Female Beauty and Personal Care Consumer (The) - UK - August 2010

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What is this report about?

In a beauty and personal care market already worth approaching £14 billion (including products and services such as hairdressing, see Mintel report British Lifestyles, August 2010), there is still plenty of scope for innovation and further growth. Women have a good understanding of basic skin types and are well practised in identifying their own flaws, large and small. Despite a good degree of scepticism, there is also an enduring optimism that drives take-up of new products. Consumers are not realistically hoping for perfection – rather wanting improved results.

What have we found out?

- Research for this report finds there is a substantial credibility gap in the beauty industry, with as many as half of women having been disappointed in a product's performance although four in ten may still buy despite not being wholly convinced by a product's claim. Older women are most likely to find product claims less credible.
- Around a third of women prefer the natural route to improving their appearance. They keep their usage of beauty products to a minimum and prefer to eat healthily, stay out of the sun and exercise more. On average these women are older, but it includes younger women. There is a growing emphasis on healthy lifestyles as well as on organics, avoidance of chemicals and purity in ingredients and beauty products are part of that broader trend.
- Almost nine in ten women have one or more worries over their general appearance and their skin in particular. The most common concerns are grey hair, being overweight, cellulite, stretch marks, crows feet or fine lines, dry skin and spots/ blemishes. This offers potential for every product sector.
- ABC1 25-44-year-old full-time working women are a key target group as they are most likely to continue trying out new products even if they are not wholly convinced by the product claims. Across haircare, skincare and make-up, the most believable claim overall is UV protection.
- Shampoo and conditioner have the lowest brand loyalty, and face and eye make-up the highest but overall, price is a deciding factor for most product sectors. The exceptions are anti-ageing, anti-cellulite and facial skincare products, which are primarily driven by perceived performance.
- Half of women buy their beauty and personal care products off the shelf - perhaps unsurprising as most mass-market products are sold that way, but perhaps also due to a reluctance to engage with beauty counter staff, since three in ten women find shopping at the beauty counter intimidating. This means lost opportunities to help women better understand new product innovations and benefits.