



September 28, 2015

Cosmopack Confronts the Future

By FAYE BROOKMAN

NEW YORK — Tapping technology for personalized formulations, the fusion of food and beauty, “green brands” and textiles infused with skin care were among the major trends identified at the Cosmopack International Business Forum and Exhibition.

Held Sept. 16-17 at the Hilton Midtown Hotel, the forum portion of the two-day event was a hotbed of innovations designed to keep consumers visiting retail stores. There was also information to ensure technology claims don't put marketers in hot water with the Food and Drug Association.

The overarching message was that consumers are more knowledgeable than ever, they want newness and they crave products curated for them. “Our shopper is always looking for the next best thing and we have to make sure we have new on the shelf,” said Shawn Tavakoli, founder and chief executive officer of the Beauty Collection.

The quest for personalized beauty is hitting fever pitch. “Brands and products have caught up with technology so we can optimize ourselves,” said Sophie Maxwell, futures director for Pearlfisher. She cited myriad examples from the 14 million downloads of L'Oréal's Makeup Genius to a new technology called MODO by Foreo, which takes an image and allows women to use a special printer to get an airbrushed replica of the look.

Other examples of customization include Selfridges' customized fragrances, Geneu which is an in-store DNA test to concoct personalized skin care and the opportunities from L'Oréal's work in 3-D printing of skin to allow for product testing.

Another consumer movement is demand for ingredients from the earth — either food (especially natural or organic) or natural ingredients. Fragrances have followed this cue and now other beauty categories are following. “Remember Chia Pets?” asked Amy Marks-McGee, founder of Trendincite LLC, “well chia seeds are back and most commonly found in natural health food stores, but we are also seeing in skin care.” Other food-to-beauty trends include coconut water, mushrooms seeds, matcha and coriander.

Wearable products will emerge in the years to come — either those to monitor health such as the bracelet Olive, which measures stress, or clothing infused with skin care are also infused with skin care.

The new breed of super products demands captivating packaging, according to a retail panel. “Packaging is the first thing a consumer sees,” noted Jessica Richards, founder and beauty brand adviser for the curated beauty emporium Shen Beauty. When she accesses whether an item is right for her Brooklyn boutique she eyes the package and then digs into the story and ingredients behind the products. Right now, much of her interest is in natural and ingestibles, especially those from Australia.

Marcia Gaynor, division merchandise manager of prestige global and exclusively owned brands for Walgreens, concurred. “It has to pop on the shelf and the product needs a reason for being.”

Authenticity and product stories compelling reasons to drive shoppers into stores, the panel said. Despite the rapid expansion of online — store visits are down 10 percent experts said; a resounding message from the session is that beauty customers want hands-on experience. “Our customers want retail therapy,” Tavakoli said. “They like to touch and feel.”

Richards said the store experience is so critical that many shoppers today are returning to mom-and-pop or smaller footprints with personalized service. Amanda Bopp, director of Macy’s consumer insights and analytics at Dunnhumbly USA concurred. “People want to go where they know their names. There’s a need for retailers and brands to work together to understand consumers’ needs and get underneath the skin of what is actually needed to drive her to the store,” she added. Compounding that move to make shopper memorable is the fact Millennials spend on experiences versus products — 72 percent of that important age group said they’d rather spend on experiences versus possessions.

Social media rules with Millennials and Bopp revealed statistics suggesting they spend 5.4 hours per day on social media. “One of the challenges for retailers is how do you get the consumer off Facebook and into the stores,” she said. Her research also encouraged retailers to add libraries or cafés on sales floors for what she calls “slow shopping.” The reasoning is the more time spent in stores, the more share of wallet. The demand from consumers for product authenticity is also ushering in an open kitchen approach to manufacturing with more companies demonstrating their product ingredients and processes through digital media or packaging.

Corey Moran, senior director of marketing mass fragrances for Coty, said neuroscience would lead to ways for store associates to detect shoppers’ moods. Infrared mapping can let sales staff know the best way to greet a consumer to help nurture brand and store loyalty. The initial encounter is key, he added, since shoppers have only an attention span of eight seconds. “That’s less than a goldfish with nine seconds,” Moran said.

With all of the technology infused in products, a panel of experts warned marketers to be mindful of claims on packaging and social media. Companies must be able to support product claims if mentioned on a Web site. It must also be transparent if bloggers have received free products. Concluded Sharon Blinkoff, counsel at Locke Lord, “New technology is exciting. You work hard to get margin for your product and to lose that money to the government takes a lot of time and erodes product margins.

Attendees also got to see the next innovations in beauty during on the exhibit floor including a special Innovation circle.