

Report: Interest in natural beauty outpaces sales

Written by AP

Tuesday, 16 December 2008 16:29

NEW YORK (AP) Ñ Natural beauty products aren't a young thing, rich thing, crunchy thing or hipster thing.

According to market researcher NPD Group, the interest in beauty items defined as natural, organic, green or socially conscious is reaching across every demographic group, even if sales are not always following.

In a new report, NPD reports 79 percent of 2,096 beauty shoppers very or somewhat interested in "natural beauty" products, but 64 percent reporting using them. That number dips to 26 percent usage of "green/eco-friendly" products, although interest is still high at 71 percent.

Karen Grant, NPD's top beauty analyst, says the disparity probably comes mostly from consumer confusion and skepticism.

"'Natural' is the most important word, but people want to know more. They want to see certification or know what makes it natural or organic," Grant says.

Perception that these products cost more also could be limiting use, she said, though most natural products are priced comparably to similarly positioned brands that use synthetics.

"This might be a carry-over perception from food where regular milk is \$2 and organic milk is \$4," she says.

The industry also faces different challenges in different age demographics.

Younger consumers are an easier audience to reach, according to NPD, but older ones are more loyal. "Older consumers are interested in recycling and have a broader world view; younger consumers are more likely to use natural products, but they're largely driven by what's

Report: Interest in natural beauty outpaces sales

Written by AP

Tuesday, 16 December 2008 16:29

new and might not stick with it," says Grant.

Linda Wells, Allure magazine's editor-in-chief, expects the big beauty players to put even more research and development dollars into this area soon.

"The industry needs to evolve the products," says Wells. "They need to be better performing, smell better and last longer."

One big brand entering the natural-care market is Victoria's Secret Beauty.

The company is rolling out Naturally Victoria's Secret, a body-care line including moisturizers, cleansers and scrubs, this spring.

The products focus on key pairings of natural elements Ñ such as blackberry (a known astringent) and tonka bean (antioxidant) Ñ as well as reiterating just how sexy "natural" can be.

Karine Schnapp, VS Beauty's vice president of brand development and creative, says shoppers repeatedly report that they feel their sexiest when they just wake up Ñ with no makeup on and their hair a mess Ñ or on a lazy weekend afternoon when they're in a camisole and jeans.