

THE CREATIVE PROCESS AND USING YOUR FIVE SENSES



Often inspiration is in front of you, but you're too busy to see it. Making a conscious decision to use every sense to be inspired opens a world of applicable ideas.



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IMPACT POINTS

- Take note of unique food ingredients or combinations. There may be a pattern that can be applied to beauty product creation.
- Considering the packaging, performance, benefits and the experience with common non-beauty consumer items may illuminate transferable ideas.

Chances are that your best ideas do not come to you when you are in your office from 9-5. Unfortunately, most of you work in a vacuum where you rarely think outside of your responsibilities and your industry. This tendency to limit yourselves is a major impediment to creativity. To facilitate creativity you need to be in tune with your five senses at all times.

In the beauty industry, consumers are continually seeking what's next and what's new, challenging you to invent new and unique products and services. In order to continually create new products, you need inspiration. Inspiration happens from a variety of stimuli, and the best ideas often come to you when you are least expecting it—usually when you are not trying to solve a problem. Often inspiration and information are in front of you, but you are too busy to see it. So the next time you are not working, think about the activities you do outside the office and see how you can find inspiration.

Eating and Cooking


Whether you enjoy dining out or cooking in, ingredients are a key factor in your eating or cooking experience. From traditional home cooking to trendy cocktails to the gastro-molecular movement, new ingredients, uses and combinations of ingredients continually present themselves. Take note of unique ingredients or combinations and you may begin to notice a pattern that can be applied to your work in beauty.

Other characteristics to keep in mind include aesthetics such as the smell, taste, color, texture and presentation of your food. Aromas and tastes are an integral part of your daily experiences. In addition, color and the way food is displayed, as well as the texture and mouth feel, add to your sensory experience. For instance, if you have eaten at a restaurant whose cuisine is unfamiliar, you probably were much more aware of your surroundings. The newness of the atmosphere, scents, unfamiliar

ingredients, unusual combinations and presentation of food made this dining experience unique and different from the everyday.

Now reflect on vanilla. Do you remember when vanilla was just for baking? Today, it is ubiquitous; it has crossed markets and is available not only in the food and beverage sector, but in air care products, personal care products and fine fragrances.

For your next ingredient story, look at the local, seasonal and exotic ingredients such as fruits, vegetables, and seasonings that chefs are using and grocery stores are carrying. Are there any proven health benefits for this ingredient? Does it have



a signature scent? Are there unusual and unexpected combinations or pairings happening? Pushing the envelope further, one of the hottest trends in food preparation is pickling. Can you transfer this technique into your manufacturing process or product line? These are the types of questions you should be asking yourself when you are cooking or eating.

Home and Family

From being a couch potato to redesigning your home to spending time with your children, design and functionality are two important aspects of your home life. For your next application or delivery system idea, pay attention to the consumer packaged goods you use everyday—such as your daily grooming products, household goods or your child's favorite toy. You can even find inspiration from your drink of choice or your food staples—from their innovative packaging to their fortified ingredients. For example, Sniffle Buddies are absorbent, antibacterial and eco-friendly wristbands designed for kids to wipe their runny noses on instead of their sleeves or hands. This product was developed by two moms who began using sports wristbands to solve this problem.

In addition to consumer packaged goods, be aware of architecture, furniture, accessories and materials found in your home. Many associate Tyvek, DuPont's lightweight and water-resistant material,

with construction and the FedEx envelope. Believe it or not, Tyvek can be found in fashion such as American Apparel's shorts and jacket.

While lounging at home or cleaning up after your children, look at the packaging, performance, benefits and the experience you have with common consumer items. Is there a design element you take for granted that you can utilize in your next prototype?

Entertainment

Traveling, cultural events, video games and entertainment play a significant and emotional role in the products and services you choose. Consumers want to be engaged and have fun. Often fun is associated with youth and kids, but this trend affects all ages. Each time you travel or attend an art exhibit, theater,

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concert or sporting event, notice the colors, costumes, uniforms, set design and lighting. Digging deeper, challenge yourself to take in the smells and sounds of your setting. Pay attention to the interaction you experience and how and why you are engaged. What made your experience fun and memorable or boring and unpleasant? You may recall going to the movies to experience the big screen and surround sound. Currently, because of technology such as high-definition TV, you can reproduce the experience in the luxury of your own home. For further evidence, look at Nintendo's Wii phenomenon and what it has done to the video game industry.

Before you attend your next event, be prepared to be fully involved, using all your senses. What grabbed your attention? Did you observe any common themes such as a recurring color, a sound pattern or expected behavior? Can you use this sensory experience to enhance your products or services? In a retail environment, is there a signature scent diffused through the air or a themed music mix that subtly draws you in?

Final Thoughts

These are just a few examples of the many activities you experience outside your office. There are a myriad of personal interests that will lead you to creativity. Next time you are out of the office, deliberately examine your surroundings. Allow yourself to be receptive to your environment and engage your five senses. See how you might apply your sensory experiences to solve your next

creative challenge. When you are grocery shopping, cooking or dining out, is there an ingredient that keeps appearing? While you are playing with your kids, pay more attention to their imaginative interaction with toys. Is there an idea for a novel application? What's the "it" color and how can you translate this into your product? Do you use this color for your packaging, label or the product itself?

For quick and easy inspiration, look at consumer packaged goods outside the beauty industry and see if there is any crossover that can be utilized in your category. For example, if you work in fine fragrance, examine distilled spirits. These two categories may appear different, but upon further inspection, they are similar. Their packaging, luxury branding, positioning and how they communicate their brand messages are alike. If you are feeling really stuck, step outside your comfort zone, do something different, and put your senses to work. Recognize what you are experiencing and how it makes you feel. The challenge is to use your sensory experiences and channel this new awareness into creative new product opportunities. ■ GCI



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