

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Outlook 2022: Self-care remains beauty consumers' top priority

December 28, 2021



Inclusivity and representation in beauty is key to effectively redefining beauty. Image credit: Sephora

By NORA HOWE

Gone are the days when beauty just meant some rouge and mascara today, beauty is health and wellbeing.

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Self-care became immensely popular with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and has only grown stronger within the beauty sector. This year saw the rapid adoption of digital technology and social platforms as tools for engaging the beauty community, and this will likely continue throughout 2022.

"The pandemic has permanently changed the way the consumer shops and experiences brands," said Aleni Mackarey, chief operating officer of [Base Beauty Creative Agency](#), New York.

Self-care 2.0

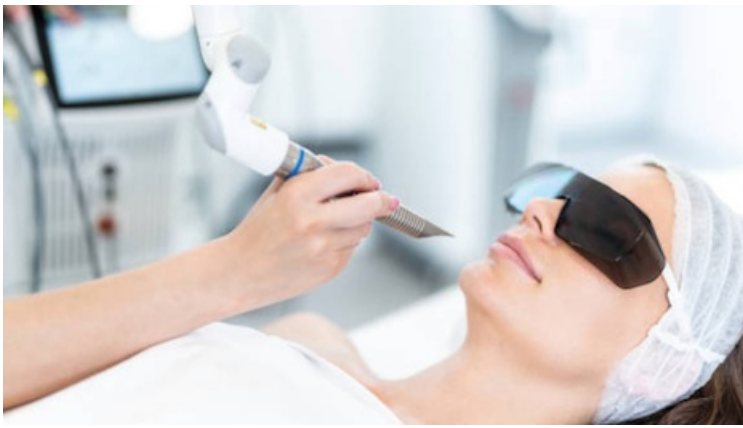
While individuals pivoted their focus on health and well-being in 2021, causing a significant rise in skincare ([see story](#)), next year the industry expects to see a revolution in self-care.

"We expect to see trends including more customized prescription skincare, an increase in the use of at-home tools like microneedling and dermaplaning, as well as beauty stickers for skin, nails and eyes," Ms. Mackarey said.

While vaccinations allowed many people to safely engage with friends and family and rejoin society earlier this year, the most recent surge in COVID-19 cases may position 2022 for an isolated start.

"With the resurgence of COVID-19 this past month, we anticipate a few more months of social isolation and remote working," said Sheri Koetting, founder and creative director of [MSLK](#), New York. "Manicures, massages, facials and more services that once felt luxurious are now considered a necessity."

With more time inside, however, may come more room to experiment with new products and beauty routines.



Consumers are starting to look into more medical, nonsurgical aesthetic treatments, in spas and at home. Image credit: Getty

"Gone are the fears that consumers will not purchase fragrances online, and we can expect more promotions and growth in fragrance in 2022, including in-home scenting and aromatherapy," Ms. Koetting said. "Makeup is back and expected to grow more this year as well, and we anticipate more experimentation with color."

And consumers are increasingly seeking out this beauty and wellness inspiration from one source: TikTok.

TikTok

What started as an unsuspecting short-form video-sharing app five years ago has become an entertaining yet encyclopedia-like destination for theoretically all topics.

"As an agency, we are smitten with TikTok," Ms. Koetting said. "The user experience, audience and costs are ripe with great opportunities for brands in 2022."

For the beauty sector specifically, TikTok has become the meeting place for beauty gurus, brands and consumers to communicate, learn and exchange trends, ideas and products.

"The integration of soundtracks native within the platform makes the content snappy, fun and endlessly addictive," Ms. Koetting said. "Consumers have an insatiable appetite for product education, especially tips and tricks, so turning to TikTok for beauty tips in a snap makes perfect sense for busy people on the go."

Gen Z is especially driving this trajectory. According to Kyra Media's Gen Z State of Beauty report, members of the young cohort are more willing to add new cosmetics products to their collection based on a recommendation from a TikTok influencer over YouTube and Instagram ([see story](#)).

"As the consumer continues to explore this new platform, it will be imperative for brands to create content on this platform that feels authentic and not sales-driven," Ms. Mackarey said. "Brands who lean into TikTok's realness' and transparency will succeed."

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As more beauty consumers turn to social media platforms for inspiration and product reviews, digital innovation will remain paramount.

Tech innovation

Many platforms and beauty brands experimented with augmented and virtual reality for try-ons this year, especially when COVID-19 upended the high-touch category.

French fashion house Chanel started the year with a lipstick color-matching tool, Lips scanner which uses artificial intelligence and virtual try-on technology to match any color to its nearest lipstick shade ([see story](#)).

"While in-store options have increased there is still an interest in virtual try-on methods," Ms. Mackarey said. "Brands who adopt these technologies should be sure to consider how they create a true omni-experience and be sure to share those efforts holistically."

For emerging beauty brands, it can be difficult to incorporate this type of technology, though.

"Virtual try-ons are gaining popularity, however, the platforms and integration can often be cost-prohibitive for emerging brands," Ms. Koetting said. "As a result, building intrigue through augmented reality is still white space.

"We are hopeful that these platforms will become more accessibly priced and adoption will increase."

Beyond VR, platforms are beginning to integrate live commerce and social shopping into their capabilities, providing beauty brands and consumers new opportunities for personalization and engagement.

"With new innovations, including personalization in tech and product development, brands should also consider diverse consumer segments and be sure to represent all consumers leveraging these tools."

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