

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Make sure your shelves are stocked and your employees are prepared to offer haircolor products and advice on demand.

by Victoria Wurdinger

In a year when the mature beauty market is showing slow growth, hair color remains a beacon to the market. This is doubly true for stores because more than half of women who color their hair either do it at home or visit a salon sometimes and do their own color other times. Fortunately for beauty supply stores, the latter group needs help selecting the right retouch formula to match their current color.

Not only do OTCs carry broader color selections, they can also provide advice other beauty products channels can't. For instance, with color lines that go permanent or the equivalent of demipermanent—depending on the developer volume—the savvy

store employee can teach anyone to do a retouch and refresh her roots to near perfection. Additionally, by displaying mannequin heads with differently colored quadrants, beauty stores can easily provide visual replies to that age-old question: How will the color in the bottle look on my hair? This is particularly important for brunettes for three reasons: One, they represent the largest percentage of the general-market population. Two, they represent almost all of the fast-growing multicultural populations. And three, it's hardest for them to visualize how any shade will look when applied to their dark hair color. It's no wonder that both fashion trends and new haircolor products increase their options.

TALKING THE TALK

You can't talk to consumers or professionals about hair color unless you're up on what's hot. While brunette shades are big, blonde shades will always be around and red shades provide blonde options with strawberry and brunette choices via dimensional blends. Right now all three are seeing a warming trend. Platinum, however, is passé, as blonde shades reflect the "blondes" of nature, from wheat to sunlight.

"Adding warmer and darker blondes against lighter shades creates the 3-D effect that shows off layers and modern haircuts best," explains Teres Martina Charles, a colorist at Dellaria Salon in Wellesley, Massachusetts. "Even blonde highlights are being warmed up to add more depth to blonde, strawberry in particular."

"Dimension comes from a mix of warm and cool brunettes that are light and soft," says colorist Susan Curtis, co-owner of Susan Alan Salon 2000 in Northridge, California. "The warmer shade is usually dominant or used for color accents."

"Even mid-America salons are creating dimensional looks with tricolor techniques," says Pat O'Donnell, Wella brand manager at P&G Professional Care Open Line Organization in Stamford, Connecticut, where he oversees the Wella American Classics brand. "The trend is not toward a major color shift but toward adding accent colors. Brunettes are of great interest because the majority of Americans are brunettes; so are most ethnic women. Hispanics almost always have hair that's level 4 or darker. For us, brunette right now is warm with neutral undertones."

CONSUMERS TURN TO BEAUTY STORES FOR COLOR REMOVERS; THIS MAKES BEAUTY STORES VALUABLE YEAR-ROUND, REGARDLESS OF FASHION TRENDS.



IMAGE COURTESY OF L'OREAL TECHNIQUE

Reds right now are copper with peachy accents added for lightness and warmth, according to Tammi Savic, a colorist at Beauty in Milwaukee. "The warm, peach cast we're seeing now is perfect for blondes who want to move into red, but it's also great for transforming brunettes."

And last but certainly not least, brunettes are having their day with dimension via a broad spectrum of colors.

Pat Grant-Williams, the technical and artistic director for Colomer Multicultural Group's Revlon Professional Products in Jacksonville, Florida, says that black women are also avoiding dark brown by adding richer tones such as red or gold. For this market, trends include both solid and dimensional colors.

"Because so many African-American women are using hair extensions, they



IMAGE COURTESY OF CLAIROL PROFESSIONAL

want allover color to blend in their own hair with the extensions," explains Grant-Williams.

Additionally, "In the ethnic market, highlights that are either natural or vibrant are becoming a new point of entry for women who don't want full-head color," adds Anthony Standifer, brand manager for African Pride in Jacksonville, Florida.

Highlights always pop up during summer—and, in a twist, wine-inspired shades, violets and purples will be popular this season, according to Maureen Buckley-O'Hara, Clairol Professional brand manager at P&G Professional Care Open Line Organization in Stamford, Connecticut.

Relaxed hair can benefit from Textures & Tones' "brown sugar" technique, which relies on mixing two shades in one formula to create a light brown with golden tones on any natural shade, according to Kirsten Horton, brand manager of the ethnic haircolor portfolio at P&G Beauty in Cincinnati.

"Whatever the particular color, placement is what will create a signature," says Buckley-O'Hara. "Color will accent the bangs or fringe, or be placed in 'underlayers.' Color blocking will also remain popular with the addition of lighter shades in the same tonal family."

Warm brunette shades that have some neutral dye molecules in the mix help combat the brassiness that many brunettes want to avoid. They're also part of another trend: Formulations with benefits.

For women who have relaxed or texturized hair but don't want to wait a week to get color, demi- and semi-permanent products are increasingly important for their hair's health, as are products that contain wheat proteins,

hydrolyzed collagen and other conditioners and strengtheners.

"The trend in color products is condition, condition, condition," says Jacqueline Tarrant, director of education for SoftSheen-Carson in New York City. "This is particularly true in the ethnic category, where women may have relaxer or other chemicals on their hair, or may frequently use heat styling."

SoftSheen-Carson is putting the front-and-center focus on hair health, Tarrant adds. Sunflower oil, aloe vera and vitamin E are just some of the ingredients in the company's Dark & Lovely line that ensure softness, manageability and shine long after the color has been applied.

SCOPING OUT THE TRENDS

Haircolor products are being formulated to meet the needs of today's discerning consumers and demanding colorists. Fading is always an issue and some colorists predict that in the near future hair color will have encapsulated, time-released, nano-dye molecules that will release fresh pigment within the hair shaft every time it's shampooed. In the meantime, longer-lasting is a buzzword that attracts any color junkie.

"Consumers invest in their color and they want it to last," says David Leib, president and CEO of Jingles International in San Diego. "That's why the pigment level of our color is 80%, while most brands are at 40%."

"Every major line is putting out collections that tap niches," says O'Donnell. "Manufacturers are also looking to create colors with faster processing times. The problem is in giving up lift. What you get is something halfway between a demipermanent and a permanent product that's best for lifting just two or three levels or for women who want more natural results."

When results go bad, consumers in particular turn to beauty supply stores because no other outlets offer color removers; this makes beauty stores valuable year-round, regardless of fashion trends.

“Products like our [Satin] Color Reverse open up a whole new world

for all users because they make color risk free,” explains Shelly Smith, sales and marketing consultant for Develo-Plus in Corona, California. “It’s the hottest trend we’ve seen.”

Other trends include products with low ammonia content and the development of palettes that work with very dark

What’s New for You

Today, many new haircolor products aim to moisturize and protect hair from dryness and breakage. For instance, **L’Oréal Technique** (800/345-5014, lorealtechnique.com) Excellence Crème has been reformulated with a patented Anti-Breakage Ceramide R Complex that penetrates the cortex to condition the hair and protect it against breakage. According to the company, extensive test results demonstrate noticeable improvements in the hair’s strength, condition, feel, color uniformity, wet-and-dry compatibility and shine. The new L’Oréal Technique Excellence Crème, which provides 100% gray coverage and long-lasting results, is available in 48 shades. New model imagery, as well as shelf-talkers and trilingual fact sheets, support the launch.

Clairol Professional’s (800/221-4900, clairolpro.com) newest innovation is Clairol Professional Premium Crème, a permanent hair color that delivers rich, highly reflective results. The line’s unique formula gives colorists the freedom and flexibility to create personalized colors, even when covering gray. According to the company, a proprietary, deep-conditioning soy complex nourishes as it colors, smoothing and softening the hair shaft to lock in hair color and improve compatibility. Built on a nine-tonal pillar formulation system, the line comes in 46 intermixable shades in an easy-to-follow system that allows colorists a quicker, more reliable color selection.

At **SoftSheen-Carson**, (softsheen-carson.com) the Dark & Lovely brand focuses on colors and technologies that allow women of color to access an increasingly diverse array of shades and tones. Most recently, seven new shades were added to the Dark & Lovely Fade-Resistant Rich Conditioning Color line of permanent hair color. These are warm mocha, brown cinnamon, rich wine, burgundy blush, vivacious red, soft amber and luminous blonde. Each shade contains the brand’s exclusive Moisture Seal Technology, which provides extra conditioning power for healthy, shiny hair, whether it’s relaxed or natural.

Also known for color that taps trends while keeping hair healthy, **African Pride** (866/340-7883, african-pride.com) is expanding its African Pride HiLites kit with The Vibrant Collection. According to the company, it’s the only highlighting kit on the market with both vibrant colors and conditioning agents. Shades include sun-kissed blonde, juicy plum and red hot spice. The original kit comes with a highlighting cap, while The Vibrant Collection comes with a comb for quick-and-easy placement of bolder colors.

With brunettes at the fashion forefront, **Wella American Classics’** (800/935-5273, wellausa.com) five new shades in its Color Charm Sugar & Spice Collection is right on target. The colors are divided among three separate tonal families—warm, warm red and warm violet. The warm series has two brunette shades, 7W Caramel and 6W Praline, which deliver buttery, warm brunette tones for clients who are a level 4 or lighter. They are also great for gray coverage. The warm red series, 5WR Allspice, provides warm, appealing tones for natural brunettes who are level 3 and lighter. Finally, the warm violet series features the last two shades, which are 7WV Nutmeg and 5WV Cinnamon. These shades create rich, spicy tones with an underlying burgundy note for customers who are a level 3 or lighter.

A number of companies are saving shelf space with permanent lines that become semi- or demipermanent when used with lower volumes of developer. That’s just what **Jingles International** (800/783-9969, jinglesinternational.com) has done with the introduction of Volume 5 Developer, as well as four new colors. The multiuse developer is intended as a creative tool for hair colorists that transforms the existing Jingles Professional haircolor line into a semi/demi hybrid. The four new Jingles shades—The Tobacco Series—expand the definition with dark tobacco, light tobacco, dark golden blonde and light sun blonde.

Rounding out the trends, you can’t forget about men, which is why **DeveloPlus** (888/692-3008, developlus.com) is introducing Suede, a men’s color line that provides gray blending or coverage in 5 to 15 minutes. The introductory pack comes with a DVD on usage, as well as a swatch ring. Stores can use the DVD to educate employees or to play in the store. The company also offers Satin, a tube color line that can be permanent or semipermanent, depending on the developer volume used. A spokesperson says the adjustable line permits simplified, perfect matching between the regrowth and more porous ends.



IMAGE COURTESY OF SOFTSHEEN-CARSON

“HOLD AN EVENING CLINIC OR PARTY TO GIVE CUSTOMERS [WITH STRONG INTERESTS IN BEAUTY AND EXPERIMENTATION] A COLOR CLASS.”

hair but avoid damage—which brings everyone back to conditioning color.

“Everyone is trying to figure out how to formulate color for relaxed hair,” says Kim Scarborough, brand manager for Revlon Professional Products. “One option is collagen-based color because collagen protects the hair and builds up the protein.”

Standifer adds, “We know for a fact that colors with conditioning agents have great value to ethnic women. That’s why all of our products, including hair color, have a substantial conditioning component.”

“Women want personalized color without damage,” agrees Buckley-O’Hora. “That’s why our new Clairol Professional Premium Crème color is infused with a unique, deep-conditioning soy complex. Soy is known for its antioxidant qualities, and it keeps the hair soft without over-conditioning fine hair.”

Whether it’s wheat protein, hydrolyzed collagen or moisturizing essential oils, both professionals and consumers are familiar with the benefits and are seeking out color products with these

ingredients. Store owners and employees who understand their importance and can differentiate between color brands that meet special needs will be well on their way to becoming color central for a slew of color-centric customers.

WALKING THE WALK

Knowing what’s hot is one thing; being able to promote and sell it is another. Great displays are a good start. So are product ranges that address the needs of everyone from teens to the more mature to multicultural clients.

Jet Rhys, owner of Jet Rhys Hair in San Diego, says she buys four color lines from four different beauty supply stores. What does she look for in a store?

“The color lines must be dust free and well-stocked, meaning that nothing—neutral, gold or red—should be missing from the line,” says Rhys. “Not only do I need hair color, but I also need bleach, peroxide, gloves, foil, tint brushes and combs, color bowls, highlighting combs, stain remover, color accelerator, plastic caps and cotton. This is why it is so important to establish relationships with the stores



“HAVE EMPLOYEES WITH COSMETOLOGY BACKGROUNDS DO COLOR ON MANNEQUIN HEADS TO HELP CONSUMERS CHOOSE A COLOR.”

I buy from.” She also likes it when her supplier shares color tips and techniques, which is an idea any store can adopt for consumers and pros.

“There are consumers out there who not only color their own hair but also color their friends’ hair,” notes O’Donnell. “I’d hold an evening clinic or party event to give those customers a color class.”

Finding out who they are isn’t always easy but if you track who buys more than one color per month and tie your computer system to frequent buyer programs and gather email addresses, you’ll be able to target those customers who have a strong interest in beauty and experimentation and help them expand their skill sets in a fun setting.

Whether your shoppers are consumers or professionals, education is key. And Tarrant says all-around stylists often need more color expertise. “On the professional end, the key to selling is education,” she stresses. “We have an entire educational team whose members travel to provide it. We even have a Level 1 certification, which covers color basics, the laws of color, our brands and their uses, as well as color techniques and placement. Our certification approach

ties everything together with the cut and style, so the stylist is empowered to deliver great color results.”

Passive shelf displays don’t attract extreme interest but when salespeople chat up shoppers, attention increases tenfold. Today, that interaction can be expanded digitally through enewsletters and emailed offers, says Grant-Williams.

“The gift with purchase goes a long way to increasing sales, even if you just add something as simple as a comb that can be used with color,” she adds. “In the store, if you have employees with cosmetology backgrounds, doing color on a mannequin head helps consumers who have no idea how to choose a color.”

Standifer says stores should take a cue from department stores that display related items together. “It’s an excellent model for increasing sales,” he says. Not only does this approach apply to permanent color and its companion demi- or semipermanent shades for color refreshing, it also brings in the whole realm of color products that build sales tickets on the spot. ■

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