

The Fountain of Youth

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Anti-aging products continue to do a strong business, and they're not just for seniors anymore as 20-somethings increase demand.

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For as long as there have been mirrors, women have been willing to use (and do) almost anything possible to cover up the signs of aging. And they have their eyes peeled for the next big breakthrough that promises to turn back the hands of time.

Targeted science has enabled cosmetic firms to harness new technologies and fine tune existing raw materials, leading to new anti-aging products that reduce fine lines and wrinkles, even skin tone, improve elasticity and restore a youthful glow. This, coupled with Baby Boomers' desire to stay young and their penchant for spending money to do so, has been a boon for a mature market.

According to Euromonitor International, Chicago, IL, global sales of anti-agers rose 10% in 2006. Although that's down slightly from the 12% increase posted in 2005, it is far ahead of the 3% growth posted by the overall cosmetics and toiletries market.

With products that claim to "harness the regenerative potential of your own facial stem cells" to at-home microdermabrasion kits, clearly this isn't your grandmother's skin care. Odds are Nana wouldn't feel comfortable with the prices either.

For example, Voss Laboratories' Amatokin—a new-to-the-U.S. "underground" anti-aging treatment offered only at Bloomingdale's—costs \$173 for a one-month supply, while Kaplan MD's new Perfecting Serum is sold in a 1.3oz. package for \$295. But even in mass, prices are climbing. A shopper is likely to shell out \$25 at the local supermarket for a 1.7oz. Olay Definity treatment.

"Rising prices at mass signal that consumers are ready and willing to pay for technologically advanced anti-aging products," says Anna Wang, a senior consultant with Kline and Company.

A Multi-Generational Market

L'Oréal is officially wooing-and-dining the 60-plus crowd, using Diane Keaton and Jane Fonda to sell Age Perfect Pro-Calcium (U.S.) and Age Re-Perfect Pro-Calcium (Europe) products, respectively. These days, however, marketers are heralding the anti-aging message to a wider array of customers.

"Not just baby boomers, but women of all ages are buying into anti-aging," says Wang. "There are products targeted to women in their 50s, 40s, 30s and even 20s. Younger women think about anti-aging in terms of preventative care and how to stop future lines and wrinkles from forming at all."

Avon has answered the call for a preemptive strike against aging with Anew Retroactive+ Youth Extending Cream SPF 25 Day and Retroactive+ Youth Extending Cream SPF 25 Night, a pair of moisturizers that work together to fight the first visible signs of aging and prevent future signs from appearing. According to Avon, clinical testing showed that when used in tandem, 97% saw an improvement in texture after just one week, and after four weeks, 90% showed an improvement in fine lines and uneven skin tone.

More anti-aging products are addressing specific skin conditions and application areas.

One skin condition that doesn't always improve with age is acne, as 20- to 50% of adult women and 25% of adult men suffer from acne at some point. Oftentimes, treating this condition can make the signs of aging more apparent. But it is a tradeoff made by many, based on the findings of a national survey of adult acne sufferers. According to Meridian Scientific, 60% of survey respondents said they are aware that their acne treatments can accentuate fine lines and facial wrinkles.

The company, founded by Dr. Nanette Liégeois, a Harvard-trained and board-certified dermatologist, contends the

Meridian Acne Therapy System is the answer. This three-part treatment contains the maximum amount of active ingredients allowed by the FDA, but is non-drying, heals skin and will not speed the aging process, according to the company.

“Combining both acne-fighting and anti-aging ingredients is both novel and effective. It’s a sensible solution to treating acne and reducing the signs of premature aging,” says David Avram, an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the State University of New York, Downstate Medical Center, and a member of Meridian’s scientific advisory board.

Pleased with the performance of Nivea Visage DNAge, its second anti-aging line along side Q10, Beiersdorf is rolling the brand out to new markets and expanding the line with DNAge Zone Action, which targets areas such as the forehead, which often show pronounced signs of aging.

Not (Just) About Face

While the face is the main focus for most anti-aging applications, it’s not the only game in town. Looking to take advantage of our culture’s fixation on youth, companies are playing the anti-aging card in other categories.

According to Information Resources, for the 52 weeks ending March 25, sales of anti-aging body care products in U.S. supermarkets, drugstores and mass merchants (excluding Wal-Mart) rose more than 6% to \$26.7 million.

Another sector garnering more attention is hair care, as companies launch products that address the changing needs of maturing hair. According to the Jan Marini Skin Research R&D team, individual strands become smaller in diameter, making hair more fragile, less reflective, drier and less dense. The San Jose, CA-based company has recently launched Age Intervention Hair Revitalizing Conditioner, which improves the appearance of aging and environmentally and chemically-damaged hair.

In Japan, Kao Corporation recently launched Segreta, a new hair care brand that addresses the changing hair care needs of women as they hit 40. The line, which works at the cellular level to reduce frizziness and improve shine, includes shampoo, conditioner, treatment and scalp essence. It is packaged in a smoky-glass colored bottle that resembles the contour of woman’s body dressed in an evening dress, according to Kao.

The Complete Package

Perhaps the most ambitious launch in anti-aging came (not without controversy) in February, when Unilever unveiled Dove Pro-Age. Rather than introduce anti-aging products incrementally, the company simultaneously launched 15 SKUs, including hand and body lotions, soap and body wash, facial care and hair care products formulated for 50-plus women.

For Pro-Age, Unilever turned again to packaging designers Raison Pure, which worked with copy and color to communicate Dove’s message to its target customers. Pro-Age uses the same packaging components as other Dove lines, which provides continuity and helps keep costs down for the global brand. However, Unilever opted for a rich burgundy color for Pro-Age line, which clearly makes the brand stand out on the shelf.

With new products such as Dove Pro-Age coming to market, venerable brands must fight hard to keep their own customers loyal and gain the attention of new consumers. A packaging facelift can work, suggest industry experts.

That’s just what Swedish direct seller Oriflame has done with its Royal Velvet anti-aging skin care line. In addition to adding two new products, the firm has revamped Royal Velvet’s packaging. The new look features aubergine (eggplant) and pearl white with gold decoration and a “comfortable shape” package, according to the company.

For Redpoint, a vibrant color (candy apple red) was an important design element for its anti-aging cosmetics sold on QVC, but protection of the line’s raw materials was absolutely critical.

“Because this line has so many advanced ingredients usually found in skincare, our packaging plays an important role in ensuring stability and performance,” says Therese Clark, director of marketing and product development. RedPoint’s Age Minimizer Line Filler—a foundation primer that contains hyaluronic acid, firming peptides and active botanicals—and DermaLift foundation are housed in airless dispenser systems to protect, stabilize and improve overall product efficacy.

“Oréal’s newest anti-aging treatment, Revitalift Double Eye Lift, also required specialized packaging to house the product’s dual formulas. The company selected a bottle with twin cylinders and separate pumps that hold and dispense Double Eye Lift’s under eye cream, which reduce puffiness and moisturizes, and its red gel,

which tightens and lifts the sag-prone skin on the upper eye.

Still, style remains a critical step in creating anti-aging packaging that communicates a brand's prestige to the consumer. Luxury brand LaPrairie has launched Cellular Radiance Concentrate Pure Gold, a highly concentrated serum in which tiny particles of 24-carat gold are suspended in a colloidal gel that permeates the skin, inhibiting the loss of collagen and elastine fibers and preserving elasticity. The product is fittingly packaged in a glittering gold glass flacon on a silver base.

What's Ahead

Anti-aging products continue to be a shot in the arm for personal care companies.

P&G recently reported that its beauty segment sales rose 8% in the first quarter of 2007, fueled double-digit gains in skin care led by Olay Regenerist and Olay Definity. Likewise, L'Oréal reported that L'Oréal Paris' double-digit growth in makeup and skin care in the first quarter stemmed from a successful launch of Age Re-Perfect Pro Calcium Night, among other products.

As boomers continue to fuel the anti-aging market's growth and company bottom lines, a younger crop of consumers consumed with fending off lines and wrinkles will be on the prowl for the next big thing. Yet companies need to keep claims and prices in check. Women will break the bank for a product that works, but if it doesn't, be ye warned.

"There may eventually be a backlash against the higher prices, especially if consumers feel they aren't receiving the promised benefits," warns Kline and Company's Anna Wang. "Marketers should be careful not to overstate the product's claims."