

Cosmetic changes



Cosmetics companies are turning to digital channels to drive in-store purchases and build awareness of their brands, says **Lisa Simmons**

Advertising for cosmetics invariably involves an exotic location populated by gloriously shimmering models, and brands prefer rich, high-quality media such as glossy magazines and posters to promote the latest skin-refiner or curling mascara.

But in a cluttered market, cosmetics companies are seeking innovative ways to persuade customers to try and buy products. In the past year, premium and high-street cosmetics brands have begun to move online to achieve objectives from raising brand awareness to growing in-store sales.

The explosion of different online ad formats has helped: campaign elements range from microsites, SMS vouchers and advertorials to the innovative virtual make-over site Easy Make Up launched by L'Oréal Paris (www.lorealparis.com) last year. This allows customers to upload their digital photos onto the site to experiment on-screen with the colours on their own faces.

"Three to four years ago the internet was still male-dominated and the only advertising format available was the banner," says Pippa Walker, group director of new business at Condé Nast, which publishes *Vogue.com* and *Glamour.com*. "With new ad formats and promotional techniques, companies are now learning how they can benefit from brand association, online data capture and the ability to drive customers in-store."

Avon has led the field in terms of e-commerce – perhaps not surprisingly for a company that has 160,000 door-to-door representatives across the country and a customer base familiar with ordering from a catalogue, rather than a beauty stand.

Avon aims to use its site (www.avon.uk.com), which was revamped last August, to target women who don't have access to an Avon representative. "The site is an extension of our shop window – our brochures – and gives us access to a younger audience," says Stuart Lee, Avon's business development planner. Like its catalogue, Avon's site is updated every three weeks and is accompanied by an email newsletter featuring prices and products.

Much of Avon's online activity has been for its Color Trend range, which is aimed at younger women. The company worked with marketing agency Messagizer last year to run an email campaign pushing the range. The work, which was supported by pop group Atomic



Kitten, invited girls to give the band a virtual make-over on the site, using the Color Trend range, in order to win an iMac. "We sent the email to 20,000 girls between the ages of 13 and 17 and got a response rate of 24 per cent. Cost per visitor worked out at just 56p," says Lee.

According to Walker, Avon aside, cosmetics firms are waiting for high-street giants such as Debenhams (www.debenhams.com) and Boots' online store Wellbeing.com – whose interactive TV channel closed last November – to drive e-commerce, while they experiment with online brand-building and sampling.

Only a small portion of beauty marketing budgets is being invested online. According to a research report by media monitoring service MMS in 2001, more than £320 million was spent over the year by the beauty and health sector through traditional ad mediums, with just £3m spent online.

"It's a fraction of what the industry should be investing," says Caroline Pathy, ad sales director at Freeserve's women's site icircle.com, which has run online campaigns for Maybelline, Garnier, L'Oréal and Oil of Olay. "But with more women making purchase decisions online, full-screen ads such as transitionals, and greater editorial integration along the lines of advertorials in magazines, things are looking up," she adds.

Rimmel has been working with partners such as Condé Nast to drive traffic to its site (www.rimmellondon.com), including a recent sponsorship of Condé Nast Online's coverage of London Fashion Week in February. "We drove one-third of its web traffic during the sponsorship," says Condé Nast's Walker. Rimmel took advantage of the considerable reach of Vogue.com and Glamour.com, which have a combined 83,000 subscribers to their email newsletters, including 17,000 daily subscribers.

Last July, Condé Nast ran an online promotion for Armani's new range of bronzing products, including pop-ups, banners and a microsite that let users zoom in and out to view the products on the model's skin, and included a link to www.giorgioarmanicosmetics.com to collect a printable money-off voucher. It was the third online campaign run by Armani with Condé Nast, following a Valentine's Day promotion on Vogue.com and a push on FHM.co.uk for the His and Hers fragrance range.

One advantage of digital marketing is the speed at which activity can be pulled together. "Campaigns can be set up in a week, rather than the three month lead-times often required when advertising in glossy monthly mags – which makes online activity ideal for product launches," says Walker.

Women's portal handbag.com ran a microsite last December for Boots, which co-owns the site with Hollinger Telegraph New Media, to raise awareness of its No 7 winter make-up range in the run-up to the Christmas party season. "The microsite let us include advice on the whole look, including fashion tips," says Alicen Stenner, brand director at handbag.com, which has drawn advertisers such as Armani, Lancome, L'Oréal and Dior.

For handbag.com, beauty is big business. Of 10.5 million page impressions in March, two million – one-fifth of the site's traffic – were in its beauty channel. "It is only recently that cosmetics brands have realised that they can do pretty much the same things online, and more, as in glossy magazines," says Stenner.

For cosmetics companies, it's a big leap to market online, as a lot of the sell is dependent on face-to-face consultation. While sampling can be facilitated online, through printable > vouchers, the

Avon: online push for Color Trend range invited girls to give a virtual make-over to pop group Atomic Kitten

Get together with Emporio Armani fragrances for him and for her this Valentine's Day

Treat your Valentine to an Emporio Armani fragrance, Emporio Armani gift sets for him and for her are available at Chemists and Department Stores nationwide.

Play the maze game to win a set of Emporio Armani fragrances

Click on girl or boy symbol. Then use the arrow keys on your keyboard to move around the maze

Emporio Armani: ran online Valentine's Day promotion with Condé Nast to push its fragrances

Rimmel uses interactive TV to push new lipstick trial



We got a 3.2 per cent response rate; the highest you usually get on the web is two per cent

Matthew Wigham
OMD UK

Cosmetics company Coty has given its Rimmel make-up brand a boost with an ad campaign starring supermodel Kate Moss.

Last November, the brand ran its first interactive TV ad to push its Exaggerate Hydra Lipstick range on Sky digital.

Using the strapline 'Get it On,' and targeting 16- to 34-year-old women, the ads used a poster-style creative on Sky Active, produced by BBC MediaArc.

BBC MediaArc is the partner of BMPtvi, which developed the campaign strategy and development. The ads ran across Sky One, Living, Trouble and Sky's network of movie channels.

According to Matthew Wigham, associate TV director at OMD UK, which handled the media planning and buying for Rimmel, it was the most successful interactive TV ad Sky had run to date. "It was a simple



mechanism – giving away a lipstick via an interactive icon that led to a poster site. We got a 3.2 per cent response rate; the highest you usually get on the web is two per cent," he says.

The work was so successful – 50,000 lipsticks were requested over the 15 days –

Interactive ads: 50,000 free lipsticks were requested over the 15 days Rimmel ran the iTV campaign

that Rimmel had to cap the offer as it couldn't meet demand. Wigham claims that 90,000 could have been given away over 28 days.

Wigham adds that iTV is ideal for cosmetic companies looking for a richer brand experience than the web can bring. This campaign was also an

excellent means of market research, giving Rimmel information about 50,000 users. And most importantly, it gave Rimmel an insight into how its rivals were doing.

"Users were asked to tell Rimmel which other brands of lipstick they had bought in order to receive the free lipstick," says Wigham.

Coty now plans to run a similar push in September to give users the chance to sample different shades of Rimmel foundation.

consultation process is a challenge, particularly as colour and texture cannot be accurately conveyed over a screen – which is why many brands use the web to drive users to beauty counters for make-overs and samples.

Handbag.com ran five evening events at Boots' Pure Beauty Stores across the UK earlier this year. The campaign aimed to encourage handbag.com users to bring a friend, and so hopefully a new handbag.com user, to the event to receive 20 per cent discount on all products. Of the 3,000 users invited, 1,000 attended. "It's all about converting online traffic to the beauty counters, and we're talking to ever more beauty brands about this," says Stenner.

Condé Nast's Walker makes the point that as online promotions can be so interactive, they can act as initial, perhaps less intimidating, consultations. Glamour.com has a virtual make-over section, using L'Oréal's Easy Make-Up tool. Users are encouraged to send in the results for the chance to win prizes and have their make-over posted on the site.

Many women consider their beauty purchases while walking down the high street, and digital marketing can allow cosmetic brands to reach an audience wherever they are. Max Factor dramatically put this to the test when, during London Fashion Week in February, it worked with marketing group New Media Industries,



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Handbag.com

technology giant Intel and wireless developer Open Mobile to stream ads to PDAs which the organisers of the show had handed out to visitors as they strolled around.

If cosmetics brands are trying to reach a younger audience, SMS campaigns are ideal, helping to drive footfall into stores even more effectively than perhaps a magazine or online ad. According to Pathy, SMS is more suited to high-street brands such as The Body Shop than department store brands such as Chanel or Armani. "SMS is perfect for a teen audience, but for full-colour brand communication, it's not suitable," she says.

In January, skincare and make-up brand Clinique decided to take a long-term view with its SMS activity. Rather than waiting for

L'Oréal goes viral to boost awareness of hair dye brand



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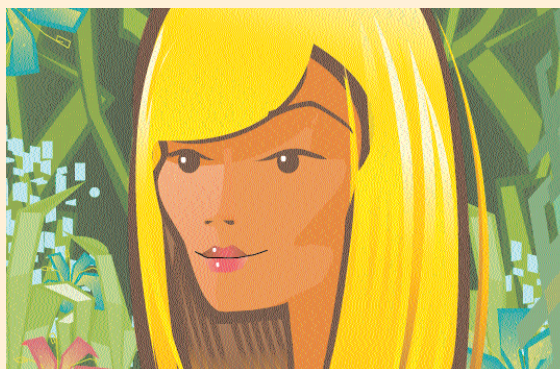
Paul Shalet
Messagizer

Earlier this year, L'Oréal ran a viral email campaign for the launch of its Open Colour hair dye. The activity aimed to raise awareness of the brand among women aged 18 to 25 who had expressed an interest in health and beauty.

Marketing specialist Messagizer worked with L'Oréal's agency, Universal McCann Interactive, to devise the campaign, which comprised of a viral animated movie sent to 20,000 women.

The movie showed a woman in her living room flicking through a magazine. She drifts off into a dream of a fantasy desert island, where a gorgeous man comes towards her and plants a kiss on her face. The movie ends as the woman awakes to find her pet dog licking her face.

Users were invited to send the email to a friend, and to click through to L'Oréal's web site (www.loreal.com) for



L'Oréal: 'desert island' email directed women to competition

the opportunity to win a convertible car and request more information about the company and its brands.

"L'Oréal wanted to capture

personal customer details and build a database, but wanted customers to do something proactive as a result of receiving the

message," says Paul Shalet, chief executive of Messagizer.

"We wanted the brand to stand out as being fresh, innovative and vibrant and so we decided to extend the creative execution beyond a banner or text into a viral film where the brand's values could be communicated without the risk of being undermined by a poor environment," he adds.

Of the 20,000 recipients, 17 per cent downloaded the Flash-based movie and 44 per cent of those sent it on to a friend; 28 per cent went through to the competition page on L'Oréal's web site.

"In total, we got 6,000 registrants," says Shalet. "The bottom line for L'Oréal was that it cost 90p to acquire each customer. It was delighted with the campaign," he says.

young women to earn enough to afford to buy its products on a regular basis, it hired wireless marketing firm Aerodeon to run a text message campaign in conjunction with B magazine, published by Attic Futura. The work targeted 18- to 24-year-olds to encourage sampling of its 3-Step skincare range.

An advertisement in the magazine asked readers to send a text message to receive a time-stamped mobile voucher for trial sizes of the range, which could be redeemed at 440 Clinique counters across the UK.

"If you see an ad in a magazine with a voucher, it's easy to forget about it," says Andrew Jones, managing director of Aerodeon. "The beauty industry is cautious because it has spent years building well-honed brands, but it is looking to become up-to-date. Add this to the fact that young people are spending more on cosmetics, and SMS becomes an ideal way for a brand to appear to be a bit cooler and innovative," he says.

Indeed, Rob Gray, founding partner of marketing consultancy Mercier Gray, which has run campaigns for Nivea, Superdrug's make-up range Kolor and Rimmel, believes that mobile marketing is more suited to cosmetic brands than the web.

"Internet marketing is almost inappropriate to this sector because the web is still more populated by young males," he argues. "Women are researching and buying online, but more for bigger

purchases such as cars or holidays. Shopping is a real leisure pursuit, and for beauty products involves smearing lipstick on your hand, not staring at a screen."

Gray believes that SMS is where cosmetic companies should be investing their marketing budgets. "SMS is exactly where the target audience of young women are, and it is an ideal tool with which to drive them to the beauty counters," he says.

Mercier Gray is preparing to relaunch a web site for Nivea's sun care range (www.niveasunstuff.co.uk), an educational site aimed at 11- to 16-year-old boys and girls. It will include fashion tips and the favourite holiday destinations of boy bands such as Blue. "We're targeting children, rather than their mums, who are buying the products, because they are still best reached through the women's press, rather than via digital means," says Gray.

While they have got off to a good start, it is now up to media owners to convince cosmetics houses that digital media can help them market their wares to all ages. □



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