



# Fragrance is Beauty

The importance of a well-developed fragrance in a beauty product is not to be underestimated, as scent can help consumers connect to products—and brands—on a deeper, more emotional level.

BY LORI MILLER BURNS

## IMPACT POINTS

- The roles of fragrances in beauty products is multi-fold, helping entice in retail environments, engage during use, foster brand loyalty and more.
- Integrated, diversified consumer offerings with complementary products presented under a distinctive brand umbrella are a fact of life in beauty. That's why it is key to focus beyond individual products to the brand level, creating a signature style that can be adapted for all products and variants under the brand profile.

**O**ur sense of smell is one of our strongest senses, capable of discerning thousands of different olfactory notes across multiple scent categories. That's impressive. But where our olfactory sense really shows its power is detecting tiny amounts of scent—in dilutions of less than one part in several billion, according to researchers.

For beauty and cosmetic designers using fragrance at lower use levels in products such as blush, foundation and lipstick, that's an important factor. But for all other beauty products, our sense of smell is more than just a factor: it's the direct route to our emotions. Put simply, our sense of smell is how we fall in love with products. Nothing connects faster to our feelings than fragrance, and nothing generates a greater emotional response. Managing beauty brands today means being smart about how fragrance works.

And while that's something you'd expect a perfumer to say, it's not industry professionals who are driving the passion for fragrance—it's consumers. Never in history have consumers been more fragrance savvy (they've been "trained" by marketers and retailers); never have

expectations been greater for beautiful fragrances in every brand; and never has more attention been paid to sensory messaging by companies such as Procter & Gamble, Unilever and L'Oréal.

Today, if a scent does not connect with consumers, or fails to motivate and inspire, the product and the brand likely will not survive. Making a better future happen means understanding the role of fragrance in product design and how fragrance planning should be undertaken.

## Beauty Is Fragrance

The best way to think about fragrance is first to think of scent as a beauty brand's primary consumer connection. Before we buy a fragranced product, we always smell the scent. If we don't like what we smell, everything stops there. That's how critical a winning fragrance is for marketers and consumers.

Second, for many—if not most—beauty products, a beautiful scent is a huge part of the consumer's user experience. As we wash, shower, shave or care for our skin and hair, we experience a fragrance that we decided to make part of our lives. It's a very

intimate, emotional relationship. And that's the heart of brand loyalty.

Third, while we may not realize it, a creative perfumer has already made sure the fragrance we love reinforces the brand's image and identity, promotes product functionality and performance promises, and is perfectly aligned with everything about the brand, including its heritage, story and place in the world. More than just a scent, fragrance is a multi-role player in the reality of beauty brands and their relationships with consumers.

## Creating a Winning Franchise Fragrance

Today, integrated, diversified consumer offerings with complementary products presented under a distinctive brand umbrella are a fact of life in beauty and personal care. That's why smart fragrance designers focus not only on individual products but also at the brand level, creating a signature style that can be adapted for all products and variants under the brand profile.

The original signature fragrance will have a clearly defined identity, carefully selected notes and accords, and a style that not only fits the brand's identity and competitive positioning but also enhances the brand's role in the consumer's life.

Next, the fragrance signature will be modified to fit individual products, formats and applications—extending the desired emotional experience from the body wash, for example, to the facial scrub, hand and body lotion, shampoo and conditioner, and face lotion, linking the fragrance to the intimacy and functionality of each product.

Developing signature concepts, perfumers study consumers' tastes and preferences, conceptualize user experiences, and draw on different fragrance notes to make the experiences real and memorable. The outcome is a compelling fragrance design that unifies the lineup, creates and reinforces brand identity, and gives the consumer multiple reasons to say yes.

A successful franchise fragrance is a series of complementary and supportive scents sharing a singular identity, each totally aligned with the product and brand. And because this new fragrance drives purchasing decisions across the business, it's more than just a beautiful olfactory event. It's a brand asset that has enormous value.

## KEY FRAGRANCE TRENDS



Trend analysis identifies fragrance notes that are creating news, stimulating the development of fine fragrances and proving their power to connect to consumers. These fragrances have long, productive life cycles and work across multiple categories. Arylessence perfumers and marketing analysts have identified major trend notes guiding fragrance development well into 2015 and beyond:

- **Blanc**—Exceptionally fresh and invigoratingly clean, sparkling scents with breezy marine ozones and white florals such as jasmine, lily of the valley and magnolia.
- **Noir**—Deeply emotional, passionate, sensual notes of amber, patchouli and soft musks with precious woods and resins; probably one of the fastest growing, most influential fragrance styles in 30 years.
- **Simple Florals**—The power and clarity of single floral notes (rather than romantic bouquets) imparting youthful, contemporary personalities with violet, rose and other florals balanced by sandalwoods and musks.
- **Tropical Fruits**—Succulent tropical notes of coconut, mango and pear accompanied by powerful single-note florals like orange blossom for scents that are youthful and exotic.
- **Verdant**—A surprisingly sensual green theme that brings together deeply verdant, lush, aromatic notes of galbanum, privet and green tea with fresh-cut grasses, herbals and aquatics.
- **Red Berries**—Just-picked strawberries, raspberries and wineberries combined with cassis, red tea and elderberry, as well as honey and amber, for scents that are rich, beautiful and romantic.
- **New Spice**—Peppercorn, cardamom and anise add depth and complexity to notes of jasmine and calla lily, along with touches of amber and musk, for scents that are startlingly simple yet still very distinctive.
- **Dark Fruits**—Rich, understated warmth and intoxicating depth define the power of dark fruits like plum, blackberry, blackcurrant, cabernet and sloe berries to blend with heady florals and dark oriental notes for bold, enticing scents.
- **Gourmand**—Honey, vanilla-infused sugarcane and rich coconut milk add creaminess to classic florals for scents that are smooth, alluring, rich, indulgent and luxurious.

## HAIR CARE AND FRAGRANCE



An important product category for fragrance performance, hair care brands need winning fragrances that reflect the brand's positioning and reinforce performance promises. Apple continues to be a predominant note in today's hair care brands, thanks to its clean sensory messaging. Moving beyond apple, more contemporary scents come from other fruit notes, especially from the berry and citrus families, as well as fruity florals, such as rose plum and blackberry violet. All fragrance styles are carefully selected to reinforce product performance:

- **Deep cleansing and clarifying shampoos**—Typically, these feature more herbal and aromatic fragrances with clarifying ingredients such as tea tree, clary sage and mint supporting the promise of more intensive cleaning of the scalp and removal of styling build-up on the hair.
- **Professional styling products**—Positioned for a prestige market, these products typically work with fragrance notes reflecting classic fine fragrance styles and contemporary, sophisticated blends.
- **Thickening shampoos and shampoos for dry hair**—Fragrances for these products often work to impart rich, creamy notes of honey or coconut balanced with vanilla, orange flower, jasmine or even gentle fruits, like apricot. Soft florals like orchid, violet and modern rose also complement softening and enriching ingredients for dry hair.
- **Shampoos for oily hair types**—These products work well with bright, clean, fresh notes, including sparkling citrus, such as mandarin or grapefruit, paired with herbal notes of white tea or mint.

## Building Competitiveness in Private Label Brands

In multiple retail categories, including beauty, private label is changing. That's because the opportunity today isn't to compete on price, with minimal product design and appealing only to the low end of the market. The real opportunity—which offers significant opportunities for margins and profits—is to swim in the mainstream, compete aggressively against national brands and build destination brands that bring shoppers into the store. Consumers can then bond strongly to fragrance experiences they love and share that love with friends. This creates lifetime loyalty, repeat purchase and consumer buzz. The opportunity is less challenging than it seems; what it takes is a commitment to intelligent planning, competitive design factors and, above all, winning fragrances.

Again, the driver here is the consumer. Today's consumers are very open and receptive to private label brands, but they also want everything they get a brand

products in private label offerings and see no reason to compromise or expect less. The success of major destination store brands in retailers like Walmart, Walgreens and Target proves the point. Consumers respond enthusiastically to the right technologies, the right ingredients, multiple performance promises, earth-friendly packaging and fragrances that connect instantly in the store, when the product is first sensed by the consumer, and then create beautiful, fragrant user experiences at home.

In fact, fragrance development is probably the most cost-effective way to enhance the performance profile of a private label brand. Smart perfumers approach private label opportunities the same way they do for brand leaders, creating new fragrance profiles that have the power to compete and win. Sensitive to the economics of marketing, perfumers also manage fragrance formulas to deliver the right fragrance effect at the right strength at the right cost.

Rethinking private label strategies and fragrances can be a life-changing event for a beauty brand. Major retailers

have already learned the lessons: many now drive decision making by advising manufacturers on exactly what they want to achieve—and exactly what they need on their shelves—in order to compete successfully for the shopper's loyalty and enhance corporate performance in categories that matter. ■ GCI



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