

Engaging the Senses

Case study: Bold colors and ergonomic details give Sephora's bath and body packages strong shelf presence.

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The Sephora team knows what it takes to sell products in a self-service environment. For instance, it knows that packaging must draw customers in on every level, appealing to their senses of sight, smell, and touch. True to form, the retailer has designed its private-label bath and body collection to command attention.

The line's packages seem to include every color in the spectrum. Each vibrant shade corresponds with a specific product scent, and each product name sounds so enticing that consumers won't be able to resist taking a sniff. When held in the hand, the packages offer tactile qualities and ergonomic details that seal the deal.

A RAINBOW OF COLOR

Part of Sephora's brand identity is simple, streamlined packaging that shows off vibrant product colors. The bath and body collection is no different. "The variety of color in this line is truly an extension of our

brand positioning," explains Catherine Marovich, Sephora Merchant.

Different gradients of color were used on the plastic bottles and tottles. Clear bottles and tottles show off the boldly colored bubble baths, body washes, and scrubs. Other bottles were tinted with color. Because the body lotions are white, their opaque bottles were colored. The dry-oil moisturizer bottles, which contain clear liquid, were also tinted.

Zorbit Resources (New York City), which designed all of the custom

bottle shapes together with Sephora, worked on color matching.

There were 72 different color matches across different materials. "We are proud to say that we hit more than 50 matches on the first submission," says Tom Butkiewicz, president, Zorbit Resources.

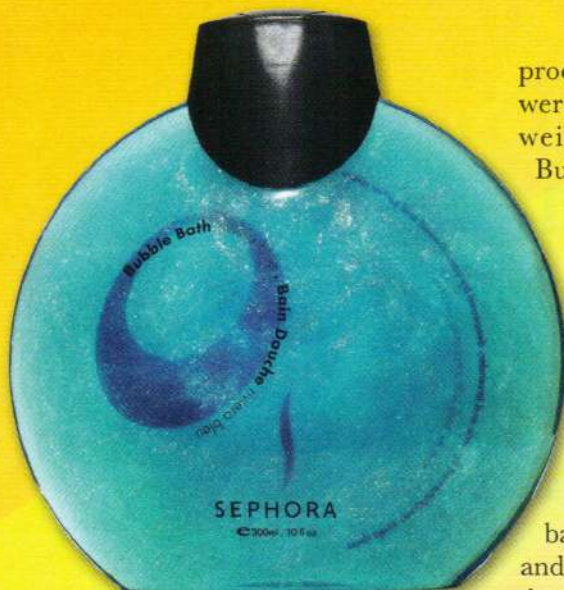
ENGINEERED TO BE SQUEEZABLE

Bottle density was another factor that had to be considered. According to Rod Hough, director of packaging, Zorbit Resources, the challenge



An array of transparent streamlined packages allow product colors and textures to stand out.

Bottles and Tottles



A thumb-sized recess on the back of this bottle allows for ergonomic handling.

with producing the extrusion-blow-molded bottles was controlling the color.

Color can vary on a package, for instance, when some areas of a bottle have thicker walls than other areas. "Color consistency is impossible to control one-hundred percent; however, this can also make every package unique," says Hough.

Bottle density also affects how squeezable a bottle is. "We chose bottles that would squeeze easily, yet still securely house the product without cracking or breaking," says Marovich.

"The forms needed to be rigid enough to hold their shape, yet squeezable enough to dispense

product easily. Through testing, we were able to find the proper gram weight to satisfy both needs," Butkiewicz explains.

ERGONOMIC SHAPES

The bottle and tottle shapes are streamlined and contemporary—and practical. One primary design goal was to make sure that all of the shapes would make the products easier to use in the shower or the bath. For instance, the circular bubble bath bottle is rounded in the front and flat in the back. "We molded a thumbprint-sized recess on the back of the bottle to make it easier to grasp," says Marovich.

"The shapes are architectural in nature. They're designed to be something to display in the home, not just a container that holds a product," adds Butkiewicz. "We were asked to design the bottles around a particular cap, which was a shape already owned by Sephora."

A MINIMALIST AESTHETIC

When it came to choosing the graphics to print on the bottle, Sephora took the minimalist route. "In our experience, a little goes a long way. We chose key sound bites of information about the product to [display on the packaging]," explains Marovich.

The product name and ingredient information were printed in a

CHOOSING THE RIGHT SCENTS

For its bath and body collection, Sephora's team collaborated with Jeanine Recckio on product development. Recckio is founder of trend forecast company Mirror Mirror Imagination Group.

"Jeanine [helped to select the] fragrances [we chose] and helped to develop key items for the collection," says Catherine Marovich, Sephora Merchant. "The collection includes an extensive flavor library, with different scent families ranging from fruits to gourmands and Orientals."

unique way. For the body lotion, body wash, and body scrub bottles, sentences were printed vertically on the bottles. On the round bubble bath bottles, words were printed in a circular pattern, following the outline of the bottle's shape.

Decorating the unusually shaped bottles was no easy feat. "We had to use up to five passes with hand-made jigs to ensure consistency and tight registration. We're proud to say that the deco registration we managed to achieve is second to none," says Butkiewicz.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CAP

A bottle's look may be a hit, but if it has a dispensing cap that doesn't function, the package is a miss. Sephora's team tested a number of caps in various sizes to determine which would best dispense an array of product consistencies and formulations. "We also made sure that the caps were easy to open and close," says Catherine Marovich, Sephora Merchant.

All of the black flip-top dispensing caps were produced by Zorbit Resources from polypropylene and PCTA. A subtle metallic colorant was added to the cap resin. The liquid dry-oil moisturizer spray required a pump supplied by Rexam Dispensing Systems (Purchase, NY) and Emsar Inc. (Stratford, CT).

