

Natural Ingredients: The New Personal Care Products Marketing Mantra

Contributed by Linda Williams
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MARKETERS ARE SEARCHING for the next "hot" ingredient that will make their products superior, and more and more of them are turning to nature to find it.

According to the "U.S. Market for Natural Personal Care Products" report by Packaged Facts, a publishing division of MarketResearch.com, the overall natural grooming market is expected to reach \$5.9 billion at retail by 2008. This record level is expected to be achieved by gains of approximately 89% during the 2003-2008 period.

"Natural ingredients are growing at almost 8% per year, while natural products themselves are seeing growth at double-digit rates," confirmed Darrin C. Duber-Smith, president of Green Marketing Inc., Nederland, CO.

"Certainly natural ingredients are growing much faster than ingredients that are synthetically derived and/or processed," commented Mr. Duber-Smith. "Since demand for ingredients is derived from the end-user, one need look at the growing consumer segment for natural products to project that this rate of growth for ingredients will not slow. Not only is the consumer demand in the natural channels driving growth, but also the inclusion of natural ingredients in more mainstream brands."

Coty Inc. has introduced Organics, a new natural products collection from The Healing Garden. According to experts interviewed by Happi, launching an organic line for mass market shoppers is a clear indication of what the future holds in terms of consumer demand for natural products.

"Demand has increased dramatically for organic certified botanical extracts, and I believe we are just seeing the beginning of serious interest on the part of manufacturers of personal care products for the mass and specialty markets," commented Edward Matson, vice president, sales and marketing, Carrubba Inc. "I believe the launch of Coty's Healing Garden Organics line will further stimulate demand for organic certified ingredients."

When it comes to any ingredient--whether natural or not--the dominant trend is toward anti-aging, pointed out Mr. Duber-Smith.

"Baby boomers refuse to age and younger generations use these products to remain looking and feeling young," he commented. "Also, natural products positioned toward men are slow to appear on the shelves. This is perhaps the greatest opportunity for marketers in the natural personal care area due to the acceptance of these products in the mainstream."

"Overall, consumers who fit into the baby boomer category are quite sophisticated and selective," commented Steve Pickman, vice president of communications for MGP Ingredients. "Health and wellness, as well as a desire to maintain a younger look longer, are factors which play into their purchasing decisions. 'Natural' is universally associated with the terms safe, healthy and good. Therefore, personal care products labeled as natural or containing natural ingredients are viewed as being more beneficial, both functionally and in the sense of being nourishing to the hair and skin."

As is always the case for suppliers, the goal is to find available new sources that are effective, but not yet discovered. Says Mr. Duber-Smith: "There are countless natural ingredients indicated for a variety of conditions. Indeed, there is a natural ingredient substitute for every single synthetic on the market. Prices are falling as demand rises and producers become more efficient in their manufacturing processes."

Krismark recently introduced organic red palm oil into its product line with the launch in January this year of the Krismark brand of body care products with palm oil and shea butter. The red palm oil contains beta carotene, the highest found in any vegetable oil. It also has vitamins E, K and tocotrienols, which is only found in red palm oil.

Krismark Harmattan has carefully blended both oils in this brand for optimum benefit to the skin. It is an excellent product for the entire family including children of all ages. There is no petrolatum or mineral oil which makes it ideal for healing skin problems without irritation. On application, the skin regains its elasticity and gives it a supple youthful glow.

As a pioneer in introducing rich natural products to the industry, Krismark has been at the forefront of this revolution, incorporating Red Palm Oil into skin creams.

Many experts were quick to point out that today's consumer is quite savvy when it comes to purchasing products. More and more marketers are seeking to develop products that are predominantly natural, instead of conventional products with promotional amounts of natural ingredients for label claim purposes.

Although many marketers in the natural personal products category realize this, mainstream marketers must embrace this reality as well, Mr. Duber-Smith pointed out.

"As large marketers with vast distribution begin to offer products that are truly natural, they will begin to attract and expand a loyal customer base," commented Mr. Duber-Smith. "Yet, simply sprinkling a few botanicals in a largely synthetic formula do not constitute a natural product. They are not fooling many people."

In the view of Deforestation Watch, the demand in natural products has become a race not just for chemical suppliers but also for personal care product manufacturers. Even though natural products have been on the market for years, natural products have become much more commonplace and consumers are responding with the demand for more.

Educated consumers are taking a more active role in their choice of personal care products, and many prefer to use natural products that offer biologically active components with clinically proven health benefits and safety profiles as opposed to the sometimes harsh synthetic ingredients used in the past. Though this trend has been in place for a long time, natural products have become much more commonplace, and consumers are realizing the value that natural and effective products--even those used externally--have on one's overall health. This trend has resulted in more science-based discovery and clinical studies sponsored both by ingredient suppliers and consumer product manufacturers.

In this respect, palm oil offers tremendous scope for personal care product manufacturers on account of its inherent anti-ageing properties because of its rich content of anti-oxidants such as beta carotenes, Co Q10 and that rare form of Vitamin E, toco-trienols. THE END.