

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Lancôme puts a face to foundation with accomplished ambassadors

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Image courtesy of Lancôme

By SARAH JONES

Beauty marketer Lancôme U.K. is empowering women from the base up through a campaign that celebrates diversity.

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To launch its Teint Idole Ultra Wear foundation in the United Kingdom, the brand matched each of the 40 shades available to 40 real women, who each share their stories of "My Shade. My Power." This wide pool of ambassadors backs up Lancôme's claims of a perfect match, highlighting the range in a memorable, personal way.

"The conversation around beauty has been changing for a long time," said Jasmine Bina, president of [Concept Bureau](#), Santa Monica, CA. "Bundle in the fact that women's rights and diversity are top-top-mind for the public right now, and a campaign like this makes sense."

Ms. Bina is not affiliated with [Lancôme](#), but agreed to comment as an industry

expert. **Lancôme** was reached for comment.

Making a match

Lancôme has seen a growing interest in foundation, as consumers seek flawless complexions for selfies. This face makeup has overtaken mascara as the number one product U.K. and Ireland residents will not leave the house without.

Finding a foundation shade that perfectly blends into a consumer's natural skin tone can be a challenge, however, especially for women with darker coloring. L'Oreal Group chemist Balanda Atis discovered an ultramarine blue pigment, helping to create the deeper tones in the line, which has a formula that stems from Teint Idole Ultra 24h.

In a campaign film, Lancôme introduces the women chosen to represent its latest foundation. Along with behind-the-scenes shots of hair and makeup, the women speak directly at the camera, sharing their names, their power and their shade number.

The women chosen work in fields as diverse as science, law, literature, education, the arts and fashion. A number are entrepreneurs who have created their own paths.

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/-pcHhJSgbhE>

Lancôme / My Shade, My Power Campaign Film

Lancôme also cast L'Oreal's managing director of luxury for the U.K.

On a campaign page of Lancôme's U.K. site, each of the women is profiled in text. Three of these stories are told in more depth in short films.

Director Gurinder Chadra talks about the rarity of seeing Indian actors on television during her childhood, which inspired her film career, as she looked to tell stories of people like her.

Olympic gold medal cyclist Laura Kenny talks about overcoming asthma to reach her goal of being an athlete. The self-professed girly girl also talks about her love of wearing makeup, even to work out.

Ballroom dancer Oti Mabuse chose to follow her heart to a career in dance, which included a move from South Africa to Germany with just a suitcase.



Unretouched photo of Oti Mabuse from Lancôme's campaign

After listening to other women's stories of power, consumers are invited to find their own shade via an interactive tool.

This asks consumers to increasingly narrow their complexion down by comparing it with beauty advisors. The foundations include variations in undertone, allowing for a more exact match.

Additional guided selling includes a video with recently named ambassador Taylor Hill. The American model tells how she gets red carpet ready, demonstrating her application process.

Beauty influencers Estee Lalone, Patricia Bright and Dina Tokio also share their going out makeup tips in a separate film.

"It could be very effective if Lancôme promotes the concept correctly," Ms. Bina said. "There are two implied brand promises here - 'we are inclusive and recognize all forms of beauty' and 'you can find your true self in our brand.'"

"The former is a great marketing angle and the low hanging fruit most brands will focus on, but the latter is what converts consumers and much harder to convey," she said.

Custom cosmetics

As part of its efforts to customize the beauty experience on an individual level, Lancôme recently expanded its bespoke skin tone matching service within the United States.

The brand's Le Teint Particulier Custom Made Makeup uses digital readings of a client's face to create a specially blended foundation at the counter. First launched exclusively at Nordstrom locations in Seattle and Torrance, CA, the consultation is being extended to additional Nordstrom stores in markets such as Chicago, Washington and Florida ([see](#)

story).

"We work to scientifically understand the colors that make up the skin and how to translate that into products that are consumer-friendly, and to specific formulations that address needs around the world," said Balanda Atis, L'Oréal Group chemist. "We adapt formulations for different climate zones..."

"We're at the forefront of the conversation and we're focused on customizing, personalizing and thinking about every single woman individually."

Taking beauty beyond skin deep, a number of brands have chosen to focus primarily on the inside for uplifting efforts.

Fellow L'Oreal Group label Giorgio Armani Beauty built on its inspirational efforts surrounding its Sì fragrance by opening a dialogue with women around the world, giving a platform to discuss inner strength.

The Sì Women's Circle was inaugurated with the stories of five real women who all found the courage to say yes to a challenge in their own lives. Keeping consistency with previous efforts around Sì, actress Cate Blanchett remains an ambassador for the campaign, urging women to take the plunge ([see story](#)).

"[Lancôme's campaign is] on point, but it's not exactly radical," Ms. Bina said. "Like so many other beauty and fashion efforts, it echoes Dove's campaign for Real Beauty from 2004, and we're in a place now where celebrating 'true beauty' is shifting from a topline selling point to a baseline expectation for female consumers.

"Lancôme is a more traditional brand reaching an older audience so this may be the right time for them to embrace a message like this, but it's certainly not one that people haven't been hearing for a long time," she said. "The idea of highlighting non-celebrity female heroes is great, but they'll need to do a lot more to make women align their beauty values with this new brand perspective."

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