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FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

SK-II examines how women face traditional expectations

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Katie Couric hosts a docu-series for SK-II. Image courtesy of SK-II

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Japanese beauty label SK-II is enlisting a trailblazing journalist for its latest #ChangeDestiny campaign in an effort to show how women are shaping their own paths forward.

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In the docu-series "Timelines," award-winning journalist Katie Couric speaks to women about the societal pressures that they face around the world. Earlier efforts from the beauty brand have also explored how women empower themselves in societies filled with rigid expectations.

Reality versus expectation

Timelines takes Ms. Couric to Japan, China, South Korea and the United States to meet young women and important figures in their lives, including mothers, grandmothers and friends.

With each episode running between four and six minutes, the series is able to explore topics such as marriage and ambition in depth. This is a stark contrast to other brands who look to capture consumers' attention with shorter clips and vignettes.

Katie Couric speaks to women in Asia and the U.S. about their future "timelines"

The young women, including a musician from New York and an SK-II global brand ambassador in Shanghai, discuss their goals and how their priorities are often counter to what society continues to expect from women.

Adding a generational angle, Ms. Couric also speaks to other women close to her subjects, including mothers, a grandmother and a best friend. These other women are able explain the range of expectations from a personal perspective.

However, the divergence in expectations and life paths has led to tensions in these relationships, which Ms. Couric helps the women unpack.

With the backdrop of more conservative and patriarchal countries, marriage and family are a constant theme in the discussions about dreams and expectations. Over the course of a generation in these societies, more opportunities

for women have developed outside of marriage and motherhood.

Most of the women are choosing to focus on their careers before pursuing serious relationships. In the case of Nara, an artist from Seoul, she is a bisexual woman living in a country that has not legalized same-sex marriage.

Timelines episode featuring New York's Maluca

Pressure for women also comes from peers, as is shown in the episode with Chun Xia, a Chinese actress and brand ambassador for SK-II. Although she and her best friend, Dan Hua, grew up together, Ms. Dan explains to Ms. Couric that she is apprehensive about her friend's workload and expresses that she wishes the actress could find contentment from a more simple lifestyle as she has.

At the conclusion of each episode, the young women meet with their loved ones to view physical timelines created for them. Using vintage television screens as markers, one timeline represents expectations while the other lists personal aspirations.

SK-II strategy

Timelines is a continuation of SK-II's long-running campaign, #ChangeDestiny, which launched in 2016.

Last year, SK-II extended its mindset of ageless beauty and female empowerment into the United States with new popular faces.

A former *Teen Vogue* editor-in-chief, a style blogger, a DJ, an actress and the GirlBoss CEO are a few of SK-II's recent influencers. The marketer brought its #INeverExpire campaign to the U.S. in a modern strategy that had these women telling their own stories (see story).

SK-II's marketing has leveraged video content, whether delving into a topic or having fun with skincare.

Recently, SK-II used comedy to educate consumers about its skincare in an entertaining format that aims to break out of the category's usual marketing formula.

The brand's "Bare Skin Chat" sees actress Chlo Grace Moretz act as a skincare guru to talk show host James Corden. Through the series of films, SK-II aims to demystify beauty with the help of the unexpected duo, removing some of the seriousness surrounding skincare (see story).

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