



## You Are What You Eat: Nutricosmetics

by Ed Schack

Today's consumers are taking the adage "we are what we eat" to heart when it comes to what they put in or on their bodies, and that includes makeup and personal care products. They are getting smarter about decisions that impact how they feel both physically and emotionally, especially given the extensive and growing access to information about the adverse effects specific ingredients or products can have on their bodies.

This new beauty-from-within perspective, which directly impacts their physical appearance and level of well-being, partially comes from being savvy about what goes on in the food industry. Consumers have become more acutely aware of how chemicals in the food supply have led to a number of health issues, so they are now demanding more natural food and beverage choices that are free of preservatives, hormones, chemical additives and antibiotics. Hence, the prevailing notion of "garbage in, garbage out" seems to be driving significant changes in what grocery products consumers are purchasing. This economic message from consumers has, in turn, caused many food producers to scramble and develop more natural ways to process and manufacture their consumable products to regain and maintain their customer base.

Such consumer concerns have extended beyond what they feed their bodies for nourishment; they also include topical and cosmetic products used for personal care and beauty needs. As it stands, the consumer is driving one of the most prolific trends to hit the beauty industry in recent years—the shift away from synthetic materials such as petrochemicals, which are now frowned upon, to natural and organic alternatives.

This burgeoning preference toward natural self-care products also stems from growing concerns about the state of the environment. Consumers are increasingly considering the impact their decisions and activities have on the planet and the climate. What they add to the environment or take away from it is now under close scrutiny.

According to Datamonitor, 28 percent of consumers currently deliberately avoid certain cosmetics or toiletries because of fears over certain ingredients, and 39 percent are somewhat or extremely concerned about parabens or petrochemicals used in beauty product formulations. In addition, according to Grail Research, 93 percent of consumers feel a company being green is important to their purchase decision, with 80 percent of consumers citing "natural" as the most important green attribute for cosmetic/toiletry products.

With this realization comes a greater level of conscientious about natural alternatives to traditional self-care approaches. With so many choices available in today's competitive beauty and personal care industry, consumers can take a socially conscious stand and send a message to

manufacturers with their pocketbooks by being highly selective and strategic with their spending. Brands now trending upward at an amazingly fast pace are those that offer natural and organic beauty products and lines.

Despite the escalating demand for natural products, as an industry, there is much more to be done to adequately meet consumers' needs. Currently, there is rampant inconsistency in how natural personal care and beauty products are delivered. For instance, there are those products with a premium price point that are still considered too expensive over what the mainstream consumer can comfortably pay—even with a higher perceived value due to its positioning in the natural category. A primary goal for the industry is to work in tandem to develop and market a greater array of price-competitive and value-added products for various consumer demographics. Shopping for natural goods should not be relegated to the elite.

Overall, the industry outlook is exceedingly good. The trend towards natural ingredients and organic products continues to strengthen. It's entirely expected for a growing number of skin care and makeup companies to respond to this natural trend at multiple price tiers. Indeed, manufacturers are working toward the Holy Grail of 100-percent natural or organic finished products.

The industry overall is on the cusp of breaking into the use of natural preservatives, natural anti-microbials and natural emulsifiers that will replace conventional synthetic ingredients. Product development teams and research groups are scouring their sources looking for such elusive pieces to the puzzle. With the introduction and growth of these natural, functional products, consumers will get even more excited and feel more empowered. This will, in turn, encourage manufacturers to offer more natural and organic products, enhance their existing natural products, and provide a larger value-based price-point so these items are accessible to more people who seek to spend their money on goods that makes them feel good and look even better.

*Edward Schack owns and operates EES Cosmetic Solutions, a Northeastern, independently owned manufacturer's representative and distributor to the cosmetic and personal care industries with several nationally known brand names as clients and principals. Visit Ed at [EESCosmetic.com](http://EESCosmetic.com).*