

Advancing Technology and the Science of Beauty

By Natasha Spencer-Jolliffe

Beauty, personal care and tech aficionados are increasingly looking for proven ingredients, systems and services that capture their need for convenient, responsible and effective products. From the developing world of blockchain and the metaverse to provable on-pack claims and comprehensive clinical studies, science and technology is providing evidence of efficacy to help consumers place their trust in new ideas. Meanwhile, clinical trials offer potential for gray areas like cannabinoids to become trusted health staples of the future.

One big technological and behavioral shift taking place in the beauty and personal care industry is the entry of non-fungible tokens (NFT). These units of data, stored on a blockchain, are used to represent ownership of unique items. Beauty and personal care brands are beginning to leverage NFTs as a way to offer exclusive, collectible items to loyal consumers and brand advocates. Over the past year, beauty brands have followed other industries like music and art to create NFT collections, providing customers with both digital and physical versions of products.

“NFT marketing in the beauty industry will continue to grow in the year ahead as a key way for brands to excite and engage consumers,” says Alice Chang, CEO and Founder of beauty tech company Perfect Corp. “NFTs have quickly emerged as the next big trend and revenue stream in the beauty and personal care industries.”

Perfect Corp believes its NFT solution signifies a ‘next evolution’ by enabling tokens that can be worn virtually through the use of augmented reality (AR) technology. As with any new innovation or experience, it can take some time for consumers to fully embrace and integrate new technologies into their everyday lives. “However, as the world moves forward, the metaverse will become a key aspect of how we shop and interact with brands as well as friends and family,” says Chang. Immersive shopping experiences and NFTs are tipped to allow consumers access to enhanced personalization, recommendations and shoppertainment, with Chang adding: “The metaverse and NFTs will take digital experiences to the next level and allow consumers to fully express themselves in these new digital spaces.”

Back in the better understood physical realm, demands are more straightforward. “Consumers want brands that not only have great and efficacious products but support the same causes that they care about,” says Lori Edwards, Vice President of Sales, Marketing and Product Development at ShiKai. “Transparency is a word that we hear repeatedly in our industry—consumers want to know what is in their products and what those ingredients are doing for their bodies.”

To answer body care consumers' demands, Shikai adds allergy icons, ingredient callouts and company certifications to its packaging, as well as a QR code so consumers can scan products in-store and learn more about ingredients and effects. This combines instant, simple messaging

Source: Innova Database



with more in-depth evidence and information for those who want to delve deeper. If the detailed data stands up to scrutiny, it increases trust in the simplified on-pack claims.

Beso Wellness saw one category that is growing at an astonishing rate. “The natural pain management sourced product craze is mind-blowing—everywhere you look another hemp product is being introduced,” says founder Megan Blackwell. The company launched its latest hemp seed oil massage topical against a backdrop of a growing demand for natural healing products. The Beso Wellness line strives to be a luxury brand, stating that it chooses the highest quality, clean and organic ingredients. “Therapeutic results are felt instantly as the key ingredients of hemp seeds repair the cellular layer and take inflammation right out,” says Blackwell, in a perfect example of claims that require scientific evidence. And so it is to science that both consumers and producers turn.

In what it claims is a first of its kind, healthtech B-corporation Radicle Science has launched large-scale, blinded, placebo-controlled clinical trials on rare cannabinoids, with particular relevance to personal care. Researchers specifically aim to study the effects of the cannabinoids THCV, CBN, CBG and CBC on energy, focus, appetite, sleep disturbance, pain, stress and anxiety. The results could have far-reaching implications for the personal care sphere.

Radicle Science’s studies will involve more than 10,000 participants. The company says it offers the first-ever scalable path to validate and predict the effects of health and wellness products, transforming them into democratized precision solutions for ailments, or to enhance

human function. The latest trials come after the completion of 25 randomized controlled trials (RCTs) of cannabinoid products. The Radicle Real World Evidence (RWE) studies, which took place in 2021 and involved over 7,000 participants, examined various formulations of CBD-containing products and their effect on key health outcomes. These were measured across five domains including general wellbeing, quality of life, sleep quality, pain and feelings of stress and anxiety.

The upcoming trials will explore a variety of scenarios and influences relating to CBG, CBC, CBN and THCV, including:

- The effect of CBG on stress, anxiety, pain, and sleep disturbance
- The effect of CBC on pain, anxiety, and sleep disturbance
- The effect of CBN on sleep disturbance, stress, anxiety, and pain
- The effect of THCV on energy, focus, and appetite

Dr Jeff Chen, Co-founder and CEO of Radicle Science, says: “We aim to support our mission of creating a movement that redefines the research paradigm and enables evidence-based decision making across the health and wellness industry, starting with cannabinoids.”

Managing Director Michelle Shuffett adds: “Cannabis self-care is on the rise, and with a variety of cannabinoid-containing products to choose from on shelves consumers should have access to rigorous clinical data to understand the effects of the ingredients in order to make informed decisions.” Consumers can expect to see this knowledge translated into innovations and development from brands within the personal care sector.

“For the first time, consumers will be able to make informed choices when choosing rare cannabinoid-containing health and wellness products,” says Shuffett. “Brands in the personal care sector can use these insights to inform their product development strategy, and also leverage the Radicle Science approach to study existing products and formulations in development in order to better understand the effect on health-related outcomes.”

The personal care industry may see the increased emphasis on CBD in clinical studies influence what consumers demand from their products, services and innovations, both in terms of research and the progression of the industry. “The mission of Radicle Science is to create a movement that redefines the research paradigm and enables evidence-based decision making across the health and wellness industry,” says Shuffett. “We envision a future where affordable, accessible, health and wellness products are trusted by patients, recommended by healthcare providers, reimbursed by insurance and used as widely as pharmaceutical drugs.”

