



GLOBAL REPORT

NATURAL AND ORGANIC: ANCIENT AND CONTEMPORARY

Whether viewed as fad or trend, there's no denying that the the beauty industry is living in the green moment. Contributor Red R. Thalhammer, creative director at Manhattan design agency Tripple Red, believes green has a promising and profitable future in the cosmetics industry, but that natural product packaging has some catching up to do in appealing to this contemporary mind-set. Read "Natural Product Packaging" starting on Page 52.

Packaging makes its biggest contribution to a sale in the retail environment. Jeff Falk takes a look at how retailing is changing to reflect growth in the natural personal care market, observing that not all natural and organic brands are including mass retailers as significant parts of their distribution plans. Read more starting on Page 56.

It is hardly a surprise that "Green is Mainstream in India," considering the country's rich Ayurvedic heritage and enduring emphasis on the use of natural products and herbs in personal care. In her article beginning on Page 60, Priyanka Bhattacharya reveals that along with that rich tradition, there is a growing awareness among India's young people about health, wellness and beauty. She adds that a consumer base attached to naturals is only part of the story. India affords advantageous naturals sourcing and manufacturing opportunities as well. ■ **GCI**

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NATURAL PRODUCT PACKAGING: Reflecting a Contemporary Philosophy

Consumers seeking organic and natural products look for brands that speak to their lifestyle approach. The packaging of such products must appeal to this contemporary mind-set.



In today's crowded marketplace, it is extremely difficult for a cosmetic product to stand out among the many others on the shelf. The current rise in popularity of natural products makes today the perfect time to introduce a whole new experience to beauty product packaging. It is imperative that companies place emphasis on packaging for subtle yet strong brand execution, and in so doing, communicate a contemporary philosophy while ensuring their distinct place in the natural cosmetics market.

Getting back to what is natural is not just a short-term trend; it has a promising and profitable future in the cosmetics business, to which many companies have already caught on. However, with the recent influx of organic and natural cosmetic lines, it is tiring for the customer to visually differentiate between the natural cosmetic brands and their generic counterparts. Differentiating between various

levels of quality within the natural sector is yet another challenge.

Research shows that approximately 70% of consumers' product-buying decisions are based on presentation. So how does a product grab the consumer's attention? To say it simply—it is the packaging, with all of its subtle cues and subliminal communication, that makes the customer notice a product on the shelf, pick it up, take it to the register and swipe her credit card. It can be asserted, without equivocation, that the lifestyle, tastes and purchasing psychology of today's consumers have changed vastly in the past 25 years. As that is the case, why then does much of the cosmetic industry turn to the same outdated packaging design that has ruled the marketplace over the past two decades? Products in the natural arena have changed yet the packaging hasn't—it is like draping a drab old cover over a swanky new couch.

Kudos to Exceptions

Jurlique just launched new packaging that reflects its vision of purity, integrity and care. The greatness of the previous packaging was in the consistency of dark blue type across the product line, applied mostly on white tinted glass containers and tubes. Each product had a unique appearance that echoed the history of the company's family-owned herb farm and business in South Australia. The new brand design has a coherent look with its beautifully shaped new containers; on the other hand, the graphics are not that different from other generic cosmetic lines.

Packaging design for most cosmetic brands is in dire need of a makeover. But to find a different path, we must first look at the patterns that have been repeated consistently over the years. Imagine the packaging of a cosmetic product. The picture that most typically comes to mind is a bottle or a jar with centered serif or non-serif type describing its contents. Often the label features a small icon above the font to add a visual kick to the presentation. Sadly, this simple yet unimaginative design still sets the norm for most premium brands in the cosmetic industry.

A major shift is needed in the area of organic and natural products especially. For this segment, the concept of health-conscious products has made critical advances but the packaging hasn't. Most natural products are still sold in containers that are pure waste. Consumers seeking organic and natural products look for brands that speak to their lifestyle approach. In order to engage and keep these consumers, the packaging of such products must also appeal to this contemporary mindset.

First and most important, the packaging of natural cosmetics should be biodegradable. With the right materials having been used in its creation, the packaging should make this fact very clear by using alternative visual cues to raise itself above the norm. Some brands have attempted to distinguish themselves through label design; however, the result often appears overly crafted and regressive, weak and cheap, or simply plain. Assuming that the natural product is of a high-level, sophisticated quality, why is there so little innovation and fresh approach when it comes to presenting it on the store shelves?

Consumers of health-conscious, natural, organic and sustainable products comprise a progressive group that is not afraid to try new things. When branding products for

such consumers, be daringly sophisticated, innovative and different. As the number of products targeting this audience grows, it is vital to sustain their interest on a sociological and aesthetic level. The modern consumer is asking for products that show true improvement on the status quo and wants to do business with companies that communicate honestly, passionately and with authenticity. These natural products must

present a healthy alternative to everyday living and stand out from generic skin care, both in the content of the product and in the packaging design.

The branding of natural cosmetics and skin care needs to be fresh and lively. These products should carry a message that conveys a certain luxury, special pampering, or that sweet skin pleasure not provided by a generic product. This message must be aligned

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A SAMPLING OF BIODEGRADABLE MATERIALS

NATURAL PLASTIC

Polyhydroxyalkanoate (PHA) polymers, produced from natural resources, is a family of semicrystalline aliphatic polyesters that are currently produced through fermentation from natural sugars and oils. They may be processed using injection molding, cast film, cast sheet for thermoforming, melt-extruded paper and board coatings.



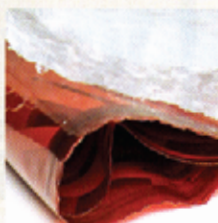
ABS/POM/PP

Injection moldable resins that contain a significant proportion of natural fibers. The polystyrene-based composites give a beautiful natural appearance to products in applications; advantageous, as fascinating outlook is a desired property, e.g. packaging of cosmetics. This is the first 100% biodegradable fiber reinforced thermoplastic composite. Standard machines, moulds, colors and methods may be used. Applications are for injection molded parts.



DEGRADABLE PLASTICS

A chemical additive to certain plastics that renders them biodegradable, commonly included during the extrusion process for polyethylene and polypropylene. The additives are food-safe and environmentally safe, according to DIN V 54900-3, and can be introduced into the waste management stream. Current applications are for refuse sacks, bubble wrap, news wrap, mailing films and fresh food packaging.



BIO PDP

This renewable resource resin, made from a corn-based polymer, is produced from 1,3-propanediol (PDO). This key building block for the polymer is produced using a proprietary fermentation and purification process based on corn sugar. Bio-PDO is well-suited for cosmetics, liquid detergents and industrial applications, such as antifreeze.



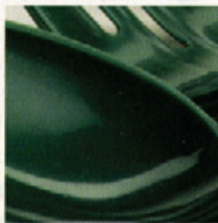
INNOVIA FILMS

Heat-sealable, biodegradable and compostable film composed of 95%–100% regenerated wood pulp, this white film has exceptional dead-fold characteristics. It is resistant to oil and grease, antistatic, provides a barrier to gases and aromas, and is designed to offer an enhanced moisture barrier for packing highly hygroscopic foods, such as sugar confectionary products, that attract moisture from the atmosphere. Films are suitable for twistwrap and overwrap machines.



CEREPLAST

A range of biopolymers based upon corn. Polylactic acid (PLA) is blended with other compostable components such as soy proteins, PHA, PHBs, or starch from corn, wheat or potatoes. The material is from 100% renewable non-GMO resources, is industrially compostable, and uses 40%–50% less fossil fuel than the manufacture of traditional thermoplastics. Ten resin formulations are currently available, optimized for extrusion, injection-molding, thermoforming, blow molding and extrusion coating.



Information courtesy of Material Connexion, a material consultancy and research center for architecture, design and material manufacturers. For further information, visit www.materialconnexion.com.

with the company's unique philosophy of contemporary elegance and the enhanced quality that natural ingredients bring to the product. A successful example of such a natural product line is Korres, of Athens, Greece, with its roots in homeopathic pharmacy. This inventive line has an engrossing and contemporary look that is mirrored both in the packaging of its products and the interior design of its stores worldwide. The combination of partially vertical type and pleasing product shots effectively communicates the pure ingredients used to manufacture the products. In this way, the packaging reflects the authenticity and honesty needed to attract new customers.

Structure and Art

To improve and support the differentiation between natural and generic brands, packaging design must focus on two areas: the container structure and the graphic art. In order to achieve concrete and innovative results, these two aspects of packaging must blend seamlessly during the process of creating a brand identity.

The entire design of a product, from the company's story and its purpose to its ingredients and packaging, should reflect a successful synergy. This is particularly important in the arena of natural cosmetics and skin care. It is in fact essential to leave behind the dull side of eco-packaging and use green materials that go beyond what is just recyclable. With the diverse range of new sustainable and biodegradable materials that have become available in recent years, the packaging of cosmetic products finally has a chance to pave a new road in this saturated market.

The next step is to find a source for new materials. Material Connexion, a consulting agency with an extensive library of materials, can be a helpful resource. The organization offers innovative material solutions for any business idea. Andrew H. Dent, vice president of library and materials research, says that Material Connexion sees a trend in materials development that works with nature rather than against it. The box to the right features a selection of materials that are biodegradable and suitable for container manufacturing of cosmetic products.

"We are learning that natural systems for the production of materials are by necessity more efficient, less wasteful and inherently beautiful," says Dent, "This selection mirrors this trend with biopolymers grown from plants, papers that either come from waste or act as compost,

and the naturally tough and resilient properties of agricultural fibers, bark and grasses.”

The market leader that sets a good example is Aveda, whose clear ideology is reflected in every product through the use of sustainable packaging. Another successful brand is Pangea, first in the use of 100% compostable, biodegradable and plantable packaging for its products. Created from recycled postconsumer newsprint, the brand is able to keep its promise—always beneficial, never artificial—by manufacturing the product with zero waste and without any glues or dyes. In addition, the off-center type and rawness of the drawings energizes the line. The combination of type, coloring and design goes all the way to the paper box, which reflects the beauty of all that is natural. Pangea has excelled at setting itself apart in a beautiful and sophisticated way.

In today's digital and virtual world, our body care has become even more precious. In opposition to all that is technical, metal and material, consumers ache for natural and organic experiences. When creating a package design for natural skin care products, it is therefore essential to speak to the senses and invoke a fresh spirit. To gain preference in an overloaded marketplace, the communication of the brand's story must be clear and sincere so that the consumer can relate to it and trust the product and its affiliated company.

An example of a line that succeeds in communicating a candid and natural message is the salon hair care line Modern Organic Products (MOP). MOP focuses on simple solutions to hair care that work in unison with nature. The translucent, clean-shaped bottle with a fairly small left-center type supports their mission and creates synergy. What

makes MOP outstanding and ultimately recognizable as a modern and organic product is the total emotional experience that its products reflect.

When discussing natural cosmetic and skin care products, it is important to emphasize the benefits of sustainability and environmental consciousness. Within a single product, this message must be integrated consistently in all aspects—from the graphic design of



MOP's translucent, clean-shaped bottle type and copy presentation supports the company's mission and creates synergy.

the packaging to the container structure that minimizes environmental impact. Natural products exist for use, not abuse. Designers must therefore not let the consumer forget why they chose the natural product over the generic. Consumers must be reminded every step of the way—from the moment they remove the product from the store shelf to when it is placed on their bathroom counter to when it is thrown into the recycling

bin—of all of the product's personal and environmental benefits. The packaging of today sets the standard for the future. ■ GCI



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