

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Shiseido collaborates with Japanese high schoolers for new product line

January 24, 2018



Shiseido has already debuted its first product created through this collaboration. Image credit: Shiseido

By DANNY PARISI

Japanese cosmetics company Shiseido is crafting a unique partnership not with a notable designer or agency, but with everyday high school girls.

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Shiseido's has introduced the POSME program, the first major project from its Innovation Design Lab, which is focused on unique and exciting new takes on the traditional beauty industry. By partnering with regular everyday consumers as part of its strategy, Shiseido is hoping to avoid creating irrelevant products and focus on goods that are desirable to a real consumer.

"It's a forward-thinking move by Shiseido that will likely resonate with Gen Z's entrepreneurial aspirations," said Rachel Saunders, Insights and Strategy Director at [Cassandra](#), New York. "We call them 'The Monetization Generation' because they're constantly looking for new ways to earn an income and develop new business skills.

Rather than exclusively rely on their parents to give them an allowance or depending on someone else to employ them, they're increasingly taking it upon themselves to piece together an income through their own efforts and financial savvy, often supplementing what they may get from these sources. In fact, 86% of them are already earning money in some way, and they love it when companies help."

Youthful inventiveness

Established in 1872, Shiseido is one of the oldest cosmetics companies in the world, but its latest project sees the brand turning to some of the youngest consumers in the market.

Whereas many brands spend time trying to predict what will be fashionable and cool among young consumers, Shiseido is attempting to cut out the middle man by simply bringing a youthful demographic in and letting them co-design its products.

For POSME, Shiseido recruited a team of high-school-age girls to consult and assist in the development of a number of new beauty products, including eye colors, lip products and blush.

The POSME team currently consists of 40 high school girls, mainly from Tokyo. Going forward, Shiseido intends to bring in more collaborators from around Japan.

Additionally, Shiseido is opening a physical location called POSME Lab in Tokyo's fashionable Shibuya district.

POSME Debut

The first product designed by POSME is the Play Color Chip. These chips come in sets of six and are single-use items that can apply a pattern or image to lips, cheeks or eyebrows.

Shiseido hopes that these chips can be swapped and shared among friends, fostering a spirit of community that is popular among young consumers.

Everyday collaborators

Shiseido has come out with a number of new products and projects in the past year, with a focus on improving its technological prowess.

For example, Shiseido leveraged an Internet of Things solution to deliver personalized skincare to consumers.

Shiseido has developed a new skincare system Optune, that personalizes products by coupling digital with science and beauty research. Shiseido has invested heavily into technology-derived solutions to maintain a competitive edge in the beauty sector through artificial intelligence, robotics and other strategies ([see story](#)).

Similarly, the brand introduced makeup for the digital age, as it continues to strengthen its relationship with technology.

Shiseido's Telebeauty concept was launched in partnership with Microsoft Japan, and is designed to show how social issues can be solved through the brand's creativity. Shiseido developed the tech solution in response to the growing number of working women who telecommute for work, but the application may be perceived by some as sexism in the workplace ([see story](#)).



POSME's first product, the Play Color Chip. Image credit: Shiseido

Across the Pacific, Shiseido Americas is investing in its sector's future use of artificial intelligence through a technology firm acquisition.

Shiseido Americas, a subsidiary of the Tokyo-based Shiseido Company, has acquired Giaran, who develops artificial intelligence platforms to heighten consumer experience and personalize beauty purchasing. The terms of Shiseido's Giaran purchase were not disclosed, but reflects the beauty sector's embrace of digital technologies as selling tools ([see story](#)).

These projects show a company that has fully immersed itself in the latest technological and cultural trends in order to best capture the valuable younger generation that is just now beginning to enter the market.

"Teens don't just want to support their favorite brands they want their favorite brands to support them, too," Ms. Saunders said. "The move speaks to Gen Z's self-starter mindset, and more companies could benefit from Shiseido's approach."

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