

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

## Makeup is back, brighter than ever: report

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Lipstick is making a comeback as mask mandates lift. Image credit: Perfect Corp.

By NORA HOWE

While the pandemic-influenced emphasis on skincare and wellness may persist, beauty consumers are returning to their makeup routines as mask mandates loosen.

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In its Q4 Global Beauty Trend Report, beauty tech solutions provider **Perfect Corp.** found that makeup trends and color preferences are evolving globally, and consumers are seeking virtual product advice and beauty consultations from brands through digital-first mindsets. To meet the demands of the post-pandemic beauty consumer, brands and retailers must acknowledge the accelerating importance of digital commerce channels and personalization.

For this report, Perfect Corp. analyzed data from its AR-powered beauty app YouCam Makeup between January and June 2021 to determine the top color and makeup trends. The results presented in the report reflect preferences by consumers in nine markets: United States, United Kingdom, Brazil, Spain, Germany, France, Japan, China and Mexico.

### Focus on lips and eyes

The pandemic has changed nearly every aspect of life, from work routines and social activities to shopping behavior. As people cautiously begin to adjust to a post-pandemic world, new beauty preferences emerge.

Last year, lipstick dropped significantly in popularity because of mask mandates. However, as restrictions lift, lip color is making a significant comeback.

Findings indicated that the most popular lip shades are cranberry pink, terracotta red, pink salmon, wild strawberry and red ribbon.

After hiding the lower portion of their faces for almost two years, consumers are experimenting with brighter lip shades. Bold pink shades are gaining popularity, especially in the U.S. and Japan.



*Makeup try-ons have increased significantly since the start of the pandemic, signifying a major shift toward digital beauty. Image credit: Perfect Corp.*

Consumers in the U.K. are opting for more subtle hues, with pink salmon a soft, natural pink listed as the second most popular shade in 2021.

In 2020, matte was the top lipstick texture globally; however, sheer has emerged as the top lip color finish in 2021 in the U.S., U.K., China, Japan, Spain and Germany.

Matte remains the most popular lip color finish in France accounting for 44 percent of all try-ons, but sheer try-ons have been on the rise in the French market as well with sheer lip try-ons increasing 7 percent from Q1 to Q2 2021.

In Latin America, there is also a preference for matte, as matte accounts for 49 percent of all try-ons in Mexico and 41 percent of all try-ons in Brazil.

During the pandemic, consumers opted for low-maintenance lip color formats instead, such as lip balms. However, lip gloss is now gaining popularity as mandates ease.

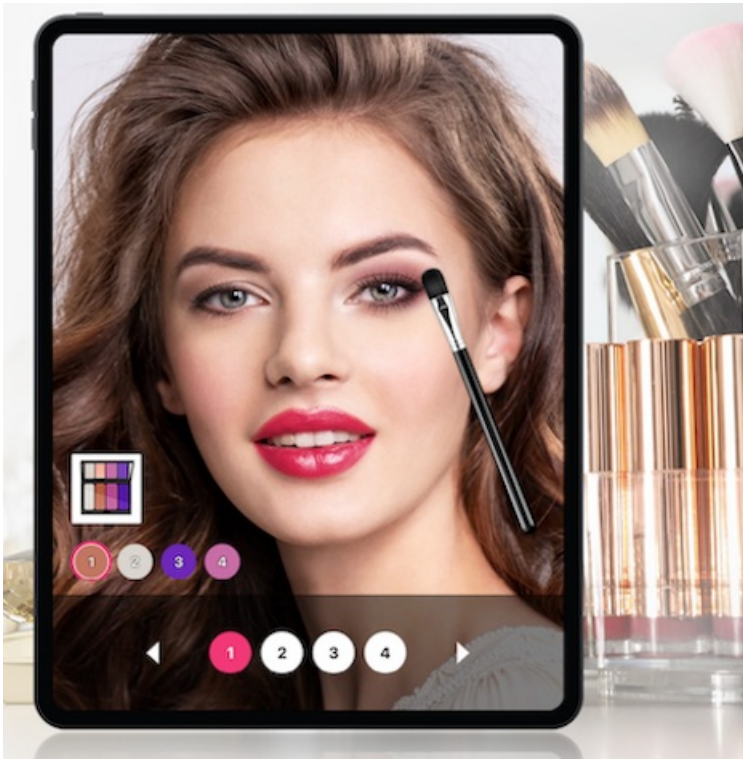
According to Perfect Corp., from Q1 to Q2 2021, lip gloss try-ons increased across all markets.

When it comes to eyes, soft purple and blue shades claimed the top spot for eyeshadow, garnering the highest try-ons.

The U.S. market is interested in natural eye tones, as neutral tones saw a 70 percent increase in try-ons.

#### Digital transformation

The beauty industry has also entered a new digital age. The emergence of augmented reality (AR) and artificial intelligence (AI) beauty technologies has allowed customers to try products virtually, essentially replacing the in-store journey.



*Digital channels are key to brand personalization strategies. Image credit: Perfect Corp.*

As a result, consumers have grown to expect virtual try-on, personalized AI skin diagnostics, virtual beauty advisors and personalized beauty shopping experiences.

In the past year, YouCam Makeup has seen more than 17 billion makeup looks being "tried-on."

Consumers are also seeking advice on digital platforms more than ever and are eager to learn new techniques.

Short-form video sharing platform TikTok has become a launchpad for beauty products and brands due to its organic and dedicated community engagement.

With billions of #TikTokMadeMeBuyIt tags, the platform plays a significant role in authentic product discovery and buyer conversion. Now, TikTok users can purchase products directly through the platform while watching videos ([see story](#)).

Another major aspect of digitalization is personalized shopping experiences. Consumers now expect beauty brands and retailers to deliver these experiences across all channels.

Perfect Corp. saw 27 million skin score quizzes completed and 17 billion virtual beauty try-ons in YouCam Makeup over the past year, signifying a shift toward digital tools and experiences that provide personalized product recommendations.

Beauty group Estée Lauder Companies has embraced a variety of omnichannel tactics, from virtual consultations to Postmate deliveries, to bring the cosmetics counter to shoppers' homes.

During the pandemic, the group launched new digital channels for customer care, including the introduction of its WhatsApp live chat which encourages asynchronous conversations as questions arise, rather than focusing solely on complaints further building relationships between shopper and brand ([see story](#)).

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