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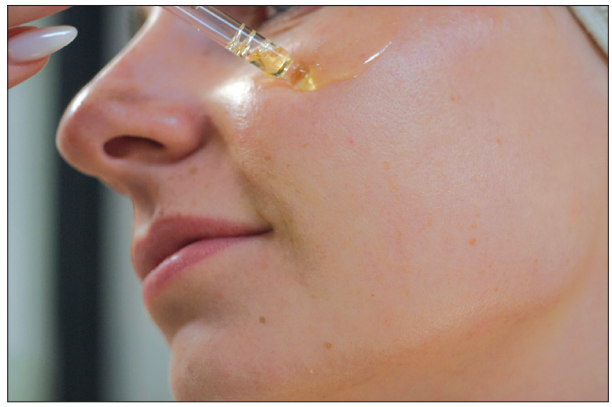
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Inside the Beauty Ingredient Shakeup

Beauty's ingredient palette reinvention is in full force.



By leveraging AI, genomics and biotechnology, scientists no longer have to wait for nature to provide a solution; they identify a specific biological pathway, such as cellular longevity or senolytic rejuvenation, and work backward to engineer the exact molecule required to modulate it.

The industry is currently undergoing a transition from traditional botanical extraction to a high-precision era of biological design. For decades, R&D relied on serendipity—screening plant extracts in hopes of finding a molecule that might influence skin behavior. Today, that iterative extract-down philosophy is being replaced by a pathway-up strategy. By leveraging AI, genomics and biotechnology, scientists no longer have to wait for nature to provide a solution; they identify a specific biological pathway, such as cellular longevity or senolytic rejuvenation, and work backward to engineer the exact molecule required to modulate it. This shift moves beauty into the realm of cellular programming, where topicals like Debut's DermCeutical EDLT or Mibelle's SenoCellTec are designed to mimic medical-grade results, targeting gene expression and zombie cells to offer pain-free alternatives to in-office procedures.

Simultaneously, there is a decoupling of the beauty supply chain from the volatility of agriculture and the environmental stigma of petroleum and palm oil. Through creation-based models, companies like Savor and NoPalm Ingredients are utilizing carbon-capture technology and fermentation to transform waste and emissions into high-performance, circular lipids. This represents a critical pivot for procurement and R&D teams: by adopting drop-in lab-grown replacements, brands can ensure supply chain resilience while drastically reducing their carbon footprints. As biotech-derived fats and oils achieve performance parity with traditional materials, the industry is moving toward a sustainable, resilient future that is no longer bound by what can be harvested from a forest, but by what can be designed in a lab.

Furthermore, the new playbook is finally delivering on the promise of structural inclusivity by solving the biomechanical gaps in multi-ethnic hair and skin care. Rather than settling for universal formulas that often fail to perform on diverse textures and tones, R&D is now focused on achieving performance parity through advanced dispersion and bio-intelligent shields. Technologies like Shin-Etsu's modified silicone dispersants are eliminating the white cast in mineral sunscreens for deeper skin tones, while Provital's 3D matrix technology provides mechanical strengthening specifically tailored to the tensile needs of textured hair. By prioritizing internal biomechanics over surface-level aesthetics, brands can create products that are both functionally superior and culturally fluent. ■



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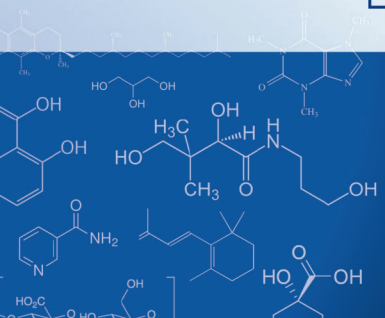
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Molecular Longevity and the Neuro-Urban Shield:

THE 2026 BEAUTY INGREDIENT AGENDA

Products must not only defend against the modern exposome—pollution, blue light, and climate stress—but also provide the sensorial comfort necessary to mitigate the physiological effects of emotional stress.



Givaudan Active Beauty is redefining ingredient delivery with VectorHyal, a next-generation micro-encapsulation system powered by hyaluronic acid.

Image courtesy of Givaudan

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The 2026 beauty ingredient landscape is defined by a decisive move away from surface-level aesthetics toward deep biological and emotional recalibration. As the industry transitions from traditional botanicals to high-precision molecular engineering, R&D teams are now deploying actives that can effectively turn back the epigenetic clock and modulate the neuro-immuno-cutaneous system. From extremophile algae that reverse biological age to neuro-active complexes that restore tactile sensitivity, the current agenda focuses on high-performance resilience. This shift reflects a new consumer mandate: products must not only defend against the modern exposome—pollution, blue light, and climate stress—but also provide the sensorial comfort necessary to mitigate the physiological effects of emotional stress.



EpiSnow from Mibelle Biochemisry is a preservative-free, water-soluble powder derived from extremophile snow algae that are sustainably produced through biotechnology.

Epigenetic Reversal: Targeting the Horvath Clock for Longevity-Driven Skin Care

EpiSnow from Mibelle Biochemisry is a preservative-free, water-soluble powder derived from extremophile snow algae that are sustainably produced through biotechnology. The active ingredient targets seven hallmarks of aging, including cellular senescence and epigenetic alterations, to effectively reduce the biological age of skin cells as measured by the Horvath clock. Clinical studies demonstrate that at a recommended use level of 2-3%, it visibly reduces photoaging, stimulates longevity factors like Klotho and AMPK, and repairs the extracellular matrix by upregulating collagen.

"EpiSnow has demonstrated preventive and rejuvenating potential," says Giovanna Grigolon, D.Sc., scientific project manager, Mibelle Group Biochemistry. "It effectively prevents cellular senescence both in vitro and clinically, while also preserving the proteomic profile of keratinocytes exposed to pro-aging conditions. In some cases, EpiSnow even showed a 'turning-back' effect, where treated aged cells displayed a biological age younger than the original controls. Although in vivo senescent-cell reduction was slight, it occurred despite sun exposure. Together, these findings position EpiSnow as ideal for preventive longevity routines while also supporting corrective, age-management regimens thanks to its demonstrated rejuvenating effects."

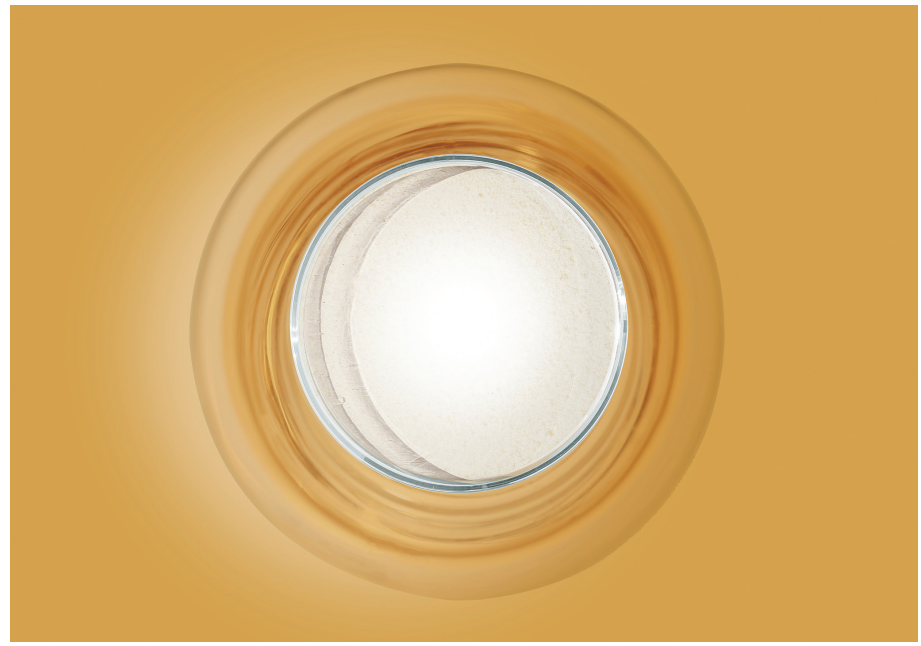
Grigolon adds, "Longevity and epigenetic skin care are going mainstream, but prestige and dermocosmetic brands are the most prepared to commercialize them. Prestige leaders already leverage advanced longevity science, making complex biology consumer friendly. Dermocosmetic brands add clinical authority, launching epigenetic products backed by thorough research. Masstige brands may follow as awareness grows, but they currently lack the scientific depth and educational power needed for such advanced storytelling."

On the formulation front, Grigolon notes, "EpiSnow can be incorporated into most formulations, emulsions and gels, except for water-free formulations. For cold processes, EpiSnow must be dissolved into the aqueous phase or added after emulsification. For hot/cold processes, it must be added during the cooling phase below 40°C. It is ethanol-stable up to 20%, pH-stable from 3 to 9 and stable in combination with surfactants. Positive clinical results were observed using EpiSnow in a simple emulsion."

Beyond Wrinkles: Neurocosmetics Target Stress, Sensation and Skin Health

Givaudan Active Beauty is turning a new page in anti-ageing with PrimalHyal NeuroYouth, an advanced neuro-active complex that targets the cutting-edge pathway of neuro skin aging unveiled at IFSCC 2025. By combining three selected amino acids with low molecular weight hyaluronic acids, PrimalHyal NeuroYouth restores cutaneous nerve

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Givaudan Active Beauty is turning a new page in anti-ageing with PrimalHyal NeuroYouth, an advanced neuro-active complex that targets the cutting-edge pathway of neuro skin aging unveiled at IFSCC 2025.

fiber function, enhances neuronal communication through NGF-like activity, and reactivates mitochondrial function in skin neurons.

Designed using biomimetic delivery concepts inspired by microneedling, it boosts amino acid bioavailability to regenerate sensory neurons, revive touch perception, and deliver powerful rejuvenation. Clinical studies on over 120 volunteers reportedly show +28% nerve fiber density, +29% fiber length, visible reduction of apparent skin age by over five years, firmer skin, smoother wrinkles, and the restoration of youthful tactile sensitivity—up to 30 years.

Givaudan isn't alone in targeting neurocosmetics. Nor are these technologies solely aimed at aesthetic benefits.

"Neurocosmetics leverage the skin-brain-immune connection, known as the neuro-immuno-cutaneous system, to influence how emotional states manifest on the skin," says Irena James, senior business development manager, beauty and personal care, North America, ingredients and specialties at Univar Solutions. "Because the skin responds to neuromediators, stress can trigger redness, irritation, and dullness, as well as accelerate skin aging, while calming inputs can support radiance and comfort."

James adds, "Modern neurocosmetic science bridges neuroscience and traditional skin care by modulating these neuromediators to help reduce stress signals, improve balance, and promote smoother, healthier-looking skin. The field also highlights the microbiota-skin-brain axis, where a harmonious microbiome can help regulate the skin's healthy appearance. Neurocosmetics represent a more holistic approach to beauty, addressing both visible concerns and the emotional experience behind them."

Stress is a particular point of focus.

"Adaptogens and neuro-soothing actives help recalibrate the skin's stress response, while sensorial cues like soft textures and calming scents elevate mood and comfort," says James. "Research shows that tactile pleasure plays a significant role in loyalty and emotional attachment to products, with textures alone capable of help improving mood. Even large-scale studies confirm that applying skin care can help lift spirits more effectively than meditating or receiving a compliment, highlighting the emotional power of daily rituals."

In conclusion, she says, "The neurocosmetic category is growing rapidly as consumers seek products that address both emotional wellbeing and visible skin results. Actives that calm stress responses, biomimetic lipids that strengthen the barrier, adaptogens, antioxidants, and microbiome-friendly ingredient technologies are especially influential."



"Texture-focused formulations, such as comforting creams, silky serums, and aromatherapeutic oils, are now essential, as sensorial attributes are strongly tied to mood improvement," says Univar's Irina James. "Ultimately, the most successful neurocosmetic products will help deliver comfort, restore balance, and support a holistic vision of beauty and well-being."

From top: Courtesy of Givaudan; Image by Prostock-studio at Adobe Stock



As the widespread use of GLP-1 medications continues to rise, "Ozempic face"—characterized by midface hollowing and rapid fat depletion—has become a primary aesthetic concern that Volpura EPO is uniquely positioned to address.

Image courtesy of Biocogent

James adds, "Beauty-from-within has also expanded as a consumer preference, with nutricosmetics, calming beverages, and stress-support supplements providing complementary benefits. Texture-focused formulations, such as comforting creams, silky serums, and aromatherapeutic oils, are now essential, as sensorial attributes are strongly tied to mood improvement. Ultimately, the most successful neurocosmetic products will help deliver comfort, restore balance, and support a holistic vision of beauty and well-being."

Beyond the Surface: Next-Gen Actives Target Ozempic Face and Dermal Architecture

The 2026 skin care landscape is shifting toward extreme structural recovery, moving past simple hydration to address deep-tissue volume loss and foundational skin failure. As the widespread use of GLP-1 medications continues to rise, "Ozempic face"—characterized by midface hollowing and rapid fat depletion—has become a primary aesthetic concern that Biocogen's Volpura EPO is uniquely positioned to address.

Derived from *Echinacea purpurea* using supercritical CO_2 technology, this active stimulates adipogenesis by activating PPAR-γ, the master regulator of fat cell differentiation. By



promoting pre-adipocyte maturation and triglyceride synthesis, it supports endogenous fat tissue development for fuller, firmer-looking skin.

In clinical trials, Volpura EPO demonstrated rapid anti-aging benefits, with over 74% of panelists perceiving improved firmness as early as week two and achieving benchmark wrinkle reduction by week eight. Its lip-specific variant delivered statistically significant improvements across eight parameters, including visible volume increase and enhanced natural color.

Because the ingredient is heat-stable at 85°C for six hours, it is a versatile choice for formulators creating hot-pour products like lipsticks and balms, as well as targeted sculpting regimens for facial sagging.

While Volpura EPO restores lost volume, TensylPro reinforces the dermal-epidermal junction (DEJ), the foundational anchor where skin health and firmness begin. Unlike conventional actives that focus on surface-level effects, TensylPro utilizes a dual-botanical synergy of *Rumex acetosella* and *Pinus massoniana* to restore cohesion between the dermis and epidermis.

It provides a complete restructuring of skin architecture by upregulating multiple collagen types—including COL3, COL4, COL6, and COL8—as well as elastin and fibrillin. Beyond structural renewal, the active directly addresses the inflammaging process by reducing key inflammatory mediators such as IL-6 and IL-8.

Clinical data confirms its rapid efficacy, with 100% panelist improvement achieved across several targets, including crow's feet and forehead lines, in as few as four weeks. By combining this multi-collagen stimulation with potent anti-inflammatory activity, TensylPro offers a longevity-focused approach to rejuvenation that revitalizes skin from the inside out.

Shield and Restore: Skin & Hair Meet Urban Defense

Susonity is arming skin against the daily assault of modern life with RonaCare Ectoin, a potent multifunctional ingredient designed to counter the visible effects of environmental stress. From UVB and UVA exposure to blue light, IR-A, temperature swings, pollution and chemical irritants, RonaCare Ectoin supports healthy-looking skin while visibly reducing wrinkles.



While Volpura EPO restores lost volume, TensylPro reinforces the dermal-epidermal junction (DEJ), the foundational anchor where skin health and firmness begin.



From UVB and UVA exposure to blue light, IR-A, temperature swings, pollution and chemical irritants, RonaCare Ectoin supports healthy-looking skin while visibly reducing wrinkles.

Clinically described as a "super moisturizer," it provides deep, long-lasting hydration and strengthens skin's resilience against dehydration. Ideal for urban defense, exposome-focused, and anti-aging concepts, this ingredient positions formulations to deliver both protective and restorative benefits in one advanced environmental defense solution.

"RonaCare Ectoin is well aligned with the exposome and skin-protection-as-daily-care movement, where consumers expect products to defend against more than UV," say Rebecca Vaiarelli, strategic marketing manager, cosmetics, and Chelsea Kincel, cosmetic application chemist at Susonity. "Think blue light, pollution, dehydration and temperature stress. For marketers, it offers a clean, easy-to-communicate narrative: a single ingredient supporting multi-stressor defense,

From top: Courtesy of Biocogent ; Image by william87 at Adobe Stock

wrinkle appearance reduction, and long-term hydration—benefits that translate well into modern claims architecture for 'urban shield,' 'daily defense' and 'healthy-aging' stories."

The experts add, "For formulators/R&D, the appeal is versatility: an ingredient positioned for protection plus moisturization enables streamlined formulas and hybrid concepts (e.g., day creams, barrier-support moisturizers, protection-serums), while supporting measurable anti-aging endpoints like wrinkle appearance. It can serve as a hero active in minimalist formulas or as a supporting active in more complex systems where hydration and environmental stress mitigation are key performance pillars."

"Urban cosmetics have risen in prominence as consumers have become more aware of how pollution, UV exposure and stress accelerate dryness, dullness, and premature aging," says Univar's Irena James. "Although the category paused during reduced city activity (re: pandemic), it quickly rebounded as urban life resumed, and environmental stress intensified. Today's urban-resilience products go beyond anti-pollution claims, combining barrier strength, antioxidant protection, sensorial comfort, and stress-supportive actives."

She adds, "The new focus is not just on shielding the skin, but enhancing its ability to recover from heat, microinflammation and environmental fatigue. This more holistic approach helps support consumers in modern city living environments."

James points out that the urban beauty category is quickly evolving.

"Urban cosmetics began when research connected pollutants and environmental aggressors to premature aging, prompting early 'shielding' formulations," says James. "As the concept gained momentum, the category expanded into daily wear multifunctional protectors. The trend declined during the pandemic as urban exposure dropped, and consumers shifted to minimalist and comfort-driven skin care."

She continues, "Its return aligns with renewed commuting, higher climate stress and a growing desire for resilience-focused routines that include neuro-soothing and barrier-strengthening ingredients. This resurgence also parallels a cultural shift toward expressive beauty, with bold makeup, sculpted cheeks, and high-impact finishes re-emerging in the post-pandemic era."

Urban-focused formulations are impacting multiple categories, James notes.

"Regarding hair care, silicones form a uniform, hydrophobic protective film over the hair fiber, reducing surface polarity and creating a low energy barrier that limits adhesion of particulate pollutants," says James. "This barrier also smooths the cuticle, decreasing friction and helping maintain hair shine, combability and manageability."

She adds, "For skin care, silicones form a breathable, low surface tension film that decreases particulate retention by minimizing surface roughness and reducing the ability of airborne pollutants to adhere. This protective layer helps keep the skin cleaner for longer and facilitates easier removal of pollution particles during cleansing."

James notes, "Consumers now favor protective, barrier-strengthening products that combine antioxidants, gentle bases, and neuro-soothing ingredients to counter pollution-induced irritation, micro-inflammation and emotional stress. Ingredients such as ceramides, lipid concentrates, and microbiome-supportive actives are especially in demand for their ability to restore resilience and reduce transepidermal water loss."

She concludes, "Hybrid essentials, such as SPF moisturizers, antioxidant serums, and barrier creams with sensorial comfort-are leading the category. Portable, multi-use items such as sticks, tinted serums, SPF primers, and on-the-go kits continue to grow among busy urban consumers. Ultimately, consumers are seeking streamlined beauty routines that offer protection, emotional relief, and visible results in one step."



Lipotrue is spinning cutting-edge science into beauty with the launch of Waspilk, a biomimetic peptide inspired by the lifeline silk of the wasp spider.

Image courtesy of Lipotrue

Spider Silk Science: Strengthening Skin and Hair from Within

Lipotrue is spinning cutting-edge science into beauty with the launch of Waspilk, a biomimetic peptide inspired by the lifeline silk of the wasp spider. Drawing on the spider's major ampullate spidroins (MaSp proteins)—the structural powerhouse responsible for tensile strength and elastic resilience—Waspilk enhances the architecture of skin and hair at a molecular level.

It boosts cytokeratin, keratins, and key matricellular proteins such as SPARC, improving collagen synthesis and dermal organization for firmer, smoother, and more resilient skin with reduced wrinkles and subtle re-contouring effects. Hair benefits equally, gaining elasticity, vitality, and resistance from root to tip. By translating the dual-strength mechanics of spider silk—resilient yet tensile—into a cosmetic ingredient, Waspilk delivers next-level performance for skin and hair care.

Precision Encapsulation Powers Visible Skin Benefits

Givaudan Active Beauty is redefining ingredient delivery with VectorHyal, a next-generation micro-encapsulation system powered by hyaluronic acid. Engineered to maximize the efficacy of cosmetic actives, VectorHyal combines high-precision encapsulation with an HA-based biopolymer chassis, enabling deeper and more homogeneous penetration, controlled release, and protection of sensitive molecules from degradation.

Clinical studies reportedly confirm rapid, visible results—+13% skin hydration in just 1 hour and a 12% wrinkle reduction in three days—while its versatility supports both hydrophilic and lipophilic actives in transparent, smooth formulations. The result: smarter, faster, and more stable delivery for next-level skin performance.



"As brands pack more into formulas—UV filters, vitamin actives, vibrant color systems and signature fragrances—the risk of fading, off-odor development, and performance drift increases," say Susonity's Vaiarelli and Kincel.

Image by zinkevych at Adobe Stock

Formulation Stability Meets Pollution Defense

Susonity is redefining formulation stability with Oxynex ST Liquid, a unique stabilizer engineered for light-sensitive ingredients. From dyes and fragrances to vitamins and UV filters, Oxynex ST Liquid protects critical actives from photo-degradation, ensuring formulations retain their performance, efficacy, and appearance.

Beyond stability, it also helps maintain healthy skin under pollution stress, shielding against heavy metals, diesel particles, and other environmental aggressors. Ideal for sun care, vitamin-enriched skin care, fragranced products and color systems, this versatile solution empowers formulators to deliver both robust protection for ingredients and enhanced skin resilience in one go.

"Oxynex ST Liquid addresses one of the biggest 'behind-the-scenes' performance drivers in modern beauty: stability under light exposure," say Susonity's Vaiarelli and Kincel. "As brands pack more into formulas—UV filters, vitamin actives, vibrant color systems and signature fragrances—the risk of fading, off-odor development, and performance drift increases. For formulators/R&D, a stabilizer positioned specifically for light-sensitive components helps protect key formula elements like dyes, fragrances, vitamins and UV filters, supporting more robust products and reducing reformulation risk during development and scale-up."

They add, "For marketers, stability becomes a consumer-relevant story: 'stays true,' 'shade stays consistent,' 'formula stays fresh' and 'performance holds up' over the product's life—especially important for tinted SPF, vitamin-enriched skin care, and fragranced or color-driven categories. Oxynex ST Liquid also links technical stability with an anti-pollution narrative, which can strengthen product positioning in daily defense and urban lifestyle lines."

Sustainable Rheology and Texture Enhancers

Micro Powders has expanded its sustainable portfolio with two high-performance, plant-based additives designed to replace traditional synthetic modifiers and microplastics. NatureThix 900 is a rheology modifier derived from sustainably sourced hydrogenated castor oil. It is engineered to build structured viscosity in emulsion systems while improving spreadability and flow behavior. The single-INCI ingredient allows formulators to achieve high-end sensorial elegance and formula stability within a transparent, natural framework.

Complementing this is Naturecel 793XF, a versatile texture modifier designed to replace talc and microplastics. In anhydrous formats, it strengthens stick structures and reduces tackiness in emollient-heavy systems. Beyond its tactile benefits, Naturecel 793XF is an in-vivo proven SPF booster, delivering up to a 72% increase in inorganic systems and a 26% boost in organic formulations, while providing soft-focus optical performance that exceeds traditional powders.

Strategic Roadmap: Key Action Items for 2026 Development

To maintain a competitive edge in this evolving market, product developers and marketers must prioritize biological transparency and multimodal defense. R&D teams should focus on drop-in stabilizers like Oxynex ST Liquid to protect light-sensitive vitamins and fragrances, ensuring formula integrity in the increasingly popular clear-packaging formats. Marketers should pivot from anti-aging to biological age reduction narratives, leveraging clinical data from tools like the Horvath clock to provide the scientific depth consumers now expect. Finally, as urban resilience becomes a lifestyle staple, brands should integrate biomimetic peptides and neuro-soothing actives that offer a dual-benefit: visible skin repair and an elevated emotional experience through optimized tactile pleasure and barrier recovery. ■



The Tariff Situation Explained; PLUS: **Mitigation Secrets Every Beauty Brand Should Know**

A guide to reclaiming up to 99% of import costs with duty drawbacks.



For beauty brands navigating this rapidly changing trade environment, various tariff mitigation strategies have become essential: foreign trade zones, bonded warehouses, tariff engineering and strategic sourcing shifts, just to name a few.

Image by ImageFlow at Adobe Stock

UPDATE: *On February 20, 2026, the Supreme Court ruled 6-3 that the IEEPA does not authorize the President to impose tariffs, effectively invalidating both reciprocal and fentanyl-related duties. This significant legal shift creates a temporary destabilization of the tariff base but does not impact the fundamental reliability of duty drawback as a recovery tool, per the experts at CITTA Brokerage.*

They note that, while the now-void reciprocal tariffs were previously eligible for drawback, the fentanyl-related tariffs were never eligible under the program. Importantly, the ruling is specific to IEEPA and does not affect Section 301 or specific drawback-eligible goods under Section 232.

Businesses currently seeking refunds on previously paid IEEPA duties are advised to consult with a trade attorney regarding the best legal path. Importers must decide whether to file a protest with CBP or take their case to the Court of International Trade (CIT).

Finally, companies are cautioned against "double-dipping," as filing for a refund through the CIT prevents a simultaneous claim for drawback on the same duties. For more details, visit the original post. -Editor



Imagine you import foundation with an incorrect shade, or a moisturizer that fails shelf-life testing. If these products don't meet quality standards, you can destroy them under the supervision of a CBP-delegated authority and then file drawback to claim 99% of the duties you paid.

As tariffs evolve under the Trump Administration (with challenges still pending before the U.S. Supreme Court), one certainty has emerged: levies on imported goods will play a central role in U.S. economic policy for the foreseeable future.

For beauty brands navigating this rapidly changing trade environment, various tariff mitigation strategies have become essential: foreign trade zones, bonded warehouses, tariff engineering and strategic sourcing shifts, just to name a few. Yet one tariff mitigation strategy stands out as perhaps the least understood and most underutilized by cosmetics and personal care companies: duty drawback.

This tariff mitigation strategy allows companies to reclaim up to 99% of duties, taxes and fees paid on imported goods that are subsequently exported or destroyed. Despite its financial potential, awareness in the beauty sector has been low. But that's changing fast. To understand why more brands are exploring drawback, *Global Cosmetic Industry* spoke with Sydnee Goodell, drawback consultant at CITTA Brokerage.

Your Duty Questions Answered: Q&A with Sydnee Goodell, CITTA Brokerage

What is duty drawback?

Goodell: The concept is simple: when goods enter the U.S., a tariff-imposed duty is assessed. The importer pays this duty, along with any taxes and fees, to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). In most cases, these costs are absorbed by the consumer.

But what if those goods leave the country? Most would agree, Uncle Sam really shouldn't be drawing revenue from goods that are merely 'passing through' the U.S. Duty drawback allows businesses to recover up to 99% of these charges.

Who's eligible to file drawback claims?

Goodell: Importers, exporters and intermediate parties like contract manufacturers can file for drawback. The most straightforward scenario is when you're both the importer-of-record and exporter-of-record, as you should have all the documentation you need.

But it gets more complex when working with third parties. For instance, if you're importing ingredients but your contract manufacturer is exporting the finished products, you will need to coordinate with them to file claims. The beauty industry often involves multiple players in the supply chain, so most claimants retain a broker to secure cooperation

Image by Nina/peopleimages.com

with the entities that have the documentation drawback requires.

Does drawback apply to both finished goods and products that go through manufacturing?

Goodell: Yes, both. Unused merchandise drawback applies when you import and export finished products in their original condition. Manufacturing drawback applies when imported materials become part of exported products—like importing surfactants, formulating them into a cleanser, then exporting it.

You mentioned drawback may be claimed when imported goods are destroyed. How does that work?

Goodell: Imagine you import foundation with an incorrect shade, or a moisturizer that fails shelf-life testing. If these products don't meet quality standards, you can destroy them under the supervision of a CBP-delegated authority and then file drawback to claim 99% of the duties you paid.

How has the Trump administration's approach to tariffs changed drawback?

Goodell: The filing process hasn't changed much, but awareness and eligibility have. Some tariffs, like Section 301 on Chinese goods, allow for drawback. Others, like Section 232, generally don't, though there are exceptions.

With tariffs now applying to goods from over 90 countries, there are far more opportunities than most brands realize. Talk to your broker about what qualifies. Chances are, you have eligible imports.

What's a typical timeframe for recovering duties?

Goodell: Once CBP approves your drawback privileges application, you're typically looking at 45 days to receive payment. The challenge right now is that getting your privileges application approved can take anywhere from six to eighteen months, especially since CBP has been flooded with applications as more companies discover drawback.

The good news is you can start filing claims while your privileges application is under review. Given that you can claim on imports going back five years, it makes sense to get started sooner rather than later. Every month you wait is another month of potentially eligible imports that age out of that five-year window.

What documents are needed to file drawback?

Goodell: You'll need entry summaries, commercial invoices for imports and exports and proof of export documentation. A critical piece, especially when it comes to manufacturing drawback, is the inventory documentation that allows you to track goods using part numbers, quantities, dates and invoice links.

What are some common pitfalls?

Goodell: The most serious pitfall is filing claims you can't substantiate. I've seen cases where companies were submitting production dates or other data that simply couldn't be validated. If you file non-compliant claims, you're not just losing that money. You could be required to return everything you've recovered and lose your ability to file drawback altogether.

Poor internal communication is another big one. When your procurement, manufacturing and export teams aren't coordinating, you end up with gaps in documentation that kill your claims. The key is never to file anything you couldn't confidently defend in a CBP audit.

What are some best practices for maximizing returns?

Goodell: First and foremost, assign someone to own this program. Drawback can't be successful as a side project that gets passed around. You need someone accountable who understands both the financial opportunity and the compliance requirements.

Second, invest in your data infrastructure. You need systems that can track inventory through your entire supply chain, from the moment materials arrive through manufacturing and ultimately to export. Without that traceability, you simply don't have a viable program.

Finally, consider working with a broker who truly specializes in drawback. Some customs brokers offer it as an add-on service. But the most successful programs are done in partnership with specialists who maximize your returns by leaving no stone unturned.

Where can beauty brands learn more?

Goodell: Your first conversation should be with your current customs broker. Ask them directly about their drawback capabilities and experience—not all brokers handle drawback because it's quite specialized. If they don't have that expertise, ask for a referral to a brokerage that focuses specifically on duty drawback recovery.

As you explore your options, make sure to ask for some kind of preliminary assessment or online calculator to help you estimate your potential recovery based on your import and export volumes. That initial analysis is valuable because it helps you understand whether this is a $50,000 opportunity or a multi-million-dollar opportunity, which obviously changes how you prioritize it.

Given how much the tariff landscape shifted in 2025, now is an ideal time to have that conversation. Even if you've never thought about drawback before, the expanded tariff coverage means there's likely more opportunity than there would have been a few years ago. ■

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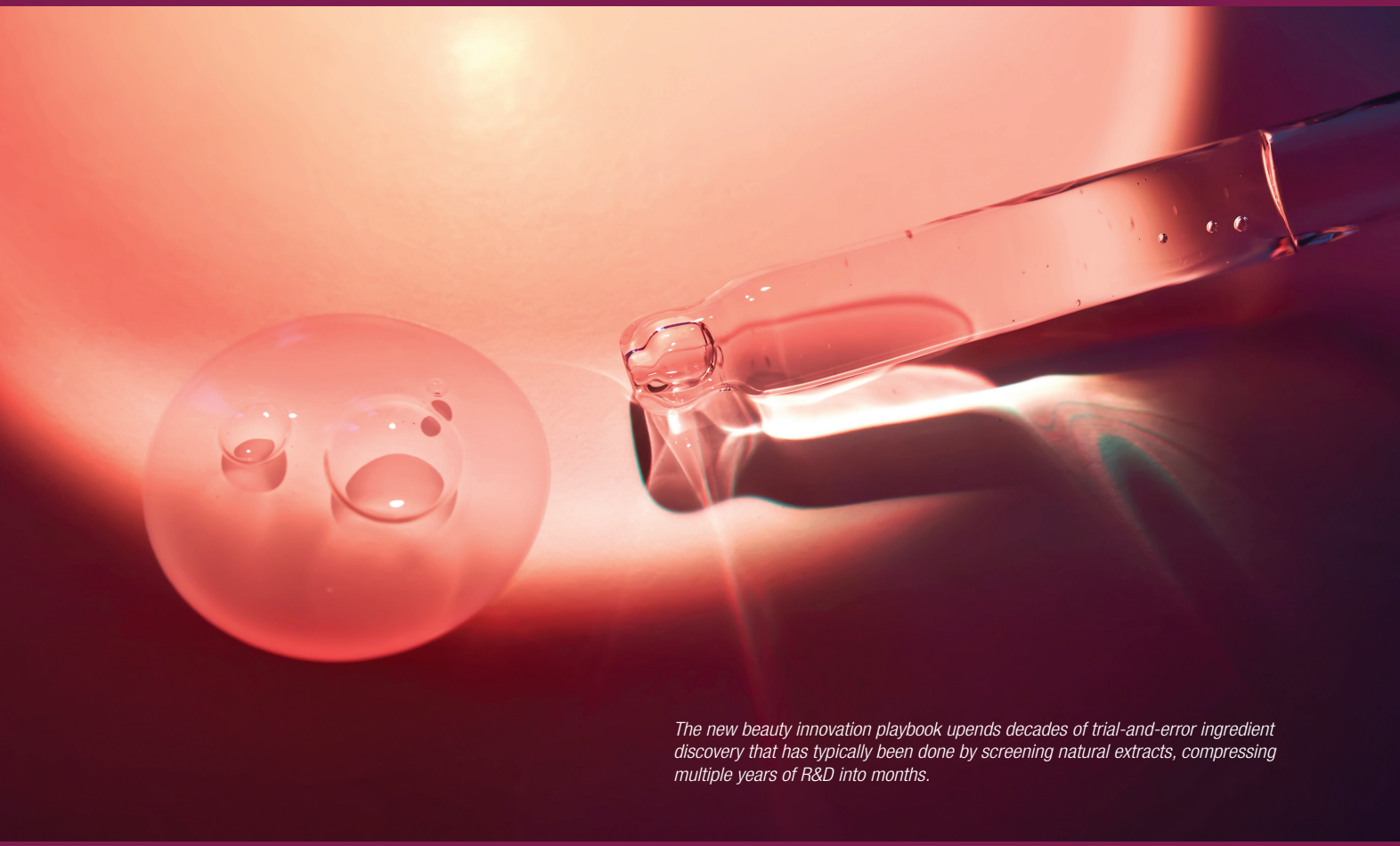
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BEAUTY REWRITTEN: DESIGNING INGREDIENTS BEFORE THEY EXIST

Today's most advanced innovation isn't about stumbling upon ingredients; it's about rewriting their blueprint and starting with the end consumer claim in mind.



The new beauty innovation playbook upends decades of trial-and-error ingredient discovery that has typically been done by screening natural extracts, compressing multiple years of R&D into months.

Image by Marevgenna at Adobe Stock

BY JOSHUA BRITTON, PH.D.

For decades, beauty product innovation relied on a narrow set of familiar ingredients discovered largely by chance and repurposed through reformulation, with innovative textures adding consumer appeal. The industry mined nature for what evolution provided, drawing on known ingredient libraries and the same iterative testing. Brands relied on one-size-fits-all ingredients. Development cycles stretched on for years–slow, resource-intensive, predictable and inherently limited.

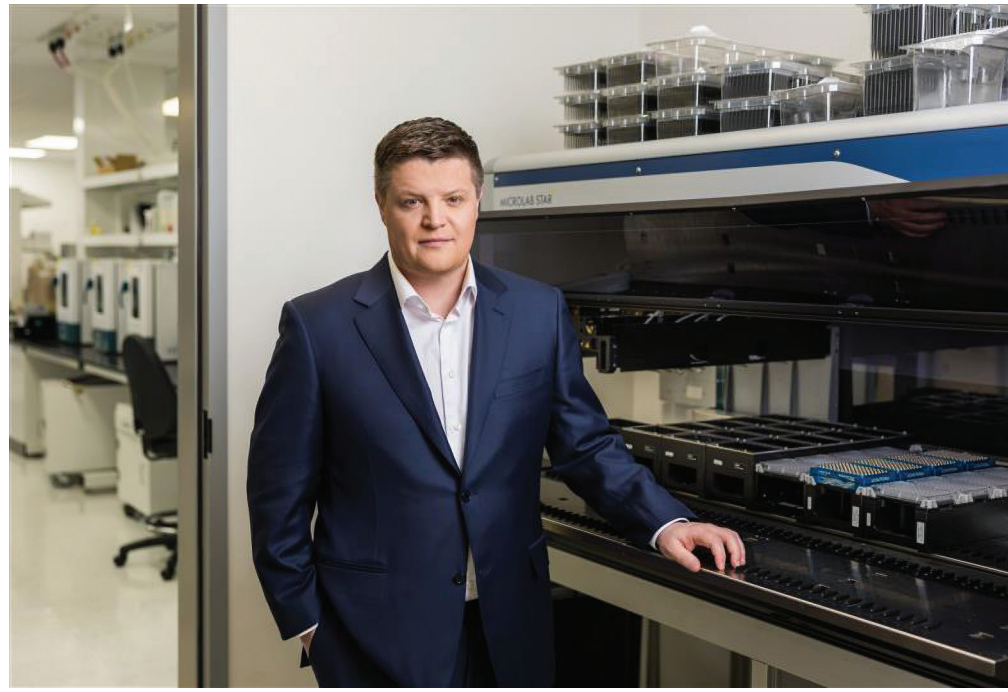
AI, genomics and biotechnology have rewritten all the rules. The new

beauty innovation playbook upends decades of trial-and-error ingredient discovery that has typically been done by screening natural extracts, compressing multiple years of R&D into months. Today's most advanced innovation isn't about stumbling upon ingredients; it's about rewriting their blueprint and starting with the end consumer claim in mind. If this sounds familiar, that's because it is terrain laid out in a parallel industry: pharma.

With this playbook, we can take over where innovation left off, accelerating millions of years of evolution to design targeted ingredients at incredible speed that deliver clinically validated performance in emerging areas of skin science. The universe of possibilities is no longer bound by what can be cultivated or grown in forests. Beauty has barely scratched the surface of ingredient possibilities with biology only now becoming accessible at scale. The molecules that brands rely on account for only 0.001% of what is possible. The new playbook taps into the remaining 99.999%. The claims driving beauty 10 years from now will be completely different–people will laugh at today's traditional methods!

Designing Beauty from the Pathway Up

This shift doesn't only accelerate discovery. It changes the very definition of what an ingredient can be. Instead of hoping a naturally occurring molecule, or one derived from traditional chemistry, might influence a desired pathway, scientists can now begin with the pathway itself and work backward, creating a molecule tailored to that specific biological mechanism and powering a new generation of science-backed claims. It's a reversal of the logic of traditional beauty R&D, replacing serendipity with advanced molecular research and expanding performance far beyond the limits of extraction. In the era of biotechnology, ingredient suppliers aren't just rethinking how they sell beauty actives, they must overhaul their entire five-year pipeline. It's a total 180 in workflows.



Joshua Britton, Ph.D.

AI can design and computationally analyze billions of molecules and identify which ones will activate specific biological pathways tied to skin longevity. This allows scientists to design ingredients that optimize performance and deliver first-of-their-kind product benefits. Examples include professional-level skin tightening in topical form and potent yet safe alternatives to kojic acid and retinol which are increasingly being regulated due to health concerns at high concentrations. Imagine what can be achieved when you take a science-up approach to product development instead of a plant extract-down approach.

Advanced genomic tools let scientists predict how ingredients interact with skin at the cellular level–activating pathways, influencing gene expression, and supporting long-term skin health – creating a pipeline of high-performance ingredients ready before they reach the formulation lab.

The Genentech Moment for Beauty: Science Takes the Lead

The new way of beauty R&D is faster, smarter, and more precise than ever, enabling brands to create groundbreaking products that address emerging skin health needs and deliver meaningful results to consumers. The platform ensures targeted solutions without compromising safety. Powered by biology, it delivers sustainable ingredients with best-in-class efficacy, combined with formulation textures that enhance the overall consumer experience.

Beauty is entering the same transformation pharmaceuticals did in 1976 when biotech company Genentech was born, from discovery by chance to discovery by design. Brands that embrace this new frontier unlock unparalleled innovation and a clear and lasting competitive edge. The most successful brands of the next decade won't merely reformulate legacy actives. They'll redefine what high-performance means in beauty. ■

Image courtesy of Debut

When Ingredients Become Evidence: Inside Beauty's Product Liability Crisis

Unpacking the real product liability threats confronting cosmetics companies, the insurance policy traps that can quietly leave brands exposed and the practical steps that can help mitigate future risk.



Image by sulit.photos at Adobe Stock

For founders, formulators and executives navigating today's heightened enforcement and litigation environment, understanding where science, coverage and perception collide has never been more critical.

Product liability has become one of the most consequential—and misunderstood—risk areas facing beauty brands today. As scrutiny around ingredient safety intensifies, high-profile litigation tied to talc, asbestos, benzene and phthalates has reshaped everything from formulation strategy to insurance availability. At the same time, social media amplification, influencer commentary and what some experts call "junk science" have fueled consumer anxiety and complicated an already complex legal and coverage landscape.

In this Q&A with Kenneth Hegel of Epic Insurance Brokers & Consultants, we unpack the real product liability threats confronting cosmetics companies, the insurance policy traps that can quietly leave brands exposed and the practical steps—ranging from reformulation to ingredient certification—that can help mitigate future risk. For founders, formulators and executives navigating today's heightened enforcement and litigation environment, understanding where science, coverage and perception collide has never been more critical.

The Hidden Legal Risks Lurking in Cosmetic Ingredients

Q: What are the top product liability issues currently facing beauty brands, particularly concerning ingredients like asbestos, talc and benzene?

Hegel: This is an excellent question. From a products liability perspective, the cosmetics industry has always been held to a higher standard in terms of product safety. The scrutiny that they have received over the years----has left many consumers confused but also has chased many insurance providers away from being interested in offering insurance for products liability to the industry. The issue has been exacerbated via social media channels, certain beauty & ingredients experts, as well as influencers, and unfortunately what I would deem "junk science". Click bait seems to be more important that of real true science in a lot of instances.

There are ingredients that have been called into question due to proven scientific negative impacts---some that have been around for a while---some newly emerging. The asbestos/mesothelioma issue has been around for over 50 years but resurfaced a few years ago with massive talc lawsuits alleging asbestos being contained in individual talc products i.e., talc and baby powder. This then carried over into not just talc powder individually, but cosmetic products that did contain talc as an ingredient such as in pressed color cosmetics. This negatively impacted the industry for a multitude of reasons but mostly on the products liability coverage side as the vast majority of products/general liability insurance carriers have adopted the "absolute asbestos exclusion."

This not only voids products liability coverage for allegations of mesothelioma but also voids any defense coverage whatsoever. Clients were forced to either reformulate their products or prove that the talc used in their products were in fact safe from any asbestos contamination. This unfortunately meant that all legal expense was born by the individual cosmetic company defending the lawsuit with little to no support from insurance. Benzene and phthalates are two more ingredients that are getting a lot of publicity lately due to the fact that they have been deemed carcinogens and also endocrine disruptors.

Q: What are some common pitfalls regarding insurance policy exclusions that could void a beauty brand's coverage obligations?

Hegel: One of the most common pitfalls is that most clients buying insurance are more focused on the price than on the coverage. The simple truth is we live in a world where everyone is cost conscious. The reason I mention that is that not all insurance products are made the same. One can purchase a policy for cheaper. However, cheapest oftentimes can equate to lessor or simply poor coverage.

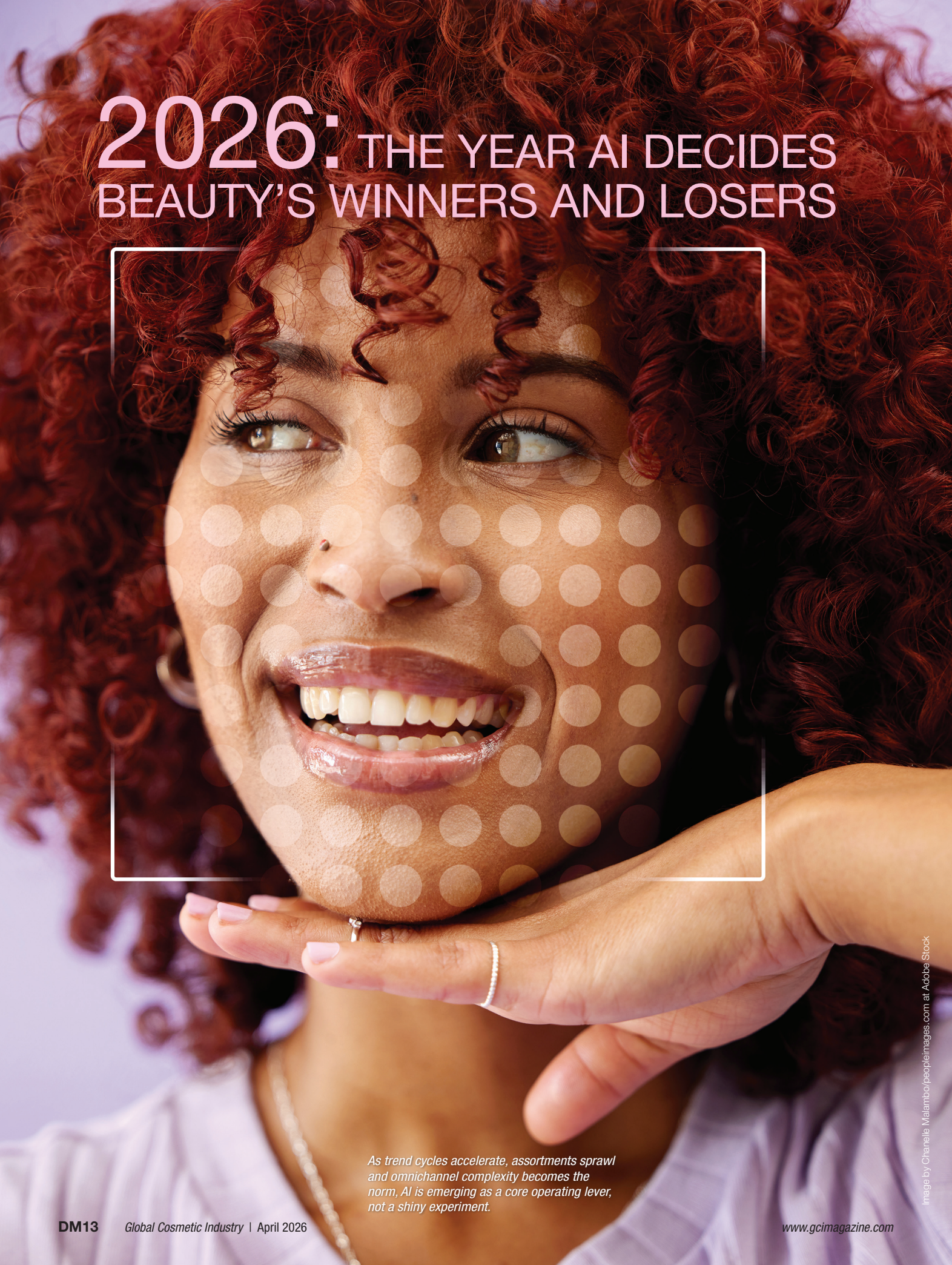
The number of insurance carriers interested in offering products liability insurance to beauty and cosmetic companies varies. However, I would say that it is always best to partner with a carrier or broker that understands the business that you are in and specializes in it. Not all insurance policies are made the same. There are two different basic coverage forms---an occurrence form vs a claims made form. Occurrence form offering much broader coverage to companies but can also be harder to find. One also needs to be conscious of the exclusions built into the policy—that in many instances—can void the very coverage you think you are buying. Endorsements and exclusions amend the coverage terms and conditions. It is important to review all aspects of coverage—not only what is covered, but more so—what is not covered by a specific policy or if a policy even exists to cover certain exposures.

Q: Do you have any tips for ingredient replacements or certifications (e.g., certifying talc, using corn starch instead of talc) that can help beauty brands prevent future liability issues?

Hegel: During the "asbestos in talc reemergence—we saw a large portion of our clients decide to reformulate the product as opposed to deal with the risk of exposure to class action litigation. Some customers who did use cosmetic talc in their products reformulated to use corn starch in its place, corn starch having similar properties to talc with zero negative press/science. Other clients chose to get ahead of the game and have their cosmetic talc tested and certified as "asbestos free.' The downside to this is the testing can be expensive as there are only certain labs that test for this. Having this certification also does not preclude you from being pulled into the lawsuit to begin with. Proper safety testing and continued focus on the ingredients and technology being used in product development remain the best ways to ensure the product is safe. ■

Image by xxxxxxxxxxxx at Adobe Stock

2026: THE YEAR AI DECIDES BEAUTY'S WINNERS AND LOSERS



As trend cycles accelerate, assortments sprawl and omnichannel complexity becomes the norm, AI is emerging as a core operating lever, not a shiny experiment.

Image by Chanelle Malambo/peopleimages.com at Adobe Stock

"Leaders must view AI as a core operating capability for managing trend volatility, not a digital innovation project."

AI in beauty is officially past the hype phase—and 2026 is shaping up to be the year it starts separating winners from everyone else. As trend cycles accelerate, assortments sprawl and omnichannel complexity becomes the norm, AI is emerging as a core operating lever, not a shiny experiment. In this Q&A, Kevin Tong, a leader in Nesuite's consulting AI services organization, breaks down why now is the inflection point, where AI delivers real P&L impact across forecasting, inventory and M&A, and what beauty executives must do to move from pilots to durable competitive advantage.

Q: Why is 2026 the inflection point for AI adoption in beauty and what separates leaders from laggards?

Tong: Beauty faces faster trend cycles, SKU proliferation and omnichannel complexity than most CPG categories, and by 2026 AI is mature enough to manage that volatility at scale. Leaders operationalize AI across forecasting, personalization and supply chains, while laggards stay stuck in campaign-level experiments.

Q: How can beauty brands use data- and AI-driven approaches to unlock revenue growth while improving capital allocation?

Tong: AI helps beauty brands predict trend-driven demand, optimize shade and SKU assortments and reduce overproduction that erodes margins. This enables capital to shift from excess inventory and markdowns into high-performing products and growth channels.

Q: What does a strong business case for AI look like in a beauty organization and how should ROI be defined?

Tong: A strong case links AI to fewer stockouts on hero SKUs, lower obsolescence from trend misses and higher conversion through personalization. ROI should be defined through margin lift, inventory turns and speed-to-market, not vanity AI metrics.

Q: Where should AI be embedded first in planning and core processes to deliver measurable impact?

Tong: The highest impact starts in demand forecasting, inventory planning and promotions where beauty brands struggle with volatility and short product lifecycles. These processes already hold rich data and directly affect revenue and cash flow.

Q: How can AI meaningfully support M&A decisions, from target evaluation to post-acquisition integration?

Tong: AI can analyze brand velocity, SKU profitability, customer loyalty and channel mix to identify which indie or premium brands can scale. Post-acquisition, it accelerates ERP alignment, demand planning and reporting consistency across portfolios.

Q: Why are industry-specific AI agents particularly effective for automating tasks like retail inventory management?

Tong: Beauty-specific agents understand shade depth, seasonal launches, retail sell-through patterns and replenishment constraints. This domain context allows AI to make practical inventory decisions that generic models cannot.

Q: What role do cross-functional teams play in ensuring AI initiatives move from pilots to scaled adoption?

Tong: In beauty, success requires tight alignment between merchandising, supply chain, marketing and finance, so AI reflects real-world trade-offs. Cross-functional ownership ensures AI improves execution, not just analytics.

Q: How does model context protocol (MCP) enable secure, personalized AI insights grounded in a brand's real business data?



"Beauty faces faster trend cycles, SKU proliferation and omnichannel complexity than most CPG categories, and by 2026 AI is mature enough to manage that volatility at scale," says Tong. "Leaders operationalize AI across forecasting, personalization and supply chains, while laggards stay stuck in campaign-level experiments."

Tong: MCP allows AI to reason over live ERP data such as sales, inventory and financials without exporting sensitive beauty IP. NetSuite AI Connector grounds insights in actual product, customer and channel data, keeping recommendations accurate and secure.

Q: What governance, data discipline and security considerations must be in place before scaling AI across the enterprise?

Tong: Beauty brands must standardize product hierarchies, shade and SKU definitions and customer data while enforcing role-based access. AI should operate within existing ERP controls to protect formulas, supplier terms and pricing strategy.

Q: What mindset shift do beauty brand leaders need to make to move from experimental AI use to AI-driven competitive advantage?

Tong: Leaders must view AI as a core operating capability for managing trend volatility, not a digital innovation project. Competitive advantage comes from redesigning planning, merchandising and supply chains around AI-first decision-making. ■

Image courtesy of NetSuite

Ingredient, Packaging & Formulation Excellence



AI-Inspired Beauty: Grant Industries and BCR Release New Ingredient Guide

Grant Industries & BCR (Bio Component Research)

https://www.grantinc.com

Grant Industries and BCR introduce the AI-Inspired Beauty booklet, a curated guide to high-performance cosmetic ingredients organized by application, benefit, and formulation strategy. Using AI-assisted insight, it highlights cross-category material pairings across skin, sun, hair and color to help formulators accelerate development and identify smarter ingredient combinations for modern beauty innovation.



Phototherapy Skin Detector Delivers Precise Moisture Readings for Pro Beauty Pros

Nuon Medical

https://www.nuonmedical.com/

Designed for professional beauty and skin care solutions, this phototherapy skin detector delivers precise moisture measurement with intuitive vibration feedback. It features clear power indication: yellow light for full charge and white light for low battery, plus a convenient storage box for enhanced usability and portability.



Plush Pop Turns Lip Oil into a Charm-Ready Beauty Accessory

Cosmopak USA

https://cosmopak.com/

New turnkey innovation: Plush Pop is a charm-ready lip oil delivering juicy shine and cushioned comfort. The non-sticky formula glides on with a sheer pop of color while nourishing lips with squalane, avocado oil, bisabolol, ginger extract and vitamin E. A built-in keychain transforms the gloss into a playful, on-the-go beauty accessory everywhere.



Save Money, Skip the Waste with McKernan's Best Value Packaging

McKernan Packaging Clearing House

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Good for your budget, better for the plant. McKernan's Best Value line keeps high-quality packaging in circulation—no recycling required. With over 3,000 Best Value items in a wide variety of styles, it's easy to source sustainable packaging that doesn't break the bank. Visit McKernan.com or call 1-800-787-7587 for details.



Water-Dispersible Iron Oxides Deliver Uniform Color Without Settling

Spectra Colors Corporation

https://spectracolors.com/fdc-dyes/

Spectra Colors' water dispersible iron oxides are coated pigments that address the settling and uniform dispersion issues in water based cosmetic applications.



Teardrop Design Gives The Ordinary's Lip Balm a Standout Edge

Berlin Packaging

https://www.berlinpackaging.com/beauty-packaging-experts

Studio One Eleven from Berlin Packaging created custom packaging for The Ordinary's Lip Balm, with a teardrop silhouette that stands out in a sea of traditional sticks and tubes. A custom closure perfectly complements the bottle and allows consumers to remove the cap with a single turn of the wrist for optimal functionality.



SPF 50 Serum: High-Performance Sun Protection Meets Dewy Hydration

Sun Deep Inc.

https://sundeepinc.com/

Meet the next evolution in sun protection: our SPF 50 serum, designed to deliver powerful defense with a low viscosity, dewy texture. This serum not only shields your skin from harmful UV rays, but also provides a hydrating after feel that keeps your complexion refreshed and glowing. With customizable tints available, you can effortlessly enhance your natural tone while enjoying the benefits of high-performance skin care. Experience sun protection like never before—luxurious, lightweight, and radiant.



Mangiophelin: A Single Active Designed to Tackle Nine Signs of Aging

Sabinsa

https://sami-sabinsagroup.com/

Mangiophelin is the industry's first comprehensive anti-aging active to target nine visible signs of aging in a single ingredient. Standardized to contain 10% polyphenols and 1% mangiferin, this Mangifera indica extract from Sabinsa is effective both topically and orally, making it uniquely suited to the growing nutricosmetics space.



Beyond the Bottle: How Smart Packaging Powers Real Skin Results.

WHEN PACKAGING SHAPES PERFORMANCE: **WHY DELIVERY CONSISTENCY IS REDEFINING SKIN CARE EFFICACY IN 2026**

Powered By nuon

For much of the beauty industry's modern history, innovation followed a linear and somewhat fragmented path. New ingredients emerged from white labs, formulations became increasingly complex with multi-layered encapsulation, and marketing efficacy claims grew more sophisticated. Packaging, by contrast, was largely relegated to a supporting role—a silent vessel tasked with protecting chemical stability, supporting dosage through vacuum pumps, and delivering the crucial "shelf appeal" necessary for conversion.

However, as we move through 2026, that historical separation between "the juice" and "the bottle" no longer reflects how skin care performance is judged by the market or the consumer.

According to recent beauty megatrend reports from leading firms, we have entered the "Era of Precision Delivery." Consumers are pivoting away from "ingredient chasing"—the era of high-percentage actives—and moving toward "outcome optimization." As users become more digitally native and biologically informed, brands are being evaluated not only on the theoretical potency of what a product contains but on how reliably that potency translates into physiological change in the unoptimized environment of everyday life. This shift is prompting a broader

industry reassessment: efficacy is no longer defined solely by the chemistry in the bottle, but by the physics of how that formula is delivered to the skin.

The Efficacy Gap: From Laboratory Proof to Real-World Results

Clinical testing remains the gold standard for validation, yet a growing tension exists between the lab and the vanity. In a controlled clinical environment, products are applied by trained professionals or under strict supervision. Application pressure is standardized, timing is precise, and the skin state is often pre-conditioned for maximum receptivity.

The "Real-World" consumer experience is the antithesis of this control. Application varies wildly from person to person and even from day to day. Pressure is inconsistent; contact time is often truncated due to morning rushes; and coverage is frequently uneven, leaving "hot spots" of product and areas of total neglect.

As Nuon Medical highlights in its 2026 Technical Insights series, even the most sophisticated formulas underperform when delivery relies entirely on unguided user technique. Historically, brands attempted to address this via formulation alone—introducing higher active concentrations, penetration enhancers, or complex solvents. While effective to a degree, these are "passive" solutions to an "active" problem. What has become the industry consensus in 2026 is that efficacy is a **physiochemical synergy**. Packaging is no longer a container; it is a **functional interface** that orchestrates physical interaction, thermal preparation, and habit formation to ensure every drop of formula reaches its intended biological target.

The Intelligence Layer: The Rise of Skin Diagnostics

The most significant leap in 2026 packaging is the transition from "dumb" dispensers to "sensory" systems. At the heart of this revolution is Skin Diagnostics. Modern packaging now effectively possesses its own "senses," allowing the device to act as a bridge between the user's immediate biological state and the product's delivery mechanism.

Nuon Medical has pioneered the integration of medical-grade sensors into primary packaging, enabling real-time diagnostics of hydration levels, sebum production, pH balance, and even cumulative UV exposure. This data is no longer just for a smartphone app; it is used to **actively guide the application**.

For example, a system equipped with Skin Diagnostics can detect a compromised skin barrier or localized dehydration. Instead of the user blindly applying a standard pump of product, the packaging provides haptic or visual feedback to adjust the dosage, or it may modulate the integrated delivery technology—such as adjusting the intensity of the LED or the frequency of the micro-vibration—to match the skin's receptivity at that exact moment. This transforms the skincare routine from a static habit into a dynamic, personalized medical-grade treatment.

The Functional Architecture: Engineering the Moment of Contact

When we discuss "Functional Packaging" in 2026, we are referring to the specific architectures that intervene at the point where formula meets skin. Nuon Medical's research and development have identified five core pillars of delivery technology that are currently redefining the premium skincare category:

1. Integrated Phototherapy (LED)

Phototherapy has transitioned from a standalone, time-consuming device to an integrated step in the primary delivery system. By embedding specific LED wavelengths directly into the applicator head, Nuon enables brands to activate biological responses (such as collagen stimulation via Red light or anti-bacterial action via Blue light) at the precise moment the formula is being spread. This "Integrated



Phototherapy" creates a synergistic effect: the light prepares the skin cells to receive the actives, while the formula provides the necessary building blocks for the light-triggered repair.

2. Calibrated Needling Systems

The barrier function of the stratum corneum is the skincare chemist's greatest adversary. In 2026, we have moved beyond "hopeful absorption" toward "engineered penetration." Specialized applicator architectures now utilize precision-calibrated microneedling elements. Unlike traditional rollers, these are integrated into the dispensing head to create temporary, painless micro-channels in the skin's surface. By calibrating the depth and density of these channels, brands can ensure that high-molecular-weight actives—which would otherwise sit on the surface—are delivered exactly where they can trigger cellular responses.

3. Pulsed Electromagnetic Field (PEMF) & Micro-Vibration

One of the most exciting frontiers in 2026 is the use of PEMF in daily packaging. PEMF technology, once restricted to medical recovery clinics, is used to boost cellular energy (ATP) and enhance local circulation. When integrated into an applicator, it works alongside high-frequency micro-vibrations. This does more than just feel "premium"; it creates a kinetic environment that reduces the surface tension of the formula and ensures even distribution across the undulating surface of the skin, preventing the "manual rubbing" that often leads to product pilling or irritation.



4. Thermal Management

Temperature is a critical, yet often overlooked, variable in efficacy. Nuon's thermal architectures allow for near-instantaneous heating or cooling of the applicator surface. Controlled warmth (Thermal Priming) increases the fluidity of skin lipids, effectively "opening" the door for deeper ingredient penetration. Conversely, precision cooling (Cryo-Delivery) is utilized for targeted treatments—such as eye contouring or anti-inflammatory serums—to constrict blood vessels and lock in actives, providing immediate sensory and physiological results.

5. Guided Motion Architectures

Finally, the physical shape of the applicator itself has evolved. Ergonomic "Guided Motion" heads follow the complex contours of the face—the orbital bone, the jawline, and the nasolabial folds. These shapes are engineered to provide "Haptic Guidance," essentially teaching the user the correct lymphatic drainage paths or muscle-lifting movements through the physical feedback of the device.

Packaging Moves from Passive to Functional: The Business Case

For brand owners and B2B stakeholders, the move toward functional packaging is not merely a technical flex; it is a strategic necessity. In a market saturated with "clean beauty" and "science-backed" claims, the point of differentiation has shifted.

2026 Trend report on Beauty & Personal Care highlights that "Frictionless Tech" is now the number one demand for the high-net-worth consumer. In previous years, the "Beauty Tech" boom led to an influx of standalone devices that eventually ended up in the "gadget graveyard"—drawers full of expensive tools that consumers were too busy to use.

The 2026 winners are brands that embed this technology directly into the primary packaging. This integrated approach solves the "User Adherence" problem. When the **Skin Diagnostics** and the **Phototherapy** are part of the bottle itself, the consumer doesn't have to change their routine. They simply use the product as they always have, but with a 10x increase in delivery efficiency. For a brand, this means faster visible results, higher repurchase rates, and a significantly higher barrier to entry for competitors who are still relying on basic dropper bottles.

Sustainability in the High-Tech Era: The Modular Revolution

A common critique of tech-integrated packaging is its environmental impact. How can a brand justify electronics and sensors in a world focused on sustainability? In 2026, the answer is **Modular Design**.

Nuon Medical has been a vocal advocate for the "Core and Cartridge" model. In this architecture, the "Core" (containing the Skin Diagnostics sensors, the PEMF emitters, and the battery) is a durable, high-quality component designed to last for years. The skincare formula is housed in a lightweight, recyclable "Cartridge" that clicks into the Core.

This creates a powerful circular economy:

- **Reduction of Electronic Waste:** The expensive tech stays with the consumer.
- **Refill Loyalty:** The consumer is "locked in" to the brand's ecosystem through the durable device.
- **Precision Dosing:** Because the system ensures 100% of the formula is delivered effectively, brands can actually reduce the total volume of product needed, further lowering the carbon footprint associated with shipping and raw material extraction.

In 2026, sustainability is no longer just about the material of the bottle—it is about the **efficiency of the system**. A product that is 50% more effective allows for a 50% reduction in total consumption over time.

Organizational Shift: Packaging as an Integrated Development Tool

Perhaps the most significant change we see in 2026 is organizational. At the world's leading skincare conglomerates, the "Packaging Department" is no longer at the end of the hallway, waiting for the chemists to finish the formula.

Delivery must be considered alongside formulation, clinical testing, and user experience from day one. This requires a "Squad" approach: formulation scientists, packaging engineers, skin biologists, and industrial designers working in a feedback loop. At Nuon Medical, we facilitate this by acting as the "Technical Bridge." We help brands align the viscosity of their serum with the frequency of our micro-vibration systems, ensuring that the two work in harmony rather than at cross-purposes.



When delivery and formula evolve together, the result is a product that is easier to validate through clinical trials because the variables of human application have been minimized. This leads to cleaner data, more robust claims, and a faster path to market.

Conclusion: Where Performance Is Decided

As we look toward the remainder of 2026 and beyond, the definition of "premium skincare" has been irrevocably altered. Efficacy is no longer a static laboratory result; it is a dynamic event that occurs at the moment of application. It is shaped by **Skin Diagnostics**, optimized by energy and temperature, and sustained by habit-forming ergonomic design.

Packaging, once the "silent component," has become the most vocal advocate for the formula's success. For brands navigating an increasingly outcome-driven market, the gap between promise and performance is closing. By treating packaging as a functional interface rather than a passive container, Nuon Medical and its partners are ensuring that skincare efficacy is not just a marketing claim—it is a repeatable, tangible, and high-tech experience.

The future of beauty isn't just in what we apply; it's in how we apply it.

About Nuon Medical

Nuon Medical is a global B2B leader at the intersection of Medtech and Skincare. With a focus on tech-integrated delivery systems, Nuon provides brands with the "Functional Architectures" required to dominate the premium market. From **Skin Diagnostics** and LED integration to PEMF and thermal management, Nuon's mission is to enhance skincare efficacy precisely where the formula meets the skin. ■

For more information, visit **www.nuonmedical.com**



Urban Decay spent four years developing its Tube Job Tubing Mascara, which features an 89% serum-infused formula.

Image courtesy of Urban Decay

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THE PERFORMANCE PIVOT: STAINS, SERUMS AND THE SCIENCE OF LIFE-PROOF BEAUTY

The makeup sector's 2026 outlook centers on advanced lip technologies, mature skin solutions, high-performance tubing mascaras and all-things hybrid.

According to Circana, makeup remained the largest prestige beauty category in 2025, growing by 4% [a]. While the sector saw unit softness in face and eye segments, every segment posted dollar growth, fueled by social media influence and a consumer shift toward value-driven, "skinified" hybrid formats. As we move into 2026, four specific narratives are dominating the R&D and marketing roadmaps: advanced lip technologies, mature skin solutions, high-performance tubing mascaras and skin care-makeup hybrids.



Breaking traditional category molds, Cosmetic Group USA's Palisades Powder Primer introduces the first-ever powder primer to utilize wet powder slurry technology.

The Lip Revolution: Long-Wear Meets High-Hydration

Lip products have emerged as the fastest-growing segment in both prestige and mass markets. Consumer interest is specifically pivoting toward durability without the trade-off of dryness. Spate data forecasts significant year-over-year growth for lip stains (up 38.6%) and lip liner stains (up 36.0%) in 2026.

The technical challenge has historically been a binary choice: the longevity of a drying stain or the comfort of a short-lived gloss. Brands like Haleys Beauty are addressing this with glossy lip stains like Re–dew, which utilizes a Fade-Resistant Stain



Haleys Beauty's Re–dew utilizes a Fade-Resistant Stain Matrix and juicy pigment technology to ensure an even flush without cracking or patchiness.

[a]https://www.gcimagazine.com/brands-products/color-cosmetics/news/22960343/beautys-resilience-comes-with-new-rules-2025-sales-lessons-for-2026-from-circanas-latest-data / https://www.circana.com/industries/beauty

From top: Image courtesy of Cosmetic Group USA; Haleys Beauty

Matrix and juicy pigment technology to ensure an even flush without cracking or patchiness. Similarly, Sacheau is scaling its viral Stay-N technology, moving from digital-native success to a nationwide retail expansion at Target. Target is projected to drive over 30% of Sacheau's retail growth in 2026, signaling that long-wear, "life-proof" lip technology has moved into the masstige mainstream.

The "skinification" of lips is further validated by ingredient suppliers. Lubrizol has adapted its renowned Argireline YOUth peptide—traditionally a skin care staple—for oil-based lipsticks. Clinical data shows this peptide can visibly reduce lip wrinkles and improve roughness in 14 days.

For marketers, the takeaway is clear: the modern lip consumer expects color to function as a high-performance treatment.



Target is projected to drive over 30% of Sacheau's retail growth in 2026, signaling that long-wear, "life-proof" lip technology has moved into the masstige mainstream.

The Mature Makeup Market: Precision Solutions for Over-40s

The "mature skin makeup" category grew 10.4% year-over-year in 2025. This demographic is no longer satisfied with traditional "anti-aging" marketing; they require formulas engineered for changing skin textures. IT Cosmetics has responded with the Do It All Sheer Tint Face Balm, a 92% skin care-based formula that prioritizes hydration and radiance over heavy coverage. The use of collagen peptides and hyaluronic acid addresses the evolving needs of skin over 40, with 91% of users reporting a reduction in the appearance of fine lines.

Strategic partnerships are mirroring this shift. By tapping Jennie Garth and Dolores Catania, brands like IT Cosmetics and Laura Geller Beauty are normalizing conversations around aging. Laura Geller's Line Smoother Targeted Fine Line Filler focuses on instant correction through silicone elastomers that blur pores and texture in one minute. This beauty emergency approach identifies a specific pain



IT Cosmetics has responded with the Do It All Sheer Tint Face Balm, a 92% skin care-based formula that prioritizes hydration and radiance over heavy coverage.

From top: Image courtesy of Sacheu; IT Cosmetics



Laura Geller's Line Smoother Targeted Fine Line Filler focuses on instant correction through silicone elastomers that blur pores and texture in one minute.



Covergirl has entered the space with its Eye Enhancer Wrap Tubing Mascara, claiming up to 30-hour wear.

point: the need for primers and bases that prevent makeup from settling into deep-set wrinkles.

Tubing Mascara: High-Performance Endurance

Tubing mascara grew 9.1% in 2025, per Spate, as consumers prioritize ease of removal alongside extreme wear. Unlike traditional wax-based mascaras that coat lashes in pigment, tubing technology wraps each lash in a water-resistant polymer tube.

Covergirl has entered the space with its Eye Enhancer Wrap Tubing Mascara, claiming up to 30-hour wear. By partnering with Olympic gold medalist Gabby Thomas, the brand positions tubing technology as the ultimate solution for high-endurance lifestyles—offering a sweat-proof, smudge-free lash extension effect that removes with only warm water.

On the prestige side, Urban Decay spent four years developing its Tube Job Tubing Mascara, which features an 89% serum-infused formula. This reflects a secondary trend: the merger of lash care with performance. Using peptides and pro-vitamin B5, the formula claims to strengthen lashes over seven days while providing 24-hour "droop-proof" lift. The strategic launch of this product on TikTok Shop indicates that tubing technology is a key driver of viral, get-ready-with-me (GRWM) content.

Hybrid Formulations in Action

The common thread across all high-growth categories is the hybrid formulation. We are seeing a move toward products where the active skin care percentage is becoming the primary selling point. IT Cosmetics' 92% skin care-based face balm and Urban Decay's 89% serum-soaked mascara are setting new benchmarks for what defines a hybrid.

At Cosmopack North America Miami in January 2026, MPlus Cosmetics unveiled Echoes, a collection that epitomizes the skin care-first

From top: Image courtesy of Laura Geller; Covergirl

benchmark currently driving the makeup category. The collection features a curated selection of 13 textures, including high-naturality formulations and hybrid solutions designed to blur the line between skin care and makeup. By focusing on weightless, breathable textures that respond to light, MPlus aligns with the broader industry shift toward skinified beauty that prioritizes sensorial experience alongside performance.

The Echoes collection reinforces the key hybrid trends identified in the 2026 strategy report:

- **Advanced Complexion Hybrids**: The Skin Whisper tinted serum foundation represents the next generation of complexion products, featuring 97% natural-origin content. This ultra-light, serum-like formula delivers sheer, buildable coverage while enhancing natural radiance, mirroring the demand for weightless, imperceptible makeup.
- **High-Performance Mascara and Brows**: Aligning with the growth in the eye segment, the collection includes three mascaras and a tubing brow gel. The Soft Echo Mascara utilizes an innovative wax blend to provide volume, lift, and definition with 86% natural-origin ingredients, addressing the consumer desire for conscious yet high-performance eye makeup.
- **Multisensorial Lip Innovation**: MPlus addresses the booming lip category with a peel-off lip tint and the Heatwave Melt Balm, a glossy lip pencil. The Heatwave Melt Balm features an innovative hot-cold sensorial effect that alternates warming and cooling sensations to enhance the appearance of natural plumpness and definition.
- **Skin-Centric Cleansing**: Extending the hybrid approach into the preparation and removal phase, the Soft Echo Cleansing Balm features a transformative balm-to-oil-to-milk texture. With 76% natural-origin content, it is designed to remove makeup and sunscreen while



MPlus' Soft Echo Mascara utilizes an innovative wax blend to provide volume, lift, and definition with 86% natural-origin ingredients.



MPlus' Skin Whisper tinted serum foundation represents the next generation of complexion products, featuring 97% natural-origin content.

Images courtesy of MPlus Cosmetics



Cosmetic Group USA's Bronzing Ceramide Jelly Oil Stick targets the skintelligence consumer by combining a sun-kissed glow with advanced barrier repair.



Addressing the high-growth lip treatment sector, Cosmetic Group USA's Jelly Lip Polish is a cushiony gloss stick that acts as a potent anti-aging treatment.

Images courtesy of Cosmetic Group USA

respecting the skin's natural balance, meeting the needs of consumers seeking makeup solutions that care for sensitive skin.

This collection demonstrates how manufacturers are currently enhancing every category—from complexion and eyes to brows and lips—with hybrid formulations that transform application into a moment of pure sensation.

Cosmetic Group USA, Inc. is pushing the skin care first movement into the realm of clinical treatment with a new trio of concept formulations. These products move beyond basic skinification by utilizing advanced delivery systems—such as jelly-to-oil transformations and wet powder slurries—to ensure that makeup application functions as a legitimate dermatological intervention.

The collection directly supports the key growth drivers identified in this 2026 strategy report:

- **Clinical Lip Solutions:** Addressing the high-growth lip treatment sector, the Jelly Lip Polish is a cushiony gloss stick that acts as a potent anti-aging treatment. It utilizes Botox-inspired peptides (CG Smooth Pep) to target dynamic wrinkles by relaxing minute muscle movements around the mouth. Clinical research on the ingredients indicates a 23% reduction in wrinkle volume and a 100% increase in hydration and firmness.
- **Barrier-First Complexion:** The Bronzing Ceramide Jelly Oil Stick targets the skintelligence consumer by combining a sun-kissed glow with advanced barrier repair. The formula uses nature-identical ceramides (CG CeraBarrier) to restore the lipid barrier and reduce transepidermal water loss (TEWL), while an infusion of CBD oil, ginger, and turmeric works to reduce visible irritation and improve skin elasticity.
- **Next-Gen Hybrid Priming:** Breaking traditional category molds, the Palisades Powder Primer introduces the first-ever powder

THE GLAMOUR RESURGENCE: PRECISION PIGMENTS AND HEAVY METAL SAFETY

As the makeup landscape pivots back to 90s-inspired glamour, 2026 is defined by bold statements—think foiled glitters, vibrant purple eyeshadows, and dramatic eyelashes. While the Pantone Color of the Year, Cloud Dancer, anchors the palette in soft, natural beiges and pastels, the market is simultaneously seeing a surge in high-impact reds and pinks across cosmetics and toiletries.

This return to bold color places a premium on ingredient purity and structural innovation. To navigate increasingly strict global regulations, Alexis Capik of Spectra Colors notes that the company has invested in advanced equipment to measure heavy metal impurities such as lead (Pb), arsenic (As), cadmium (Cd), and mercury (Hg). These metals often enter the supply chain as impurities from raw minerals or manufacturing processes.



Susonity's RonaFlair White Sapphire NXT represents a shift away from traditional fillers.

The primary goal for manufacturers is to keep these impurities at technically unavoidable levels, often below 1–2 ppm for highly toxic metals. Regulation varies by region; for instance, U.S. lip products must keep lead under 10 ppm, while the EU requires cadmium to be under 0.1 mg/kg. Some standards are even more stringent, requiring levels as low as 0.2 µg/g for cadmium, mercury and chromium (VI) in specific applications like tattoo inks.

Parallel to safety is the demand for sophisticated skin feel and invisible effects. Susonity's RonaFlair White Sapphire NXT represents a shift away from traditional fillers.

"RonaFlair White Sapphire NXT has different light reflection profile traditional basic fillers (talc, kaolin, starch) because it was created to [optimally] control light reflection," notes Susonity. "RonaFlair White Sapphire NXT features high transparency and exceptionally smooth, flat crystal surfaces. The platelet morphology allowing the light to reflect in a controlled, directional manner, which results in enhanced luminosity without a masking effect, or ashy cast on deeper skin tones. This makes it especially suitable for diverse shade ranges, where maintaining shade fidelity is critical."

Key details of this functional filler include:

- **High Transparency:** Its high transparency allows it to deliver essential radiance without masking the skin, making it ideal for both dark and light skin tones.
- **Color Neutrality:** It is a pure white powder that has no impact on the final color of a formulation.
- **Sensorial Excellence:** It offers a unique silky and velvety texture, providing an enhanced sensorial experience where skin feel is critical.
- **Advanced Structural Performance:** With a small particle size, it offers superior compressibility for solid applications like pressed powders and remains stable and easy to incorporate into any formulation.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** It features low heavy metal content and carries COSMOS, vegan, and China registered certifications to help brands navigate complex global markets.

Image courtesy of Susonity

primer to utilize wet powder slurry technology. This process allows for a talc-free, velvety texture that suspends pigments in a liquid phase, enabling the integration of high-load skin care actives like hyaluronic acid, squalane, and vitamin C. This hybrid delivers an immediate soft-focus blur while simultaneously disrupting melanogenesis to promote long-term radiance.

For product developers, this means innovation is no longer about adding a "splash" of vitamin E. It is about using advanced delivery systems—like Lubrizol's LipoClear inverse micelle delivery—to ensure that potent actives remain stable in oil-heavy makeup bases.

For marketers, the strategy lies in performing, not conforming. Consumers are looking for products that solve real performance gaps: stains that hydrate, balms that blur, and mascaras that condition.

Strategic Takeaways for 2026

Here are four strategic takeaways for beauty industry professionals based on the 2026 market trends:

1. Prioritize high-performance lip hybrids

- **The opportunity**: Lip products are the fastest-growing segment in mass and prestige markets, with lip stains and liner stains projected to see over 36% growth in 2026.
- **The strategy**: Move beyond the binary choice of drying long-wear stains versus comfortable, short-lived glosses.
- **R&D focus**: Utilize advanced delivery systems and actives, such as peptides and moisture complexes, to create one-step life-proof formulas that offer 8-hour wear without sacrificing hydration.

2. Target the mature market with precision textures

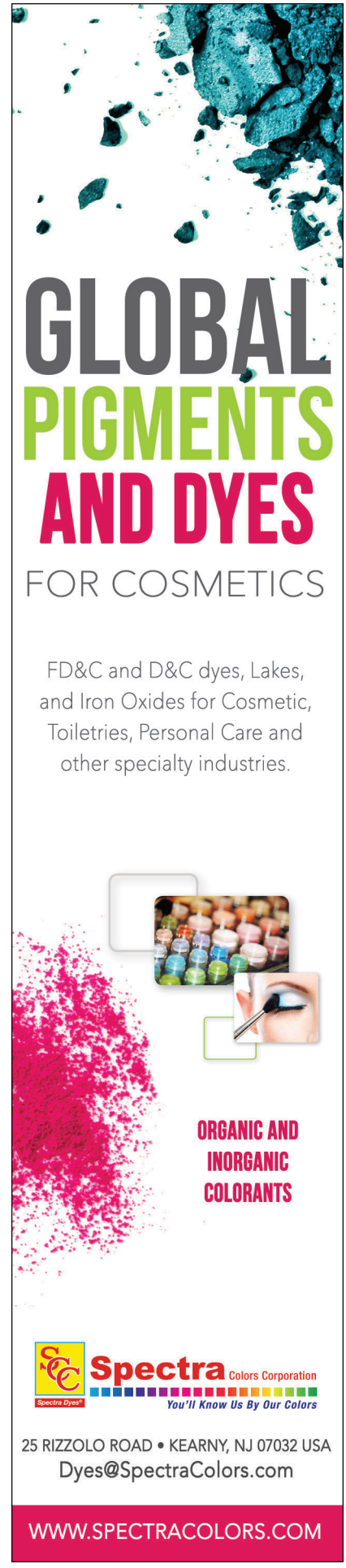
- **The opportunity**: The mature skin makeup category grew 10.4% in 2025, driven by consumers over 40 who demand formulas engineered for changing skin textures rather than generic anti-aging marketing.
- **The strategy**: Shift marketing toward confidence and beauty emergency solutions that address specific pain points like deep-set wrinkles and texture blurring.
- **R&D focus**: Develop skin care first complexion balms and primers—using 90%+ skin care based ingredients like collagen peptides and silicone elastomers—to provide hydration and radiance instead of heavy, cakey coverage.

3. Leverage tubing technology for the active consumer

- **The opportunity**: Tubing mascara grew 9.1% in 2025 as consumers prioritize extreme endurance paired with effortless, warm water removal.
- **The strategy**: Position eye products for high-endurance, life-proof lifestyles, using partnerships with athletes or viral social media content to demonstrate performance.
- **R&D focus**: Merge lash care with performance by infusing tubing formulas with serums, peptides, and vitamins to strengthen lashes while providing smudge-free, 24-hour lift.

4. Benchmark against skin care first formulations

- **The opportunity**: Consumers now expect makeup to function as a clinical skin care treatment, with active percentages becoming a primary selling point.
- **The strategy**: Stop adding a splash of hero ingredients; instead, lead with high-load active percentages (89%–97%) and natural-origin content to justify prestige price points.
- **R&D focus**: Invest in advanced delivery systems, such as wet powder slurries and inverse micelle delivery, to ensure potent actives like vitamin C, hyaluronic acid, and ceramides remain stable and effective within color cosmetic bases. ■



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Luna Bronze successfully entered Ulta Beauty nationwide with a mission born from skin cancer awareness.

Image courtesy of Luna Bronze

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SPF Gets Skinified:

Why 2026 Sun Care Is Built on Longevity, Recovery and Lifestyle

Growth is now driven by disruptive innovations in medical aesthetics, longevity science and experiential lifestyle marketing.

The skinification of sun care is a baseline for 2026 consumer expectations. While moisturizing and sensitive skin claims are now common on over 50% and 33% of launches, respectively, per Mintel[a], growth is now driven by disruptive innovations in medical aesthetics, longevity science and experiential lifestyle marketing.

Medical Aesthetics and Post-Procedure Recovery

A critical growth segment exists at the intersection of medical aesthetics and dermatology. As the global aesthetic procedures market expands, there is an accelerating demand for mineral-only, dermatologist-validated protection.

- **Actionable Insight:** Develop recovery-first SPF solutions. Conventional sunscreens can trap heat, causing discomfort after laser or RF procedures.
- **The Blueprint:** Universkin by Alma established a new category with its Daily Mineral Serum SPF 50, utilizing Dual-Shield 50 technology. By pairing micro-dispersed aqueous phases with 24% zinc oxide, the formula acts as a thermal sink to dissipate residual heat in treated skin.

Longevity Beauty and Cellular Health

Preventing visible signs of aging remains a primary purchase motivator, with 57% of Canadian users applying sunscreen specifically to combat aging, per Mintel. The next wave of skinification leverages longevity actives such as NAD+, PDRN and ATP to target cellular aging.

- **Actionable Insight:** Transition from anti-aging to longevity claims. Brands should incorporate biological-age targeting actives and activated vitamin D technologies to enhance the skinification narrative.
- **The Blueprint:** Lacidem has pioneered this by integrating NAD+ into its Hydrating Waterdrop Sun Lotion, aligning with the longevity beauty trend identified by Mintel.

The Sensorial and Seasonal Lifestyle Shift

Consumers are increasingly seeking mood-boosting sun care that feels like body care. By removing the sunscreen smell and heavy textures,

[a]www.mintel.com/insights/beauty-and-personal-care/5-ways-bpc-brands-can-take-suncare-skinification-to-the-next-level/



Universkin by Alma established a new category with its Daily Mineral Serum SPF 50, utilizing Dual-Shield 50 technology.



By The Beach launched its SPF30 Body Dry Oil in Citrus, Cotton Candy and Melon scents, focusing on a lightweight, luminous finish that avoids grease or stickiness.

L to R: Images courtesy of Alma; By the Beach

THE INGREDIENT TOOLBOX:

Mastering the Skinification of Sun Care

The regulatory evolution in Canada, specifically the addition of Parsol Shield (bemotrizinol) to the Secondary Sunscreen Monograph, marks a turning point for multi-functional beauty. By permitting this photostable, broad-spectrum filter at concentrations up to 6% in daily-wear cosmetics, formulators now have the technical freedom to develop global chassis products that bridge the gap between high-performance protection and the silky, lightweight textures consumers demand. This regulatory shift simplifies supply chains and accelerates time-to-market for brands looking to integrate "skintelligence" into daily moisturizers and hybrid foundations.



Recent ingredient innovations allow product developers to create high-performance sun care that functions as a premium skin care ritual, meeting the consumer demand for efficacy without compromising on an elegant, weightless feel.

To further elevate these hybrid formats, manufacturers are leveraging advanced silicone technologies and specialized boosters to solve long-standing aesthetic challenges. Shin-Etsu Silicones (SESA) has introduced silicone technologies like KSG-45 and X-22-6695B, which provide velvety, mattifying finishes and improved transparency to eliminate the unwanted white cast often associated with mineral sunscreens. These ingredients enable the creation of high-SPF mineral milks and anhydrous clear gels that combat the traditional greasiness of UV filters, ensuring a soft-focus effect that is inclusive of all skin tones.

Complementing these sensorial improvements are multi-functional boosters and naturally derived film-formers that enhance defensive efficacy. Vantage Specialty Chemicals' Distinctive Sunbooster and Jeechem TDS act as versatile emollients and solvents that not only soften the skin but also function as photostabilizers to maintain the effectiveness of other UV filters.

Simultaneously, Croda's Crodabond CSN, a 100% naturally derived plant-based emollient, optimizes film-forming behavior to boost SPF and UVA protection.

"By enhancing film uniformity, UV-scattering efficiency and rheological stability, SPF boosters enable higher photoprotection while maintaining—or even reducing—UV-filter loading," says Abhijit Bidaye, applications manager, Croda. "These improvements contribute to superior formulation performance, including optimized sensory attributes and more efficient use of raw materials, ultimately delivering a more pleasant, consumer-preferred experience."

Bidaye adds, "As sun care evolves into a true extension of skin care, hybrid sunscreens demand ingredients that deliver not only high-level photoprotection but also hydration, barrier support, and the refined textures consumers now expect from their daily products."

Together, these innovations allow product developers to create high-performance sun care that functions as a premium skin care ritual, meeting the consumer demand for efficacy without compromising on an elegant, weightless feel.

Image by Chris Cross/KOTO at Adobe Stock

brands can encourage the high-frequency reapplication sought by 66% of consumers who favor brands sponsoring their passions.

- **Actionable Insight:** Utilize fast-absorbing dry oil formats and nostalgic, carefree scents like cotton candy or citrus to make SPF enjoyable rather than a chore.
- **The Blueprint:** By The Beach launched its SPF30 Body Dry Oil in Citrus, Cotton Candy and Melon scents, focusing on a lightweight, luminous finish that avoids grease or stickiness. Similarly, Kiehl's has integrated its Better Screen UV Serum into mountain culture through partnerships with Ikon Pass and Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, proving product efficacy in extreme, high-performance environments to move beyond seasonal usage.

Reclaiming the Aftersun Segment

Aftersun is an under-innovated segment currently ripe for a resurgence. Modern aftersun must move beyond basic cooling to focus on active repair, regeneration and antioxidant support.

- **Actionable Insight:** Skinify aftersun with biotech ingredients like ectoin, hyaluronic acid and botanical antioxidants to repair sun-stressed skin damaged by sweat, chlorine and pollutants.
- **The Blueprint:** Blue Lizard expanded into this category with its After Sun Soothing Lotion, utilizing Australian desert peach and lime extracts for antioxidant support alongside aloe and cucumber to calm visible redness.



Kiehl's has integrated its Better Screen UV Serum into mountain culture through partnerships with Ikon Pass and Jackson Hole Mountain Resort.



Blue Lizard expanded into this category with its After Sun Soothing Lotion, utilizing Australian desert peach and lime extracts for antioxidant support alongside aloe and cucumber to calm visible redness.

Skin-First Tanning and the Rise of Sunless Alternatives

As awareness of UV damage grows, safer tanning alternatives are becoming essential beauty rituals centered on wellness and confidence.

- **Actionable Insight:** Position self-tanning as skin-loving by incorporating skin care-forward ingredients into diverse formats like milks, jellies and waters.
- **The Blueprint:** Luna Bronze successfully entered Ulta Beauty nationwide with a mission born from skin cancer awareness. Their strategy focuses on skin care-forward formulas and natural-looking finishes, treating the self-tan as an elevated skin care ritual rather than a cosmetic temporary fix. ■



L to R: Images courtesy of Blue Lizard; Kiehl's



Engineering the Future of Bio-Intelligent Beauty: Ingredient Strategy Report

Actionable strategies for R&D, product development and marketing.

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Beauty is experiencing a shift from traditional botanical extraction to high-precision molecular engineering. The latest actives available to beauty brands are beginning to mimic in-office procedures, tap into captured carbon and upcycled waste to decouple supply chains from palm and petroleum, and closing performance gaps in multi-ethnic hair care and inclusive sun protection. But what does this mean for product development, R&D and marketing teams? Here's our strategy breakdown.

Medspa inspiration: Debut's DermCeutical EDLT targets biological pathways for deep elasticity improvements rather than surface renewal.

Image by DragonImages at Adobe Stock



Provital's PureBlome is engineered to simultaneously treat adult acne and aging by increasing collagen I (+14%) and elastin (+25%) while reducing sebum production by 16.5% and total lipids by 27%.



Shin-Etsu's KF-6115 is a polyglycerin-modified silicone dispersant promotes consistent powder dispersion in oils, improving stability and transparency. It supports maximum UV absorber loading with minimal viscosity, delivering a silky feel and a non-whitening finish.

Skin Care: Cellular Programming & Senolytic Evolution

The industry is moving toward topicals that biologically modulate skin-support biomarkers to mimic in-office results through AI-driven discovery and senolytic science.

- **Debut's DermCeutical EDLT**: Developed through a proprietary platform integrating AI and skin genomics, this active targets biological pathways for deep elasticity improvements rather than surface renewal. It biologically modulates biomarkers to increase elastin, downregulate inflammatory signals, and reverse adverse gene expression. In a 12-week study, it demonstrated a 73% improvement in skin sagging and a 100% fine-line improvement rate versus placebo.
- **Mibelle's SenoCellTec**: This next-generation senolytic redefines rejuvenation by targeting zombie (senescent) cells. Its clear-fill-revive mechanism eliminates these cells to reactivate skin stem cells, rebuilding dermal structure to enhance firmness, elasticity, and barrier function.
- **Provital's PureBlome**: A 100% natural-origin post-biotic ferment derived from *Bacillus velezensis*. It is engineered to simultaneously treat adult acne and aging by increasing collagen I (+14%) and elastin (+25%) while reducing sebum production by 16.5% and total lipids by 27%. It also reduces inflammatory markers IL-6 and IL-8 to fade acne marks and improve tone evenness.
- **Uniproma's BotaniCellar Range**: This plant cell mass cultivation technology utilizes patented single-use biodegradable reactors to make rare botanicals accessible at a lower cost. Featured variants include Tianshan snow lotus for melanin reduction and desert rose for inflammatory aging relief and intense hydration.

Sun & Color: Advanced Dispersion & Inclusive Defense

Innovations focus on high-loading capacity and the elimination of the white cast to ensure performance parity across all skin tones, as well as offering defense against multiple environmental aggressors.

- **Symrise's Dragosine FG:** In the pursuit of holistic environmental defense, Symrise has introduced Dragosine FG (INCI: carnosine), a nature-identical biomimetic dipeptide engineered to protect skin from the modern connected lifestyle. This L-carnosine active provides broad-spectrum photoprotection against UV, infrared and high-energy visible (HEV) blue light, specifically preventing hyperpigmentation induced by digital screens. Beyond defense, the ingredient functions as a potent anti-glycation agent, arresting the degradation of

L to R: Courtesy of Provital; Image by LuneVA/peopleimages.com at Adobe Stock

collagen and elastin to preserve dermal firmness and structure. Clinical data further supports its ability to actively stimulate collagen synthesis, resulting in increased elasticity and a measurable reduction in fine lines. By combining antioxidant properties with structural repair, Dragosine FG offers a multi-functional approach to well-aging that addresses both natural chronological aging and modern environmental stressors.

- **Shin-Etsu's KF-6115**: This polyglycerin-modified silicone dispersant promotes consistent powder dispersion in oils, improving stability and transparency. It supports maximum UV absorber loading with minimal viscosity, delivering a silky feel and a non-whitening finish.
- **Shin-Etsu's KP-578**: A silicone/acrylate polymer designed to prevent streaking and separation in color cosmetics. It facilitates high pigment loads (up to 20%) in sheer, stable formulations by interacting with the hydrophilic groups on the pigment.
- **Azafran's BioSheer Zinc Dispersion**: Engineered with uncoated zinc oxide, this dispersion is designed for maximum transparency and broad-spectrum UVA/UVB protection. It is clinically proven safe at the nanoparticle level and is reef-safe and biodegradable.
- **Ashland's X-Tend 226**: A proprietary polar ester (phenethyl benzoate) with high solubilizing capacity for solid organic UV filters like bemotrizinol. It prevents filters from crystallizing over time, ensuring consistent protection and a streamlined formulation process with improved cost-effectiveness.

Hair Care: Structural Reinforcement & Enhanced Experiences

The focus is on replacing traditional quats with biodegradable, bio-intelligent shields that optimize drying time and strengthening for multi-ethnic hair.

- **Provital's CoverTrix**: Utilizing 3D matrix technology for the sustained release of amaranth seed extract, this bio-intelligent shield improves the internal structure and external mechanics of all hair types. It increases tensile strength in Afro (+13%) and straight (+21%) hair while reducing air-drying time by up to 42%.
- **Inolex's ProCondition 22**: A biodegradable, non-palm alternative to quats that forms lamellar gel networks to mimic the natural structure of skin and hair. It provides wet combability comparable to behentrimonium chloride (BTAC) and replenishes skin moisture within 15 minutes, maintaining it for 24 hours.

Formulation & Preservation: Circular Lipids & Delivery Systems

Biotech is providing alternatives to petroleum and palm-derived ingredients while simplifying the preservation of clean formulas.

- **Savor's carbon-capture tech**: Savor designs lipids directly from captured carbon—cutting emissions by more than 90% compared to tropical oils. Its portfolio includes climate conscious triglycerides (a palm-free alternative to caprylic/capric triglyceride) and vegan tallow,



Provital's CoverTrix increases tensile strength in Afro (+13%) and straight (+21%) hair while reducing air-drying time by up to 42%.



NoPalm Ingredients and ÄIO use fermentation to transform agricultural, wood and dairy waste (like whey permeate) into oils and fats identical to conventional palm and petroleum-based oils.

L to R: Courtesy of Provital; ÄIO

which targets the demand for rich conditioning without livestock.

- **NoPalm Ingredients & ÄIO**: These companies use fermentation to transform agricultural, wood, and dairy waste (like whey permeate) into oils and fats identical to conventional palm and petroleum-based oils.
- **Curie Co.'s AmpliPQ-CF**: A chelator-free preservation system that boosts the efficacy of sodium benzoate to deliver broad-spectrum protection. It serves as an alternative to phenoxyethanol in systems with a pH of 3-6 and meets stringent clean beauty standards like Target Clean and Sephora.
- **Solabia's ViscoPure**: A 100% natural aqueous thickener that delivers up to 20x the thickening power of standard xanthan gum at just 0.1%. It offers broad pH tolerance and produces smooth, transparent gels.
- **Labio's MIT [HD]**: A patented delivery system using a multi-lamellar vesicle (MLV) structure that mimics the skin's own structure for enhanced biocompatibility. It carries high loads of both oil- and water-soluble actives for prolonged release and deeper penetration.

Innovation Playbook: R&D, Product Development and Marketing

Pivot to Procedure-Mimetic Topicals

Product development should move beyond surface-level aesthetics toward ingredients that biologically modulate cellular pathways to mimic medical-grade results. Utilize AI and genomics-driven discovery to target the root causes of aging, such as senescent zombie cells and gene expression, rather than relying on traditional physical stimulation or surface renewal. Position daily topicals as pain-free, cost-effective alternatives to in-office treatments like lasers or needles.

Implement Creation-Based Supply Chain Models

Procurement and R&D must decouple from volatile, extraction-based agricultural sources in favor of lab-grown or upcycled feedstocks. Adopt circular lipids derived from captured carbon emissions, agricultural waste, or dairy side streams to ensure consistent performance and supply



Position daily topicals as pain-free, cost-effective alternatives to in-office treatments like lasers or needles.

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Incorporate technologies that reduce air-drying or blow-drying times and utilize cold-processable, multifunctional ingredients to lower energy consumption during production. Market these advancements as time-saving performance markers that reduce cumulative heat exposure and simplify complex beauty rituals.

chain resilience. Move toward drop-in replacements that provide performance parity with petroleum or palm-derived ingredients while drastically reducing carbon footprints.

Design for Structural Inclusivity

R&D should focus on the internal biomechanics and external structure of diverse skin and hair types to achieve true performance parity. Develop formulations that provide transparent, non-whitening protection for all skin tones and mechanical strengthening tailored to the tensile needs of multi-ethnic hair. Use bio-intelligent shields and specialized dispersants that eliminate traditional formulation trade-offs, such as white cast in mineral sunscreens or buildup from hair conditioning agents.

Prioritize Fast-Acting Beauty and Efficiency

Product developers should leverage ingredients that optimize the consumer's daily routine while streamlining manufacturing. Incorporate technologies that reduce air-drying or blow-drying times and utilize cold-processable, multifunctional ingredients to lower energy consumption during production. Market these advancements as time-saving performance markers that reduce cumulative heat exposure and simplify complex beauty rituals.

Solve Multifunctional Ecosystem Gaps

Formulators should seek out ecosystem ingredients that provide dual biological modulation for overlapping consumer concerns. Target specific demographic intersections—such as adult acne and aging or digital blue-light defense and glycation—with a single active rather than multi-step routines. Replace controversial traditional preservatives and surfactants with biodegradable boosters and natural thickeners that maintain high efficacy and minimalist aesthetic standards. ■

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Hair thinning (77%) and hair loss/shedding (80%) are the top two negative hair changes women experience since perimenopause or menopause (up sharply from the 2021 study results, where hair thinning or shedding were negative effects hovered around 50% for menopausal women).

Image by deagreez at Adobe Stock

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Beyond Quick Fixes:
WOMEN EMBRACE SCIENCE-BACKED, LIFE-STAGE HAIR CARE

Most women don't currently use a hair longevity approach to their own hair, but there is strong interest.

BY DENISE HERICH, The Benchmarking Company

More than 6,000 U.S. women reach the menopause milestone daily, with an average age of onset at 52, according to the Society for Women's Health Research[a]. Eight to 10 million women experience menopausal symptoms in any given year.

Among the many recorded symptoms, "unfavorable changes in hair" was noted by 72% of women going through menopause, according to the results of The Benchmarking Company's (TBC) February 2026 primary online consumer study. The 4,000-plus respondent study captured pain points and beauty and personal care brand remedies sought from women currently in perimenopause, menopause or post-menopause, with hair issues in particular focus.

[a]https://swhr.org/health_focus_area/menopause/

87% of Women Report Frustrating Symptoms as Internet Overtakes Doctors for Guidance

Eighty-seven percent of women in menopause say they always (50%) or sometimes (37%) experience menopausal symptoms that frustrate them. This percentage is in line with other currently published research about frequency of symptoms, and an increase from TBC's 2021 study of menopausal women, where that combined rate was just 72%.

To find information that will help her navigate the stages of menopause, her own Internet research (with ChatGPT cited often) now serves as the main source of inspiration for 78% of all menopausal respondents (**T-1**). Her own doctors were her main source of education on the subject as published in TBC's 2021 study (when doctors were noted at 69% and her own internet research was 55%). Her doctors (now 58% for women of all stages), friends and family (57%), and what she's learning from social media sources (21%) are helpful as well. Social media has climbed as a trusted resource since TBC's 2021 study, when just 9% looked to social media for answers.

Sleep Loss, Hair Changes and Relentless Heat Top Menopausal Concerns

"Sleep pattern disruption" (77%) is the most cited frustration for women in all stages of menopause, with "unfavorable changes in my hair" close behind at 72% (**T-2**). Hot flashes (67%), unfavorable skin changes (67%) and night sweats (67%) followed. Not surprisingly, those in active menopause noted these frustrations with more frequency than those in perimenopause or post-menopause.

T-1. Information sources for those experiencing menopause

What are/were your main sources of information as you navigate the stages of menopause? Select up to 3. (only those at 10% and higher shown)		
Perimenopausal women	**Menopausal women**	**Postmenopausal women**
Internet/My own research: 81%	Internet/My own research: 78%	Internet/My own research: 74%
Doctor: 54%	Doctor: 62%	Doctor: 60%
Friends/Family: 62%	Friends/Family: 60%	Friends/Family: 52%
Social Media: 29%	Social Media: 22%	Social Media: 13%

Courtesy of The Benchmarking Co.

T-2. Menopausal effects reported by respondents

What menopausal issues or changes have you experienced? Select all that apply.				
	Total	Perimenopause	Menopause	Post-menopause
Sleep pattern disruption	77%	75%	82%	76%
Unfavorable changes in my hair	72%	72%	75%	70%
Hot flashes	67%	58%	81%	70%
Unfavorable changes in my facial or body skin	67%	67%	73%	65%
Night sweats	67%	64%	76%	64%
Difficulty losing weight	65%	61%	68%	67%
Mood swings	58%	63%	65%	48%
Decreased sex drive	56%	53%	60%	58%
Vaginal dryness	45%	33%	56%	53%
Drop in estrogen levels	38%	28%	46%	44%
Irregular periods	28%	55%	19%	5%
Incontinence	26%	23%	29%	26%
Painful sex	23%	15%	28%	27%
Change in vaginal odor	20%	22%	25%	14%
Vaginal atrophy	12%	6%	13%	19%
Favorable changes in my hair	4%	5%	6%	3%
Favorable changes in my facial or body skin	4%	5%	6%	3%

T-3. Negative menopausal hair changes reported by respondents

What are the negative changes in your hair since perimenopause or menopause? Select all that apply.				
	Total	Perimenopause	Menopause	Post-menopause
Hair loss/shedding	80%	81%	82%	79%
Hair thinning	77%	77%	74%	78%
Dry hair/loss of hydration	58%	57%	65%	56%
Greying/whiting hair	57%	55%	57%	58%
Limp/lifeless hair	50%	49%	55%	50%
Hair breakage	49%	50%	55%	45%
Rough/brittle hair texture	40%	40%	45%	37%
Natural color is less vibrant	30%	29%	30%	30%

Interestingly, "difficulty losing weight" rates lower on the issues menopausal women experience today for each stage, compared to the 2021 study: 73% then, versus 65% on average now. Perhaps the rise in GLP-1 usage has eased that frustration.

The Great Hair Divide: 4% Thrive, 80% Report Loss

Of those fortunate menopausal women who say that menopause has caused favorable changes in their hair (just 4%), the most commonly cited change was hair that went from straight to wavy (31%). Other positive hair changes since menopause were hair growing faster (30%), less hair loss/shedding (29%), hair has more body/is fuller (22%), healthier-looking hair (21%) and thinning areas of hair filling out (21%).

Courtesy of The Benchmarking Co.

The majority of those with changing hair didn't fair as well.

Hair thinning (77%) and hair loss/shedding (80%) are the top two negative hair changes women experience since perimenopause or menopause (up sharply from the 2021 study results, where hair thinning or shedding were negative effects hovered around 50% for menopausal women; see (**T-3**).

Dry hair (58%), graying hair (57%) and limp hair (50%) round out the list in 2026 for more than half of those experiencing negative hair changes. For those in menopause, 55% also experience hair breakage.

From Silk Pillows to LED Helmets: The Menopause Hair Fix Boom

To combat their hair issues at this life stage, 43% color their hair, 41% use leave-in conditioners, 37% use specialty styling products, 34% have switched to a silk pillow, and 25% use specialty hair treatments or repair products, along with thickening shampoos (25%). Fifteen percent currently use a non-prescription hair health supplement.

There are many solutions that she's interested in trying, but she just hasn't done so yet (**F-1**). Seventy percent of menopausal women said they're interested in using an LED hair growth helmet that uses low-level red-light therapy to stimulate hair follicles. Specialty scalp treatments (65%), anti-gray boosters or supplements (64%), densifying shampoos (64%), specialty bristle brushes (63%), and keratin treatments (63%) are also of strong interest.

36% Say Menopause-Branded Hair Care Works Better

Thirty-six percent of menopausal women believe hair products specifically marketed as "for those experiencing menopausal symptoms" work better than hair products marketed to the general public (60% say they work the same).

Those who believe they work better say so because the products are specifically formulated for women in their life stage (92%), they've got proof of efficacy behind them in the form of product reviews and consumer claims (60%), show clinical test results (48%), and have ingredients that are known problem-solvers (47%).

They've used brands that market their hair products for menopausal women, such as:

- 34%: Olaplex
- 32%: Nexxus
- 25%: Kerastase
- 22%: Living Proof

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- 19%: Color Wow
- 15%: Nutrafol
- 13%: Rogaine
- 10%: Briogeo

Other brands used now or in the past for menopausal hair issues cited were Hers (9%), BondiBoost (7%), Fekkai (7%), Vegamour (4%), Better Not Younger (4%) and many others.



Seventy percent of menopausal women said they're interested in using an LED hair growth helmet, such as Qure's (pictured), that uses low-level red-light therapy to stimulate hair follicles.

Longevity Claims: Women Are Ready for Hair Health That Lasts

Just 14% of women in menopause (and 26% of younger women) have heard of the growing wellness trend of "hair longevity." This was described to respondents as focusing on maintaining scalp, hair follicle and strand health to prevent premature aging, breakage, and density loss. Rather than just "anti-aging," it prioritizes a long-term health-span for hair through a holistic approach. This is often a cocktail of products approach, including topical treatments, nutritional support and in-salon care, rather than relying on a single product.

Eighty-two percent of all women find the concept of hair longevity to be appealing, with 78% believing that employing a hair longevity approach to hair care will result in healthier hair for longer.

Aspects of this approach that all respondents found most appealing include:

- 82%: moving beyond just "quick fix" regrowth by keeping follicles younger for longer, focusing on density, thickness, and a healthy growth cycle.
- 81%: using products with peptides, antioxidants, ceramides, and probiotics to protect against UV rays, pollution and damage.
- 79%: that this trend is more "prevention first," instead of treating damage that has already occurred.
- **77% need proof of efficacy in the form of product reviews, consumer claims, or clinical testing to adopt a hair longevity regimen.**

Most women don't currently use a hair longevity approach to their own hair—just 14% of women overall (with 21% of those still in child-bearing years)—but there is strong interest. Eighty-two percent of all women (76% of those not yet in perimenopause) are interested in doing so.

There are some caveats to her acceptance of the concept. First, she'll need to be able to afford a hair longevity regimen, according to 85% of all respondents. Importantly, 77%

FROM TIKTOK TO GOOGLE: HAIR SHEDDING SURGES AS CONSUMERS HUNT SOLUTIONS



Rosemary oil, found in products like the Believe Speak Volumes Scalp Awakening Serum, is a top search term in the hair wellness/loss space.

Hair loss and thinning are top-of-mind for consumers, and the data confirms it. According to January 2026 Spate data, concern around hair shedding has surged across platforms, with TikTok interest up 643.5%, Instagram 284% and Google searches averaging 49.6K per month. Consumers are actively seeking reassurance and solutions, from ingredient-led content (#rosemaryoil, #pumpkinseedoil) to affordable, accessible products (#walmartfinds). Hair growth sprays, in particular, are one of the fastest-growing trends, with TikTok views up over 1,000% year-over-year and strong interest in plant-based, routine-friendly options. This consumer curiosity and demand for proven, convenient solutions provides important context for the insights in this article, which explores menopausal women's hair challenges, emerging solutions, and the rising interest in holistic, life-stage hair care.

From top: Images courtesy of Qure; Believe



With 60% of all women already using three to four hair care products in their regular regimen (18% use five or more products), it may be a matter of brands offering education to inform buyers of the best product mix to achieve healthy hair.

say they'll need proof of efficacy in the form of product reviews, consumer claims, or clinical testing to influence her to adopt a hair longevity regimen. Seventy-two percent say the products would need to be easily incorporated into her hair care regimen, and 46% want the regimen to be tailored to her life stage.

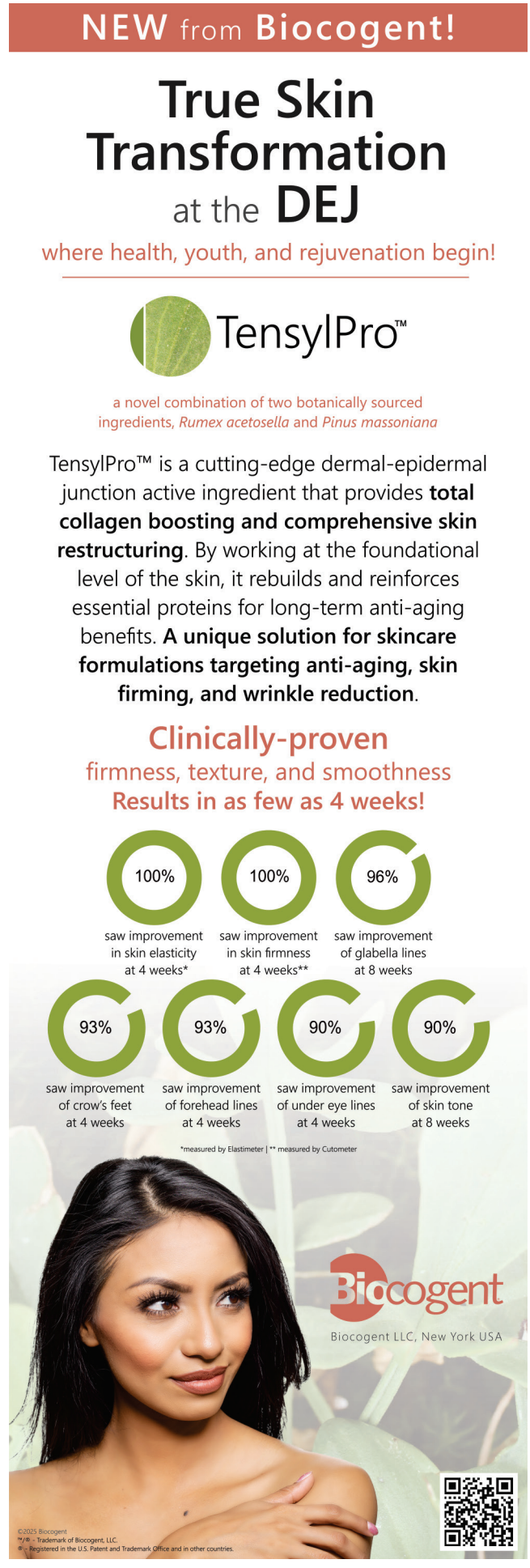
Guiding Women to Holistic Hair Health

With 60% of all women already using three to four hair care products in their regular regimen (18% use five or more products), it may be a matter of brands offering education to inform buyers of the best product mix to achieve healthy hair through this holistic approach—as well as proof of efficacy. This could be a boon to future menopausal women who might not suffer the same hair issues through those life stages. ■



Based in sun-seared San Diego, **DENISE HERICH** is co-founder and managing partner at The Benchmarking Company. The Benchmarking Company provides marketing and strategy professionals in the beauty and personal care industries with need-to-know information about its customers and prospects through custom consumer research studies through its 250,000+ female PinkPanel database, focus group, and consumer in-home use testing (IHUTs) for claims substantiation and risk mitigation.

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Aptar Beauty has partnered with Dubai-based fragrance house Kayali to launch a new collection of body and hair mists utilizing high-performance aerosol and dispensing technology.

Image courtesy of Kayali/Aptar

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The 2026 Packaging Edit: DROPPERS, MINIS, DISPENSING & MORE

As beauty insiders navigate the demands of e-commerce, increasingly stringent recycling standards, the dermocosmetic boom and more, the packaging supply chain has stepped up.

The 2026 packaging landscape is being defined by a move toward omnichannel resilience and high-performance circularity. As beauty insiders navigate the demands of e-commerce and increasingly stringent recycling standards, the latest dispensing innovations are prioritizing metal-free engineering and integrated tamper-evidence to streamline the supply chain.

From aerospace-grade polymers that replace traditional springs to 360-degree aerosol clouds and e-commerce-ready pumps with record-breaking stack heights, these technical advancements ensure that luxury aesthetics no longer come at the cost of environmental or structural integrity. This report explores the high-spec transformation of the "mini" category, the evolution of precision dropper tech, and the new era of metal-free, secure dispensing.

Small Format, Big Impact: Travel-Size Innovation Scales Up for 2026

The "mini" category is undergoing a high-spec transformation as the 2026 beauty market prioritizes premiumization and functional portability. Moving beyond basic single-use plastics, the latest launches from Berlin Packaging and ICONS America highlight a dual-track evolution: the shift toward fully recyclable, luxury glass for prestige trial sets and the rise of wearable packaging that integrates beauty into the daily commute. These innovations provide brands with the technical tools to maintain luxury positioning while meeting consumer demands for sustainable durability and on-the-go convenience.

Wearable Beauty: Keychain-Ready Packaging for On-the-Go Rituals

"At ICONS America, we are seeing portability and convenience driving innovation, especially in travel-ready packaging," says Marianna Cilauro, VP of sales and marketing, ICONS America. "Our keychain-ready packaging collection is perfect for on-the-go touch-ups, turning classic packaging into wearable, travel-ready accessories."

She adds, "The collection includes portable liquid lip and concealer



"At ICONS America, we are seeing portability and convenience driving innovation, especially in travel-ready packaging," says Marianna Cilauro, VP of sales and marketing, ICONS America. "Our keychain-ready packaging collection is perfect for on-the-go touch-ups, turning classic packaging into wearable, travel-ready accessories."

Image courtesy of ICONS America

wand packaging and D19 PE tubes with slant tip applicators, ideal for a wide range of formulation types. The integrated keychain hole on the cap enhances portability for travel and creates a stylish way for customers to personalize their beauty packaging."

Redefining Luxury Travel Sizes with Recyclable Glass

The MiniMania Collection from Berlin Packaging represents a strategic shift toward premiumization in the "mini" category, offering high-quality glass solutions for luxury skin care and makeup. As brands move away from single-use plastics in travel and trial sizes, this collection emphasizes durability and recyclability through the use of top-quality glass.

The collection is defined by its use of glass, which Berlin Packaging highlights as a fully recyclable material. Key technical features include:

- Premium aesthetic: All containers feature high-quality glass and characteristic thick bottoms to maintain a luxury feel in a reduced format.
- Broad size range: To accommodate various product types, the line is available in 20 ml, 15 ml, 10 ml, 5 ml and 3 ml options.
- High customization: Decoration techniques range from external varnishing and metallization to advanced options like 3D inkjet, laser etching, and "precious metals" screen printing.

Designed for high-viscosity serums and liquid formulas, the bottles offer versatile neck types and accessory compatibility:

- Infusion & Sky (20 ml): The 20 ml models serve as the anchor of the collection, compatible with droppers, spray pumps, and cream pumps.
- Ego, Heavy, & Sky (15 ml): These 15 ml variants offer different diameters and heights—such as the low-profile Heavy (45.8 mm diameter) versus the slender Sky (30.4 mm diameter)—to fit brand-specific silhouettes.
- Mirò (3-5 ml): For ultra-concentrated treatments, the Mirò line features a slender 16 mm diameter with special neck requirements.



The MiniMania Collection from Berlin Packaging represents a strategic shift toward premiumization in the "mini" category, offering high-quality glass solutions for luxury skin care and makeup.

The jar collection is engineered for formulas ranging from balms to mousse foundations:

- Large Format Minis (15–20 ml): The Infusion 20 ml and Delight 15 ml jars utilize special neck sizes, while the Ego, Heavy, and Luxe 15 ml variants use standard 45/400 necks for easier accessory integration.
- Diverse Closure Options: Depending on the model, jars can be paired with caps in PP, ABS, aluminum, or sustainably-positioned wood.
- Specialty Functionality: The Heavy and Luxe 15 ml jars are compatible with sifters, making them suitable for travel-sized loose powders or glitters.

The Petite & Luxe Range (5–10 ml): These smaller jars are ideal for eye contours and lip treatments, featuring compact heights (as low as 16.5 mm for the Heavy 15 ml jar) and specialized gaskets for formula protection.

The MiniMania collection is positioned as a comprehensive solution for:

- Skin care: Primer, serum oils, eye contours, and lip treatments.
- Color Cosmetics: Blush, lip balms, eyeliner gels, eyebrow gels, and cream eyeshadows.
- Complexion: Concealers, mousse foundations, and glitter gels.

Precision Dispensing: Next-Gen Dropper Tech for Clinical Accuracy and Circularity

The 2026 dropper landscape is shifting from basic dispensing to high-precision engineering and circular design. Today's beauty insiders are demanding hardware that balances clinical-grade accuracy with sustainable material stories, driving a new generation of monomaterial systems and automated loading mechanisms. From "smart" reloads that enhance hygiene to the transformation of the internal pipette into a branding canvas, these latest innovations prove that the smallest components can deliver the most significant impact on formula integrity and shelf appeal.

Image courtesy of Berlin Packaging



Virospack's Translucent Harmony concept features color-painted translucent glass bottles that offer a literal window into the formula.



Beyond dosing accuracy, Virospack is transforming the internal pipette into a high-visibility branding asset.



Virospack is redefining the dropper category with a high-dosage push-button system engineered for professional-level precision.

Precision Meets Branding: High-Dose and Translucent Dropper Tech

Virospack is redefining the dropper category with a high-dosage push-button system engineered for professional-level precision. Each press delivers a consistent 0.65 ml dose, effectively eliminating over-application and formula waste. The hardware is built for the circular economy, utilizing PCR and chemically recycled plastics for the button, shell, and inner cap, while offering pipettes in either glass or recyclable PP.

Beyond dosing accuracy, Virospack is transforming the internal pipette into a high-visibility branding asset. Utilizing in-house high-definition screen printing on curved glass, brands

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Images courtesy of Virospack



"Our 10 ml PP Airless Push Button Dropper packaging follows the rising trend in tactile beauty packaging that is also easy-to-use and travel friendly," says Marianna Cilauro, VP of sales and marketing, ICONS America.



Capardoni's Diamond dropper is a monomaterial dispensing system featuring a diamond-shaped bulb designed for a precise grip and dosing.

can now apply intricate logos and fine patterns with exact Pantone matching directly to the pipette. This durable, formula-compatible decoration elevates the pack's perceived value and removes the need for additional labeling.

Rounding out the collection is the Translucent Harmony concept, featuring color-painted translucent glass bottles that offer a literal window into the formula. Paired with a monomaterial PP dropper cap, the entire assembly is 100% recyclable. This visual-light aesthetic aligns with the market move toward transparency and purity while maintaining the technical sophistication required by prestige beauty brands.

Airless Push Button Dropper: Precision Meets Portability

"Our 10 ml PP Airless Push Button Dropper packaging follows the rising trend in tactile beauty packaging that is also easy-to-use and travel friendly," says Marianna Cilauro, VP of sales and marketing, ICONS America. "The silicone push button at the base allows for convenient single-handed use, and the mess-free dropper tip delivers targeted application."

Diamond-Grade Recyclability: Monomaterial PP Dropper

Capardoni's Diamond dropper is a monomaterial dispensing system featuring a diamond-shaped bulb designed for a precise grip and dosing. All components are constructed from polypropylene (PP), which allows for recycling and waste reduction.

The technical design includes a precise dosing mechanism suitable for performance-focused applications. Furthermore, the system is customizable, as different bulb shapes can be produced using specialized molds.

NeoDropper Autoload for High-Precision Skin Care

Aptar Beauty has introduced the NeoDropper Autoload, a 30 ml glass bottle system featuring a 20/400 neck size and a 0.35 cc dosage capacity. The design utilizes a twist-and-push mechanism that automatically reloads the applicator with the correct dose upon opening. To enhance hygiene, the system employs a short-applicator design that prevents direct contact between the formula and the applicator, which has been scientifically shown to offer higher bacterial protection than traditional dropper formats.



Aptar Beauty has introduced the NeoDropper Autoload, a 30 ml glass bottle system featuring a 20/400 neck size and a 0.35 cc dosage capacity.

The technical specifications include a sealed bottle construction that prevents leakage if overturned and a dip tube engineered to minimize product waste. For brand customization, the upper and lower collars, as well as the actuator, support metallization, lacquering, and silk-screening.

From top, L to R: Images courtesy of CONS America; Capardoni; Aptar

Omnichannel Flow: Metal-Free Engineering and High-Security Dispensing for 2026

The 2026 packaging landscape is being defined by a move toward omnichannel resilience and high-performance circularity. As beauty insiders navigate the demands of e-commerce and increasingly stringent recycling standards, the latest dispensing innovations are prioritizing metal-free engineering and integrated tamper-evidence to streamline the supply chain. From aerospace-grade polymers that replace traditional springs to "360-degree" aerosol clouds and e-commerce-ready pumps with record-breaking stack heights, these technical advancements ensure that luxury aesthetics no longer come at the cost of environmental or structural integrity.



Italian packaging specialist Lumson has launched FREE, a metal-free dispensing system engineered to match the mechanical performance of traditional metal-spring pumps.



Aptar Beauty has engineered a specialized dispensing solution for Moroccanoil's new Treatment Mist, utilizing the EuroMist Technical spray pump to handle the unique challenges of dry oil formulations.

360º Scented Clouds: High-Performance Dispensing Tech

Aptar Beauty has partnered with Dubai-based fragrance house Kayali to launch a new collection of body and hair mists utilizing high-performance aerosol and dispensing technology. The collection features four 125 ml body mist references and a 75 ml Oudgasm Rose Oud 16 hair mist, all designed to elevate the daily fragrance ritual through advanced diffusion.

At the heart of the partnership is Aptar's All Over Spray technology, which delivers an ultra-continuous, cloud-like mist. Key technical highlights include:

- Full coverage dispensing: The system features 360º dispensing capabilities to ensure neutral diffusion and a generous dosage at any angle.
- Durable construction: Scents are housed in unbreakable aluminum bottles compatible with a wide range of bag capacities, valve types, and actuators.
- Hybrid tech: The 75 ml hair mist launch specifically integrates both Aptar's PZ1 spray and All Over Spray technology for precision application.

The packaging was engineered to align with Kayali's luxury positioning while addressing modern retail requirements:

- Premium finishes: Bottles and caps feature color-matched matte finishes enhanced with decorative hot stamping.
- Tamper evidence: A specialized sleeve over the cap reinforces product safety and helps maintain formula integrity.
- Secondary packaging reduction: To minimize environmental impact, Aptar applied peel-off labels containing all necessary regulatory information directly onto the bottles, eliminating the need for outer boxes.

Metal-Free Performance: RecyClass-Certified Pump

Italian packaging specialist Lumson has launched FREE, a metal-free dispensing system engineered to match the mechanical performance of traditional metal-spring pumps. Developed over five years of research, the pump utilizes a high-performance polymer adapted from the aerospace and medical sectors. This material is designed to withstand significant mechanical, thermal, and chemical stress while maintaining long-term dosage accuracy and effortless user comfort.

The innovation represents a major milestone for circular beauty packaging, as the removal of metal components simplifies the recycling process. When paired with a neutral PP bottle and cap, the FREE pump has earned RecyClass Technology Approval and a Class A Compatibility Letter, confirming its full compatibility with the PP recycling stream.

Available in both atmospheric and airless versions with a standard 24/410 neck, the system allows prestige brands to maintain high-performance dispensing without compromising sustainability goals. By integrating this aerospace-grade polymer into its "technological heart," Lumson continues to bridge the gap between durable engineering and

L to R: Images courtesy of Lumson; Aptar

UNICA PACKAGING DEBUTS POWDER-MIX AIRLESS BOTTLE FOR ON-DEMAND RECONSTITUTION

Unica Packaging has introduced the Powder-Mix Airless Bottle, a specialized dual-chamber system designed to improve the end-user experience for products requiring powder reconstitution. The packaging features two sealed chambers—one for powder (3 ml to 5 ml) and one for liquid (10 ml to 20 ml)—that remain separated to preserve ingredient stability. Upon the first actuation, an internal seal opens to mix the components, while subsequent actuations dispense the freshly reconstituted formula through an airless pump mechanism.



Unica Packaging has introduced the Powder-Mix Airless Bottle, a specialized dual-chamber system designed to improve the end-user experience for products requiring powder reconstitution.

The system is engineered to address the growing demand for fresh, active skincare, particularly in the Asian beauty market. Key technical benefits include:

- Enhanced potency: By storing active ingredients in a water-free powder state, they are protected from degradation until the moment of use.
- Preservative reduction: Because the separation of water and powder limits microbial growth drivers, brands can formulate with significantly fewer preservatives.
- Process efficiency: The design replaces manual consumer mixing, which is often inconsistent or messy, with an automated internal process.
- Material composition: The unit is constructed from a combination of PETG, PE, PP, silicone, and glass.

Designed for high-end beauty and skincare, the bottle is versatile across various applications and utilizes simple filling and assembly equipment. It is available in two primary dimensions: 29 mm x 29 mm x 116 mm and 34 mm x 34 mm x 122 mm. This reportedly first-of-its-kind design provides a compelling option for clean beauty brands looking to deliver high-potency, stable formulations in a user-friendly, airless format.



"ICONS America Tubes with Airless Pumps are a versatile, user-friendly packaging option," says Marianna Cilauro, VP of sales and marketing, ICONS America.

environmental responsibility for the global cosmetics market.

Precision Dispensing for Oil-Based Formulas

Aptar Beauty has engineered a specialized dispensing solution for Moroccanoil's new Treatment Mist, utilizing the EuroMist Technical spray pump to handle the unique challenges of dry oil formulations. Designed to prevent common issues such as leaking, clogging, and component swelling, the EuroMist Technical is constructed with high chemical resistance specifically for oil-based products. The system delivers a consistent, ultra-fine "cloud-like" spray with a precise dosage of 150 mcl per stroke.

The selection of the EuroMist Technical allowed Moroccanoil to maintain shelf consistency with its existing product lines while utilizing a specialized internal insert to optimize the spray experience for oil. Manufactured in Cary, Illinois, the pump's architecture is highly versatile:

- Formula Integrity: The pump is specifically engineered to avoid the chemical degradation and leakage often caused by oil-based treatments.
- Customizable Components: The system offers various inserts, dosages, and finishes to meet brand-specific aesthetic and functional requirements.
- Scale Versatility: To ensure a uniform user experience, the same pump technology is deployed across both the 100 ml full-size and 25 ml travel-size formats.

Aptar Beauty customized the pump with an exclusive champagne color and smooth matte finish to align with Moroccanoil's premium branding. For the deluxe discovery sampling program, the brand integrated Aptar's stilo mini packaging solution:

- Discovery Format: A 5 ml amber glass bottle.

From top: Images courtesy of Unica Packaging; ICONS America



Aptar's HDP all-plastic, high-dose dispensing pump features the market's shortest stack height at 15 mm, designed to maximize retail shelf presence while maintaining a 3.5 cc output for high-viscosity formulas.



Capardoni has introduced the patented 360° Security flip-top cap, a tamper-proof closure designed to eliminate the need for secondary shrink sleeves.

- Premium Dispensing: Features a Replica fragrance pump with a glossy black overcap for high-end presentation.

Precision Flow: Versatile Airless Pump Tubes

"ICONS America Tubes with Airless Pumps are a versatile, user-friendly packaging option," says Marianna Cilauro, VP of sales and marketing, ICONS America. "Available in a variety of materials and sizes with various dosages, pump styles and collar choices, they are ideal for a wide range of formulations."

Shortest Stack, Highest Sustainability: New E-Commerce Ready All-Plastic Pump

The beauty packaging landscape is seeing a shift toward high-performance, omnichannel-ready dispensing with the launch of Aptar's HDP. This all-plastic, high-dose dispensing pump features the market's shortest stack height at 15 mm, designed to maximize retail shelf presence while maintaining a 3.5 cc output for high-viscosity formulas. By utilizing a metal-free spring positioned outside the dosage chamber, the design ensures superior formula compatibility and high recyclability within the polypropylene (PP) waste stream.

Engineered for the demands of modern retail, the HDP is optimized for e-commerce through a down-locking, twist-to-lock neck finish that eliminates the need for external safety clips. Currently available in North America, the system is Ista-6 Overbox (Amazon) testing compliant, making it a viable solution for transit and on-the-go consumer use.

Key technical specifications:

- Sustainability profile: Fully recyclable PP construction, available with up to 50% post-consumer recycled (PCR) resin.
- E-Commerce capability: Secure twist-to-lock mechanism ensures safety during shipping without secondary packaging.
- Design versatility: Features two neck finish options and supports in-mold coloring for brand customization.
- Optimized dimensions: At 15 mm, it offers the shortest stack height currently available for high-dosage products.

Tamper-Proof Efficiency: 360° Security Flip-Top Cap

Capardoni has introduced the patented 360° Security flip-top cap, a tamper-proof closure designed to eliminate the need for secondary shrink sleeves. Engineered with a specialized anti-unscrewing system, the cap cannot be removed once it is screwed onto the bottle, ensuring total product integrity and consumer safety.

This cost-effective and eco-friendly design is optimized for both promotional retail and the high-impact demands of online sales, where secure transit is critical. The cap is currently available in four technical versions to accommodate various neck sizes: 24/410, 24/415, 28/410, and 28/415. ■

L to R: Images courtesy of Aptar; Capardoni

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