

world. It is incredible that so many great creations have been composed in such a highly pressured environment.

America is now the world center of creative perfumery. A free society, we are more receptive to innovation than the old world. The American revolution in perfumery is now touching Europe. Until ten years ago, an Opium would have been considered an "American perfume" in the pejorative sense.

One of the most important trends in American perfumery today is a floral one. I believe, however, that this will change. In perfumery, as in

other arts, abstraction is the future. As tastes become more and more sophisticated, creativity gains more and more leeway. The beginnings of this are already in evidence. For example, green notes, once reserved for sophisticated markets, are successfully filtering down to mass market fragrances.

We will transcend the usual classical accords, whose elements (like jasmine) are no longer common to the experience of the urban dweller. We move instead towards unusual accords, challenging our imagination and tapping our increasing repertoire of materials.

Birth of a fragrance for a product

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At the conception of a fragrance, marketing presents a briefing on the fragrance type and product profile to the in-house perfumers and three or four perfume supply houses.

Concept: luxury soap to be positioned against "X" soap or "Y" company.

Guidelines: timing two months; fragrance to be completely original, new, and different; to smell expensive but be inexpensive; to cost between "A" and "D."

Marketing's description of the fragrance: something like perfumes "A," "B," "C" and "D," but not really—green but not too green—floral but not too floral—different!!

Gestation follows from this discussion as the perfumers go to their drawing boards; we study "X" soap to be sure we do not duplicate the fragrance. We evaluate and study the best selling perfumes. From there we begin to formulate the original new fragrance.

The perfumer works with natural oils, synthetics, chemicals, and specialties. We formulate and re-formulate until we have achieved the proper balance and feel our perfume will be a winner. The perfume is then put into the soap base and milled into soap bars.

Complications result when the perfume oil contains an ingredient that is on the suspect list of RIFM, so it must be replaced. The perfumer goes back to the drawing board to work on a replacement. When we have solved this problem, the new fragrance is then sent to the soap group to be put into soap bars for testing.

The product group formulates the fragrance into a bar of soap. The soap is evaluated for both

color and odor stability under room temperature and rapid aging conditions. We receive candidates from the outside suppliers, and they too undergo these stability studies.

When the fragrance is unstable in the desired soap base or the fragrance causes unacceptable color changes upon aging, reformulation is necessary. Once acceptable stability is achieved, labor begins.

The first stage of labor is consumer evaluation of the new fragrance candidates. Small in-house sniff panels of about twenty people are conducted to evaluate the new fragrances (in-house plus outside house candidates) against soap "X." Typically, the panelists are asked to read the luxury soap concept developed by marketing and evaluate each soap fragrance for preference and for how well it matches the concept.

A complication arises when the new fragrance candidates lose to soap "X" in the initial screening. The perfumer goes back to the formulation drawing board again. The supply houses are asked to reformulate their fragrances and re-submit candidates.

The second stage of labor begins once fragrances have been received and have successfully passed the small sniff panels. Additional larger scale in-house sniff tests are then conducted. Keeping the concept in mind, these sniff panels pit the new in-house fragrance against the outside candidates and all against soap "X." The ultimate goal is to obtain one or two fragrances from all the candidates which match the concept and beat soap "X" for larger-scale testing.

Once the field of candidates is narrowed down to one or two through the in-house sniff panels, the market research department is summoned to assist the delivery through stage three and the birth of the new fragrance in soap.

Large-scale consumer testing is the third stage of labor. The market research department fields a large-scale consumer sniff panel (using 100 to 400 people) in malls, shopping plazas, etc. to determine reactions to the fragrance candidates and concept matching. The candidates can be tested against each other and also against soap "X."

Based on the results, the winning candidate is selected for further testing. Not only is the initial fragrance important here, but also how the fragrance stands up in the soap under normal usage conditions in the bath, shower, and at the sink.

A serious complication can result when the formulas are submitted for medical clearance prior to the placement of any of the winning candidates from the large sniff panel into a home usage test. Sometimes, supplier information on the perfume components and their safety (which, by the way, is given to the medical services department only) is sufficient to allow medical clearance. If insufficient data is available on the safety of the components, studies must be conducted for sensitization prior to approval. The necessary studies can take up to three months, thus delaying the ultimate birth of the fragrance.

Once safety clearance is obtained for the winning candidates, they then undergo the final stage of testing in large-scale consumer home usage tests. Since soap "X" is the target, it too will undergo the usage testing.

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The test design can be of the single placement type, where each test participant is given either one of the soaps with the new fragrance or soap "X," to use for an extended period of time at home. Another design used is a head-to-head comparison of the new fragrance and soap "X." In this design each participant is given one of the soaps to use for a period of time, then given the other.

In both designs, the participants can be given the concept statement when the test is fielded. At the end of the home usage test period, the participants are requested to answer questionnaires containing various attribute categories for the fragrance, overall bar soap performance, and concept matching. Once the results are tabulated, the winning new fragrance is about to be born.

The marketing group reviews the test results and approves the birth of the fragrance. The perfumer issues the new fragrance formula and full scale production of the new soap is begun. The fragrance is born!!

The progress the infant makes after its long and sometimes stormy delivery depends on marketing, which assumes the task of caring for the new-born product through its positioning and advertising. If marketing fails to guide and help this new and different soap along in the competitive world, even though the product and fragrance are on target with the initial concept, the young life may be doomed.

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Purchasing fragrances

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I will discuss what is involved in a total fragrance launch from purchasing's viewpoint based on the Avon system.

First of all, we recognize that purchasing is strictly an arm, a tool of the marketing department. We take our direction initially from marketing and design. In the launch of a fragrance we really have two prime areas to develop: the fragrance itself and all of the components that go into the package which will support the fragrance statement.

I would like to outline a few of the decisions

behind both of these aspects.

First, we get a profile, a description of exactly what marketing wants, both for the packaging and for the fragrance. When dealing with fragrance, we try to extract as much information from the total marketing plan as possible. This includes the promotional image, the target group, and any packaging information. This is relayed to the perfumers so that they can create around the packaging and total promotional image that is planned for the item.

The first step in the development process is