

Cosmetics Industry Case Study

The popularity of cosmetics in the last decade has increased rapidly. Many companies have catered to this expanding market with the delivery of new varieties of foundation, lipsticks and mascara, greater marketing and better packaging. Each of these cosmetic products have their own once opened 'use by' dates ranging from a few months to a year. Use by date information and awareness has been limited, however this has begun to change in recent years.



The Challenge

EU regulations have recently incorporated new Periods after Opening (PaO) rules for cosmetic products to provide consumers sufficient information on when the cosmetic products are at their best and safe to use. The open cream jar symbol with its time indication seems to be a step in the right direction towards giving consumers a good idea of how long a product will perform at its optimum level. Yet the issue of remembering exactly when the product was opened still remains.

There are few potential risks regarding the use of cosmetics. One product that has a particularly short life-span once opened is mascara. Some mascara contains an ingredient that breaks down to produce formaldehyde which prevents the growth of bacteria. Mascara that has been open for a long period of time may no longer be producing formaldehyde, allowing bacteria to proliferate. For this reason, it is recommended to replace a tube of mascara every few months.

The Solution

Inexpensive and easy to use Timestrip labels contain a non-toxic tinted liquid dye which, when activated, migrates across the label at a consistent rate. This allows accurate monitoring of the time that has elapsed since a product was opened, providing a reliable visual 'alarm clock'. Timestrips are appropriate wherever a product has a shelf life and labels can be tailored to the period of time which needs to be measured, from a number of hours to 12 months. Timestrip technology is easily adapted for customised printing and can be incorporated into the product packaging itself, adding a highly visible indicator of when the product needs to be used up.

The Result

Timestrip labels provide added value to consumers by offering a valuable method of information for when cosmetic products are at their best and when they could become a health risk. This encourages customers to replace the products more often than they may otherwise have done.