



Facial Skincare - A Virtual Reflection

As we cautiously emerge from this global pandemic, we are still understanding how it has radically impacted many industries both negatively and positively.

There is no question on the profound impact it has had on the entire beauty industry. For many of the large prestige houses, mainly Estee Lauder companies and L'Oréal Luxe it has been their skincare portfolios that have seen the most positive trends and helped alleviate major declines in other categories.

With all forms of communication moving to zooms and skype, video linking with people's faces on screens became the new normal way to interact with the world.

The ritual of 'getting ready for work' changed as people were no longer leaving their houses. People embraced the opportunity of working in more casual clothes in the comfort of their own home.

Similarly, the ritual of 'making-up' the face reformed. Those who wore full coverage foundation, concealer, bronzer, eyeliner, brow product, mascara and lipstick on a daily basis were finding it difficult to justify all this application when their rare contact with the outside world would now likely be a delivery driver.

The ardent few continued to put their full face of make-up on for the camera, however the majority soon refined their routine to a more natural concealer and mascara quick fix-up that made them feel a little more presentable for work.

Interestingly a recent poll indicated that more than 55% of women are now wearing less make up than they did pre-pandemic.

There is no doubt that the immediate switch to the virtual world attributed to an increase in focus on the face.

Constantly being able to see your own face on computer certainly makes people more conscious of their appearance. The virtual world highlighting every blemish, imperfection, and line.

This recurring reflection combined with the closure of beauty salons and spas meant that those who loved to take good care of their skin with facials and treatments were desperate to try new skincare products to improve their complexion.

The power of social media

With the restrictions to reaching beauticians for advice, social media took on the role as being the ultimate platform to educate on what brands to try out.

One of the most successful brands of skincare over the past year is Cerave, an affordable American pharmacy brand that was born from the need to create appropriate products for atopic skin.

(In Ireland 1 in 5 children and 1 in 10 adults suffer from extreme sensitive atopic skin conditions)

Cerave was launched in Ireland in 2019 and was included in the 'Irish times best beauty launches' that year. It was performing very well considering its infancy in Europe, nevertheless its feature on Tiktok (the latest social media platform for creating, sharing, and discovering short videos) catapulted the brand into massive global success.

A Tiktok influencer with 7m followers reviewed the Cerave products and tutored his viewers on why the brands salicylic acid ingredients are ideal for acne prone skin and why Cerave's non-stripping hydrating cleanser is best for dry sensitive skin. Even though this 'skinfluencer' is not a qualified dermatologist, he has won trust and a loyal following from a massive Gen-Z audience.

This sizeable audience caused a frenzy about the brand and soon it was flying off the shelves in pharmacies. Fortunately, there has been a steady supply distribution and the product remains accessible with fewer periods of out of stocks than would have been expected with such a surge in demand.

Keeping it local

There are many global brands appreciating positive sales spikes recently, however we all know how important it is to buy Irish now more than ever. The goal is to keep money circulating in the community and support Irish businesses and families.

We are very fortunate here in Ireland that our desire to grow, manufacture and export quality

Written by Roisin Murray, Premium Beauty Buyer, McCauley Health & Beauty Pharmacy

produce is not confined to one single industry. We boast some excellent skincare brands born from Irish people with passion who've decided to go for it, entrepreneurs working to the highest standard of innovative skincare creating products championed by experts globally.

Pestle & Mortar's hyaluronic acid, Kinvara's Natural Skincare Cleansing oil, Green Angel's Seaweed and Collagen Face cream and Codex Beauty's Facial oil, to name some of the best products you can get when it comes to skincare and all created on our home soil.

Not only are customers more conscious of the origin of what they buy, they are more conscious about what they are putting in their bodies and on their skin.

There has been a significant shift in preference for more natural and organic products rather than cosmeceutical brands.

In turn, many skincare brands have invested heavily in making their ingredients as 'clean' as possible whilst also reviewing their packaging to make it entirely sustainable. We are seeing more and more vegan friendly and eco-friendly products on our shelves as the demand for these brands is rising.

External factors leading to growth

External factors are also contributing to growth in skincare categories, for example when gyms are closed people are outdoors, running, walking, cycling, swimming all meaning more time exposed to UVA & UVB rays. As people are more aware and invested in their skin, they are purchasing more facial SPF to protect against sun damage which leads to pigmentation & ageing.

Face Coverings is another example where people have had to purchase some correction skincare products as they suffered from either 'Mascne' acne from blocked



pores due to mask wearing or have suffered from very dry skin and dryness around the eyes.

The total lockdown experience has also been very stressful on people who experience various changes to their skin because of stress. Psoriasis flare ups and dermatitis from intensified sanitising and washing. These have attributed the need for further skincare solutions to relieve these problems.

Skin experts

A very important part of the skincare offering in our pharmacies is our service. Our skilled staff must be able to help our customers shop for the specific skin focus they have.

To develop our colleagues, we implemented a Virtual McCauley Master class on our Skin Brands for all our staff who support our skincare category. We carry out intensive brand training over several weeks empowering our colleagues to educate our customers who visit our stores.

By keeping up-to-date with latest trends and technology in the industry, with the right skincare product ranges on offer and the skilled service supporting these, both in-store and virtually we are confident we are set up to continue growth into the future.