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Wellness: a new brand mission or a new b[r]andwagon

“Wellness: the state of being in good health, especially as an actively pursued goal”

Looking after yourself isn't new thinking: eating a balanced diet, regular exercise, limiting alcohol intake and not smoking have long been the pillars of a long and healthy life.

Wellness extends this, reflecting changing consumer values towards an holistic approach across food and beverage, beauty and personal care, mental health and wellbeing, as well as in the more traditional areas of fitness and nutrition.

Consumers are treating their bodies like an ecosystem and seeking solutions that complement their personal health and evolving needs. [Intel, Global Consumer Trends 2019]

According to Fast Company, the wellness market has grown by 12.8% since 2016, representing 5.3% of the global economy's output. In addition, (according to PinkReport) 68% of consumers buy some natural and organic products as they perceive them as being healthier for their bodies (74%).

First seen in the food industry, the aspiration for clean-living is now taking form in the personal care and beauty sector. 'The Future of Beauty' report by Nielsen shows that products now featuring natural claims represented 3.1% of the market in 2017, generating a turnover of \$1.3bn.

It's therefore no surprise that brands are capitalising on product, innovation, technology, service, distribution and marketing under the wellness banner to entice consumers towards aspirational lifestyles and products.

Under the wellness umbrella, active-wear retailers are selling skincare alongside collagen-infused protein powders (Bandier) and haircare companies are launching ingestibles (Briogeo).¹



But this is not without its controversy: many brands are perceived to be jumping on the wellness bandwagon in order to promote their product or service.

For this to be taken seriously, brands need to do more than simply weave together beauty and wellness messaging; consumers are increasingly wise to brands that are using the wellness label simply as an opportunity to re-position themselves.



In addition, while organisations have relied on a solid base on loyal customers, this is shifting as consumers pay more attention to what peers and influencers say, than brands: 92% of consumers trust recommendations from others, even people they don't know, over branded content.²

It therefore needs to be recognised that brand extension does not necessarily equate to an 'holistic' approach to wellness especially if it's coming from bigger brands.

Consumers shifting their loyalty to the big brands are now choosing instead micro-brands with dynamic and targeted products and a clear wellness ethos woven into all that they do, produce and publicise.

Brands like Alo, Bandier and Briogeo have a flexibility in their approach. They have built a community that allows them to diversify across and embrace a range of categories they work across. This creates a dynamic brand and one that is recognised as standing out in a crowded marketplace.³

But there are still notes of caution. Marc Magliacano, Managing Partner at private equity firm L Catterton, believes brands should tread lightly when expanding into additional categories because people only have so much room in their lives for any one brand. "If you want fitness you may go to Equinox, if you want skin care you may use Elemis, if you want body care you may use Bliss, if you want meditation you may use Headspace. People want to have the option to go curate and edit their own wellbeing, and we know millennials do."⁴

Brands therefore need to ask: when is it about a genuine effort to address overall wellness and well-being rather than brand extension, promotion and opportunity? What—and where—is the genuine combination of personal care and wellness? What does this mean and what does it look like?

And while brand extension rather than diversification seems to be the route being taken by the many of the major brands, defining a wellness angle still requires serious consideration—and a clear strategic intent—rather than a reliance on a loyal consumer base.

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¹ <https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/beauty/why-beauty-needs-to-jump-on-the-wellness-boom>

² <https://blog.realhub.com.au/people-trust-their-friends-family-5-times-more-than-a-brand-message-3db33a9959d9>

³ <https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/beauty/why-beauty-needs-to-jump-on-the-wellness-boom>

⁴ <https://wwd.com/beauty-industry-news/beauty-features/fitness-beauty-and-wellness-converge-tracy-anderson-akt-megan-roup-amanda-kloots-kirsty-godso-1202641144>