

DMN News

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Beauty Ads Gel with Men

BY MARY ELIZABETH HURN

American men will spend more than \$9 billion on grooming products this year, including retail and online sales, according to Kline & Company, a market researcher. Men are a small but coveted demographic for direct marketers of personal care products and services, and direct marketing has proven a primary avenue to reach them.

“A few years ago, men were much more into touching, feeling and smelling the product,” says Lee Jacobs, president of Lescoja, makers of the Matte For Men skin care line. “Today they’re much more comfortable buying online based on the right proposition.” If the product meets a need and is easily explainable and demonstrated online, it makes a huge difference in sales, he explains.

Matte for Men does most of its online marketing through search and banner ads, which link back to the products’ home page, on targeted grooming sites. Jacobs believes it’s important for marketers to think outside of the box in ad copy, and Matte uses risqué messaging to stand out. For example, a face wash with microspheres has the tagline “Finally...a face wash with balls.” Jacobs explains that this type of language resonates with men and helps the messaging cut through the clutter.

E-commerce sites also play a huge role in sales. Peter Thomas Roth, a unisex line of body products, is sold on numerous e-commerce sites, including Sephora.com, Ulta.com, Beauty.com as well as PeterThomasRoth.com. Founder and CEO Peter Thomas Roth says that using these types of sites to sell products is a large part of his company’s distribution strategy.

“Especially for a product launch, we’ll sell a product exclusively through Sephora for three months before opening it up to other sites,” he says. “You have to draw a lot of attention to it at the onset or your product will get lost in the shuffle.”

Peter Thomas Roth products have been featured in the Sephora Insider e-newsletter. It also participates in a sampling program. With each purchase at Sephora.com, the consumer can choose three free samples to receive from a list of 12. One option is a Peter Thomas Roth product.

“This is a much more direct way to sample because you know the person isn’t going to just throw it in the garbage,” Roth says. “They’ve actively chosen to try your product.”

Michele Probst, founder and CEO of Menaji Skincare, which sells products ranging from shaving sets to bronzers

and concealers for men, agrees the Web is an effective channel.

“Sales are continuously shifting from bricks to clicks,” she says. “Especially from a small business point of view, the online sector is cheaper because you don’t have to pay for in-store signage and other expenses associated with retail distribution.”

She adds that privacy is another advantage of the Web: “Men probably aren’t comfortable in a department store surrounded by women, asking a clerk about the right shade of concealer for their skin.”

The economy has also played a role in the sales of Menaji products, Probst continues.

“Now more than ever, these baby boomers are competing for jobs with these computer savvy college grads, so any edge they can get is really important,” she says. “Confidence is really important right now. Grooming is not new to men, but there are new tools.”

Other marketers, however, believe a more traditional approach is best. Tony Sosnick, founder and CEO of skincare line Anthony for Men, says training staff, sampling in stores and building relationships with sales teams is still very important.

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“This is a people business,” he says. “You want to get the person that’s selling your product to understand, sample and like your brand.”

Sosnick says he plans to launch Twitter-only promotions in which users will be able to enter a promotional code available exclusively in the company’s Twitter feed to receive deals.

Direct mail is also an option to reach this audience, especially if the product or service is regional, says **Chris Hurn, co-founder, chairman and CEO of Kennedy’s All-American Barber Club**. The franchise has six locations in Florida, and 75% of its business comes from members who pay a monthly fee for unlimited haircuts and other services.

Hurn says the company shoots to send out 7,500 to 10,000 monthly direct mail pieces to consumers within a five-mile radius of each store.

“With e-mail you get various deliverability rates,” he explains, “but that’s not the case with direct mail.”

The company uses list firms to find its target demographic and uses different selects for different campaign. For example, it targets wives for a Valentine’s Day postcard.

On most of the company’s direct mail pieces, **Kennedy’s** offers first time customers a free haircut and straight razor shave. Those customers will receive a handwritten thank you note within a few days. “It plays up nostalgia and our overall branding,” **Hurn** said. “People are shocked by it and it resonates with men.”

Perhaps the most important thing to remember when marketing to men is that they’re not like women, Probst

says. “Unlike women, men aren’t typically out there constantly looking for the best new products,” she explains. “Men are very loyal, so once you get them, you’ve got them.” ■

Campaigns



When the Matte for Men line launched in January 2007, CEO Lee Jacobs made a decision to reach men through the online channel. Using a combination of ad networks and buys on targeted content sites like SlyBaldGuys.com, not to mention salacious copy, MatteforMen.com was able to garner more than 40% of its traffic from online banners. E-commerce sites, search engine optimization and paid search complemented the effort to drive clicks and sales.



Kennedy’s All-American Barber Club wanted to increase membership at its six locations in south Florida. The grooming company launched its “Member-Get-a-Member” contest earlier this year. The direct mail promotion urged members to recruit others to join Kennedy’s. Various prizes, such as golf clubs, gift cards and vacation packages, were offered based on how many members participants referred. Over the course of 10 weeks, Kennedy’s retained more than 130 new members.