

The little-known art of designing cosmetic containers

Cosmetics are a huge industry, accounting for many billions of dollars of retail purchases. The competition between cosmetic companies is fierce. It's no wonder that each company spends a lot of money trying to figure out how to package the product in the most attractive way. All other things being equal, they want you to choose their product rather than their competitors.

When you purchase any cosmetic product, the container is ultimately going to be on your dressing table or bathroom vanity. Naturally, you want your container to look pretty. Whether it's lipstick, lotion, perfume or the latest wrinkle-removing night cream, how the container looks is important. Who's going to buy a cream in a plain-Jane plastic jar with an equally plain lid, when another comparably priced cream, advertising the same effect, is packaged in a container sporting a gold lid and deep blue glass jar emblazoned with a gold leaf ribbon across the top? No contest.

It's true that in the world of cosmetics, almost all of the products will do what they say they'll do. A lotion is a lotion, a cream is a cream. So here, the appearance of the cosmetic containers make a great deal of difference in the company's bottom line.

Next time you're shopping in the cosmetics section, notice the differences in the designs of cosmetic containers which are aimed at different age groups. For example, a set of products that are intended to eliminate acne are targeting a young consumer. You'll see how the designs of these cosmetic containers are more trendy. Colors and design lines on the container are brighter and bolder, while the container may be chunky in shape, as teens find attractive. If the product is related to wrinkles, this container leans more towards elegant, perhaps with a svelte shape. The cosmetic containers designer plays to your age. There's nothing wrong with that, as each consumer wants a beautiful container as much as the actual product inside.

Perfume and cologne probably express the ultimate in cosmetic container design. These products are unnecessary. You're buying it because it makes you feel and smell sexy. It's not like toothpaste or shampoo. So here, cosmetic companies know that the container must almost have a personality of its own that conveys, by its container, how you'll feel when you spritz this lovely on your neck. The design of such a container can be a complex task indeed.

Now, as for that plain-Jane jar. Let's say you bought some apricot oil on the recommendation of the health food store clerk. It works like magic on your wrinkles. Unfortunately, it's sold in a little clear plastic bottle. Why, you

simply buy your own fancy cosmetic containers for such treasures. There are companies that sell wondrously beautiful empty cosmetic containers. Go look for yourself.