

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Mobile is like having a makeup artist in your pocket: Este Lauder exec

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Photo courtesy of Este Lauder

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NEW YORK After bringing the beauty counter experience online, Este Lauder Companies is turning its technology focus toward incorporating digital into its offline channels.

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According to an executive from the brand speaking at Luxury Interactive 2016 on Oct. 17, innovation has been part of the Este Lauder brand since its namesake founder began mixing cosmetics and fragrances in her kitchen in 1946. This "test and try culture" is centered on the user experience above all else.

"We might talk about all of our new technology, and the things that we use to get our pilots done, but really it all comes back to what are the experiences we are giving consumers?" said Ophelia Ceradini, vice president of digital innovation and technology group at Este Lauder. "We're just using technologies to enhance the experience."

In the DNA

According to Ms. Ceradini, Ms. Lauder was the first to create a high-touch service in-store, moving out from behind the counter to interact with clients.

Extending that heritage into the 21st century, Este Lauder Cos. is testing a number of solutions to facilitate the beauty shopping experience. A proof of concept becomes a prototype, which is then translated into a pilot program.

Contrary to the perfectionist nature of the Este Lauder brands, the pilot is carried out with the most basic usable form of the completed product, since adding the finishing touches is time consuming.

Aware of the fact that younger consumers are switching from email to other forms of communication such as text message, Este Lauder rolled out a text to buy pilot.



Image courtesy of Este Lauder

For consumers that already have a profile on a brand's ecommerce site, the beauty label can send a text suggesting a product to buy and the recipient can buy simply by texting a response. The consumer's identity is confirmed via their email address, and their order is placed.

Looking to connect the beauty counter with online channels, Este Lauder prototyped a tool for makeup artists to use during the consultation process. Typically as they are applying products to a client, artists will write down the names and shades used.

The face chart interface created that recently launched as a pilot at stores in the United Kingdom lets the consumer upload the diagram to her account to be accessed later on mobile or desktop.

Along with giving the consumers the ability to share their look on social media, the platform lets a makeup artist continue the conversation with the client.

When launching Flirt Flashes, false eyelashes that come with an applicator that resembles a tape gun, Este Lauder prevented any confusion about the use of the product with smart packaging. Simply tapping an Android phone against the side of the package brings up how-to content.



Flirt Flashes

The factors that determine whether a particular technology goes beyond the pilot vary depending on the product. For instance, success for text to buy relies on conversions, while the face chart needed to be something that makeup

artists wanted to use.

Data applications

Collecting data for marketing purposes is becoming the way of the future, but 21 percent of brands surveyed do not collect any analytics, according to a new report from Forbes Insights.

Data-driven marketing is when brands use data to reach marketing goals and measure results. Data has always been about who bought something, where they acquired it, when they purchased it and what the item was, but with increases in data consumption, brands can now look into why a consumer bought it and adjust their marketing strategies toward this information ([see story](#)).

One brand leveraging data is Sephora, which retails a number of Este Lauder brands.

A Sephora executive at eTail West 2016 discussed the beauty brand's focus on collecting individual customer data in addition to data gleaned from its loyalty program as it ramps up to drive sales among frequent and first-time customers.

During the kick-off session, "Retail's Future Vision: Using Data To Innovate The Customer Experience (It's All About Mobile, Social And In-Store)," the executive revealed Sephora's use of data collected from its several loyalty levels, and also highlighted the beauty giant's dedication to connected innovation. All of its digital offerings, including the new Virtual Artist mobile application, contain a heavy commerce angle, enabling long-time fans and first-time customers to buy featured products with just a few taps ([see story](#)).

"We truly believe that it's not about the masses of data, but it's just how you take the data that you need and use it," Ms. Ceradini said.