

## BEAUTY

### Time to target the over-45s

IMOGEN MATTHEWS, WGSN 20.11.08

**As attitudes to ageing change, the beauty needs of today's older woman has evolved. Her lifestyle, aspirations and beauty choices have much in common with 25-year-olds. But has the beauty industry kept abreast of the potential of this growth market?**

Some critics maintain that beauty brands are too fixated on the young, arguably a more vibrant and dynamic demographic than women heading towards old age.

Perhaps it's time for the industry to recognise that **45-plus women have the money and desire to spend out on products that keep them looking young**. And perhaps that time is right for another reason. The economic downturn is causing both consumers and companies to reassess where they are heading.

"Women over 45 are thinking they won't be able to retire as early as they thought, so **they will need to invest in themselves** to look young or remain an active player in the workplace," maintains US marketing consultancy Fletcher Knight partner Carol Davies.



Felicity Huffman



Helen Mirren



Michelle Obama

Anti-ageing skincare is an obvious category for the mature woman and there has been plenty of new brand activity aimed at this demographic. "Women don't want to be singled out as they grow older. **They want to blend in,**" argues Davies, who believes that brands that target through empathy will be more successful. "Physical age is different to a woman's psychological age. Many 50-year-olds feel emotionally closer to 35."

But this is not always so easy to achieve. Too many anti-ageing brands have used impossibly young models in advertising, which **potentially alienate the older audience** they are targeting. One way skincare companies tap into the older demographic is to use celebrities whose age everyone knows or which is spelt out in the ad. "L'Oreal does a good job using celebrities," maintains Davies. "People know **Andie McDowell** and **Diane Keaton** are over 45, but they have a kind of agelessness."



#### Key points

- Women over 45 increasingly recognise a need to invest in themselves
- Younger models can alienate their audience
- Cosmetics companies are increasingly focusing attentions on developing age-specific products for the sector
- Beauty categories such as hair products and perfume are largely uncharted territory
- This age group is not necessarily as brand loyal as older baby boomers

Nivea Visage advertising



Olay Definity

She adds: "**The ideal goal is to make it hard to discern the age of a model.**" "Olay does that. The women it uses are not like real women. They look iconic and appear neither young nor old."

Olay's main focus is not on the woman in the ad, but on product function. For example, **Olay Definity** homes in on discolouration, dullness, brown spots and wrinkles, the kind of skincare issues older women are more likely to encounter.

**Nivea Visage's** latest anti-ageing treatment, **Expert Lift**, also uses a model of an indeterminate age, although the target audience is women aged 50-65. Expert Lift is formulated with a patent pending system called Bioxilift, shown to increase the connective activity of collagen during in vitro testing, thereby creating a tightening effect on the skin.

In 2005, **Lancome was one of the first premium brands to launch a skincare line specifically for women in their 60s**, called **Platinéum**. The formula took 10 years of research and contains a patented ingredient called Hydroxy {a}-Calcium™. Lancome's contention is that at the age of 60, the reduction of calcium causes skin to become weaker, more fragile and slackened. The Platinéum range has since been extended with a dual action eye and lip contour cream, which targets these sensitive areas more prone to wrinkles.

Boots has been involved in a long-term skincare research project to determine how women's skincare needs change as they age. All aspects of women's skin, how it ages and how the seasons affects skin appearance were measured. The most significant changes were wrinkling, age spots and discolouration.

"We have followed a group of women of a broad spread of ages for several years now," states Boots skincare scientific advisor, Stewart Long. "**Knowing how the skin responds** has allowed us to design better products."

### Opportunities in other beauty categories

While older women's needs are being largely met in skincare, this is not happening so much in other areas. "There is not much new product development targeting older women in make-up," points out Davies. "This may be an opportunity."



Catherine Deneuve and Diana Ross for MAC

MAC has been one of the few make-up brands to use older women as ambassadors. French actress Catherine Deneuve and US singer Diana Ross have both starred in **MAC's Beauty Icon** series.

Almost by default, **premium make-up brands**, including Chanel, Lancôme and Estée Lauder, have built **a strong following amongst older women**. "These brands may not have necessarily started as the brands for older women, but find themselves with an older following," affirms Euromonitor analyst, Oru Mohiuddin. "They have thus evolved accordingly to prevent the loss of a significant consumer base."

Currently, **there are few haircare lines designed with older women in mind**. Haircare concerns include damage caused by continual colouring. Hair in older people may also become coarser when it turns grey.



Estée Lauder



Ageless Fantasy by Harvey Prince

Fragrance is not an obvious area for a brand to single out the older consumer, but the recent launch of **Ageless Fantasy Harvey Prince** claims to be the first anti-ageing scent **designed to make women smell younger**. The scent was created by a New York-based company whose research suggested that grapefruit and apple-based scents are associated with a younger age group and can negate odours associated with older age groups.

### Not stuck in their ways

The new breed of mature woman is **not necessarily as brand loyal as the older baby boomers who are happy to stick with what they know**. Beauty brands should recognise that these women want to appear young and are motivated to try new products.

"This group of consumers is becoming more beauty conscious and greatly values product efficacy, particularly when it comes to anti-ageing products," says Mohiuddin. She recommends that brands use effective advertisements describing the benefits of the product and use greater promotional activity, some of which should be on-line. "**Web-based interaction** with consumers will help to create an emotional bond with brands, as exemplified by the olayforyou.com site"

More beauty brands need to realise age is not a barrier and start to speak to older women in ways that are more relevant.