

Notes From Asia

Empatech Beauty Is Where Holistic Meets Cosmetic



Michelle Yeomans, Freelance Journalist 12.02.19

As Asian consumers increasingly seek out cosmetics that will complement their holistic lifestyle, beauty products developed with the “empatech” concept in mind are in good stead to tap into this demand. Michael Nolte, creative director at trends agency Beautystreams, informed Happi that efficacious products offering holistic benefits hold the greatest potential. Holistic living is deeply ingrained in Asian culture and consumers living in polluted mega-cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Seoul, Jakarta and Bangkok are very aware of the negative effects of pollution. According to Nolte, empatech resonates most with these consumers, particularly those in their 40s, who value natural and clean formulations.

“Her approach to beauty is holistic, not simply cosmetic. She believes that fitness, supplements and food contribute just as much to her beauty as makeup and skin care,” Nolte told this publication.

Age-Appropriate Beauty

According to the trends specialist, the goal for this demographic is to be the “best version” of themselves—seeking to enhance their looks rather than striving to banish the signs of aging.

“It’s about you, but better. It’s not about looking 20 when you are 45. The aim is to look healthy and glowing, the best version of yourself,” he informed Happi.

Yet, this doesn’t seem to rule out semi-invasive inventions such as fillers or Botox.

“They are open to slightly cheating with their natural beauty routine by way of semi-invasive interventions,” he added.

Nolte explains that these treatments aren’t used with the intention to hide the Empatech consumer’s identity but are more about emphasizing her natural beauty and character.

Predominantly Natural

According to this marketing trends expert, to reach these consumers and adequately communicate this concept, the beauty industry would be best to employ holistic focused content marketing.

“As beauty products are part of our lifestyle, they should be marketed in the context of a holistic lifestyle. Therefore, online platforms and also lifestyle concept stores are good channels to reach the typical Empatech consumer,” he advised.

In addition, Nolte reported transparent communication to be another key aspect here as this type of consumer will always keep an eye out for the latest no-go ingredients and potentially harmful products.

Thus, short ingredient lists that are predominantly natural are paramount.

“This doesn’t mean that chemicals can’t ever be used, but rather that non-natural ingredients must have a specific function and be considered safe,” he explained.

Cosmetics giants in the region are well versed in marketing their products to this demographic. Luxury beauty brand Sulwhasoo, owned by Amorepacific, incorporates medicinal herbs like ginseng into its skin care applications and touts its products as “inspired by the theory of yin and yang, rooted in Asian tradition and with the philosophy of harmony and balance in nature.”

For example, according to Amorepacific, more than 50 years ago, the company’s founder Suh Sung-whan asked, “If ginseng is good for the body when eaten, wouldn’t it have an equally positive effect on the skin?”

Instant Results, Long-Term Benefits

The holistic-focused consumer is also seeking products that offer long-term benefits but also instant results.

“They do not want to compromise the efficacy of premium quality products,” said Nolte and in this space, the beauty sector’s investment in product development and consumer engagement will be key.

Taking all this into account, it’s not surprising that hybrid products embracing both makeup functions and skin care benefits are on the rise.

Standout products in this category include Flower Beauty Supernova Celestial Skin Elixir, a one-step primer with skin and makeup benefits, and Barepro Longwear Lipstick that provides long-lasting color, environmental protection and a long-term plumping effect.

“B-Selfie’s Volume Lip Filler is a lip plumper with micro-needles that are made of pure hyaluronic acid and epidermal growth factor. The plumping effect is visible after just two hours,” Nolte reported.

Within its forecasts, Beautystreams notes emerging concepts to be the likes of a flourish eyeliner that offers instant color and features firming skin benefits and enhances lash growth. Other products include a lip care applicator that is designed to address aging issues such as wrinkled lips.

An Emphasis on Mental Health

Mental well-being is increasingly important and will also influence future technological developments in the sector. Some suggest that skin conditions like vitiligo and neurodermitis, for example, are increasingly linked to stress or emotion in general, and consumers are becoming aware that the mind has a key role to play in beauty, too.

According to Nolte, one-third of beauty and global care products launched in 2018 offered de-stressing and relaxation benefits. This, he said, “indicates that the holistic approach embedded in Asian cultures is now expanding from wellness and food to incorporate mental health.”

Coupled with this, another emerging beauty trend is “good vibrations,” according to Beautystreams. It involves the exploration of wave therapies like ultra-sound treatments, magnetic waves, and electrostimulation that, for example, activate formulations.

“The idea is to use wave-emitting devices to enhance the efficiency of clean formulation,” he concluded. “To our knowledge, this trend has not been widely developed, but we foresee it as booming in the years to come.”

Michelle Yeomans

Freelance Journalist

Email: Michelle.yeomans@gmail.com

Michelle Yeomans is an award winning multimedia journalist. She has been reporting on cosmetics industry movements in EMEA, US and Asia for five years and has won an award for her coverage of the complexities of operating in the Middle East. Michelle’s passion lies in tracking the beauty culture and trends of the Asia Pacific region. Ever the AV enthusiast, she also relishes the opportunity to create engaging video and podcast content for the B2B industry.
