, eucalyptus and sandalwood.

The Axe Face range includes Face Wash, Shave Gel and Hydrator (2 in 1 post-shave gel and moisturizer) and is available in Boost, Chilled, Controil and Shield variants. All are packaged in sleek black and silver containers with a color accent that emphasizes the variant. For example, the Chilled products all use turquoise blue to connote cooling.

"Unilever's brand Axe has added new products to its collection and continues to use attractive and masculine packaging," noted Marks-McGee.

The men's category is clearly booming, said Bouchardy, who

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Winners of the International Package Design Awards, sponsored by HAPPI and Beauty Packaging, will be announced on June 19.

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called men more daring in their tastes when it comes to packaging. As a result, packaging runs the gamut from ornate gold leaf to streamlined silver products.

"The men's category will continue to grow as men continue to take better care of themselves," he observed.

Fragrant Beauties

Not every element of a successful package is universal. What works for a skin care cream often does not translate to an EDT; and some of the most intriguing fragrance packages are difficult to pin down, say packaging experts.

"Fine fragrance is probably the toughest category to describe what makes for a successful package because it relies so much on instinct and intangibles," explained Bouchardy.

Secondary and outer packaging must communicate the brand ethos and history or history-in-the-making, according to Bouchardy.

"(Fragrance) is more about experience than the other two (skin and color), so I always love to notice details that feel like they become part of my own story," said Bouchardy. "I love the new HYLNDS collection by D.S. & Durga, which comes with substantial rigid boxes and sleeves and an insert that describes each scent."

To help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the company, Mary Kay launched Dance to Life, a limited edition scent. The package evokes the swinging movement of a woman dancing, according to Swisher.

"It's all about loving life and dancing through life," she explained.

Marks-McGee singled out Marc Jacobs' new Honey fragrance bottle, which is similar in design to Dot, which is a play on polka dot, a common design element used by Jacobs in his fashion.

"Staying true to the brand, both packages use the same simple, glass bulbous bottles with polka dots," she said. "Using different color combinations, Dot looks like a ladybug while Honey looks like a bumble bee. The fragrance bottles are playful, recognizable and geared to a younger set."

Other fragrances that pop on shelf, according to Marks-McGee, are Alice & Peter Cupcakes' Eaux de Parfums and Pétale Noir, which recently debuted from Agent Provocateur, the sexy lingerie shop.



The shape of Mary Kay's Dance to Life evokes movement.

Colorful Winners

Finding a fragrance that matches your personality is nice, but finding the right cosmetic to match your skin tone is essential and the right package can make all the difference.

According to Karen Chambers, director of design and development, Iman Cosmetics is all about skin tones.

"Our consumers really want to be able to see the shades that we offer," she explained. "So we make most of our products with visible windows for easy shade identification."

When the brand launched in 1996, the signature packaging was a wood grain brown and ecru, recalled Chambers.

"We have since modernized the packaging and adapted it for self-serve retail environment in the US."

Now, cartons display the product through die-cut windows for easy shade identification. Also, some products are no longer cartoned, allowing for more efficiency in wall space.

"But we have kept the brand integrity by maintaining high quality componentry in contemporary, but recognizably 'Iman' tones of ebony-brown and ecru, with gold and bronze accents," she added.

Iman has enhanced the consumer experience in the digital age as well, by reworking packaging and in-store signage to include a QR code that consumers can scan with their smart phones and get instant access to the "Find Your Shade Guide."

The feature enables women to make more accurate purchases with the touch of a button.

"We have also grown our online business, which is exciting," said Chambers. "There used to be a concern in the industry that consumers would be reluctant to buy beauty products on line. But we make consumer selections easier with things like tutorial videos and other online tools that are virtual extensions of the live shopping experience."

According to Chambers, luxury will always have a place in the beauty arena.

"Women usually don't skimp when it comes to their appearance. Consumers are looking for luxury with added benefits," she said. "They want convenience, customization, information, quality

and an enhanced experience to accompany their purchases.”

The Rouge Bunny brand was born of the desire to bring opulence and beauty to those who yearn for the uncommon and the exquisite, according to company founder Nadin Eule-Mau.

“Like the purveyors of curiosities from days long gone, every item is intended to unfold like the opening of a box of memories; each detail reveals a pageant of small delights,” she told HAPPI.

The idea is to remind women of an era when love letters were the norm, not the exception.

“From the sleek feel of the carefully selected compacts, to the intoxicating scent of our fragrances, each product contains the enjoyment of a gift every time it is revisited,” said Eule-Mau.

Multipurpose Winners

Luxury and dual benefits are apparent on cosmetics counters, according to Marks-McGee, who provided several examples. Hourglass N° 28 Lip Treatment Oil is packaged in a luxurious and sophisticated chocolate brown applicator with a 24kt gold-plated, anti-bacterial palladium tip to dispense product and creates a soothing effect on the lips.

“The package looks expensive and reinforces the chic and cutting edge brand,” she said.

Higgins noted that recent advances in mascara brushes and applicators are providing a lift to lashes and category sales, while new foundation compacts feature interesting designs that are capturing women’s attention.

“There is just so much going on in color,” noted Higgins. “It’s all about

fashion and there is that emotional cord that tugs at women. The beauty industry is magical.”

Some of that magic is evident in Maybelline’s Eye Studio Master Duo 2-in-1 Glossy Liquid Liner that offers a 2-in-1 dual tip applicator that can create either thin and precise or bold and thick lines.

Similarly, Revlon’s new Nail Art line uses a dual-ended applicator. The Expressionist range features 10 colors; one side offers a solid color with a skinny nail art brush and the other offers a different color with a typical nail polish brush while the Moon Candy collection also offers 10 shades; one side showcases a holographic glitter top coat and the other features a dark cream base coat, according to Marks-McGee.

Kits are on fire because they address two key elements—portability and multipurpose, according to Higgins. She predicted that lipsticks will regain their edge as the popularity of gloss wanes.

“We were in glosses for so long, but today’s lipstick formulas contain new ingredients like Moroccan oil that make them more comfortable to wear with better shine.”

Luxury plays a key role in the upscale environmental and personal fragrance market too, according to Francois Damide of Crafting Beauty, Inc., which offers fashion designers, celebrities, retailers and smaller brands the tools they need to create their own beauty brands.

His company specializes in candles that retail for \$85-125 a piece and fine fragrance that go for \$125-\$250. That demand for luxury often translates into his customers opting for hot-stamping foils and other expensive techniques.

“Customers will spend more money to bring more value and more

Rouge Bunny—
inspired by the
Victorian Era.



attractiveness than just trying to save nickels and dimes,” said Damide. “They will spend \$2, \$3 or \$5 dollars to make it stand out.”

Damide said with the 2012 US Presidential election over, luxury has made a big comeback, helped along by healthy stock market gains and a resilient US economy.

“I’ve seen a big turnaround since January,” he insisted. “People are spending more on luxury in a wiser way. They want value.”

He recalled that prior to The Great Recession, the word “luxury” was thrown on to every product category and shoppers would purchase anything as long as it was expensive.

“Now, they want luxury, but it must have quality, craft and execution.”

Higgins agreed that luxury is back and people will pay for it, as long as they get the performance—especially when it comes to skin care.

“A lot of women will try a product once, but performance and results are what keep her coming back.”

Liquor Is Quicker

And what will inspire marketers and designers to execute winning packaging? While inspiration may be all around us, some packaging experts find inspiration in liquor. Not in the booze itself, mind you, but in the bottle.

“The liquor industry has the best packaging,” asserted Bouchardy. “The bottles are large and arresting. It is very valuable for a liquor bottle to be eye-catching on a bar shelf. I look to the

liquor industry for inspiration more than cosmetics, fragrances or toiletries.”

Others agree. Drybar, for example, is a new hair care range with distinctive packaging that was inspired by the “cocktail bar” concept, according to Marks-McGee. Drybar salons, founded by Alli Webb, offer blowouts only—not cuts or color—with a menu that features treatments like Hair Shot and UpTini.

In line with the company’s services, the company designed a line of tools, brushes and hair products aptly named the Hard Stuff and the Sauce.

“The bottles for the hair care products are evocative of liquor bottles and use playful names such as Happy Hour Blowout Shampoo and Weightless Conditioner, Hot Toddy Heat Protector Fizz Fighter and 100 Proof Treatment Oil,” noted Marks-McGee.

She added, “The brand’s message is clear and there is continuity in all of the company’s touch points including the services, packaging, names and marketing collateral.”

Whether the category is hair, skin, color or fragrance, industry experts say the beauty business is improving—albeit slowly.

“People are feeling good about CFT these days, but they are growing organically and carefully,” observed Bouchardy. “There is so much competition out there, you need a strong story that you can build on every day.”

Nearly everyone agrees that packaging plays a critical role in successful story-telling. •

Looking for a new packaging supplier? A list of them starts on p. 73



Iman's BB Creme