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JUNE 2026



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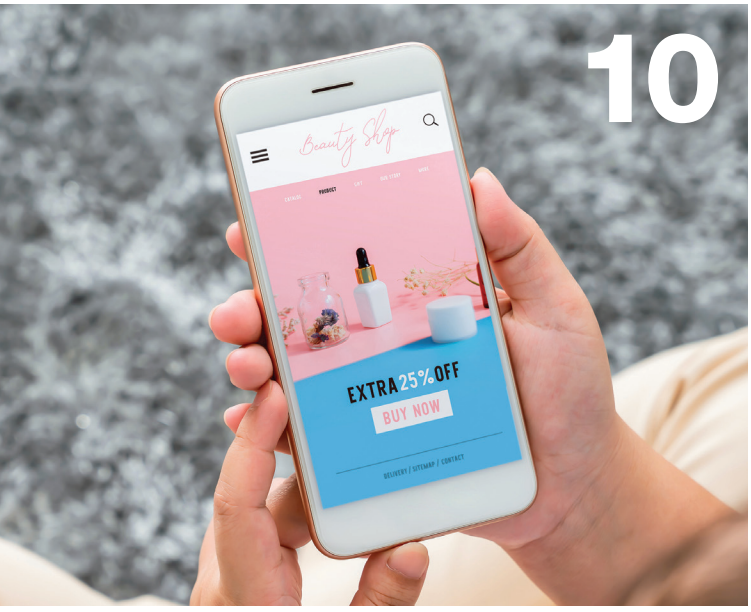
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Consumers Are Buying Less but Expecting More. Here's What That Means for Beauty.

Spending expectations diverge by 15-20 percentage points between high- and low-income households.



Lower-income consumers are more likely to prioritize products tailored to their skin type or concerns (40%), while higher-income shoppers lean more heavily on brand trust (43%).

Beauty spending in spring 2026 is being reshaped less by outright cutbacks and more by precision, according to the Alvarez & Marsal Consumer Sentiment Spring 2026 Report. Consumers are still willing to spend, but they expect something in return.

Across the category, 43% of consumers have simplified their beauty routines, but simplification is not translating into blanket downtrading. Instead, spending is concentrating. Hair care and skin care are holding up as necessity categories, while fragrance and makeup are increasingly treated as discretionary, creating a clearer hierarchy within beauty baskets.

Overall sentiment remains cautious. The Alvarez & Marsal Consumer Sentiment Spring 2026 Report shows net beauty spending intent at -3%, meaning slightly more consumers plan to reduce rather than increase spend. Personal care is marginally more resilient at -1%, but both sit well below neutral, signaling stabilization rather than growth.

Beneath the headline softness, however, is a sharp income split. Spending expectations diverge by 15-20 percentage points between high- and low-income households, with higher earners continuing to support category growth while lower-income consumers pull back more aggressively. This divergence is also why beauty and groceries are outperforming other discretionary categories like electronics and home goods, which show deeper contraction.



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At the same time, about 20% of consumers are still trading up in beauty, even in a cautious environment. The motivations are increasingly functional rather than aspirational: 51% cite higher-quality ingredients or "clean" formulations, 43% prioritize better performance, and 40% point to brand trust and perceived quality.

These trade-up drivers also reveal a subtle income divide. Lower-income consumers are more likely to prioritize products tailored to their skin type or concerns (40%), while higher-income shoppers lean more heavily on brand trust (43%). Across both groups, however, efficacy and ingredient quality consistently outrank luxury positioning, signaling a shift from status-driven beauty to results-driven selection.

Technology is accelerating that decision-making process. Between 25% and 41% of consumers now use AI for product discovery, research and value comparison across beauty, apparel and grocery, with adoption highest among younger cohorts. Among consumers aged 18-44, 64% actively ask AI for recommendations, and 66% say they act on those suggestions, embedding algorithmic guidance directly into purchase behavior.

Taken together, spring 2026 points to a beauty market that is not collapsing, but concentrating: fewer steps, higher scrutiny, stronger reliance on performance signals and an increasingly digital path to purchase that is quietly reshaping how spending decisions are made. ■



Next-Gen Packaging, Ingredients & Manufacturing



RonaCare Poppy SE Elevates Conscious Beauty with CO_2-Extracted Radiance Boost

Susonity

https://www.susonity.com/US/en/product/PM/132149

RonaCare Poppy SE is a refined, oil-soluble poppy seed extract that brings elevated performance to modern skincare and body care. Sustainably obtained through advanced CO_2 extraction, it supports smooth, radiant-looking skin while giving formulators versatile use across modern, high-performance products with a refined, conscious beauty appeal.

- INCI Name: Caprylic/Capric Triglyceride (and) Papaver Rhoeas Extract (and) Tocopherol



Drop, Dissolve, Deliver: RITA's Pre-Dosed Surfactants for Sustainable Beauty

RITA Corporation

https://www.ritacorp.com/

Support ESG goals using RITA's anhydrous surfactants—pre-dosed and packaged in dissolvable formats. Plant based, biodegradable and free from harsh additives these easy drop in refills deliver consistent, high performance with no pouring or measuring.



Precision Filling for Next-Gen Beauty

ProSys Fill

https://prosysfill.com/

As cosmetic formats evolve, filling technology must deliver precision without compromise. ProSys Fill, with Pendergraph Machines, offers advanced tube, airless and hot melt solutions for creams, gels, and solids. Engineered for flexibility, reliability and efficiency, these systems help manufacturers scale innovation while ensuring consistent quality, performance and premium presentation across every fill.



Cosmopak 360 Airless Sprayer: All-Angle Fine Mist Precision for Premium Skin Care

Cosmopak USA

https://cosmopak.com/

Cosmopak's 360 Airless Sprayer Pump (AP-0171) combines sleek design with advanced dispensing technology for a premium skincare experience. This 100 ml airless pack delivers consistent, fine mist application from every angle while helping protect formula integrity. Engineered for performance and portability, its modern silhouette offers elevated functionality with a refined, contemporary aesthetic.

Images courtesy of the manufacturers



Shift Toward Concentrated, Actives-First Formulas: Renu Labs Insights

Renu Labs

https://renulabs.com/

"On the R&D bench, we're shifting to minimal INCI lists with concentrated actives, botanical oils, and transparent aroma ingredients," says chemist Chi Do of Renu Labs. "Consumers want efficacy, not oversized water-heavy formulas. Concentrated systems deliver more value with less waste, and it's exciting to pair these innovations with increasingly recyclable, sustainability-minded packaging."



RNA Skin Care Breakthrough: RNActivate W Targets Wrinkles at the MicroRNA Level

Biocogent

https://biocogent.com/product/rnactivate-w/

RNActivate W is a next-generation RNA skin care ingredient using antagomiRs and a proprietary delivery system to target the microRNA associated with wrinkles. By inhibiting this signal, it restores collagen, elastin, and other ECM proteins. Proven across studies, it improves firmness, elasticity, and wrinkles, supporting stronger, smoother, and more youthful-looking skin.



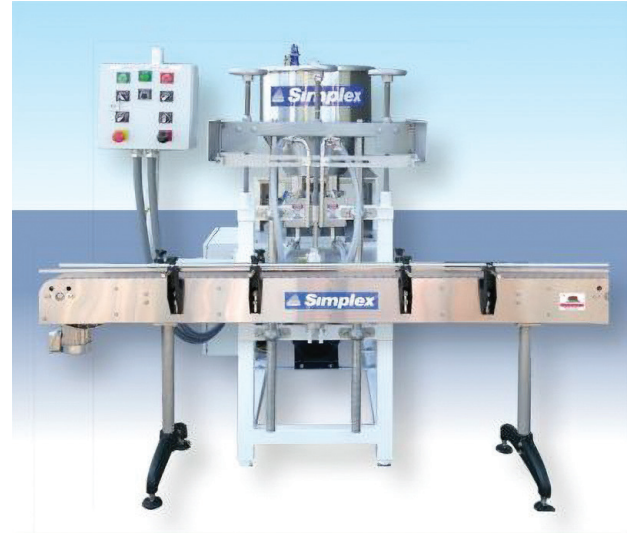
Wetting Rewritten for Textured Hair Care

Ashland

https://www.ashland.com/industries/personal-and-home-care/nyscc-suppliers-day-2026?utm_source=GCI+May+show+preview&utm_medium=product+roundup+easy-hance&utm_campaign=PHC26+ADV+Global+Cosmetic+Industries

New easy-hance wetting agent designed for textured hair delivers superior and perceivable benefits across wet and dry phases. Enabling faster, more efficient wetting, improved detangling, fiber alignment, and overall product performance in both leave on and rinse off applications while reducing water usage and time for textured hair care routines.

- Proposed INCI name: Polyglyceryl Bis(Ethylhexyl Ether)



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Foam That Fits Life on the Go

Berlin Packaging

https://www.berlinpackaging.com/

Given demand for smaller pack sizes that fit consumers' busy on-the-go lifestyles, Berlin Packaging expanded our Foamy collection, adding 30 ml and 50 ml travel sizes. Perfect for skin care and hair care applications, Foamy is designed to be refilled up to 25 times and can be combined with Sashi, our recyclable, monomaterial stand-up pouch.



Snap, Seal, Sell: Packaging That Elevates Everyday Beauty

McKernan Packaging Clearing House

https://tinyurl.com/35zh43b

The right closure can make all the difference. Display Snap-Top Closures with Clear PET Jars give your products a clean, polished look while making life easier for your customers. Perfect for body butters, bath salts, facial wipes and more. Easy access your customers will love.



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.



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.

Images courtesy of the manufacturers



Beyond Retinol: IconicA Delivers Next-Generation Vitamin A Without the Irritation

CoValence Laboratories

https://covalence.com/iconica/

Retinol is currently used as a benchmark, because of its own capability to improve skin's appearance. Challenges and irritation reduce retinol's broad acceptance with consumers. With the invention of IconicA, which is a superior form of vitamin A, gives you a stable, non-irritating alternative to traditional vitamin A product.



Nuon Medical Brings the Chill to Eye Care with Smart Cooling Applicator

Nuon Medical

https://www.nuonmedical.com/

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CIS, protecting the beauty industry for over 40 years.

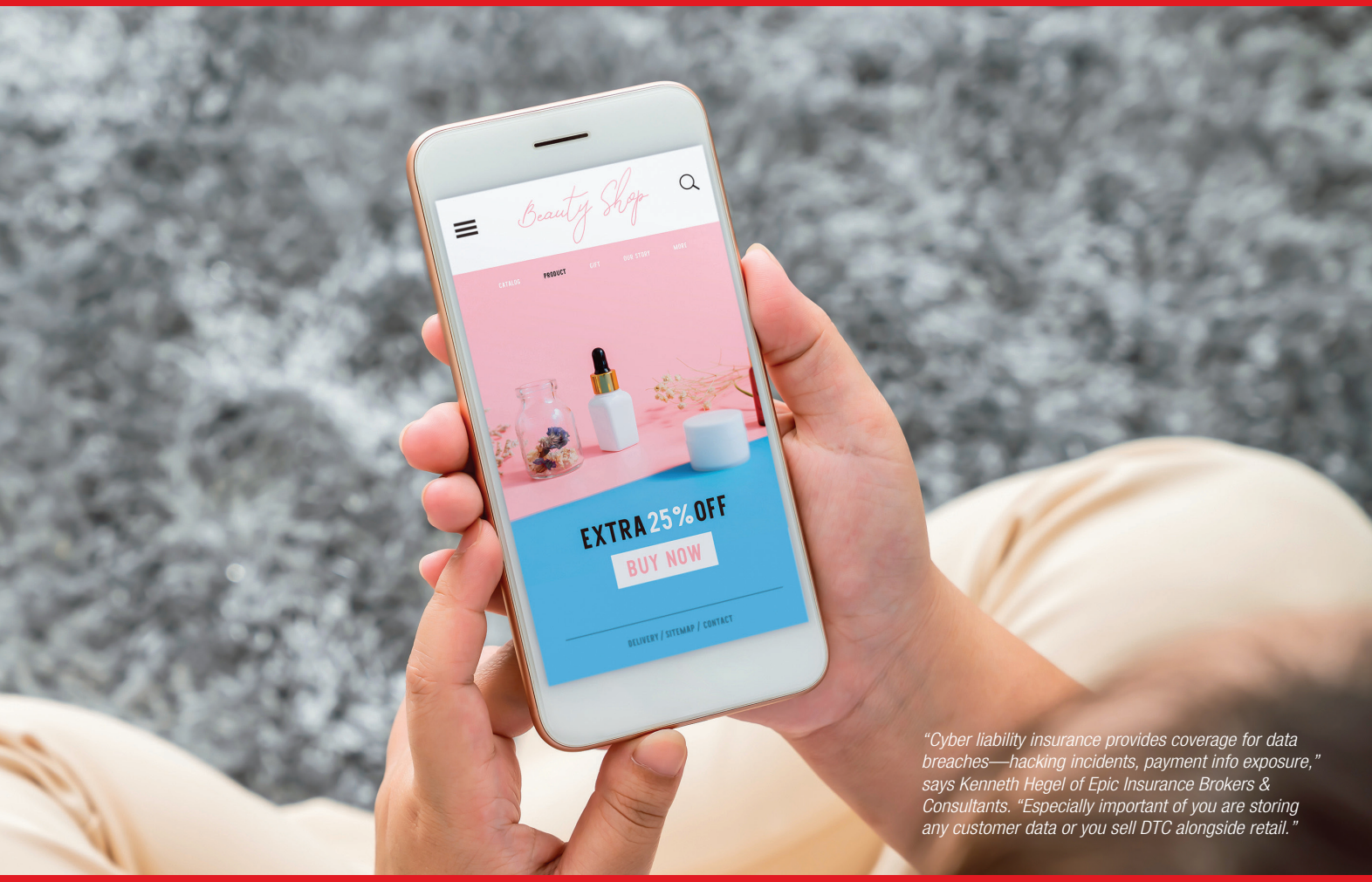
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The Retail Insurance Rules Beauty Brands Can't Ignore

"Rising insurance costs are changing how beauty brands operate in a pretty fundamental way."



"Cyber liability insurance provides coverage for data breaches—hacking incidents, payment info exposure," says Kenneth Hegel of Epic Insurance Brokers & Consultants. "Especially important of you are storing any customer data or you sell DTC alongside retail."

Getting onto retail platforms like Amazon, Target, Walmart, Sephora or Ulta isn't just about shelf appeal—it comes with a detailed insurance checklist that can make or break onboarding. From product liability and recall coverage to cyber and property protection, retailers require brands to carry layered insurance that scales with product risk, distribution reach and contract terms. As claims grow more complex and expensive across the beauty sector, understanding these requirements is becoming a critical part of doing business—not an afterthought.

In this Q&A with Kenneth Hegel of Epic Insurance Brokers & Consultants, we explore rising insurance costs, liability policies, how brand scale impacts insurance decisions and much more.

This is a must read for any brand seeking to avoid getting caught out.

Image by sitthiphong at Adobe Stock

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What types of insurance do brands need when onboarding to platforms like Amazon, Target/Walmart, or Sephora/Ulta?

Hegel: Cosmetic brands selling on these platforms are typically required to carry a relatively robust insurance portfolio. Most of what is required would be laid out in the supply agreement/contract but in most instances would include the following:

- **Commercial general/products liability policy:** Provides coverage for claims alleging bodily injury or property damage caused by the use of your products. Skin irritations, allergic reactions, etc. A certain level of advertising injury would be included as well but on a limited basis. Limits required would also be laid out in the contract. Minimum limits typically would be $2 million per occurrence and in the aggregate. Certain stores might require higher limits based on the product category, i.e. $5 million for depilatory creams.
- **Product recall insurance:** Covers the cost of pulling products off the shelves and the shipping and disposal costs associated with a recall. Can also provide coverage required for customer notifications and PR crisis management.
- **Property insurance:** Insurance to cover your inventory whether stored in a warehouse or fulfillment center, retail store, etc. Coverage provides payment for fire, theft, water damage, etc.
- **Cyber liability insurance:** Provides coverage for data breaches—hacking incidents, payment info exposure. Especially important of you are storing any customer data or you sell DTC alongside retail.
- **Umbrella/excess liability insurance:** Provides higher limits if liability insurance. Adds extra coverage over and above a primary CGL/products liability policy. Example: Primary policy carries a $2 million occurrence limit, but contract calls for total of $5 million in limit. An umbrella would be purchased to satisfy the additional $3 million in limit required.

What are the specific coverage requirements for each retailer?

Hegel: It varies by a number of issues. The individual contract and the exposure depending on the products class, i.e. a lipstick line might only require a $1 million liability limit, but a hair straightener might require $10 million in total liability limit. All retailers will require a minimum limit of at least $1 million in total liability and will require you to name them under your policy as an additional insured while providing evidence of the coverage via a certificate of insurance.

How do these insurance requirements change based on a brand's scale?

Hegel: Typically speaking, the insurance requirements for a cosmetic brand do not increase linearly, they evolve based on risk exposure, distribution reach, and contractual obligations and pressures from retailers. Obviously, the larger a client gets—the more exposure they have based on their growing presence. Most clients increase coverage due to contractual obligations, or an increase in size of the assets of the company which can make them a bigger target for potential lawsuits.

How category-specific are the insurance requirements?

Hegel: The requirements become very specific. Much more than most brands realize in the beginning. Once you move beyond basic cosmetics, insurers and retailers begin underwriting your brand based on ingredients, insurance claims, application method, and overall risk profile. Not just the size of your revenue. Low risk categories like basic skin care, moisturizers and cleansers. Color cosmetics, makeup, i.e. powder, lipstick, foundation—without active ingredients—remain somewhat standard. Skin care that contains "active" ingredients, i.e. retinol, AHAs, BHAs, vitamin C serums, acne treatments, etc. These products will fall under a higher scrutiny level and often require more in terms of liability limits required. OTC type products, sun care, sunscreen, anti-acne with benzoyl peroxide, salicylic acid—those products tend to face the highest level of scrutiny.

Why is insurance becoming more expensive for beauty companies?

Hegel: The costs are increasing because the underlying risk environment has changed dramatically. Not just the insurance market itself. Insurance carriers are reacting to higher claims volume, larger lawsuits i.e. nuclear verdicts, and more aggressive retail and regulatory expectations and scrutiny. There are more and more class actions over skin irritation, hair loss, allergic reactions, clean beauty/marketing claims, etc. Even a small claim can turn into a multi-state class action with millions in defense costs before you even get to trial. Social media is also a major driver of these claims. A single post can escalate a minor irritation that goes viral gaining attention from plaintiff's consul.

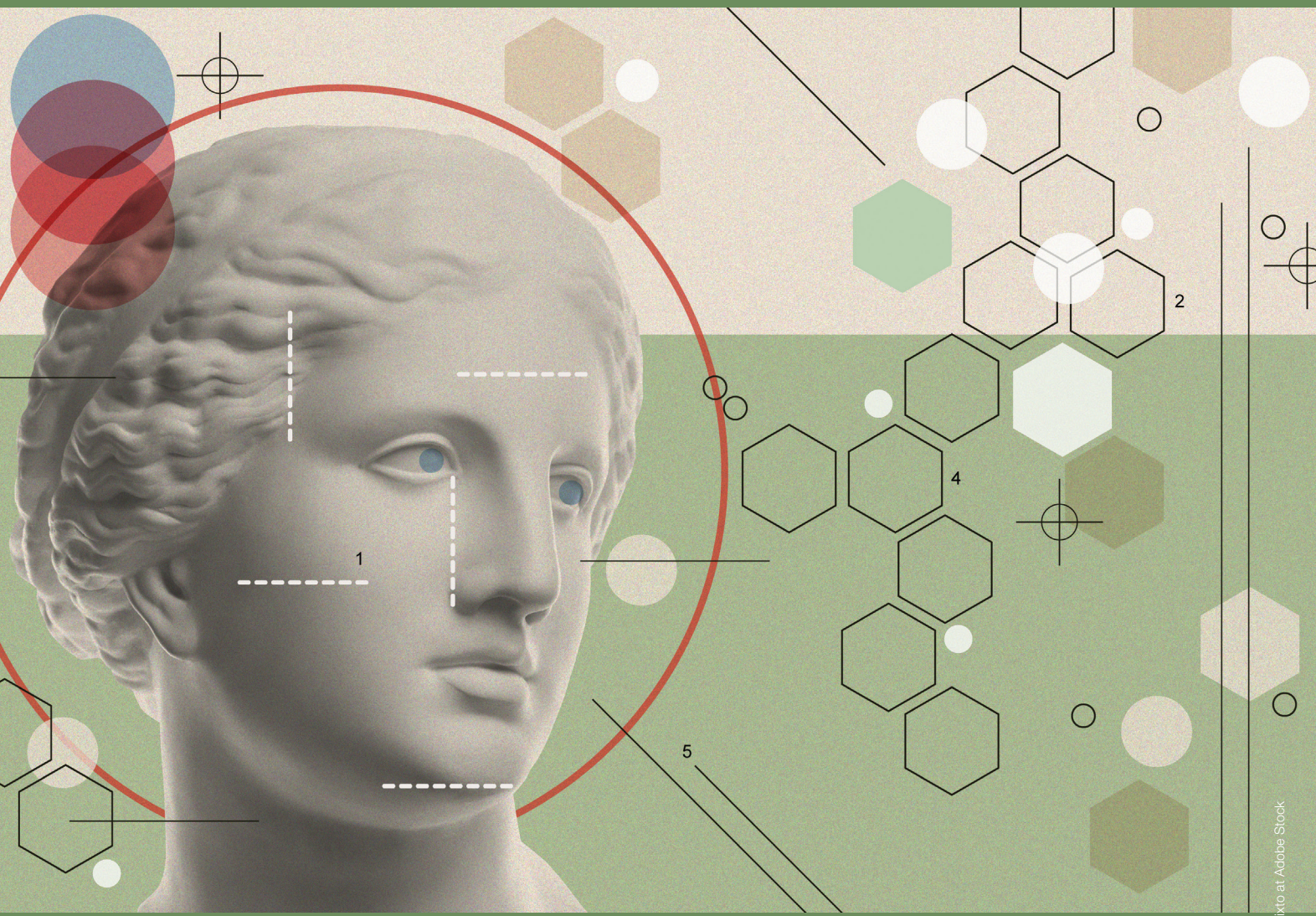
What does the rising cost of insurance mean for beauty brands seeking coverage?

Hegel: Rising insurance costs are changing how beauty brands operate in a pretty fundamental way. Its not just about paying more for insurance, it is affecting product strategy, safety testing protocols, contractual risk transfer, when possible, with your key suppliers, verifying claims substantiation in how you label and market your products, etc. All of this adds additional costs to the brand and impacts their cost of entry into the market. A clean loss record, proper and documented product safety testing, staying updated on the safety of the ingredients used in your product formulations and working with a qualified insurance broker that understands your business and the insurance market—will all help in keeping premiums affordable. ■

Building a Science-Forward Beauty Brand Is Harder Than Ever. Here's What I've Learned.

The companies that will thrive in the coming decade are those that treat science not as a decorative flourish but as a foundational element of their identity.

BY ALEC BATIS, chemist co-founder and co-CEO, Sweet Chemistry Laboratories



Today, many consumers recognize functional ingredients—niacinamide, ceramides, peptides—and have a working understanding of what they do. This shift has changed the rules of brand communication. It's no longer enough to reference "advanced botanicals" or "proprietary complexes." Consumers want specifics.

Image by Ded Pixto at Adobe Stock

From before I started as a chemist in 1990 and up until now, the beauty industry could get away with a lot of, let's call it, poetry. Products promised to transform the skin using "proprietary complexes" that sounded vaguely scientific but were rarely, if ever, explained. Marketing departments leaned heavily on aspiration, and consumers—while curious—had few tools to interrogate the claims.

That era is over, abruptly.

Today's beauty consumer has access to unprecedented information. Ingredient databases are a click away. Reddit threads unpack product formulations in forensic detail. TikTok creators, myth-busters, and debunkers, analyze ingredient lists line by line and combat misinformation at every turn. Even casual shoppers increasingly cross-reference claims before making a purchase. What we're seeing is the rise of the digital sleuth—a new class of consumer investigator who expects transparency and is equipped to challenge vague marketing. For brands, this shift has created both pressure and opportunity. Claims are under scrutiny in a way they've never been before. But for companies built on real scientific foundations, this moment also offers a powerful advantage.



Alec Batis, Sweet Chemistry



When we founded Sweet Chemistry, we had three major challenges when it came to communicating the science.

Science Communicated the Smart Way: Our Positioning

For me and Sweet Chemistry, the challenge is in navigating the intersection of science and storytelling—figuring out how to translate rigorous science into marketing that is compelling, credible, and accessible. The lesson we've learned is simple: scientific rigor can be one of the most valuable assets a beauty brand has—but only if it's communicated thoughtfully. I remember back in the mid 1990s when I was a chemist at the L'Oréal Group, Marketing leadership would call me "the opinionated chemist." This was because I would push the marketing managers to use language that was more informative, but in a way that would make people feel smart. At the time, marketing would customarily lean into "dumbing the science down" but I found that phrase to be disrespectful to the people who buy our products. Instead, why not find enticing ways to understand complex concepts? That, to me, is marketing. It was then that L'Oréal moved me to marketing and a whole new world of possibilities began.

When we founded Sweet Chemistry, we had three major challenges when it came to communicating the science. How do we talk about the Matrikynes ECM-extracted matrikine technology that was born from organ repair research without overstepping in regulatory? How do we communicate our novel formulation concepts without scaring off the customer? But most difficult, how do you gain credibility with both extremely knowledgeable content creators (who I learn from all the time—remember, I left the lab in the mid 1990s), the new customer who is extremely well-informed, and at the same time, the bulk of the customers who aren't interested in having to grasp complex science? It was critical that we build a framework for credibility at different levels.

Building Credibility Through Transparent Science

One of the most important investments we've made as a brand is to build this framework for credibility beginning with the structure of our website. When we first started, the

Images courtesy of Sweet Chemistry

idea of taking upcycled bovine bone and extracting matrikine peptides from them was a huge challenge to communicate for all the reasons you can imagine. Where do these bones come from? Who is hydrolyzing them and are they qualified to do so? Who is Xylyx Bio and this "Alec" guy? Then, it's the delicate balance of explaining what matrikine peptides do in nature, vs. the proprietary extracted matrikine peptides our parent company Xylyx Bio called Matrikynes—because we have to remember that we are a cosmetic, not a drug. There was also the challenge of communicating our formulation innovation as well.

What that meant, was having to put a large amount of our science on the landing page of our website. I don't think there was a single person who agreed with me at the time (well, maybe one), because the general thought is to "bury" science to the science page. However, for people who were more knowledgeable or critical thinkers, I knew that there would be immediate judgement from the landing page with very little patience to get to the science page.

Sure enough, even the *Wall Street Journal* journalist (with no experience in beauty), mentioned that we were the only website he could find detailed info on the science immediately, and wrote that of 136 brands investigated, "Sweet Chemistry … was the most documented in terms of the science behind their products." We addressed this without alienating general consumers by placing studies behind easy-to-access links, using language that balanced scientific detail with clarity (with deeper information on the science page), and designing visuals that felt inviting and human rather than intimidating in the way the cold scientific aesthetic often used by brands can be.

For curious consumers, our landing page offered approachable explanations that deepened understanding without requiring a chemistry degree. For the digital sleuths—the Reddit investigators and TikTok analysts—our website provided the transparency needed to verify claims. And for retail partners and media, they create a credible repository of information that supports storytelling.

Science-First Creator Strategy Pays Off

We also realized we needed to prioritize the more science-driven content creators, not just beauty editors and influencers—because they would be the most likely to understand the more complex science and perhaps even help us explain it to the world. What I was told at the time from every "influencer expert," was to go for more democratic lifestyle influencers because the science-driven content creators didn't have as much "reach." This is where we also took the road less traveled, and not just because it was strategic, but because it personally mattered (and still does) how we are seen in the eyes of creators whose knowledge I respect.

At the same time, people told me that with my long experience from Pfizer/L'Oreal R&D to NARS Marketing, I should get on social media myself to talk about the brand and our products. I, by no means, am any kind of influencer and I do not have the stamina you need to be one. But to be able to go past the fear of the three little dots on the iPhone video camera and try my best to explain our science in various different ways, share my motivations, and answer questions—has helped immensely. To know there is a knowledgeable human being behind the brand and products with long standing industry experience is a point of difference you want to lean into if at all possible.

The End of "Proprietary Complex" Skin Care Marketing

As I personally get out there speaking in the DM's and comments of social



The companies that will thrive in the coming decade are those that treat science not as a decorative flourish but as a foundational element of their identity.

media to many people, one of the most profound shifts we've observed is the rapid increase in ingredient literacy among consumers. Not too long ago, only a small subset of enthusiasts could decode an INCI list. Today, many consumers recognize functional ingredients—niacinamide, ceramides, peptides—and have a working understanding of what they do. This shift has changed the rules of brand communication. It's no longer enough to reference "advanced botanicals" or "proprietary complexes." Consumers want specifics. They want to know what is actually in those secret "complexes" and in practice, this means brands must move away from vague claims and toward transparent formulation narratives.

That doesn't mean revealing every detail of a formula. But it does mean being clear about what ingredients do, what they don't do, and how they work together. It also means that, specifically for "science-backed" skin care, the founder(s) should also be experienced enough to know where each ingredient is sourced, which I'd venture to say is the vast minority

Image courtesy of Sweet Chemistry

at the moment. Transparency and experience builds trust—and trust is increasingly the currency that determines whether a brand survives in a highly scrutinized market.

AI Is Becoming Beauty's New Gatekeeper

And speaking of trust, a new development is now adding another layer to how consumers research beauty: AI-assisted discovery. Tools like Claude and Perplexity are increasingly becoming intermediaries between consumers and brands. Instead of scrolling through dozens of articles, a consumer might ask an AI assistant to explain the difference between ingredients, compare formulations, or recommend products based on specific concerns—even ask if a particular founder (me) has the experience to be good at skin care formulation!

Since AI systems draw on publicly available information, we've found this to be tremendously helpful in telling our story and explaining our innovation, and particularly in ways each individual user can understand. Of course, that means the clarity and accuracy of a brand's educational content is increasingly critical to how these tools interpret and represent the brand. In other words, your ingredient explainer pages and educational content aren't just serving human readers—they're also shaping how AI systems understand your products.

We've begun to think of AI not simply as a tool for marketing, but as a new layer of the discovery ecosystem. Well-structured, transparent content helps ensure that both consumers and AI interpreters arrive at accurate conclusions about what a product does. From the brand side, AI tools can also be powerful collaborators. They can help surface story angles, clarify technical language, and structure educational narratives in ways that resonate with broader audiences. Used thoughtfully, these tools don't replace expertise—they give existing information a sort of "independent validation" and also amplify it.

Credibility Will Shape the Next Decade of Beauty

The beauty industry is entering a period where credibility matters more than ever. Regulatory scrutiny is increasing. Consumers are more informed. And digital communities are quick to challenge claims that don't hold up under examination. For brands built on marketing hype alone, this environment is uncomfortable. For science-driven brands, it's an opportunity.

The companies that will thrive in the coming decade are those that treat science not as a decorative flourish but as a foundational element of their identity. They will be curious about innovation. They will strive to put the "R" back into "R&D". They'll invest in innovation, educational infrastructure, communicate transparently about ingredients, and engage with consumers who want to understand the "why" behind their products.

At Sweet Chemistry, we've found that when science is communicated clearly but without intimidation, it builds a strong community of people who appreciate the efforts that have gone into creating our technology, innovation, and products. People often assume that the word "chemistry" in our name refers to the science behind our products, but it's more than that, it's also the energy between people—and that's really the beauty of it. ■

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THE AI GOLD RUSH IN BEAUTY R&D

Competing platforms vie to demonstrate their value in achieving speed, savings and efficiencies, and market triumph.



Moving cosmetic formulation, product development and packaging workflows onto AI-driven platforms can potentially offer advantages in speed, efficiency and decision-making. But there can also be challenges.

Image by golubovy at Adobe Stock

Unilever views AI as a fundamental reset of how beauty and well-being innovation is conceived, developed and scaled, shifting R&D from slow, iterative experimentation to fast, data-driven discovery grounded in real-time consumer insight. Across its €12.8 billion Beauty & Wellbeing division, the company is using AI, machine learning and automation to analyze more than 1,000 external data sources, decode social and search trends, and connect them with decades of proprietary R&D knowledge, enabling scientists to identify opportunities and design products in days rather than months.

In an April 2026 analysis, Unilever reported that AI has reduced formulation cycles from up to six rounds to just one or two, accelerated claims generation by 75%, and cut insight analysis time by around 60%, fundamentally changing the speed and precision of innovation. Beyond efficiency, the company is also using AI-powered "virtual cohorts" and digital twins to simulate consumer responses at scale, while its R&D Assistant unlocks over 150,000 scientific documents through natural language search.

Importantly, Unilever frames AI not as a replacement for human expertise or physical testing, but as an augmentation layer that enhances scientific creativity, improves predictive accuracy and helps uncover patterns in biological and consumer data that would be impossible to detect manually, ultimately powering faster, more targeted, and more commercially successful beauty innovation.

Unilever isn't alone in betting big on AI to improve the speed and success of beauty R&D, and a raft of AI platforms have emerged to service them.



Overreliance on AI can potentially risk homogenized innovation if teams default to algorithmic suggestions, while data quality and integration challenges can undermine outputs if legacy systems or inputs are flawed.

AI in Beauty R&D: the Promise and the Peril

Moving cosmetic formulation, product development and packaging workflows onto AI-driven platforms can potentially offer advantages in speed, efficiency and decision-making. These systems promise to rapidly generate and optimize formulas, reduce trial-and-error, ensure real-time regulatory compliance across markets, and connect R&D, packaging and sourcing teams through a single source of truth, significantly shortening time to market while improving cost control and sustainability tracking.

However, the trade-offs are equally important: overreliance on AI can potentially risk homogenized innovation if teams default to algorithmic suggestions, while data quality and integration challenges can undermine outputs if legacy systems or inputs are flawed. There are also concerns around protecting proprietary formulations, maintaining creative intuition in sensorial design, and ensuring that AI-generated recommendations align with nuanced brand positioning and consumer expectations.

In practice, the strongest outcomes tend to come from hybrid models, where AI augments—rather than replaces—expert formulators and packaging developers.

Here, we round up a sampling of the many AI innovation platforms springing up to drive beauty into its next era.

The AI Formulation Stack: Inside the Platforms Rebuilding Beauty R&D from the Ground Up

The Promise: AI Meets Formulation to Fast-Track Product Development

Coptis PLM's Purple AI is a generative formulation assistant designed to accelerate and optimize cosmetic product development by acting as a copilot for R&D teams. Natively integrated into the PLM system, it analyzes project inputs—such as product type, target market, efficacy goals and regulatory constraints—to instantly generate tailored base formulas, helping formulators move quickly past early-stage bottlenecks. The platform then

Image by jackfrog at Adobe Stock



In some emerging platforms, sourcing, manufacturing and commercialization are integrated into the same workflow.

enables dynamic refinement through adjustable parameters like naturality, cost, compliance and innovation level, while continuously learning from both internal formulation data and external databases. By reducing trial-and-error, supporting sustainability goals and scaling across multi-brand environments, Purple AI is claimed to streamline decision-making, shorten time to market and enhance both creativity and technical precision in formulation workflows.

The Promise: One Platform, Faster Launches

Centric PLM from Centric Software offers a unified, end-to-end platform for cosmetic and fragrance development that centralizes formulation, ingredient data and compliance into a single source of truth—eliminating silos and drastically reducing reliance on spreadsheets. Its key advantage, according to the company, lies in combining real-time collaboration, AI-driven insights and integrated workflow management to accelerate time to market (by up to 60%) while improving accuracy, traceability and cross-team alignment. By connecting R&D, packaging, sourcing and regulatory functions, the platform claims to enable faster innovation, tighter cost control and stronger margin performance, while built-in sustainability tracking and compliance tools ensure brands can meet evolving global regulations and consumer expectations without slowing development.

The Promise: AI That Turns Formulation Into a Days-Long Process

Specright R&D Workbench from Specright compresses the entire product development cycle by combining AI-driven formulation, labeling and compliance into a single, data-connected workflow. Using natural language prompts, teams can instantly generate or reverse-engineer formulas, then optimize them in real time with intelligent ingredient substitutions that balance cost, performance and regulatory fit. What sets the platform apart, per the company, is its built-in, multi-region intelligence—automatically generating compliant labels and validating claims across global frameworks while tracking allergens, nutrition and full version histories. By embedding compliance and specification data directly into every step, Specright claims to eliminate guesswork, accelerate time to market from months to days, and enable R&D teams to innovate faster with confidence, accuracy and global scalability.

The Promise: From Lab to Launch at Machine Speed

Wipro highlights how generative AI is fundamentally reshaping cosmetics R&D by compressing every stage of innovation—from ingredient discovery and formulation to clinical testing, regulatory compliance and sustainability assessment—into what it argues is a faster, more predictive and data-driven workflow. By leveraging machine learning, natural language processing and simulation models, brands can reportedly identify promising bioactive ingredients more quickly, predict formulation stability

Image by primeimages at Adobe Stock

before physical testing, and optimize product performance with far fewer trial-and-error cycles. Digital skin models and AI-powered clinical trial design further reduce reliance on costly, time-intensive physical studies while improving safety and efficacy predictions, Wipro claims. At the same time, integrated explainable AI systems help navigate increasingly complex global regulations and sustainability requirements, enabling faster, more confident decision-making. The key advantage of this approach, per the company, lies in its ability to unify speed, precision and compliance—allowing beauty brands to innovate at scale while reducing cost waste and development timelines.

The Promise: From Ingredient Search to Full Formulation in Minutes

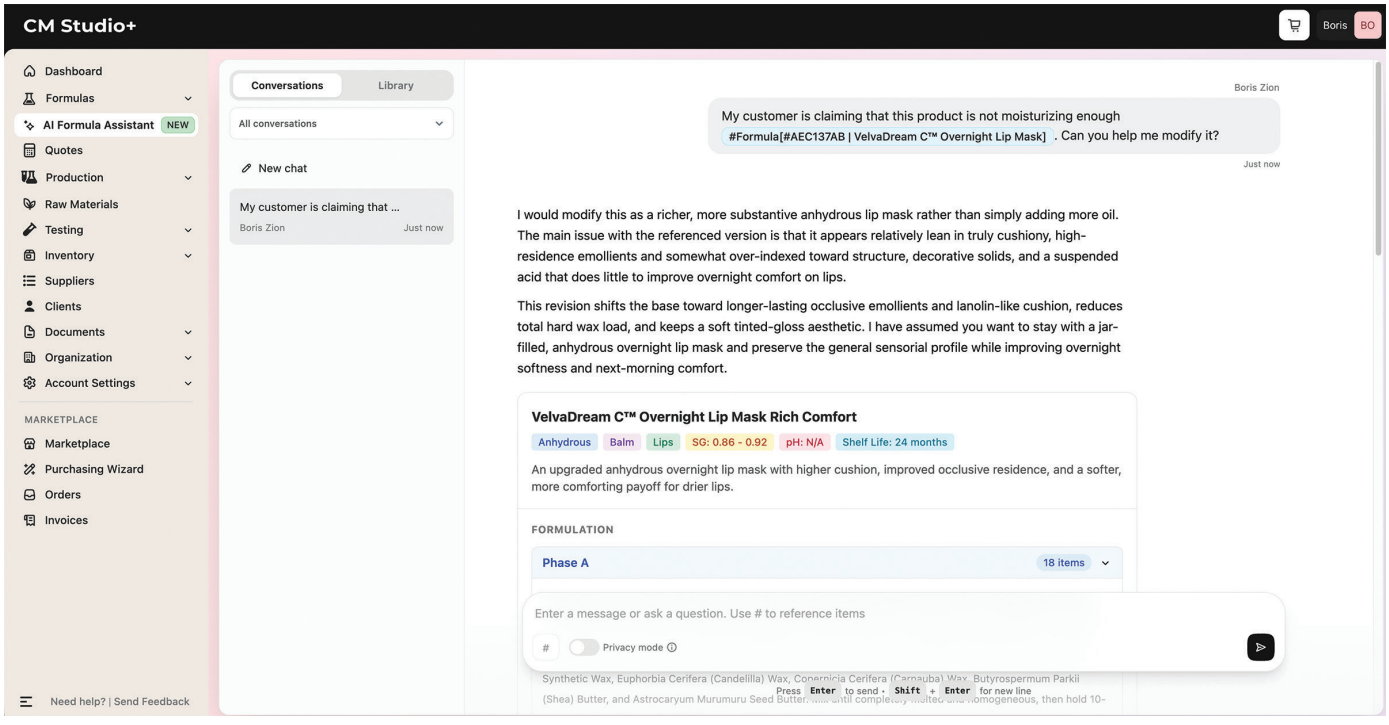
Potion AI claims to have transformed cosmetic R&D by unifying ingredient discovery, reverse engineering, formulation and compliance into a single AI-native workspace. Its core advantage, it claims, lies in turning natural language prompts and INCI inputs into actionable formulas—allowing teams to instantly search 80,000+ raw materials, deconstruct competitor products and generate starting formulations with trade names and concentrations in seconds. Beyond speed, the platform builds a structured Ingredient Vault that centralizes formulation knowledge while enabling AI-driven compliance screening, purportedly reducing regulatory friction and accelerating global readiness. With a secure, SOC 2-certified environment and optional private cloud deployment, it also protects proprietary formulations and IP, addressing concerns among brands seeking to balance rapid innovation with strict confidentiality and regulatory demands.

The Promise: From Fragmented Workflows to One Scientific Source of Truth for Beauty Innovation

Good Face Project is a cloud-based AI platform that unifies formulation, regulatory compliance, claim validation and predictive modeling into a single connected system for cosmetic innovators. Its key advantage, the company argues, lies in replacing fragmented, multi-stakeholder workflows—where formulators, suppliers, brands and retailers operate in silos—with a shared, real-time environment powered by a proprietary ingredient ontology spanning 175,000+ ingredients and 200,000+ benchmarked formulas. By continuously mapping formulations against more than 100 global regulatory frameworks and millions of scientific data points, the platform claims to enable teams to design safer, more sustainable and compliant products from the outset rather than retrofitting them later. The result is reportedly faster innovation cycles, reduced compliance risk and greater transparency across the entire value chain, all grounded in a single, science-driven "source of truth" for cosmetic development.

The Promise: From Ingredient Libraries to AI Formulation Intelligence

Nouryon's BeautyCreations platform claims to transform personal



CM Studio+ claims to replace fragmented legacy PLM systems, spreadsheets and manual formulation workflows with a single AI-native environment built by contract manufacturers, chemists and product developers who have lived the complexity of cosmetic R&D firsthand.

Image courtesy of CM Studio+

care R&D by turning decades of formulation expertise into an AI-powered discovery engine that enables formulators to move from concept to viable formulation in minutes rather than weeks. Built in collaboration with Albert Invent, the tool allows users to search Nouryon's formulation database using natural language prompts, instantly surfacing relevant hair and skin care solutions aligned with specific product claims, textures and performance goals. Its key advantage, the company believes, lies in combining AI speed with deep formulation science—guiding users not only to existing solutions but also helping them understand ingredient interactions and formulation logic behind them. By unifying search, ideation and technical formulation guidance in one digital environment, BeautyCreations reportedly enhances supplier-formulator collaboration, reduces development cycles and makes complex formulation expertise more accessible, ultimately accelerating innovation while preserving scientific rigor and intellectual property protection.

The Promise: From Lab Chaos to Click-to-Formula

CM Studio+ claims to replace fragmented legacy PLM systems, spreadsheets and manual formulation workflows with a single AI-native environment built by contract manufacturers, chemists and product developers who have lived the complexity of cosmetic R&D firsthand. Its core advantage, it argues, lies in turning what is traditionally a slow, error-prone process—ingredient research, formulation building, compliance checking and iteration—into a guided, real-time workflow where users can generate complete INCI-backed formulas in minutes based on product type, skin profile, ingredient preferences and regional regulations. Unlike traditional tools designed to manage data in silos, the platform actively drives development through embedded intelligence, offering instant stability insights, safety assessments, compatibility warnings and formulation optimization suggestions. By combining practical lab experience with AI automation, CM Studio+ claims to eliminate version-control chaos, reduce reformulation cycles and enable faster, more confident product development from concept to launch.

"My journey began as a brand owner, where I built my own facility to achieve vertical integration," says Boris Zion, founder of CM Studio+. "Years later, as a contract manufacturer, I realized the industry's technology was outdated and overpriced. This led me to see an opportunity to create something more streamlined and user-friendly."

Zion argues that a marketplace model can improve accountability among suppliers by increasing competition on price and lead times, with transparency driven by user ratings of customer experience. Similar to Amazon Seller Central, he says, it can incentivize suppliers to innovate through expanded pack-size options and ultimately disintermediate traditional middlemen.

In an era of dupe culture, it's notable that the CM Studio+ platform can support reverse engineering of products.

"Once given access, the formulator will gain a better understanding of your ingredients, cost targets, and different goals for each development," says Zion. "If you were to reverse-engineer a formula with ChatGPT or any other tool, they wouldn't necessarily know what you are working with. CM Studio+ has full visibility into your inventory, formulation style, and raw material suppliers, making it a perfect AI assistant that actually has the full context to build better products."

Zion notes that the AI-driven platform that connects ingredient discovery, formulation, compliance, manufacturing and procurement into a single workflow. It combines a large, importable ingredient library with direct purchasing, real-time formulation support, and AI-assisted regulatory guidance across multiple global markets.

He also argues the platform streamlines R&D and production by generating manufacturing tickets and centralizing GMP-compliant documentation to improve traceability and audit readiness. For contract manufacturing, it uses live cost tracking and industry-wide pricing benchmarks to purportedly improve quoting accuracy and protect margins.

Finally, he says, supplier performance is made transparent through user ratings and metrics like speed and responsiveness, with rankings influenced, Zion argues, by real-world performance and SEO visibility to drive competition.

"If the ingredient purchase was made through the CM Marketplace, the vendor must automatically upload the information, including tracking, before receiving payment," says Zion. "Otherwise, users can upload COAs for specific batches."

Meanwhile, he says, the platform's MoCra Kit "allows people to select a formula and register it with the FDA. It's a paid feature that automates the process and submits it to the FDA via API."

Looking ahead, the platform will be adding additional features, including packaging management (regulatory and environmental facets) and regulatory documentation.

How to Assess an AI Platform for Your Organization

AI is fundamentally reshaping innovation in beauty and personal care by shifting R&D from slow, linear experimentation to fast, data-driven and increasingly integrated systems. Platforms are converging around a shared goal: transforming fragmented innovation workflows into unified digital systems. These systems generally fall into four

capability layers. The first is intelligence, where AI identifies opportunities by analyzing trends and consumer signals. The second is formulation, where systems generate or optimize product recipes and reduce trial-and-error in development. The third is compliance and knowledge management, ensuring products meet regulatory requirements across markets. The fourth is execution, where sourcing, manufacturing and commercialization are integrated into the same workflow. Together, these layers point toward a future in which innovation is treated as a continuous, end-to-end system rather than a series of disconnected steps.



Ultimately, the strongest results will come from hybrid models where AI enhances rather than replaces human expertise.

However, there can be important risks and trade-offs. One key concern is the potential for homogenized innovation, where over-reliance on similar datasets and algorithms leads to less differentiated products. Data quality is another major issue, since AI outputs are only as strong as the underlying ingredient, regulatory and formulation data. There are also limitations in areas where human judgment remains essential, such as sensorial design, emotional resonance and brand storytelling. Additionally, IP protection becomes more complex in systems that integrate suppliers, reverse engineering tools and shared databases. These risks suggest that AI should be treated as an augmentation layer rather than a full replacement for human expertise.

For companies evaluating AI platforms, it is important to determine whether a platform serves as a true system of record or simply a point solution layered onto existing workflows. Platforms that unify formulation, compliance and sourcing into a single source of truth can potentially deliver structural transformation. In addition, companies should assess whether the system creates closed-loop learning, meaning it improves based on downstream outcomes such as performance, cost or consumer feedback, rather than generating static recommendations. Finally, explainability is critical in regulated industries, as scientists need to understand why AI makes certain suggestions and be able to override them when necessary.

Another key evaluation factor is data depth rather than model sophistication. The most valuable platforms may be those built on proprietary formulation databases, regulatory mappings and historical R&D knowledge, not just general-purpose AI interfaces. Integration capability is also crucial; platforms must connect seamlessly with existing ERP, PLM and laboratory systems to avoid creating new silos. Companies should be thoughtful with marketplace-style models that combine AI with supplier ecosystems, as these introduce potential conflicts of interest, transparency issues or IP risks.

Ultimately, the strongest results will come from hybrid models where AI enhances rather than replaces human expertise. Leading organizations like Unilever are not simply deploying tools, but redesigning their innovation systems around AI-enabled decision-making loops. The key strategic distinction is whether a company is adopting AI as a productivity tool or as a full innovation operating system. Productivity tools accelerate individual tasks, while innovation operating systems reshape how ideas are generated, validated and brought to market. Over time, the companies that build integrated, data-rich, and human-augmented systems are likely to gain the most durable competitive advantage. ■

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Kayali's Eden Sweet Peach | 35 and Eden Plush Pear | 23 launch exemplifies a playful approach to the category, positioning fragrance not just as scent but as a curated cultural experience.

Courtesy of Kayali

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Fragrance in Flux:
How Packaging, Formats and Experience Are Redefining the Category

Brands are rethinking format, functionality and storytelling, signaling a category defined less by traditional perfume codes and more by fluid, lifestyle-led consumption.

Fragrance is undergoing a structural reset, driven by shifts in how consumers discover, wear and engage with scent across daily life. From body mists and alcohol-free formulations to refillable luxury systems, travel formats and immersive brand worlds, packaging is the primary interface shaping product experience. Across every tier of the market, brands are rethinking format, functionality and storytelling to meet demands for personalization, portability, sustainability and sensory engagement, signaling a category defined less by traditional perfume codes and more by fluid, lifestyle-led consumption.



The launch of eos Cashmere Body Mists extends the brand's best-selling scent portfolio into a dedicated mist format in direct response to overwhelming consumer demand and social engagement.

Courtesy of eos

From Hydration to Fragrance Layering: Why Body Mists Are Becoming the New Core Category

Body mists are rapidly emerging as one of the fastest-growing fragrance-adjacent categories, driven by consumer demand for lighter, more wearable scent formats that integrate seamlessly into daily body care rituals.

The launch of eos Cashmere Body Mists illustrates this shift, extending the brand's best-selling scent portfolio into a dedicated mist format in direct response to overwhelming consumer demand and social engagement. With eight familiar gourmand and fresh fragrances reformulated for spray application, the category reflects a broader scent layering behavior where fragrance is built across multiple body-care steps rather than applied as a single finishing gesture.

This growth is closely tied to the scentification of body care, where fragrance is no longer isolated to eau de parfum but embedded across lotions, washes and mists to create personalized, multi-step routines. Brands like eos are positioning mists as both an entry point and an extension of skin care-led fragrance experiences, bridging fine fragrance performance with skin care benefits such as hyaluronic acid and aloe. This hybrid positioning strengthens their appeal to younger consumers who prioritize accessibility, customization and repeatable daily rituals over traditional luxury fragrance formats.

Packaging innovation is playing a central role in the rise of body mists, with spray systems increasingly engineered to deliver a more sensorial, controlled and versatile user experience. Across formats like mist sprays for body and hair care, the focus is shifting toward smoother actuation, finer droplet dispersion and

more consistent delivery to support frequent, all-over application. Solutions such as EuroMist Heaven and Essencia Bloom reflect this direction, offering continuous, breeze-like sprays designed to feel lightweight and comfortable on skin and hair. Design refinements—such as low-profile pump structures, metal-free fluid pathways for olfactive neutrality and multiple dosage options—highlight how packaging is being tailored not just for function, but for fragrance integrity and elevated sensory perception.

At the more advanced end of the category, high-performance dispensing systems like Aptar's All Over Spray and MTS are redefining what mist packaging can deliver in terms of coverage, sustainability and usability.

All Over Spray leverages bag-on-valve technology to create an ultra-continuous mist with even distribution and high evacuation efficiency, while also enabling 360° application and using compressed air or nitrogen for propellant-free dispensing.

In parallel, MTS introduces a minimalist, ergonomic trigger format with flexible nozzle options, consistent dosing and secure locking mechanisms, designed for ease of use across fragrance, body and hair applications.

Together, these innovations show how mist packaging is evolving into a performance-driven platform that prioritizes sensoriality, precision and adaptability across expanding personal care and fragrance use cases.



Aptar's All Over Spray leverages bag-on-valve technology to create an ultra-continuous mist with even distribution and high evacuation efficiency, while also enabling 360° application and using compressed air or nitrogen for propellant-free dispensing.



Aptar's MTS introduces a minimalist, ergonomic trigger format with flexible nozzle options, consistent dosing and secure locking mechanisms, designed for ease of use across fragrance, body and hair applications.



Brands like Ôrəbella are helping redefine the fragrance category with a skinification approach to fragrance, positioning scent as something that hydrates, nourishes, and interacts with the body rather than simply evaporating from it.

Skin-First Scent: How Alcohol-Free Fragrance Is Reshaping Packaging Innovation

Alcohol-free fragrance is emerging as a major shift in perfumery, driven by growing consumer demand for sensitive-skin-friendly, skin-first formulations that move beyond traditional alcohol-based delivery systems.

Brands like Ôrəbella are helping define this category with a skinification approach to fragrance, positioning scent as something that hydrates, nourishes and interacts with the body rather than simply evaporating from it. In Ôrəbella's case, the alcohol-free bi-phase formula combines a moisturizing oil base with essential oil-driven fragrance layers, requiring users to shake the product before application—reinforcing a more tactile, ritualistic engagement with scent.

This formulation shift is directly influencing packaging and dispensing technologies, which must now

From top, L to R: Courtesy of Aptar; Aptar; Ôrəbella

accommodate oil-based, water-based and hybrid systems without compromising spray performance or olfactive integrity. Traditional alcohol-compatible pumps are being replaced or re-engineered with metal-free fluid pathways, POM-free components and broader formula compatibility to ensure stability across sensitive skin formulations.

In this context, solutions like Aptar's Inune HDS illustrate how pump design is adapting, offering soft-actuation, fine mist dispersion and compatibility with alcohol-free and water-based fragrances while solutions like Aptar's Inune HDS illustrate how pump design is adapting, offering soft-actuation, fine mist dispersion and compatibility with alcohol-free and water-based fragrances while maintaining a premium sensorial experience.

At the same time, packaging is increasingly being designed to reinforce the wellness and sensory positioning of alcohol-free fragrances. Lightweight, ergonomic formats, refillable components and invisible internal mechanisms support a cleaner, more skin-centric aesthetic that aligns with the category's health-forward messaging. As brands continue to blur the lines between skin care and fragrance, packaging innovation is becoming essential in enabling texture-driven, ingredient-led scent experiences that prioritize comfort, inclusivity and daily wearability.

Playful by Design: How Fragrance Brands Are Building Immersive, Shareable Worlds

A growing trend in fragrance and beauty branding is the rise of playful, immersive design ethos—where packaging, product storytelling and experiential marketing work together to create highly shareable, emotionally engaging worlds. Rather than treating fragrance as a purely sensorial or functional product, brands are increasingly building full lifestyle universes that lean into nostalgia, self-expression and entertainment-driven discovery. Kayali's Eden Sweet Peach | 35 and Eden Plush Pear | 23 launch exemplifies this approach, positioning fragrance not just as scent but as a curated cultural experience.

The brand's March 2026 launch event in Los Angeles reinforced how physical activations are becoming extensions of packaging philosophy. A Y2K-inspired Eden universe featured interactive scent layering bars, candy-colored installations, hyper-realistic fruit cakes, retro arcade games and a branded G-Wagon photo moment—each designed to translate product identity into playful, content-ready environments. These multi-sensory touchpoints mirror the fragrances' positioning as mood-driven, layerable scents while turning packaging and branding cues into immersive storytelling assets that fuel social sharing and community engagement.

This shift is also influencing packaging design itself, where playfulness is increasingly balanced with purpose and sustainability. Systems like Aptar's Color Code reflect this duality, combining bold, customizable color expression across components with refillable structures and high PCR content. The result is a new packaging language that merges visual delight with ergonomic simplicity and environmental intent. Across fragrance and adjacent



Solutions like Aptar's Inune HDS illustrate how pump design is adapting to alcohol-free, water-based fragrances, offering soft-actuation and fine mist dispersion.



Systems like Aptar's Color Code combine bold, customizable color expression across components with refillable structures and high PCR content.

L to R: Courtesy of Aptar; Aptar

beauty categories, brands are moving toward designs that are not only visually expressive but also modular, sustainable and deeply aligned with identity-driven consumption.

Small But Strategic: The Rise of Travel-Ready Fragrance Formats

Small and travel-sized fragrance formats are becoming a core growth driver in the beauty industry, reshaping how brands launch, merchandise and expand accessibility.

The nationwide Ulta Beauty rollout of Sweet Tooth by Sabrina Carpenter illustrates this shift, pairing full-size eau de parfums with a new Bite Sized 10 ml mini collection. These compact formats—offered both individually and in discovery coffrets—reflect strong consumer demand for portability, collectability and lower-commitment entry points into fragrance franchises.

This trend is closely tied to the rise of fragrance discovery and lifestyle-driven usage occasions. Minis are no longer positioned as secondary products but as essential extensions of the main line, designed for travel, gifting, sampling and social-media-driven trial.



The nationwide Ulta Beauty rollout of Sweet Tooth by Sabrina Carpenter illustrates this shift, pairing full-size eau de parfums with a new Bite Sized 10 ml mini collection.

In Sweet Tooth's case, the 10 ml formats maintain full fine-mist functionality while translating the brand's gourmand identity into a more playful, on-the-go format. This aligns with broader retail strategies where accessibility and try-before-you-commit models help accelerate consumer adoption and brand reach.

From a packaging innovation standpoint, travel and mini formats are also becoming more sophisticated and sustainable, moving beyond simple downscaling of full-size bottles.

Solutions such as Aptar's Private Spray and Stilo Replica demonstrate how mini packaging is being re-engineered with premium mechanics, refillability and compatibility across formula types.

Features like metal-free fluid pathways, customizable decoration and refill systems reflect a shift toward multifunctional, low-waste formats that support both brand storytelling and more intentional consumption habits.



Solutions such as Aptar's Private Spray and Stilo Replica demonstrate how mini packaging is being re-engineered with premium mechanics, refillability and compatibility across formula types.



Destin de Balmain is positioned as a bold, floral fruity eau de parfum built around notes of strawberry, peony and sandalwood; the fragrance is housed in a refillable glass bottle that merges decorative codes with long-term usability.

From top, L to R: Courtesy of Sweet Tooth; Aptar; Balmain



Aptar's Nomad Refill highlights how the user experience is being streamlined, enabling consumers to refill a 10 ml travel spray directly from a full-size bottle in under five seconds.

Refill Revolution: Fragrance Packaging Gets a Luxury Reset

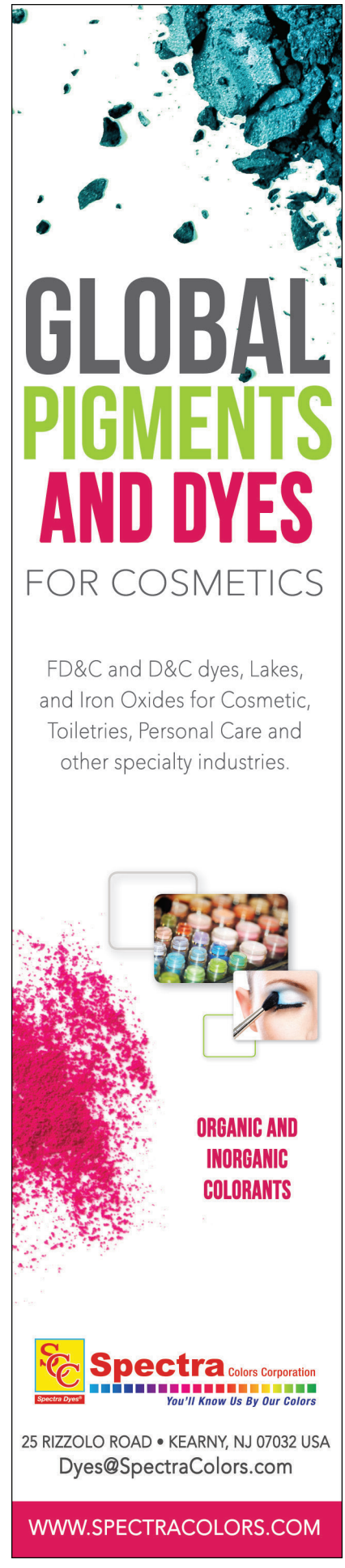
Refillable fragrance is rapidly shifting from a niche sustainability feature to a defining pillar of modern prestige launches, as brands respond to growing consumer demand for reduced waste, longer product lifecycles and more intentional consumption. This evolution is not limited to environmental positioning—it is reshaping how fragrance is designed, packaged and experienced, with refillability increasingly integrated into both the storytelling and functionality of new products.

The launch of Destin de Balmain underscores this shift at the luxury level. Positioned as a bold, floral fruity eau de parfum built around notes of strawberry, peony and sandalwood, the fragrance is housed in a refillable glass bottle that merges decorative codes with long-term usability. The design—featuring a cube silhouette, gold accents and the brand's labyrinth motif—demonstrates how refill systems are being elevated through premium aesthetics, ensuring they align with prestige expectations rather than compromising on visual impact. Multiple size formats, including a travel spray, further reinforce flexibility and extended use.

At the same time, innovation in refill technology is making these systems more accessible and convenient for everyday use. Solutions like Aptar's Nomad Refill highlight how the user experience is being streamlined, enabling consumers to refill a 10 ml travel spray directly from a full-size bottle in under five seconds. Compatibility with standard formats, along with features that prevent overflow, overpressure and air exposure, ensures both ease of use and preservation of fragrance integrity.

Together, these developments signal a broader industry move toward refillable ecosystems that combine sustainability, performance and premium design—positioning refill not as an add-on, but as a core expectation in fragrance packaging. ■

Courtesy of Aptar



In 2026, Sustainability is a Performance Engine IN NEXT-GEN FORMULATION DESIGN



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"Nature-inspired ingredients, particularly marine-derived actives like algae and kelp, are playing a critical role in advancing both sustainability and skin protection," says Michelle Chavez of Accupac.

"As sustainability expectations accelerate, the industry is moving beyond surface-level claims toward formulation strategies that inherently conserve resources, elevate performance, and deliver measurable impact," says Michelle Chavez, chief commercial officer. "[W]e see this shift not as a constraint, but as a catalyst for more intelligent product design—where every input, from water to actives to packaging, is scrutinized for both efficacy and environmental consequence."

Chavez notes, "Brands are increasingly embracing waterless and upcycled formulations not only to reduce environmental burden, but to also enhance product performance. Eliminating or minimizing water allows for highly concentrated systems that may deliver actives more efficiently, creates the opportunity to potentially reduce the preservative load, and could significantly lower shipping weight and packaging volume. At the same time, the rise of upcycled ingredients—derived from agricultural or industrial by-products—introduces potent, story-rich actives that would otherwise go to waste. These materials are no longer compromises; they are often rich in antioxidants, vitamins, and bioactive compounds that rival or, in some cases, outperform conventional inputs."

Through its innovation arm Cobalt Labs, Accupac is translating sustainability principles into scalable, high-performance concepts that balance environmental responsibility with elevated sensoriality, Chavez notes. The Dry Polish Sugar Scrub showcases a waterless exfoliation system using biodegradable sugar crystals and upcycled mineral exfoliants to gently refine and smooth skin, while the Second Skin Healing Balm features upcycled fermented apple peel extract in a concentrated, multi-functional format designed to address targeted skin concerns with minimal formulation complexity. Together, these systems

reflect a less is more approach—reducing resource use and formulation steps while maximizing functional and sensory performance.

"Nature-inspired ingredients, particularly marine-derived actives like algae and kelp, are playing a critical role in advancing both sustainability and skin protection," says Chavez. "These organisms are inherently resilient, thriving in high-stress environments such as UV exposure, salinity, and pollution. When translated into cosmetic applications, they can bring multifunctional benefits—hydration, barrier support, antioxidant defense—while often being sourced through low-impact cultivation methods. As environmental aggressors become a more prominent consumer concern, these bioactives offer a compelling intersection of efficacy and ecological alignment.

We are also seeing increased synergy between marine actives and fermentation technologies, unlocking enhanced bioavailability and stability. This allows formulators to create high-performance systems that help protect against environmental stressors while maintaining elegant textures and compatibility with concentrated or waterless formats."

She continues, "At the same time, consumer demand for transparency and circularity is fundamentally reshaping how raw materials and packaging are selected. Today's consumer expects clarity—not only on ingredient origin and function, but on lifecycle impact. This is driving brands to prioritize traceable supply chains, responsibly sourced inputs, and materials that can re-enter the production cycle rather than contribute to waste."

Formulation and packaging are increasingly being designed as an integrated system, with concentrated delivery formats driving both usage efficiency and packaging reduction, Chavez explains. Products like the Moisturizing Serum-Infused Body Mist, developed by Cobalt Labs, illustrate how micro-dosed systems can lower product consumption while enabling smaller, lower-impact packaging footprints. Similarly, the Ultra Hydrating Dry Body Oil—made with upcycled plum oil recovered from juice production side streams—demonstrates how ingredient sourcing can actively reduce waste while still delivering a high-end sensorial experience.

"Ultimately, the industry is entering an era where sustainability is inseparable from performance," says Chavez. "Consumers are no longer willing to trade efficacy for environmental responsibility—they expect both, and they expect proof."

Ingredient firms have stepped up to the challenge with a new generation



Vantage Personal Care's Elixir du Soleil concept formulation is a lightweight, fast-absorbing face serum designed to deliver hydration, smoothness and a radiant finish while helping prepare and protect the skin.

Image by LIGHTFIELD STUDIOS at Adobe Stock

of materials offering superior product protection, sensoriality and more.

Elevating Natural Oils into Multi-Category Luxury Performance Actives

Vantage Personal Care's recent Infinite Oil concept taps into the rising prominence of natural oils as luxury hero ingredients, driven by their visibility in viral, influencer-led beauty trends. As social media continues to spotlight high-performing, sensorially rich formulations, oils have emerged as must-have staples valued for their versatility, efficacy and elevated feel across skin, hair and nail care.

To illustrate the power of these materials, Vantage has crafted a range of concept formulas:

- Elixir du Soleil is a lightweight, fast-absorbing face serum designed to deliver hydration, smoothness and a radiant finish while helping prepare and protect the skin. The formula blends a selection of natural oils chosen for both performance and sensorial appeal: jojoba and grapeseed oils provide balanced, non-greasy hydration suitable even for sensitive skin, while olive squalane enhances spreadability with a dry, elegant after-feel. Cacay oil adds a cushioned texture and antioxidant benefits, creating a luxurious yet comfortable sun elixir that leaves skin soft, luminous and never sticky.
- Princess Treatment Nail Infusion applies the skinification trend to nail care, delivering face-serum-like benefits to nails and cuticles through a blend of natural, sustainably sourced oils. The formula combines apricot oil for rich yet easily spreadable conditioning, jojoba oil for fast-absorbing, non-greasy nourishment, and cacay oil for a cushioned feel and nutrient-rich care. The result is a lightweight, pampering treatment designed to hydrate, smooth and enhance the appearance of nails and cuticles without leaving a heavy or oily residue.
- Scalp & Hair Cleansing Oil is a pre-wash treatment designed to protect and condition the hair fiber—particularly for treated or damaged hair—before shampooing. Applied to a dry scalp, the formula combines natural extracts and jojoba esters to deliver antioxidant benefits that help reduce inflammation, while a blend of nourishing oils provides deep hydration and care for both scalp and strands. Jojoba oil ensures lightweight, non-greasy nourishment, while nutrient-rich cacay oil adds a luxurious, restorative touch, leaving hair better prepared for cleansing and more resilient overall.



BASF's Uvinul T 150 X EcoBalanced marks BASF's first UV filter using a biomass balance approach, significantly reducing product carbon footprint while maintaining proven UVB protection performance.

Bioactive Performance Meets Low-Carbon Protection

From Upcycled Seeds to Thicker Strands

BASF's Aloversil is a natural-origin active developed to support the appearance of denser, fuller hair in men experiencing visible shedding. Derived from upcycled sea buckthorn seedcake, it leverages potent natural peptides to promote a healthier scalp environment. Clinical testing in a four-month, placebo-controlled study showed improved hair coverage and density, supported by instrumental data, while in vitro results indicate enhanced cellular communication and micro-vascularization linked to healthier-looking hair.

Image by halayalex at Adobe Stock

Low-Carbon SPF

BASF's Uvinul T 150 X EcoBalanced marks BASF's first UV filter using a biomass balance approach, significantly reducing product carbon footprint while maintaining proven UVB protection performance. Designed as a drop-in replacement for conventional filters like octocrylene, it requires no reformulation and retains full efficacy. Certified under REDcert² and produced using renewable feedstocks allocated via mass balance, it aligns high-performance sun care with verified sustainability standards.

Multifunctional, Low-Dose Protection Systems Built for Clean, High-Performance Formulation Design



Ashland is stepping up its push into next-generation cosmetic preservation with the launch of Ashland Effisin EM Natural Multifunctional, a 100% nature-derived antimicrobial booster designed to streamline formulation while maintaining high-performance protection.

Readily Biodegradable Antimicrobial Boosting for Simplified, High-Performance Formulations

Ashland is stepping up its push into next-generation cosmetic preservation with the launch of Ashland Effisin EM Natural Multifunctional, a 100% nature-derived antimicrobial booster designed to streamline formulation while maintaining high-performance protection. Positioned as a solution for simplification without compromise, the ingredient reflects a growing industry shift toward multifunctional systems that reduce formulation complexity without sacrificing efficacy, safety or sensorial appeal.

Effisin EM is engineered to modernize preservation strategies by combining antimicrobial boosting, broad formulation compatibility and cost efficiency in a single water-soluble system. The ingredient delivers strong antifungal performance at ultra-low use levels (0.05-0.2%) and operates effectively across a wide pH range of 3 to 8, making it adaptable to both leave-on and rinse-off applications. This versatility allows formulators to reduce dependency on multi-component preservative blends while maintaining robust microbial control.

Importantly, the system is designed to integrate seamlessly into diverse product formats without disrupting aesthetics or texture, an increasingly critical requirement as brands push toward minimalist INCI lists and clean sensory profiles. Effisin EM also carries strong regulatory acceptance globally and is positioned as a practical alternative to conventional antimicrobial boosters, particularly in categories where compliance, safety and consumer perception intersect.

From a sustainability standpoint, Ashland highlights Effisin EM's alignment with modern environmental expectations: it is fully food-ingredient based in toxicological profile, 100% readily biodegradable, and suitable for sensitive applications including oral care, baby care and dermatological products. This broad claim space signals a deliberate move into high-growth, trust-sensitive personal care categories where preservation efficacy and perceived gentleness must coexist.

With its combination of natural origin, multifunctional performance and cost-in-use efficiency, Effisin EM reflects a broader industry pivot toward consolidation in formulation architecture in which fewer ingredients are expected to do more. For formulators navigating tightening regulatory frameworks and increasing consumer scrutiny, Ashland's latest launch positions itself as a pragmatic building block for next-generation preservation systems.

Plant-Powered Protection Meets Premium Sensorial Experience

Mindera Euca from Symrise is a 100% plant-based multifunctional ingredient that elevates rinse-off personal care formulations by combining superior product protection with a rich, sensorial experience. Leveraging Symrise's patented Mindera platform, it delivers broad-spectrum formulation stability across a wide pH range while enhancing foam quality, volume, and texture—even in sulfate-free systems. Beyond performance, it supports clean beauty and wellness trends, allowing brands to create indulgent, restorative cleansing rituals that appeal to consumers seeking

Image by kinomaster at Adobe Stock

natural, safe, and high-performing products. With its versatility and proven efficacy, Mindera Euca enables formulators to deliver everyday confidence and premium sensory experiences in rinse-off routines.

Arxada Targets Neutral pH Preservation Gap

Arxada has unveiled Geogard NEU, a patent-pending multifunctional blend engineered to deliver product protection at or near neutral pH—an area long considered a technical blind spot for formulators. Designed to perform at inclusion levels starting from just 0.03%, the ingredient is positioned for cost-sensitive, high-volume personal care formats, spanning rinse-off applications like shampoos and body washes to select leave-on products such as lotions and creams.

The launch directly addresses a persistent formulation challenge: maintaining robust product protection without relying on chemistries facing increasing regulatory and consumer pressure. Traditional organic acid systems often lose efficacy as formulations approach neutral pH, while many alternative multifunctional systems require significantly higher use levels, limiting their viability in mass-market applications.

Geogard NEU combines established multifunctional ingredients—already familiar to formulators for their antioxidant and skin conditioning roles—into a synergistic blend that extends functionality into product protection. Because the components come with existing safety and regulatory documentation, the system can streamline qualification and compliance processes, offering a pragmatic route for reformulation and innovation.

"Product protection is central to product quality and brand trust," said Sabrina Behnke, Ph.D., director marketing and growth, personal care at Arxada. "With Geogard NEU, we offer a patent-pending solution that works at very low inclusion levels while aligning with evolving regulatory expectations and consumer preferences, and supporting efficient large-scale manufacturing."

For developers, the ingredient brings a tightly defined value proposition: ultra-low use levels for cost efficiency, targeted performance at neutral pH, compatibility across rinse-off and select leave-on formats, and a powder format that simplifies handling and dosing. Its multifunctional profile also supports added formulation benefits beyond preservation.

Geogard NEU is expected to find traction in reformulation projects moving away from traditional neutral pH chemistries, systems transitioning from acidic preservation approaches, and cost-driven formulations where conventional multifunctionals—often used around 0.5%—are no longer economically feasible.

High-Performance Textures, Biodegradable Systems and Next-Gen Feel in One Ingredient Wave

Where Natural Performance Meets Next-Level Sensory Texture

Seppic's Solagum X+ is a 100% natural-origin cross-linked polysaccharide designed to bridge the gap between sensoriality and performance in natural formulation. As part of Seppic's expanding natural polymer portfolio, the ingredient leverages patented, sustainable cross-linking technology to deliver high multifunctionality as a high-performance rheology modifier, texturizing agent and long-lasting moisturization booster.

With thickening power up to four times greater than conventional xanthan gum, it stabilizes emulsions even at low use levels and supports challenging systems such as high oil phases and sunscreen formulations. Beyond performance, Solagum X+ introduces a distinct sensorial dimension, creating gels with customizable "smooth" or "frosted" textures that translate into a soft, comforting skin feel and a lightweight "nude" finish.

Clinically validated for up to 24-hour hydration and fully biodegradable, it also aligns with clean beauty expectations while offering fast, cold-process compatibility for streamlined manufacturing—positioning it as a versatile tool for formulators seeking both efficacy and elevated consumer experience.

Sustainable Slip: Biodegradable Conditioning Power

BASF's Dehyquart S18 is a biodegradable conditioning agent designed as a more sustainable alternative to traditional quats. With 78% renewable carbon content,



Seppic's Solagum X+ introduces a distinct sensorial dimension, creating gels with customizable "smooth" or "frosted" textures that translate into a soft, comforting skin feel and a lightweight "nude" finish.

Image by Valerii Apetroaiei at Adobe Stock

it delivers effective conditioning performance while meeting rising environmental and formulation standards, including vegan and silicone-free concepts. Performance testing shows improved wet and dry combability, enhanced softness at low use levels and reliable frizz control, even in high humidity conditions.

Natural Thickening with 20x Viscosity Power

Solabia's ViscoPure—which won Gold for Best Functional Ingredient at in-cosmetics Global 2026—is a 100% bio-based aqueous gelling system built on a patented synergy between konjac and xanthan gums, engineered to form a highly efficient 3D "honeycomb" network for advanced thickening and stabilization. It delivers exceptional performance at very low use levels, generating gels up to 20 times thicker than xanthan alone, while maintaining broad pH compatibility, strong electrolyte tolerance, and synthetic-like structure. Beyond viscosity, it functions as a powerful stabilizer and suspending agent for pigments and particles, including glitters, making it highly versatile across skin care, body care, makeup, and sun care. Sensory-wise, ViscoPure is designed to replace synthetic gellants with non-tacky, non-stringy textures that offer a fresh, quick-break application and a soft, comfortable after-feel, supporting cleaner, more natural formulation concepts without compromising texture sophistication.

Cold-Process, Sustainable Formulation with Natural-Origin Emulsification

Clariant has expanded the performance profile of Lysofix Liquid, a cold-process, natural-origin emulsifier based on lysophospholipids, with new efficacy data confirming cross-category benefits spanning skin care and hair care applications. Originally positioned as a multifunctional emulsifying system capable of forming fine, stable oil-in-water emulsions across a wide pH range (4-8) and high oil phase loads (up to 60%), the ingredient is now further differentiated by demonstrated biofunctional activity beyond formulation structuring.

In skin care, updated data show Lysofix Liquid delivers immediate



Clariant is strengthening its mild cleansing portfolio with the launch of Hostapon CT Solid, a salt-free sodium methyl cocoyl taurate surfactant designed to meet rising demand for gentler, skin-compatible cleansing systems—particularly in response to the continued growth of dry-skin positioning across shampoo and body care categories.

Image by Svitlanan at Adobe Stock

hydration with moisturization lasting at least four hours, alongside measurable skin-conditioning benefits linked to barrier and extracellular matrix support. Reported increases in pro-collagen I synthesis (+25%) and tropoelastin production (+58%) suggest potential reinforcement of skin elasticity and bounce, while anti-inflammatory activity (-33% IL-8) and visible redness reduction (-26% erythema after two hours) position the system as particularly suitable for sensitive skin formats. The ingredient also enhances delivery efficiency of both lipophilic and hydrophilic actives, including CoQ10, caffeine, and beta-arbutin, by improving stratum corneum fluidity and increasing penetration into deeper skin layers—supporting efficacy at reduced dosage levels.

In hair care, Lysofix Liquid functions as a hair fortifier with demonstrated effects on follicular cell activity and fiber integrity. Testing indicates increased dermal papilla cell proliferation (Ki67 ×3), along with structural markers associated with stronger hair formation, including keratin-40 (×9) and keratin-71 (×3). On-fiber performance data further show improved hair quality metrics, including increased structural integrity (+11.5%), reduced porosity (-21%), and enhanced combability in both wet (-17%) and dry (-38%) conditions, supporting smoother, more manageable hair.

Beyond performance, Lysofix Liquid is positioned within a sustainability framework, derived from certified non-GMO lecithins and produced as a valorized by-product of the food industry. It is 100% natural-origin, readily biodegradable, and aligned with zero-deforestation sourcing commitments, reflecting broader industry demand for multifunctional ingredients that combine formulation efficiency, sensorial performance, and verified environmental credentials.

Silicone-Like Glide and Second-Skin Wear with Bio-Based Film Technology

Solabia's OleoVeil Care—awarded Gold (Make-Up Bar) at in-cosmetics Global 2026—is a 100% bio-based film-forming agent engineered with a unique amphiphilic structure that creates a flexible, durable "second-skin" layer on the skin. It enhances adhesion and wear resistance while maintaining high water tolerance, helping formulations stay intact and comfortable throughout use. Designed to upgrade sensoriality in natural oil-based systems, it delivers a smooth, blurred finish with a noticeable silicone-like feel, improving glide and spreadability without relying on silicones. Easy to formulate in both hot and cold processes and compatible across makeup, skin care, sun care, and hair care, OleoVeil Care functions as a ready-to-use performance booster that elevates texture, finish, and longevity in modern cosmetic systems.

Cleanse Reinvented: High-Foam, Biodegradable and Sulfate-Free Systems Powering the Next Wave of Mild Surfactant Innovation

Sulfate-Free Foam Upgrade Boosts Lather, Viscosity and Biodegradable

Performance Eastman Chemical Company has introduced Kalidex, a biodegradable foam booster and thickener designed specifically for sulfate-free personal care formulations, addressing the ongoing challenge of maintaining rich cleansing performance while reducing surfactant load. The ingredient enhances foam structure and viscosity in products such as shampoos, body washes and facial cleansers, with testing demonstrating a 30–45% increase in foam height while enabling more efficient formulation strategies. Positioned as a multifunctional tool for performance optimization, Kalidex allows formulators to reduce total surfactant levels without compromising lather quality or sensory experience. Certified readily biodegradable under OECD 301B standards, the ingredient reflects growing demand for cleansing systems that balance material efficiency, sustainability and consumer expectations for rich foam and premium feel.

Salt-Free, High-RCI Mild Cleansing with Sustainable Foam Performance for Next-Gen Shampoos

Clariant is strengthening its mild cleansing portfolio with the launch of Hostapon CT Solid, a salt-free sodium methyl cocoyl taurate surfactant designed to meet rising demand for gentler, skin-compatible cleansing systems—particularly in response to the continued growth of dry-skin positioning across shampoo and body care categories.

With a high active content of 90%, Hostapon CT Solid is engineered to deliver dense, stable foam with strong oil resistance while maintaining low irritation potential, enabling formulators to develop high-performance cleansing systems without compromising mildness. The ingredient supports both clear and pearlescent formats and enhances sensorial appeal through a creamy, soft-foam profile that elevates rinse-off experiences, especially in premium shampoo applications. It also offers formulation flexibility through EO-free, salt-free composition, supporting cleaner label positioning and simplified system design.

Sustainability and sourcing credentials are central to its positioning, with an 80% Renewable Carbon Index and RSPO Mass Balance certification underscoring reduced reliance on fossil-based inputs and responsible palm sourcing practices. The ingredient is also aligned with vegan standards and carries a low EWG safety profile, reinforcing its role in formulations targeting increasingly strict environmental and consumer transparency expectations. ■

THE INNOVATIONS TACKLING THE SPF CONFIDENCE GAP



Ilia Beauty's Sun Serum Mineral Sunscreen SPF 50 further underscores how sunscreen is being redefined through the rise of hybrid formats that merge protection, skin care treatment and sensorial experience into a single step.

Courtesy of Ilia

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Sun care is undergoing a structural reset, moving from a category defined by clinical claims and isolated protection to one shaped by culture, convergence and continuous use. Across markets and segments, SPF is becoming a platform for hybrid skin care, sensorial innovation and lifestyle integration. At the same time, credibility pressures are intensifying, with growing scrutiny around SPF testing and regulatory consistency accelerating demand for transparency, reproducibility and real-world performance validation.

Within this shift, three forces are reshaping how sun care is developed, communicated and experienced:

- SPF is becoming culturally embedded through creator-led education and social-first storytelling, reframing sun safety as a daily habit formed early and reinforced through identity-driven content.
- Hybridization is dissolving traditional category boundaries, with sunscreen merging into serums, moisturizers, makeup and treatment-led formats that prioritize skin benefits alongside protection.
- Formulation science is rapidly advancing—through improved UV filter dispersions, multi-functional actives, and sustainability-driven systems—enabling higher performance with better sensoriality, inclusivity and environmental alignment.

Taken together, these developments signal a category that is increasingly defined by experience, trust and multifunctional performance.

Sun Safety Goes Creator-Led for Gen Alpha

ThinkSun is reframing SPF as a Gen Alpha lifestyle habit rather than a traditional skin care step with the appointment of 12-year-old influencer Taylen Biggs as its first-ever chief sunshine officer, a role designed specifically to translate sun safety into youth-driven, creator-led storytelling. With more than 3 million followers across platforms and a strong presence in fashion and entertainment media, Biggs is fronting a series of educational and entertainment-led campaigns focused on making mineral sunscreen use feel accessible, habitual, and socially relevant for younger audiences growing up in a highly visual, digital-first environment. The initiative positions sun care not as a corrective or medical message, but as an everyday "sunshine routine" embedded in lifestyle content.

At the center of the strategy is ThinkSun's positioning as a family-first, mineral-only SPF brand originally developed for babies and now extended across all ages, reinforcing trust and safety as core purchase drivers for parents of Gen Alpha consumers. The brand is using Biggs' on-camera storytelling style to bridge education



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Courtesy of ThinkSun

and engagement, highlighting dermatologist-backed mineral protection and demystifying SPF usage through short-form content, routines, and peer-style demonstrations. This reflects a broader shift in sun care communication, where credibility is increasingly built through relatable digital voices rather than traditional clinical messaging alone.

The collaboration also signals how SPF brands are evolving their go-to-market strategies to meet Gen Alpha where they are—on social platforms, in creator ecosystems, and within culture-led narratives. Campaign content will feature ThinkSun's SVP of R&D alongside Biggs, combining technical expertise with accessible, youth-oriented explanation to reinforce product efficacy while maintaining entertainment value. By anchoring sun safety in personality-led education and Gen Alpha-native communication styles, ThinkSun is positioning mineral SPF not just as protection, but as an identity-shaping wellness behavior formed early and reinforced through daily routine.

The Hybrid Era of Beauty: When SPF, Serums and Moisturizers Become One System

Dot & Key's Dragon Fruit Bounce Sunscreen SPF 50+ PA++++ stands out in India's rapidly evolving SPF landscape by pushing sunscreen from basic protection into clinically validated, hybrid skin care performance designed specifically for local climate and skin needs. Unlike conventional SPF products that rely on lab-based claims alone, this launch is the only sunscreen in its category to be in vivo tested for both UVA and UVB protection, signalling a stronger shift toward real-world efficacy validation at a time when Indian consumers are becoming more ingredient- and science-aware. It also integrates new-age photostable UV filters with antioxidant-rich dragon fruit extract, positioning sun protection as both a defensive and corrective skin care step against pollution, heat, and urban stressors.

A key differentiator is its hybrid formulation approach, combining sun protection with active skin care benefits through Dot & Key's proprietary Bounce–Lock™ Complex, powered by ectoin and niacinamide. This system is designed not only to shield skin from UV damage but also to maintain hydration, support barrier resilience, and improve tone uniformity under sun exposure—blurring the line between sunscreen and daily skin treatment. The inclusion of antioxidant actives further extends its role into preventative skin care, addressing oxidative stress alongside UV exposure, which is particularly relevant in high-pollution, high-UV environments common across Indian cities.

From a sensorial and usability perspective, the product is engineered for mainstream adoption in India through a lightweight cushion-gel texture that absorbs quickly, leaves no white cast, and avoids greasiness—key barriers to SPF compliance in oily and combination skin types. This positions it as a true hybrid format: high-performance dermatological protection combined with everyday cosmetic wearability. By uniting clinical testing, climate-specific formulation, and consumer-friendly texture innovation, Dot & Key is effectively reframing sunscreen in India as a daily skin care essential rather than a seasonal or purely functional product.

Pixi Beauty's Vitamin-C CremeSerum further highlights a clear acceleration of the hybrid skin care format trend, where traditional category boundaries between serums and moisturizers are being intentionally dissolved in favor of single-step, multifunctional solutions. Rather than layering multiple products, consumers are increasingly prioritizing



Dot & Key's Dragon Fruit Bounce Sunscreen SPF 50+ PA++++ stands out in India's rapidly evolving SPF landscape by pushing sunscreen from basic protection into clinically validated, hybrid skin care performance designed specifically for local climate and skin needs.

Courtesy of Dot & Key



Pixi Beauty's Vitamin-C CremeSerum further highlights a clear acceleration of the hybrid skin care format trend, where traditional category boundaries between serums and moisturizers are being intentionally dissolved in favor of single-step, multifunctional solutions.



Ilia's Sun Serum is emblematic of a new generation of SPF hybrids—products that blur the line between skin care and protection, and redefine sunscreen as a daily performance skin care essential rather than a standalone functional category.

efficiency and performance, with Mintel data showing nearly a third of women actively shifting toward multifunctional skin care as part of a broader "less is more" routine philosophy. This launch responds directly to that behavioral change by merging brightening treatment and daily hydration into one unified formula, reflecting how skin care is being redesigned around speed, simplicity, and efficacy.

What makes this product distinct is its engineered "dual-phase" design approach, using 3D encapsulated vitamin C moisture pearls suspended within a hydrating serum base. This format is not just a formulation innovation but a delivery strategy, protecting ingredient stability while enabling consistent release of actives during application. By combining vitamin C, niacinamide and ferulic acid in a single system, the CremeSerum effectively compresses a multi-step routine—typically involving serum, antioxidant treatment, and moisturizer—into one application, signaling a broader industry move toward consolidation without compromising on functional performance.

The launch also reinforces how hybrid formats are reshaping both product development and consumer expectations around skin care texture and usability. Lightweight, fast-absorbing sensorial profiles are now essential to ensure that multifunctional products remain appealing in real-world routines, particularly for morning use where layering fatigue is highest. In positioning a serum-moisturizer hybrid as a daily essential rather than an innovation niche, Pixi underscores how hybridization is no longer a trend at the edges of skin care, but a structural shift in how brands define product architecture, routine design, and consumer value.

Finally, Ilia Beauty's Sun Serum Mineral Sunscreen SPF 50 further underscores how sunscreen is being redefined through the rise of hybrid formats that merge protection, skin care treatment and sensorial experience into a single step. Rather than functioning as a standalone protective layer, SPF is increasingly positioned as an active skin care product, and this launch builds directly on that shift by extending Ilia's skin-first philosophy beyond its cult Super Serum Skin Tint into a dedicated sunscreen category. The result is a product designed not only to shield against UVA/UVB, visible, and infrared light, but also to actively improve skin function throughout the day, reflecting how SPF is evolving into a daily-use skin care hybrid rather than a seasonal or purely defensive product.

At the formulation level, the hybrid positioning is reinforced through a multi-functional active system that combines seven molecular weights of hyaluronic acid, Seppic's Aquaxyl, and botanical oil-control extracts like *Echinacea purpurea* and *Rhodiola rosea*. This allows the formula to simultaneously hydrate, strengthen

L to R: Courtesy of Pixi; Ilia

the skin barrier, regulate sebum, and deliver broad-spectrum protection, effectively compressing multiple skin care steps—hydration, barrier care, oil control and sun protection—into one. The gel-cream-to-water-burst texture further supports this hybrid identity, prioritizing both skin care performance and cosmetic elegance, ensuring SPF feels as desirable and wearable as a daily moisturizer or serum.

This convergence of functions reflects a broader industry acceleration toward skin-enhancing SPF, where sunscreen is no longer a separate or final step but an integrated part of the skin care routine that actively improves skin condition. Clinical validation around hydration, shine control, and barrier strengthening reinforces this positioning, while consumer demand for lightweight, invisible, and non-cosmetic-feeling SPF highlights the importance of sensorial design in hybrid success. In this context, Ilia's Sun Serum is emblematic of a new generation of SPF hybrids—products that blur the line between skin care and protection, and redefine sunscreen as a daily performance skin care essential rather than a standalone functional category.



EltaMD is expanding its flagship UV Clear franchise with the launch of UV Clear Blemish-Prone & Oil Balancing SPF 50, a mineral sunscreen designed specifically for oily, acne-prone skin.

Acne-Prone SPF Gap with Clinically Proven Oil-Balancing Sunscreen

EltaMD is expanding its flagship UV Clear franchise with the launch of UV Clear Blemish-Prone & Oil Balancing SPF 50, a mineral sunscreen designed specifically for oily, acne-prone skin. The launch coincides with the third annual National Dermatologist Day, underscoring the brand's longstanding positioning within the medical aesthetics and dermatology community.

What makes the product notable in the SPF category is its explicit dual-function design: high-performance sun protection combined with clinically measured blemish and oil reduction benefits. Built on the brand's established UV Clear platform, the new formula is non-comedogenic and non-acnegenic, but pushes further into treatment territory with claims of a 65% reduction in visible blemishes and 61% reduction in excess oil and shine after 12 weeks of use.

At the center of the formula is EltaMD's Zinc-AOX Pro Technology, a blend of 11% high-purity zinc oxide paired with four antioxidants, combined with 5% niacinamide. The system is designed to address multiple acne-related triggers simultaneously—UV exposure, environmental stressors such as blue light and pollution, excess sebum, and visible inflammation—positioning the sunscreen as both a protective and corrective daily step.

Clinical testing on acne-prone and oily skin (43 subjects, Fitzpatrick I–VI) showed early improvements as soon as week four, with continued gains through week 12. In addition to reductions in blemishes and oil, the study reported a 25% improvement in the appearance of pore size, reinforcing the product's skin-refining claims beyond traditional SPF performance metrics.

The launch also reinforces EltaMD's deep ties to dermatology, arriving on a date the brand itself established to recognize the profession. This year's observance is further marked by parent company Colgate-Palmolive's 220th anniversary, with EltaMD set to ring the Closing Bell at the New York Stock Exchange as part of the celebration.

Together, the launch highlights a broader shift in sunscreen innovation: from passive UV protection to multifunctional, dermatology-aligned skin care that actively treats persistent skin concerns like acne while protecting against environmental damage.

Courtesy of EltaMD

SPF Meets Skin Recovery: Mineral Sunscreen as a Post-Procedure Treatment

SkinCeuticals is pushing mineral sunscreen beyond traditional UV protection with the launch of Future Mineral UV Defense SPF 50, a formula designed to function as both a daily SPF and a clinically backed anti-aging treatment.

What sets the launch apart in the increasingly crowded SPF category is its explicit positioning at the intersection of dermatological recovery and long-term skin performance. Built on a dual mineral filter system—3% titanium dioxide and 15% new-grade zinc oxide with compact particle technology—the formula is engineered to solve one of mineral SPF's most persistent consumer barriers: heavy texture and visible white cast.

Instead, the brand is emphasizing cosmetically elegant mineral protection that is wearable across all skin tones, with physician testing showing 95% of users agreed the formula suited their complexion. That focus on inclusivity and sensorial refinement places the product firmly in the daily wear first mineral SPF evolution currently reshaping the category.

SkinCeuticals is positioning the sunscreen as a post-procedure support system, not just a preventative shield. The formula incorporates barrier-supporting and film-forming actives—including niacinamide, panthenol, beta glucan and cellulose—designed to create a second skin effect that helps lock in hydration and support recovery after aesthetic treatments.

That medical-aesthetic alignment is reinforced by physician testing, which found the formula well-tolerated just five minutes after non-ablative laser procedures—an uncommon claim in consumer SPF positioning and one that underscores its clinic-to-home bridge strategy.

Clinically, the brand reports visible improvements after 12 weeks of use, including:

- 27% reduction in wrinkles
- 32% reduction in fine lines
- 27% reduction in dark spots

In a category often defined by UV claims alone, SkinCeuticals is reframing mineral SPF as a treatment-adjacent, skin-repairing daily essential—one that protects in the moment while actively improving visible signs of aging over time.

SPF Moves Into the Glow Economy

Coco & Eve, long established in the self-tan and bronzing category, is entering the sun protection market with the launch of *Sunny Honey Protect*, a new SPF collection designed to bridge the gap between skin care-level sun protection and the aesthetic expectations of glow-focused consumers. The move positions SPF not as a corrective or purely functional step, but as an extension of the brand's core tanning philosophy: skin that looks radiant, hydrated, and visibly enhanced in the sun.

What makes the launch distinctive in the SPF space is its explicit reframing of sunscreen as a glow-enhancing beauty product rather than a standalone protective layer. Developed by a brand deeply rooted in tanning behavior and bronzed-skin aesthetics, Sunny Honey Protect was created in response to a consumer tension the company identified—while SPF awareness is high, many users still avoid or underuse sunscreen due to concerns about heavy textures, white cast, or dulling effects on skin appearance, particularly on the body.

Instead of positioning SPF as a compromise, Coco & Eve has built a three-product "SPF wardrobe" designed to integrate into beauty routines with different sensorial and aesthetic outcomes. The range includes a lightweight Coconut Milk Body SPF 50 with a dewy finish for daily



Coco & Eve, long established in the self-tan and bronzing category, is entering the sun protection market with the launch of Sunny Honey Protect, a new SPF collection designed to bridge the gap between skin care-level sun protection and the aesthetic expectations of glow-focused consumers.

Courtesy of Coco & Eve

hydration, a Highlighter Body SPF 50 formulated with pearlescent minerals for visible radiance, and a Tan Boosting Anti-Aging Body Oil SPF available in multiple SPF levels to protect while enhancing the appearance of natural or self-applied tans.

Across the collection, the brand emphasizes sensorial experience as a core functional benefit, incorporating tropical botanical extracts and a signature mango fragrance to reinforce its existing identity in the body care and tanning space. The formulation strategy reflects a broader category shift toward multi-functional SPF that blends protection, cosmetic finish, and skin enhancement in a single step, particularly in body care where adoption has historically lagged facial sunscreen use.

According to the brand, the launch is rooted in direct consumer feedback from its global tanning community, with the goal of creating SPF that "works with glow, not against it."



Univar Solutions' CloudComfort SPF 50 is "a hybrid sunscreen designed to provide reliable broad-spectrum protection while keeping skin comfortable, hydrated, and easy to wear," according to the company's innovation team, which includes Claudia Barba, technical services manager, beauty and personal care, ingredients and specialties, and Irena James, senior business development manager, beauty and personal care, ingredients and specialties.

That positioning underscores its key differentiation: rather than adapting traditional sunscreen formats, Coco & Eve is translating tanning category thinking into sun protection—treating SPF as part of the aesthetic outcome, not just the protective one.

SPF is becoming the foundation of modern skin care, makeup and hybrid complexion performance. This new wave of formulas blends mineral sun protection with treatment-level actives and sensorial innovation to deliver blur, glow, and care in a single application. From weightless skin prep to tinted coverage and radiance-boosting textures, this roundup of concept products shows how the industry is redefining how protection and beauty can seamlessly coexist.

Hybrid Beauty Breakthroughs: Skin Care, SPF and Color in One Seamless Swipe

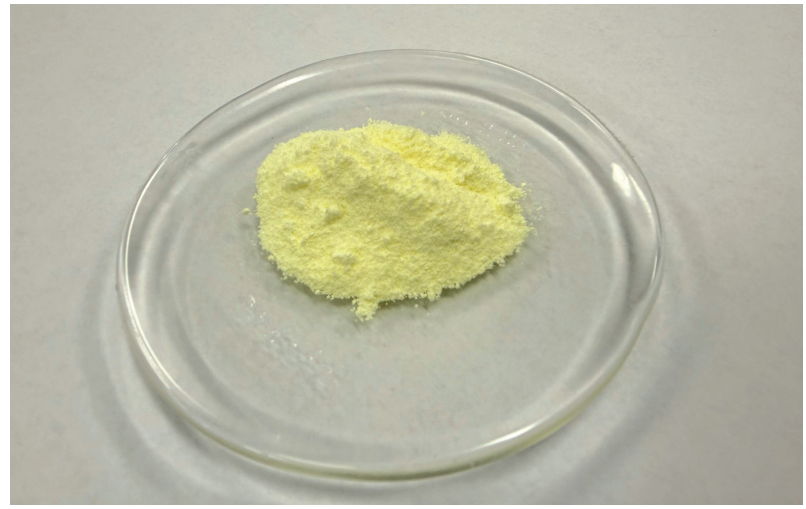
SPF is becoming the foundation of modern skin care, makeup and hybrid complexion performance. This new wave of formulas blends mineral sun protection with treatment-level actives and sensorial innovation to deliver blur, glow, and care in a single application. From weightless skin prep to tinted coverage and radiance-boosting textures, this roundup of concept products shows how the industry is redefining how protection and beauty can seamlessly coexist.

Recent concept products show more innovation is possible.

A K-Beauty-Inspired Hybrid Sunscreen

Univar Solutions' CloudComfort SPF 50 is "a hybrid sunscreen designed to provide reliable broad-spectrum protection while keeping skin comfortable, hydrated, and easy to wear," according to the company's innovation team, which includes Claudia Barba, technical services manager, beauty and personal care, ingredients and specialties, and Irena James, senior business development manager, beauty and personal care, ingredients and specialties.

They note, "The formula combines a modern mineral filter with a complementary organic UV filter to deliver strong UVA, UVB and blue light protection without the heavy feel or white cast often associated with mineral sunscreens. By pairing surface-treated zinc oxide with [dsm-Firmenich's soon to be approved] Parsol Shield, the formulation uses less total zinc oxide, which helps create a more fluid, elegant texture that blends easily on all skin tones."



Univar Solutions' CloudComfort SPF 50 pairs surface-treated zinc oxide with dsm-Firmenich's soon to be approved Parsol Shield (pictured).

L to R: Courtesy of Univar; Univar

The concept is inspired by K-beauty's lightweight sunscreen formats, featuring a smooth, fast-absorbing texture that layers easily with skin care and makeup. It also includes dsm-Firmenich's Pentavitin to deliver immediate and long-lasting hydration, helping maintain skin comfort during sun exposure.

"The result is a breathable, daily-wear sunscreen with a non-tacky finish, designed to help meet both performance expectations and consumer demand for elegant, comfortable textures," say Barba and James.

The inclusion of Parsol Shield signals the industry's excitement around the ingredient's imminent addition to the U.S. beauty palette.

"The anticipated 2026 introduction of Parsol Shield represents a structural shift for U.S. sunscreen innovation, marking the first new FDA-proposed UV filter in more than 25 years," say Barba and James. "This milestone demonstrates that modern regulatory pathways can support scientifically advanced photoprotection. Its proven broad-spectrum UVA/UVB performance and formulation efficiency, already validated through long-standing global use, give U.S. brands access to higher performance with improved aesthetics and inclusivity."

They add, "Just as importantly, Parsol Shield establishes a workable precedent for introducing additional globally recognized UV filters through a science-driven FDA process. From an industry standpoint, this milestone reopens investment, innovation, and long-term formulation planning."

Finally, say Barba and James, "Moving forward, leadership will depend on continued regulatory modernization that recognizes well-established global safety and performance data and helps provide a more predictable, science-based pathway for new UV filters. Parsol Shield also represents an important early milestone in this evolution, demonstrating how progress can unlock innovation and strengthen public health outcomes."



Pure Blur Skin Prep | Mineral Shield SPF 30 is a multifunctional, silky skin-prep formula that smooths, blurs, hydrates and protects in a single step. Non-SPF variant pictured.

Courtesy of Cosmetic Group USA

Blur, Protect, Perfect: A Weightless Mineral SPF That Does It All

Cosmetic Group USA's Pure Blur Skin Prep | Mineral Shield SPF 30 is a multifunctional, silky skin-prep formula that smooths, blurs, hydrates and protects in a single step. Featuring a sheer, no–white cast mineral SPF 30 based on zinc oxide, it combines peptides, squalane, and hyaluronic filling spheres to boost hydration, support collagen production, and visibly improve firmness, elasticity and fine lines, delivering both instant soft-focus effects and longer-term skin benefits. A plant-based silicone alternative provides a lightweight, breathable finish that enhances spreadability and creates a perfected, pore-diffusing look, whether worn alone or under foundation. Dermatology tested and aligned with green chemistry principles, the anhydrous, customizable formula can be adapted with pigments or actives and packaged in multiple formats, offering a flexible, low-carbon solution for modern hybrid skin care-makeup applications.

The formulation's invisible, weightless blurring and non-greasy, bare-skin feel were achieved with "next-generation zinc oxides with advanced particle technology and surface treatments," says Mat Rashidi, executive director of R&D at Cosmetic Group USA.

Rashidi adds, "These newer versions deliver transparency and smoother film formation, helping eliminate the heavy, chalky look traditionally associated with mineral SPF. Using my favorite new plant-derived silicone alternative, my chemists were able to achieve a silky glide and improved dispersion, for a soft-focus and cloud-like effect that feels weightless on the skin."

As for the consumer benefits of a hybrid formulation, Rashidi explains, "Our approach allows consumers to simplify their routine without compromising protection. By delivering a lightweight, velvety finish

that feels like skin prep yet functions as daily sun protection, we help shift the perception of SPF as a separate, often heavy step to a seamless part of the everyday complexion routine. Protection has never felt this good!"

SPF Meets Plumping

Cosmetic Group USA's Pure Pout Plumping Lip Butter Plus is a multifunctional lip care concept that combines visible plumping, deep hydration and sun protection within a clean, customizable formulation base. Powered by a biomimetic pomegranate flower extract (CG PomPlump), the formula is clinically positioned to enhance lip fullness, smooth fine lines and support barrier function, while a blend of jojoba oil, kahai oil, squalane, shea butter and murumuru butter delivers long-lasting moisture and conditioning without greasiness. Antioxidant support from vitamin E and botanical oils helps protect against oxidative stress, while added UV protection—via mineral zinc oxide (in SPF 30 versions) and Parsol Shield SPF 50 (in select variants, pending U.S. approval)—extends the product into treatment-plus-protection territory. Designed for flexibility, the formula can be adapted across shades, formats, and marketing positions, with early clinical data indicating measurable plumping effects within hours and over extended use, positioning it as a hybrid lip care solution that merges skin care benefits, cosmetic enhancement and SPF defense.

"Developing an SPF 50 lip balm that avoids a white cast and remains sensorially elegant is a significant formulation hurdle," says Rashidi. "It comes down to building the UV protection into a very elegant anhydrous base, rather than letting it sit on top of the sensorial story. By combining zinc oxide with a modern organic UV filter and supporting that system with strong dispersing and surface-wetting technology, we were able to create much better transparency and a more uniform film on the lips. That is what helps deliver high protection without the heavy, whitening effect people often expect from high-SPF lip products. From there, rich emollients and plush structuring agents bring back the buttery glide, cushion, and glossy finish, so the formula feels indulgent and polished rather than technical."

Rashidi adds, "The balance [of performance among the ingredients] really comes from the architecture of the oil phase. We used a combination of elegant esters, rich emollients, butters and carefully chosen waxes to create a cushiony melt that feels smooth and substantial, but never sticky or pasty. The color portion is also milled for a finer, more uniform laydown, which helps preserve that silky payoff. The result is a lip balm that delivers serious daily protection, but still feels like a prestige lip treatment in the way it melts, shines and wears on the lips."

The Seamless Veil: A Next-Gen Tinted Serum with Built-In SPF Protection

Cosmetic Group USA's Tinted Serum Foundation with SPF 30 is a skin care-first complexion product that combines lightweight coverage with treatment-level benefits and mineral sun protection. Built around a biomimetic, plant-based collagen designed to mimic the skin's natural triple-helix structure, the formula supports barrier function, hydration and plumpness, while an AI-designed peptide complex targets firmness and radiance. The emulsion also incorporates a blend of actives—including hyaluronic acid, glycerin, allantoin, aloe vera, vitamin C and niacinamide—alongside marula and kahai oils for deep hydration and skin conditioning. A natural silicone alternative enhances spreadability and delivers a smooth, breathable, second-skin finish, while avocado oil-coated pigments improve blendability and create a more even, luminous complexion. Broad-spectrum UV protection is provided via zinc oxide, positioning the product as a hybrid between foundation, serum, and sunscreen, with additional antioxidant support from a plant-based blend to protect against environmental stress.

"The key [to creating a cast-free effect] is creating one seamless film



Cosmetic Group USA's Pure Pout Plumping Lip Butter Plus is a multifunctional lip care concept that combines visible plumping, deep hydration and sun protection within a clean, customizable formulation base.

Courtesy of Cosmetic Group USA

between the mineral UV filter and the pigment system," says Rashidi. "We used a pre-dispersed zinc oxide with advanced wetting and coating support, then built the shade system with treated color dispersions that can be homogenized very finely into the base. That level of dispersion is critical, because it keeps the SPF and the color from reading as two separate layers on the skin. Instead, they move together as one flexible, fluid veil. That is what allows the formula to feel light and serum-like while delivering a far more cast-free result across a broad global shade range, including deeper tones."

Sun-Kissed Skin, Swipe On: Glow-Boosting Jelly Oil Stick Delivers Instant Vacation Radiance

The company's Bronzing Ceramide Jelly Oil Stick is a multifunctional glow product that combines a novel jelly-to-oil texture with skin-care-driven benefits to deliver instant warmth and long-term skin support. Though it doesn't feature SPF claims, the concept still points to sun-powered trends in the market.

Formulated with cannabis sativa seed oil and a nature-identical ceramide complex (CG CeraBarrier), it is designed to strengthen the skin barrier and reduce transepidermal water loss, while a blend of marula, kahai, ginger, and turmeric oils provides antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and hydrating benefits for a radiant finish. Avocado oil-coated pigments enhance color payoff and blendability, while vitamin C helps brighten and even skin tone. The portable stick format allows for easy, buildable application across the face, positioning the product as a hybrid between makeup and treatment, with customizable potential for added actives, SPF, or sensory enhancements.

Achieving a glowing, sun-kissed look in a solid stick format, without feeling greasy or heavy on the skin, is a significant sensorial challenge.

Rashidi explains how the format was achieved: "It comes down to building a structured oil network that feels juicy on application, but still has enough internal structure to stay elegant on skin. We used lightweight emollients for glide and spreadability, richer skin-conditioning lipids for comfort, and a silica-based jelly builder to create that cushiony, balm-to-skin payoff. Supporting oils like marula and kahai help reinforce the nourished feel, while ceramide adds to the perception of care and conditioning. The result is a luminous bronze finish that feels smooth, hydrated, and beautifully skin-like rather than greasy."



Cosmetic Group USA's Tinted Serum Foundation with SPF 30 is a skin care-first complexion product that combines lightweight coverage with treatment-level benefits and mineral sun protection.

Courtesy of Cosmetic Group USA

Sun Care Reset: Low-Carbon UV Filters, 4-in-1 Blends & Next-Gen Mineral Dispersions Redefine SPF Formulation

Low-Carbon UV Filter

BASF has introduced Uvinul T 150 X EcoBalanced (ethylhexyl triazone), the company's first UV filter produced using its biomass balance (BMB) approach, marking a sustainability-focused step in sun care formulation where UV filters are recognized as a major contributor to product carbon footprints due to their chemical complexity and resource-intensive production. The new version of Uvinul T 150—a widely used, photostable UVB filter and established alternative to octocrylene and ethylhexyl salicylate—delivers the same proven efficacy as the conventional ingredient while offering a significantly reduced carbon footprint through the substitution of fossil feedstocks with renewable raw materials at the beginning of the production process. Allocated via a certified mass balance system, the biobased inputs are attributed to the EcoBalanced product without requiring reformulation or changes to performance, enabling a direct drop-in solution for formulators. The approach is independently certified under REDcert² and audited by TÜV Nord, aligning with verified sustainability standards, and expands BASF's growing EcoBalanced portfolio in personal care, alongside ingredients such as Texapon N 70 X EcoBalanced and Dehyton PK 45 X EcoBalanced.

Simplifying Sun Care with Tailored, Broad-Spectrum Protection

Symrise's Neo Heliopan Fusion is a 4-in-1 UV filter blend that streamlines sun care formulation while delivering high-performance, broad-spectrum protection. By combining three crystalline UV filters solubilized in a single liquid UV filter, it enables easy customization of SPF levels up to 50+ with balanced UVA coverage and a light, pleasant skin feel. This viscous, oil-soluble, water-free format simplifies processing, reduces the need for auxiliary ingredients, and supports a wide range of applications—from creams, lotions, and sprays to BB/CC creams, foundations, lipsticks, and daily skin care with SPF—making it a versatile solution for modern, differentiated sun care products.

Designed for efficiency and sustainability, Neo Heliopan Fusion supports cold, hot, or hybrid manufacturing processes, accelerating development cycles while reducing inventory complexity and energy use. Its unique composition allows formulators to create tailored sunscreen solutions with precision, all while maintaining stability, reliability, and regulatory compliance. By consolidating multiple filters into a single, easy-to-use ingredient, Neo Heliopan Fusion empowers brands to deliver effective, consumer-trusted sun protection, helping them meet evolving market demands for safe, high-performing, and transparent sun care formulations.

Mineral Sunscreen Rebuilt: How Dispersions Solve SPF's Biggest Pain Points in Clean Beauty Formulations

G-Block UV-Grade dispersions from Applechem, part of Solabia Group, are a line of natural sunscreen ingredient systems designed to address one of the core formulation challenges in mineral SPF: achieving high transparency while maintaining broad-spectrum protection and strong SPF performance. Engineered as stable dispersions of zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, the G-Block range enables high active loading while preserving easy-to-process viscosity, helping formulators move efficiently from lab development to scale-up without compromising consistency.



G-Block UV-Grade dispersions from Applechem, part of Solabia Group, are a line of natural sunscreen ingredient systems designed to address one of the core formulation challenges in mineral SPF: achieving high transparency while maintaining broad-spectrum protection and strong SPF performance.

The systems are COSMOS, Ecocert, and Natural Product Association approved, globally compliant with FDA broad spectrum, EU COLIPA, and Japanese standards and designed to remain physically stable without separation or settling, ensuring consistent SPF and critical wavelength performance across batches. The portfolio includes multiple zinc oxide and titanium dioxide-based dispersions in caprylic/capric triglyceride systems, combining clean-label positioning with manufacturing robustness for modern natural sunscreen development.

"With our unique combination of dispersant technology, specialized processing and optimized ZnO selection, G-Block, particularly our latest launch, DZ 72CCC, delivers the most transparent zinc oxide on the market with excellent spreadability on the skin," says Yung Chan, head of formulation and application, North America.

That spreadability has multiple benefits, per Chan: "Improved spreadability of UV filter dispersions enables the final sunscreen formulas to glide smoothly and form a more even, continuous film on the skin, one of the most critical factors in achieving real, reliable UV protection. This is especially important for mineral sunscreens, where mineral particles can naturally agglomerate, leading to patchy coverage and reduced UVA/UVB performance. When a sunscreen feels patchy or difficult to apply, consumers tend to use less of it or avoid reapplication altogether."

She adds, "By minimizing agglomeration and enhancing uniformity, better-spreading dispersions help deliver higher, more consistent SPF and UVA protection while creating a smoother, more pleasant experience for the consumer."

In addition, says Chan, "Our G-Block dispersions are 100% natural and all ZnO dispersions within the G-Block series are COSMOS-approved."

Image by Lea at Adobe Stock

The company's S-Block DZ 100 PDCC, meanwhile, is a zinc oxide dispersion designed to bridge clean beauty and clinically validated sun protection by enabling formulators to deliver broad-spectrum mineral SPF within both silicone-free and traditional systems. Positioned for next-generation sun care, it allows compatibility across emulsion and anhydrous formats while reducing reliance on silicone or siloxane dispersions, making it suitable for clean, clinical and high-performance formulations.

"Our S-Block dispersions contain 98.4% natural content," says Chan. "Even when formulating with the maximum allowable zinc oxide level permitted by regulation, only about 0.5% non-natural ingredient is introduced into the formula, enabling brands to maintain strong naturality claims while still delivering high-performance sunscreen protection."

The system combines 78% zinc oxide active loading with stable, easy-to-process viscosity and stress-free formulation behavior that prevents separation or settling, supporting consistent SPF performance and faster scale-up from lab to production.

Chan notes, "At the same ZnO content, S-Block delivers a remarkably serum-like low viscosity while maintaining long-term stability. This performance has been demonstrated across multiple formulation types, including both O/W and W/Si systems."

In addition to its regulatory compliance with FDA broad spectrum, EU COLIPA, and Japanese PA standards, S-Block is engineered for improved sensorial aesthetics, delivering a smooth, powdery skin feel and detackified finish that enhances user experience without added powders or silicones.

Technologies such as these could potentially support reef-safe claims.

Chan explains, "There is currently no universal or legally defined standard for making "reef-safe" claims. From a regulatory standpoint, many popular reef-rich regions, including Florida, Hawaii, Aruba, Palau, Mexico, Thailand and several Caribbean islands, have banned certain organic UV filters, while encouraging the use of mineral UV filters as safer, lower-risk options. From a technical perspective, although research on environmental impact continues to evolve, non-nano mineral UV filters remain less debated and are generally perceived as more compatible with vulnerable coral reef systems."

The technologies also offer biocompatibility, which can benefit consumers with acne-prone skin.

"Mineral UV filters provide gentle, non-irritating photoprotection while supporting overall skin health," says Chan. "Because they remain on the skin surface rather than being absorbed, they do not interact or penetrate with living skin layers, the bloodstream or barrier lipids, making them inherently biocompatible. Their inorganic, chemically inert and highly stable nature further minimizes the risk of irritation or inflammation, which is why they are widely regarded as gentle and mild for sensitive skin."

She adds, "They also avoid the pore-clogging tendencies often seen with certain occlusive organic UV filters. In addition, ZnO offers anti-inflammatory and antibacterial benefits that help reduce acne-related redness and inflammatory lesions, with many clinical studies demonstrating improvements in *Cutibacterium acnes* activity, reduced lesion counts, and soothing of irritated skin."

From an operational perspective, pre-dispersed mineral filters offer efficiencies that differ from traditional powder-form UV filters.

"Pre-dispersed mineral UV filters streamline production by eliminating the high-shear mixing, long dispersion times, and dusting issues associated with powder-form ZnO or TiO_2, says Chan. "The pre-dispersed, stable clean-paste format reduces inhalation concerns, minimizes the need for special processing equipment, and significantly cuts cleaning time and requirements. With a proven three-year shelf life and no separation of our G-Block and S-Block dispersions, these ready-to-use dispersions offer reliable, consistent quality batch after batch, making formulation easier, faster, and worry-free, without the risk of quality variation."

5 Innovation Strategies Shaping the Next Era of Sun Care

1. **Build SPF credibility through next-generation validation systems:** Move beyond single-lab SPF claims by investing in multi-site testing, in-vitro methods, and real-world wear studies to strengthen reproducibility, reduce regulatory risk and reinforce consumer trust.
2. **Design SPF as a hybrid skin care platform, not a standalone category:** Develop formulations that integrate UV protection with actives for hydration, barrier support, tone correction and anti-aging, positioning SPF as a core daily skin care system across facial, lip, and body formats.
3. Prioritize sensorial engineering as a core performance driver: Treat texture, finish and wearability as equal to UV efficacy, focusing on invisible mineral systems, no-white-cast solutions, lightweight emulsions and makeup-compatible formats that improve compliance and daily use.
4. **Leverage advanced dispersion and delivery technologies to unlock performance:** Invest in pigment and UV filter dispersion systems, encapsulation (e.g., multi-weight actives, controlled release pearls), and structured oil/emulsion architectures to improve stability, efficacy and aesthetic elegance.
5. **Integrate sustainability and inclusivity into formulation architecture from the start:** Embed low-carbon UV filters, clean-label mineral systems, and broad-spectrum skin tone compatibility into early R&D decisions, aligning innovation with regulatory evolution, environmental expectations and global market diversity. ■

HAIRSPAN: DEFINING THE NEXT FRONTIER OF HAIR LONGEVITY

A new movement is emerging as a defining structure for formulation strategy, functional claims and consumer education, and positions the hair and scalp as a biological system designed to be preserved over time.

A new concept is beginning to take hold across the hair care industry: the "hairspan." An extension of the healthspan movement in wellness and skin care, it reframes hair care around the period in which hair maintains peak functional performance—density and growth, strength, texture and manageability, and color vitality—rather than focusing solely on short-term aesthetic correction.

This shift reflects a broader transition from reactive repair to proactive, prevention-first care. Rather than treating damage after it occurs, the hairspan framework emphasizes biological longevity, resilience and sustained follicle function, positioning the scalp and hair fiber as dynamic systems influenced by aging, stress and environmental exposure.

This focus has already driven ingredient innovation, as seen with Croda's Procapil, a multi-active hair care complex designed to combat premature hair loss by targeting key mechanisms of follicle aging. Combining apigenin, oleanolic acid and biotinoyl tripeptide-1 in a conditioning delivery system, it reportedly helps strengthen hair anchorage, improve follicle vitality and support a healthier anagen-to-telogen ratio, effectively extending the growth phase of the hair cycle. By improving the morphology of the hair bulb and reinforcing follicular structure, Procapil helps reduce shedding while promoting the appearance of denser, fuller and more resilient hair. Its liquid, versatile format enables easy incorporation into shampoos, conditioners, scalp treatments and leave-on systems, positioning it as a functional active for comprehensive anti-hair loss and scalp care formulations.

Active Concepts has taken this hairspan approach with its latest concept product collection. At the center of the collection is AC ExoRoot, a biomarker-driven



Active Concepts has taken this hairspan approach with its latest concept product collection.

Courtesy of Active Concepts

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Image by evgeniyashit19 at Adobe Stock

As brands accelerate into scalp-first, longevity-led innovation, the hairspan is emerging as a defining structure for formulation strategy, functional claims and consumer education, and positioning the hair and scalp as a biological system designed to be preserved over time.

active designed to unify scalp, follicle and fiber care. Powered by the amino acid-rich biology of *Chlorella vulgaris*, it supports key pathways involved in scalp balance and growth signaling, while sulfur-rich peptides help extend the hair growth cycle. Additional benefits include support for fibroblast function and extracellular matrix integrity, reinforcing long-term scalp resilience and anti-aging performance at the source.

The company's hairspan framework is designed to address visible signs of hair aging—including thinning, dullness, dryness and texture degradation—by maintaining equilibrium at the scalp and buffering daily environmental and oxidative stressors. By applying skin care-style longevity principles to hair, the hairspan approach reframes scalp care as a central driver of sustained hair performance.

As brands accelerate into scalp-first, longevity-led innovation, the hairspan is emerging as a defining structure for formulation strategy, functional claims and consumer education, and positioning the hair and scalp as a biological system designed to be preserved over time.

Here, we break down how the hairspan movement is manifesting in the marketplace and among consumers, as well as the new class of ingredients reshaping claims and functions in supporting hairspan benefits.

Moving SPF Thinking Into Hair Care

SPF, meet HPF. Dove has extended the logic of year-round sun protection beyond skin and into hair with its recently launched UV Repair & Glow Collection, a science-led range designed to address what the brand calls one of the most overlooked drivers of hair damage: daily UV exposure. Positioned alongside heat and bleaching, UV radiation is framed as a leading cause of structural degradation, contributing to dullness, dryness and cumulative internal fiber damage over time.

The collection introduces a dual-focus system that both repairs up to 99% of accumulated internal UV damage and helps protect against future exposure through HPF 70 (hair protection factor), a leave-in technology designed to deliver up to 70 hours of protection with repeated use. Inspired by skin care routines built around daily SPF application, Dove is embedding UV defense directly into everyday hair care.

(HPF is hardly new. The concept was posited as early as 1990 in the pages of our sister publication, *Cosmetics & Toiletries*; Sergio Nacht, Sunscreens and Hair, *Cosm & Toil* 105 55-60 (1990[a].)

At launch, the Dove range includes a bi-phase serum and oil mist formulated with a ferulic serum and ultra-light micro-oils for shine, smoothness and on-the-go protection, alongside a shampoo and conditioner duo focused on restoring cuticle integrity and enhancing light reflection. A 10-in-1 rinse-off mask with melting lumi-beads completes the regimen, targeting rapid recovery of softness, strength and gloss.

According to Dove, the goal is to make UV protection and repair as habitual in hair care as sunscreen is in skin care, positioning hair as a continuously exposed, damage-sensitive fiber that benefits from both prevention and restoration in a single routine.

Glass Scalp: The Skinification of Hair Care Comes to Scalp Care

"Glass scalp" is rapidly emerging as the next evolution of "glass skin," driven by a 613% year-on-year surge in Google searches and 125,000 queries in the past month alone, according to Fresha. The trend reflects the accelerating "skinification" of hair care, with consumers prioritizing scalp health,

[a]https://www.cosmeticsandtoiletries.com/testing/efficacy/article/21836612/a-sunny-proposition-the-effects-of-sun-on-hair



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Courtesy of Dove

ingredient-led routines and long-term hair quality over traditional styling.

Defined by a smooth, balanced scalp and ultra-reflective hair (see also "glass hair"), the look is achieved through peptide-based serums, exfoliating scalp treatments and silk-protein products. Momentum is building across TikTok hashtags like #glassscalp, Reddit communities, Korean beauty channels and industry reports, while salons report rising client demand for scalp-first treatments.

Fresha's data suggests this is more than a fleeting trend, pointing instead to a durable shift toward science-led, scalp-focused hair care as consumers increasingly apply skin care principles to hair.



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The Hairspan Ingredient Toolbox: Where Scalp Biology Meets High-Performance Hair Science

To decode where the hairspan concept is heading next, we've rounded up the latest generation of hair and scalp care actives—where barrier health, microbiome balance, follicle longevity and fiber performance converge into truly multifunctional solutions. Across fermentation-derived ceramides, peptide-rich growth boosters, AI-designed scalp actives and advanced biomimetic delivery systems, innovation is increasingly focused on treating the scalp as a biologically active extension of the skin while simultaneously elevating visible hair aesthetics. Together, these ingredients reflect a clear industry direction: faster-acting, clinically substantiated, sustainability-forward technologies that deliver layered benefits—from inflammation control and dandruff reduction to density, shine, strength and long-term follicular resilience.

Biomimetic Ceramide Repair for Scalp-to-Strand Barrier Strength

Croda's Sphingo'Hair Drypure is a 100% natural-origin, bio-fermentation–derived ceramide NP designed to restore and reinforce the skin, scalp and hair fiber barrier through biomimetic lipid replenishment. By delivering long-chain ceramides that mirror the skin's own structure, it helps rebalance barrier integrity while modulating key inflammatory markers and improving scalp comfort.

Clinically, it supports a multi-level performance profile: reduced scalp irritation and flaking, improved hydration and desquamation control, and enhanced hair fiber quality, including increased shine, softness and moisture balance alongside reduced roughness.

Lightweight yet highly functional in powder form, it integrates across shampoos, conditioners, scalp treatments and skin care formats, positioning it as a holistic barrier-repair active that bridges scalp health and visible hair beauty.

Bio-Enhanced Polyphenols for a Balanced, Microbiome-Friendly Scalp Ecosystem

Saniscalp from Solabia is a high-natural-origin scalp care active derived from passion fruit seeds (*Passiflora edulis*), enriched with bio-enhanced piceatannol dimers produced via the company's patented laccase enzymatic bioconversion, which amplifies polyphenol bioactivity. Designed as a holistic scalp rebalancing solution, it targets multiple pillars of scalp health: it helps soothe irritated scalps by modulating key inflammatory mediators (PGE2, LTB4 and IL-18), reinforces barrier integrity by supporting epidermal differentiation to reduce flaking and strengthens the scalp's natural defenses to help maintain microbiome balance. The result is a comprehensive anti-dandruff and comfort-focused action that positions Saniscalp as a multifunctional active for sensitive scalp care, post-color protection and styling-support formulations, delivering a fortified, healthier-feeling scalp environment with a strong natural origin profile (>95% per ISO 16128).

"Supporting the scalp microbiome means supporting the diversity of the microbiota and maintaining healthy balances of key commensal microbes," says Melissa Bergman, actives business development manager,

Image by LIGHTFIELD STUDIOS at Adobe Stock

Solabia. "Products that are friendly to the scalp microbiome do not induce overgrowth of scalp microbes such as *Cutibacterium* species which prefer lipid-rich environments and produce metabolites that upregulate lipid synthesis. Oily scalp is directly linked to microbial dysbiosis as high sebum content on the scalp creates an environment that favors that growth of lipophilic species such as *Cutibacterium*. In the presence of high lipid content, such as with oily scalp, the environment strongly favors the growth of *Cutibacterium* species creating a self-amplifying loop in which the lipophilic bacteria consume the lipids, produce metabolites to upregulate lipid synthesis, which then reinforces that lipid rich environment and the resulting oiliness of the scalp. Maintaining healthy ratios of lipid-loving *Cutibacterium* species relative to other commensal species reduces the impact of the feedback loop created by *Cutibacterium* species as they metabolize lipids on the scalp."

AI-Designed Coffee-Derived Scalp Active for Barrier-Focused Hair Care

Syensqo has announced the launch of Re2 Coffea Arabica Peptide, a bio-sourced scalp care active developed in partnership with Bota Biosciences. The AI-designed ingredient is positioned at the forefront of the ongoing "skinification" of hair care, addressing rising consumer demand for advanced scalp treatments that deliver skin care-like performance benefits.

Designed as a multifunctional, single-solution active, Re2 Coffea Arabica Peptide enables brands to support a broad spectrum of scalp health claims. These include intensive hydration and soothing, aligned with top consumer priorities in scalp care; barrier reinforcement, with demonstrated improvements in skin barrier function and significant reduction in transepidermal water loss (TEWL); anti-inflammatory action, helping to reduce redness and irritation; and enhanced tactile results, delivering measurable improvements in scalp softness.

The ingredient is derived from upcycled coffee grounds sourced in Yunnan, China, reinforcing brand narratives around circularity, ethical sourcing and sustainable ingredient innovation. Using its physical AI-driven biofoundry platform, Bota Biosciences screened natural coffee proteins to identify biologically active peptide sequences with the highest functional potential. These sequences are then refined through an enzymatic process that breaks proteins into targeted peptide fragments, creating the final active.

Plant-Powered Follicle Energy for Denser, Stronger-Looking Hair

Mibelle Biochemistry's PhytoSpherix Hair is a plant-based glycogen derived from a unique, non-GMO sweet corn variety that redefines hair vitality by delivering targeted, natural energy directly to the follicle. By replenishing the hair's intrinsic energy reserves, it enhances follicle activity, supports accelerated growth and promotes fuller, denser-looking



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Courtesy of Syensqo

hair aligned with the hair-longevity trend. Its energizing mechanism helps optimize hair-growth performance while rejuvenating strands from root to tip, improving strength, resilience and overall appearance. The result is plant-powered energy that leaves hair looking denser, healthier and visibly revitalized.

Upcycled Sea Buckthorn Peptides for Denser, Fuller-Looking Hair and Scalp Vitality

BASF's Aloversil is a natural-origin active developed to support the appearance of denser, fuller hair in men experiencing visible shedding. Derived from upcycled sea buckthorn seedcake, it leverages potent natural peptides to promote a healthier scalp environment. Clinical testing in a four-month, placebo-controlled study showed improved hair coverage and density, supported by instrumental data, while in vitro results indicate enhanced cellular communication and micro-vascularization linked to healthier-looking hair.



Kalichem's Stimucap range represents a next-generation approach to hair longevity, designed for R&D and marketing teams seeking multifunctional, biomimetic actives that go beyond traditional anti-hair loss paradigms.

Hair Longevity Through Follicle Rebalancing, Anti-Inflammation and Cellular Regeneration

Kalichem's Stimucap range represents a next-generation approach to hair longevity, designed for R&D and marketing teams seeking multifunctional, biomimetic actives that go beyond traditional anti-hair loss paradigms. Instead of focusing solely on 5α-reductase inhibition or vasodilation, it works to restore follicular homeostasis through a dual-action system combining CLA-glutathione and sodium DNA, targeting inflammation, oxidative stress, and cellular renewal at the level of the hair bulb and scalp environment.

The CLA-glutathione complex delivers a synergistic antioxidant and anti-inflammatory mechanism: conjugated linoleic acid enhances delivery of glutathione into the follicular environment while supporting endogenous GSH synthesis, strengthening the scalp's redox defense system and reducing oxidative stress-driven follicle miniaturization. At the same time, CLA-derived modulation of eicosanoid pathways helps reduce PGE2-mediated inflammation, a key contributor to follicular stress and involution.

Complementing this, sodium DNA provides nucleotide fragments that support metabolically stressed scalp cells, helping restore cellular activity in the follicle niche. By supporting fibroblast function and promoting regenerative signaling in germinal cells, it contributes to improved follicle vitality, increased hair shaft thickness and enhanced growth environment stability.

From a hair longevity perspective, Stimucap addresses three core dimensions of hairspan performance: reduced shedding through improved follicle anchoring, enhanced fiber robustness via bulbar regeneration and sustained scalp equilibrium through oxidative and inflammatory control. Clinical benchmarking against minoxidil shows superior performance in hair pull resistance (+40% vs +17%) alongside strong tolerability and absence of scalp irritation.

For formulators, Stimucap enables flexible integration into leave-on scalp treatments, conditioners and rinse-off systems, supporting claims around hair strengthening, density maintenance and follicular resilience. For marketers, it aligns with the growing shift toward scalp-first, longevity-driven narratives—positioning hair health not as episodic repair, but as continuous biological maintenance of the follicular ecosystem.

Stimucap is available in two variants—Stimucap V, a vegan PDRN complex + glutathione for scalp care and hair skinification, and Stimucap SC, marine PDRN + CLA glutathione to protect follicles and boost hair health.

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The Hair Benefits of Hyaluronic Acid: Strength, Repair and Fiber Protection

Givaudan Active Beauty has released new efficacy data expanding the performance claims of its hyaluronic acid portfolio, highlighting benefits for both skin and hair care applications.

The company reports that PrimalHyal Hydra[+] can protect the hair fiber even in rinse-off formats due to strong affinity with the hair surface, helping improve elasticity, softness and cuticle smoothness while increasing resistance to environmental stressors such as UV exposure.

New studies also show that ResistHyal adapts its behavior based on hair condition, delivering surface-level smoothing on healthy strands while targeting deeper repair in damaged fibers to reduce frizz and improve cohesion after aggressive treatments.

On the skin side, PrimalHyal Ultrafiller demonstrated hydration benefits lasting up to 24 hours after a single application, alongside support for extracellular matrix integrity tied to anti-aging performance.



Givaudan Active Beauty has released new efficacy data expanding the performance claims of its hyaluronic acid portfolio, highlighting benefits for both skin and hair care applications.

The company also shared new findings for Spherulite HA Ultimate, a delivery system built on a 100% natural-origin chassis that enables deeper and more even penetration of actives in the skin.

According to the company, the data reinforce how molecular design, biotechnology-driven production and advanced delivery systems can extend hyaluronic acid's functionality well beyond traditional hydration in next-generation skin and hair care formulations.



A standout feature is Covertrix's ability to balance hydration retention with quick-dry performance, helping reduce drying time and heat exposure across all hair types.

3D Matrix Hair Strength, Hydration Control & Rapid-Dry Performance in One Bio-Intelligent System

Covertrix from Provital is a plant-derived, bio-intelligent hair care active built on 3D matrix technology that combines a biopolymer network with lysine and *Amaranthus caudatus* seed extract to reinforce hair fiber resilience while optimizing hydration control.

Designed to act both on the surface and within the hair structure, it forms a protective film that reduces moisture loss while enabling controlled delivery of actives for improved fiber quality. The result is stronger, more breakage-resistant hair with enhanced shine, softness and a smooth sensorial finish. A standout feature is its ability to balance hydration retention with quick-dry performance, helping reduce

Image by New Africa at Adobe Stock

drying time and heat exposure across all hair types.

Fully 100% natural origin (ISO 16128), vegan, preservative-free and globally compliant, Covertrix positions itself as a multifunctional, sustainability-forward solution for next-generation high-performance hair care.

"Covertrix was tested on a multi-ethnic panel including hair types I, III, V and VII, ensuring broad applicability," says Nina Esposito, managing director at Provital LLC. "For curlier and Afro hair types, which naturally require higher moisture retention and are more prone to breakage, the deep moisture and breakage-resistance results are particularly relevant. These fibers benefit from enhanced hydration and structural reinforcement."

She adds, "For straight and wavy hair, improvements in shine and softness become especially important, as these consumers often prioritize smoothness, manageability and visual gloss."

Finally, says Esposito, "Regarding drying time reduction, this benefit is universally relevant across all textures. However, it becomes especially impactful for curly and Afro hair, which typically require longer drying times. Reducing drying time helps minimize prolonged thermal exposure and mechanical stress during styling."

Rapid drying times have implications for brand positioning.

"With drying time reductions, Covertrix can be easily positioned within heat-protection, anti-breakage and styling lines," says Esposito. "By reducing drying time, it limits thermal exposure, helping to protect the hair fiber and reduce mechanical stress during styling. This makes it particularly suitable for blow-dry creams, leave-in conditioners, heat sprays and anti-breakage serums."

Esposito concludes, "Covertrix features 3D matrix technology, which enables sustained release of the active ingredient. The components of this matrix show no inherent incompatibilities with silicones and as a 100% natural-origin ingredient (ISO 16128), it has been specifically designed for use in clean and natural formulations."

Natural Peptide Power for Fuller, Denser-Looking Hair

Aloversil from BASF is a 100% natural-origin, peptide-rich active derived from upcycled sea buckthorn seedcake (*Hippophae rhamnoides*), developed to support the appearance of denser, fuller hair in men experiencing visible shedding. By helping maintain a balanced scalp environment, it promotes conditions associated with stronger-looking, more resilient hair. In a 60-subject, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical study, daily use of a leave-in serum over four months improved perceived hair coverage and density, with instrumental measurements confirming the results. In vitro data further indicate that Aloversil supports cellular communication and microvascular activity linked to follicle nourishment, positioning it as a sustainability-driven, performance-oriented solution for hair fullness and scalp vitality

Fast-Track Scalp Relief: Multi-Action Dandruff Control

Symrise's Crinipan PO Plus positions itself as a next-generation scalp care solution built for speed, simplicity and multi-functional performance, directly addressing rising consumer expectations for fast-acting, comfort-driven dandruff treatments. Clinically, the ingredient delivers visible dandruff reduction in as little as one week, while simultaneously improving key markers of scalp health, including itch relief, barrier function and malodor control. This combination supports a more holistic definition of scalp care, where efficacy is paired with immediate sensory benefits and long-term balance.

At its core, the system blends the well-established anti-dandruff active piroctone olamine with performance enhancers such as decylene glycol and 1,2-hexanediol. This synergistic composition accelerates efficacy beyond traditional piroctone olamine formats, enabling faster flake reduction while contributing antimicrobial support and improved scalp environment. The result is a streamlined approach for formulators seeking to consolidate multiple scalp claims—anti-dandruff,



Compatibility across a broad pH range (3–11) expands Crinipan PO Plus' application potential, allowing integration into diverse formats including shampoos, tonics, serums and even solid systems, provided UV protection is considered due to piroctone olamine sensitivity.

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*Moving beyond simple color camouflage, Chemyunion has introduced BioTech4 AntiGray, a breakthrough postbiotic ingredient (*Lactobacillus Ferment Lysate*) engineered to stimulate natural melanin resumption at the follicular level.*

soothing and odor control—into a single active system.

From a formulation standpoint, Crinipan PO Plus offers notable versatility and ease of use. Its liquid format improves solubility and eliminates the need for heating, simplifying processing and enabling cold formulation. Compatibility across a broad pH range (3–11) further expands its application potential, allowing integration into diverse formats including shampoos, tonics, serums and even solid systems, provided UV protection is considered due to piroctone olamine sensitivity.

Strategically, the ingredient aligns with the broader skinification of scalp care, supporting claims around scalp barrier health, cleanliness and comfort while maintaining strong anti-dandruff credentials. For brands, this enables concise yet powerful messaging centered on fast results, multi-benefit performance and elevated user experience—key pillars as scalp care continues to evolve toward high-efficacy, treatment-led positioning.

Postbiotic Power that Reverses Grays

Moving beyond simple color camouflage, Chemyunion has introduced BioTech4 AntiGray, a breakthrough postbiotic ingredient (*Lactobacillus Ferment Lysate*) engineered to stimulate natural melanin resumption at the follicular level. This 98.7% natural-origin active targets the biological origin of hair graying rather than masking it with synthetic pigments, aligning with the "clean beauty" and longevity-focused market trends.

BioTech4 AntiGray acts as a signaling agent within the hair bulb to address the progressive decline of melanocyte activity. Its multifaceted approach includes reactivating dormant melanocyte activity to resume natural pigment production.

The technology also contributes to the maintenance of melanocyte stem cells to preserve the hair's pigmentary system, while enhancing antioxidant gene expression to protect melanocyte integrity from environmental and biological aging factors.

The ingredient's performance is backed by significant scientific evidence:

- Human hair follicle studies showed a 43% increase in melanin content in the hair bulb.
- In a 120-day study of 90 volunteers, a 3% active formulation delivered a 27% increase in hair color uniformity and a noticeable reduction in gray intensity.
- 76.7% of participants reported a visible reduction in gray strands,

Image by santypan at Adobe Stock

contributing to a 90% overall satisfaction rate.

Designed for high technological versatility, BioTech4 AntiGray is ideal for advanced hair longevity tonics and treatment shampoos. By addressing the biological mechanisms of pigmentation, it enables brands to offer a new generation of functional care that restores natural color from the root up.

Biodegradable Conditioning Power for Silky, Frizz-Controlled Hair

BASF's Dehyquart S18 (stearamidopropyl dimethylamine) is a readily biodegradable, cationic conditioning agent designed as a sustainable alternative to traditional quaternary ammonium compounds in hair care. With 78% renewable carbon content, it supports cleaner formulation strategies while delivering high-performance conditioning in conditioners, masks and treatment systems.

Under acidic pH conditions, it forms a smooth, lightweight film on the hair fiber, significantly improving wet and dry combability, reducing frizz in high humidity and enhancing suppleness even at low use levels.

Compatible with silicone-free and vegan formulations, Dehyquart S18 bridges sustainability expectations with salon-level sensorial performance for smoother, more manageable hair.

Bio-Based Flexible Film Former for Hair and Scalp Comfort

Solabia's OleoVeil Care is a 100% bio-based, amphiphilic film-forming ingredient designed to improve both performance and sensory experience in hair and scalp formulations. Its unique structure forms a flexible, resilient "second-skin" film that adheres effectively to hair fibers and the scalp, enhancing manageability, smoothness and overall wear comfort.

"In a market craving natural alternatives, we sought to utilize the unique chemical and physical properties of new bio-sourced feedstocks," says Timothy Cuneo, NPD functionals group leader at Solabia. "By creating a balance of lipophilic monomers and hydrogen bond accepting polyether monomers in the backbone, we were able to tune the structure to adhere tightly to natural substrates and maximize compatibility with typical oil phase components."

Cuneo adds, "While traditional film former science has focused on maximizing hydrophobicity, OleoVeil is drawn to the skin and hair surface by being oil soluble but polar enough to interact with a variety of different substrates. This also has the benefit of promoting deposition to the hair and adhering strongly to the skin while maintaining a nice sensory. With OleoVeil, consumers can expect enhanced long-wear and improved hair manageability and protection, as well as comfortable wear for everyday life."

In hair care, the ingredient reportedly helps improve fiber alignment and reduces roughness, delivering a smoother, more polished finish with enhanced softness and shine. Its silicone-like sensory profile elevates the feel of oil-based and natural formulations, reducing greasiness while maintaining lightweight conditioning benefits. The ingredient also supports frizz control and improves hair uniformity, contributing to a healthier-looking, well-groomed appearance.

On the scalp, OleoVeil Care forms a breathable yet durable film that helps maintain hydration and comfort while resisting disruption from water exposure. Its high water tolerance ensures long-lasting performance even under rinse-off or humid conditions, making it suitable for both leave-on and protective scalp care applications.

"OleoVeil promotes comfort of wear by creating very thin, gentle films that hug the natural contours of the skin and hair," says Cueno. "It is not penetrating, but it is able to sink into the stratum corneum or between hair cuticles to create a subtle and less oily



OleoVeil Care's unique structure forms a flexible, resilient "second-skin" film that adheres effectively to hair fibers and the scalp, enhancing manageability, smoothness and overall wear comfort.

Image by EkaterinaJurkova at Adobe Stock

sensation. In hair care products, the reduction of greasy sensory improves the feel of hair and helps mask the heaviness of oils included in the formulation. The amphiphilic nature also helps prevent over-accumulation by allowing excess to be washed away. In color cosmetics, the ultra-thin film helps to seamlessly blend the products into the skin, to give a natural look."

He adds, "OleoVeil can help reduce the dynamic friction of common carrier oils, making their rheological profile more similar to silicones. OleoVeil is also less tacky than comparable film formers while maintaining particularly strong adhesion to skin and hair, helping to improve wear while being comfortable on the skin/hair."

Finally, says Cuneo, "The polyether backbone is highly flexible, mimicking the same type of structure that gives fabrics like Spandex their stretchability. This property helps the film to cover skin and hair comfortably while allowing the film to remain intact during natural flexing of the substrate. In formulation, this also means that issues like flaking, pilling, or balling up due to gums and other powders can be greatly reduced."

As for the ingredient's water tolerance, Cuneo notes, "The backbone [of the ingredient] contains hydrogen bond acceptors, but not hydrogen bond donors. This allows the polymer to interact with water while maintaining an overall oil-soluble nature. Reducing the repulsive forces allows the film to tolerate the presence of water, rather than become disrupted by it. In everyday life, we see this benefit most when dealing with sweat and tears. Incorporating OleoVeil can strengthen film integrity, helping prevent splotchy makeup from the disruption of the makeup layers with water."

Putting the Hairspan Into Action: 5 Strategies for Marketing & Product Development

1. Hairspan is shifting hair care from repair to prevention-led longevity: The category is moving toward maintaining "peak hair performance" over time—framing formulations around follicle health, scalp balance and fiber resilience rather than short-term cosmetic fixes.
2. Scalp-first biology is becoming the primary innovation battleground: Across microbiome balance, inflammation control, barrier repair and follicle signaling, the scalp is now positioned as a living biological system that determines long-term hair quality and density.
3. Multifunctionality is replacing single-claim actives: New ingredients increasingly combine multiple benefits—growth cycle support, anti-inflammatory action, barrier reinforcement, fiber strengthening and cosmetic improvement—enabling condensed, high-efficacy claims in single systems.
4. Skinification is evolving into "systemification" of hair care: Brands are applying skin care-style longevity, UV defense, hydration science and cellular repair concepts to hair, expanding the role of hair care into a continuous care ecosystem rather than a rinse-off routine.
5. Sustainability, delivery tech and measurable performance are now non-negotiable: Innovation is being defined not just by efficacy, but by biodegradable systems, upcycled inputs, AI-guided discovery and clinically validated results—raising the bar for both formulation and marketing credibility. ■



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Rethinking packaging as a multi-sensory, engineered brand system where form, materiality and user experience are inseparable.



Baralan advances usability-driven design with a push-button applicator system that extends product reach to minimize waste, improve evacuation rates and enhance end-of-life efficiency across makeup categories.

Courtesy of Baralan

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Packaging for beauty and personal care is rapidly evolving beyond surface aesthetics into a discipline defined by structural storytelling, functional intelligence and measurable sustainability gains. Across fragrance, beauty and prestige goods, brands and suppliers are rethinking packaging as a multi-sensory, engineered brand system where form, materiality and user experience are inseparable.

A standout expression of this shift comes from Rissmann, which is redefining rigid round box architecture through sculptural edge design and layered visual depth. Rather than treating the lid and base as simple cylinders, Rissmann introduces precision-carved contours that interact to create a three-dimensional visual experience. A circular, mountain-shaped die-cut reveals a shimmering gold gradient when closed, turning the packaging itself into a moment of discovery. Supported by Fedrigoni Sirio Color papers and highly customizable decorative finishes, the system transforms secondary packaging into a narrative platform—where every combination of lining, texture, and cut-out becomes a brand signature rather than a standard format.

Critically, this expressive design language is paired with industrial scalability. Once specifications are defined, production is automated, allowing Rissmann to balance craftsmanship with efficiency across global luxury categories. Tailored dimensions ensure product security, while hybrid manufacturing models—combining automated, semi-automated and manual processes—enable agility across markets. This industrial sophistication is underpinned by a robust ESG framework spanning ISO certifications, FSC sourcing, EcoVadis scoring, and alignment with emerging EUDR requirements, reinforcing the brand's positioning at the intersection of design excellence and regulatory readiness.



Rissmann is redefining rigid round box architecture through sculptural edge design and layered visual depth.

Alongside structural innovation, packaging is undergoing a parallel transformation in dispensing intelligence and material efficiency. Nuon Medical has introduced a precision-engineered anti-wrinkle essence dropper integrated with light therapy, merging controlled dosing with functional skin activation in a compact



Courtesy of Rissmann



Nuon Medical has introduced a precision-engineered anti-wrinkle essence dropper integrated with light therapy, merging controlled dosing with functional skin activation in a compact format.



The technical design of the AeroFlexx format focuses on enhancing the consumer experience through a functional, resealable system that provides controlled refilling without compromising product performance. Pictured is AeroFlexx's underlying technology, not the final Aveda packaging.

format. Meanwhile, Baralan advances usability-driven design with a push-button applicator system that extends product reach to minimize waste, improve evacuation rates and enhance end-of-life efficiency across makeup categories. Constructed from recyclable PP and PE, the system reflects a broader move toward functional simplicity that directly addresses consumer frustration with residual product loss.

At the prestige end of the spectrum, Aveda's partnership with AeroFlexx signals a major step forward in refill architecture. The lightweight airframe structure reduces plastic use by up to 70% compared to standard bottles, while maintaining a premium, resealable user experience. Designed for curbside recyclability and aligned with circular design principles, the format demonstrates how refill systems are evolving beyond utilitarian sustainability claims into luxury-ready consumer experiences. Its planned rollout across best-selling products underscores a long-term shift toward scalable refill ecosystems in prestige beauty.

Across these innovations, a unifying trend is emerging: packaging is becoming a convergence point for storytelling, engineering, and sustainability metrics. From Rissmann's sculptural luxury boxes to AeroFlexx's structural reduction systems and Baralan's waste-minimizing applicators, the industry is moving toward formats that do more with less—less material, less waste, and less friction in use—while delivering greater emotional and functional impact.

Ultimately, packaging is no longer a passive vessel but an active performance layer within the product experience. The next generation of solutions will be defined not only by visual identity or recyclability, but by their ability to integrate structural ingenuity, user-centric design, and circular logic into a single, seamless system. ■



L to R: Courtesy of Nuon Medical; AeroFlexx

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