

FACE, PLACE AND SPACE

The beauty consumer landscape is changing faster than ever. **Stirling Murray** reveals his insights on how beauty brands can get a sense of solidity when everything around us is changing at lightspeed.

How do brands keep pace with their target market in a world of absolute fluidity and continuous hyper-change? No sooner does a brand spot its target market and then it is gone. No sooner does it have a fix on where to be listed and then the horizon rapidly changes again.

This year's annual Beauty Symposium brought together an expert panel to explore these issues. The Face, Place and Space theme provided a way of



looking at how you and your beauty brand can get a sense of solidity when everything around you is changing – from the target market and retail landscape to the competition and methods of communicating.

FACE – WHAT IS THE FACE OF YOUR BRAND?

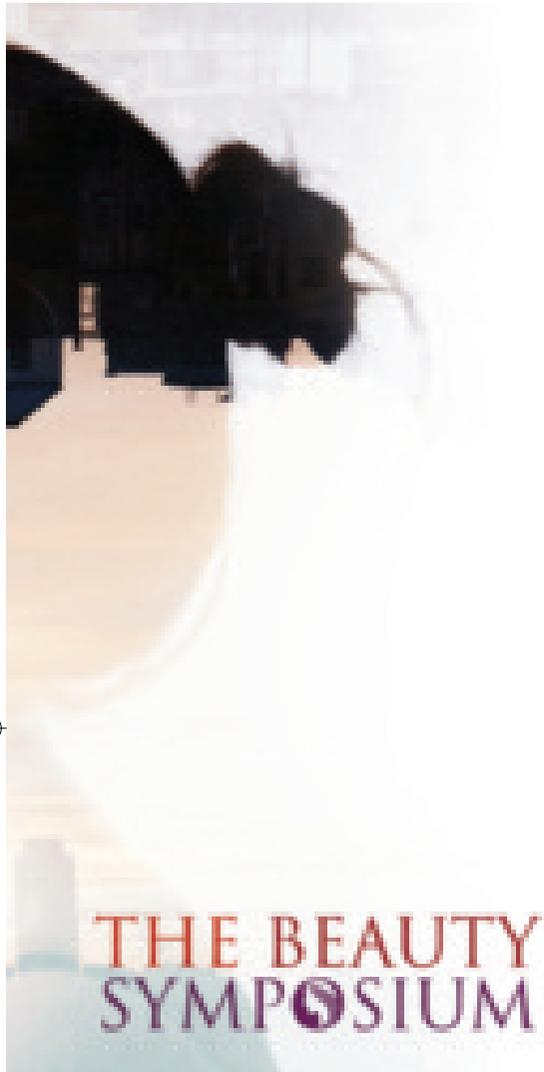
Every brand has to be diamond sharp in its personality and how that is expressed. It needs to have consistency in its tone of voice and visual assets. We all recognise faces so a target

market needs to recognise the face of your beauty brand. We like faces that are truthful and honest, that don't exaggerate and tell it like it is.

PLACE – WHO IS YOUR TARGET MARKET?

Who is your target market? You would be astonished at how many new and established brands we see that are unable





to answer that simple question. Know where your target consumer resides both for information and the likely place of purchase and plan to be there. As we often say to clients – it's not about your brand, it's about your audience.

SPACE – WHAT IS YOUR UNIQUE SELLING POINT?

Build space around your brand so that it occupies a place that is unique. Critically question why your brand is different, how it genuinely benefits the consumer and why it is better than its competitive set. Be honest – if answering these questions is difficult and you cannot

build space then maybe you need more work on developing your brand and its personality. Consumers and buyers will see through anything that is a me-too brand or a brand that has no real reason for being.

HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE UK BEAUTY MARKET

Every beauty category is saturated. Spend five minutes in a world-class store like Selfridges and the sheer number of brands fighting for attention is overwhelming. Brand blindness – the inability to distinguish between one brand and another – sets in quickly. You need to make sure your brand's face is recognised and has a unique space surrounding around it.

UK beauty consumers are savvy. They are promotionally literate, looking for instant results, celebrity obsessed, love to browse and they are increasingly cynical about brand and product claims. A beauty consumer will shop for shower gel in Tesco, nail colour in Superdrug, lipsticks in Harvey Nichols and Amazon for premium. There are no rules anymore – except to be where your target market expects to find you.

If you are in the male grooming market men no longer shop where you expected them to. They buy online, at their barber's or in specialist retailers, very rarely making their own purchase in-store. It's essential for your brand to be in the right place – if it's not, your marketing efforts will be wasted.

Despite the rigid structure of the market there are more opportunities than ever for niche and new brands to secure routes to market. E-tailers like



Not On The High Street, ASOS and Groupon are now determined to grow a strong beauty business, as are TK Maxx and specialists like Myshowcase and BeautyMart. You need to consider that these new retail spaces could be where your target market might be shopping.

Buyers are approached by five to ten new brands a week. Bricks-and-mortar buyers are becoming increasingly risk adverse. Less so for the major e-commerce sites but even they are becoming fatigue-weary of new brands. Face and space helps distinguish your brand from others and provides a compelling reason for a buyer to take a risk.

There are of course many other factors that build brand success but getting the face, place and space of your brand right will help to build stability when all is changing around you. It's like building a house. Think of face, place and space as the foundations – they need to be deep and strong enough to support the architecture and building of your brand.

Stirling Murray is CEO and Founder of The Red Tree and has over 35 years' international



experience of building businesses and brands in the global beauty industry. The Red Tree is a leading international consultancy specialising in the global beauty market. Working with a wide range of businesses, from start-ups to international brands, it creates and implements long term strategy and vision, getting brands ready for market and helping launch new brands. It develops international growth strategies as well as managing brands on behalf of international brand owners. The Red Tree also organises The Beauty Symposium, which is a yearly event featuring an eclectic mix of speakers to inspire, inform and surprise with all net proceeds going to the charity Look Good Feel Better. For more information visit the website theredtree.co.uk, send an email to smurray@theredtree.co.uk or call 0844 858 8860.