

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

How can beauty brands fuse the physical/digital connection post-pandemic?

June 12, 2020



YSL Beauty Instagram campaign. Image credit: YSL Beauty

By DIANNA DILWORTH

As retail stores begin to reopen, many cosmetics companies face a brave new world of how to sell products that once relied so heavily on close-up personal interactions.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Makeup counters and close-up product demos will have to be reformed using digital tools. This shift in strategy should include a hybrid model in which live and digital components of beauty sales complement each other.

"Rather than standalone in-store events, demonstrations or parties launching in the physical sense or having a purely online workshop/Q&A, they'll need to find their way together and no longer be mutually exclusive," said Claire Berry, founder of **Perfect Cartel**, London.

YSL Beauty skincare tutorial

Going live

An in-store launch can still take place, but it will be much smaller than in the past to accommodate for social distancing.

However, there is the potential that these events can reach even larger audiences than before through livestreaming to a global audience.

"Or maybe an Instagram Live with an ambassador welcoming questions and comments from people watching so they feel part of the conversation," Ms. Berry said.

The challenge for cosmetics brands will be to define exactly the user journey beyond just hoping someone will click on links and to capture their attention online where distraction abounds.

"A successful launch or activation post-pandemic will draw guests or consumers in and keep their attention, either by stimulating the senses, encouraging engagement, community building or experiencing new beauty tech never seen before," Ms. Berry said.

YSL Beauty, for instance, has been using its digital platforms to entertain and delight consumers at home during the

coronavirus pandemic through engaging content that includes everything from playlists to tutorials.

"They've always aligned themselves with musical talent and I think their YSL Beauty Beats Spotify playlists and YSL Beauty Club Virtual Room on IG have been really clever and quick to respond to COVID challenges," Ms. Berry said. "Plus, their tutorial series on Facebook all include shoppable links."

Fenty Beauty by Rihanna has been using TikTok to create virtual must-see content that helps entertain and sell products.

"The House is a hub for all creators to make content exclusively for TikTok and they can even raid the Make-Up Pantry," Ms. Berry said. "With 8.6 million followers now, they are going to be extremely hard to catch."

[@fentybeauty](#)@makayladid in our new CHEEKS OUT Cream Blush in shade "Crush on Cupid" comin out 4/17!! Whos ready for this launch?? [Cradles - Sub Urban](#)

Fenty Beauty tutorial

Post-pandemic testers

Selling beauty products has long been reliant on offering samples, whether at the beauty counter or in gift bags or beyond.

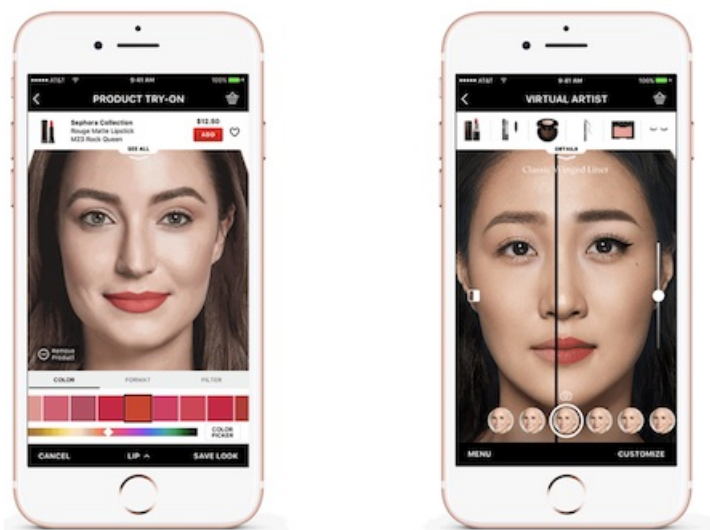
For the time being, the health crisis will disrupt the close contact between make-up counter specialists and make-up trials because it involves such up-close contact.

"Along with the necessary sanitary requirements of gloves, gel, masks and social distancing, there needs to be new ways to experience and trial without compromising safety," Ms. Berry said.

Antiviral paint in high-traffic areas such as department store make-up counters can also help cut back on germs and make customers feel safer shopping in stores.

"When guests are encouraged into the store, it will be more about creating brand moments and exclusive content and then for them to continue the experience at home with the product, a DIY version," Ms. Berry said.

"Virtual consultations, AR and access to digital MUA and spa treatment therapists can cut this demand for face-to-face interaction for the time being," she said.



Sephora's Product Try On and Virtual Artist apps. Image credit: Sephora

Sephora, like Fenty also an LVMH brand, is among the various vendors selling make-up that offers such digital trials.

As stores continue their re-openings, they should be listening harder than ever to how customers feel and what their needs are, and adapt accordingly.

"Authentic, diverse influencers will continue to capture attention: it's a read-the-room situation like never before," Ms. Berry said.

"A give-back campaign related to a new product launch in a non-commercial way is a good idea," she said. "People love brands with heart and, for those who are in a position to do so, it's the right thing to do at the moment."

Events should be catered to the current context and adapted through a hybrid of the in-person and the virtual.

"Event mirroring is certainly not a new phenomenon, but will be vital for the future of luxury experiential," Ms. Berry said.

"Global launches where international press may have flown a great distance will now be able to activate in their own territories and invite a wider audience without the requirement for air travel and simultaneously execute launches also reducing the need for embargo," she said.

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.