

# Naturally Beautiful Hair and Skin

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**Sales of natural and organic personal care products have climbed to \$4.3 billion, and may reach \$6.6 billion in 2010—a 50-percent increase—according to market research firm Packaged Facts. And as the demand for natural personal care products increases, so will the need for reliable, informative product information to keep current consumers on the bandwagon while gaining the attention of outsiders.**

Providers of natural personal care products are challenged to convince consumers that natural products can provide results comparable to conventional products, with greater safety and purity. Luckily, consumers already riding the natural product care wave are helping manufacturers' causes. "Customers in this market are very driven by word of mouth," said Andree Falardeau, president of Canus Goat's Milk in Vermont. That is crucial for proliferation of the organic ideal, but it can be problematic. "The marketplace is very susceptible to rumors about ingredients, which can be hard to dispel."



That's why many companies strive to educate each player in the retail line-up, from managers to sales associates to consumers. "We offer flash cards and brochures for each product that describe the product's function and list each ingredient and its purpose in the formula," said Laura Setzfand, director of marketing for Jason Natural Products.

Other companies like Honeybee Gardens also understand the importance of being forthright in natural care products marketing. In fact, Honeybee Garden's Web site ([www.HoneybeeGardens.com](http://www.HoneybeeGardens.com)) has thorough descriptions for every product in its line and makes reference to what natural ingredients have replaced the synthetic ones. "We make every attempt to spread the word," noted Melissa Hertzler, chief executive officer (CEO). For consumers who want the best for their bodies, information is increasingly available, and it is the retailers' job to showcase the benefits of switching from conventional to natural.

There are several questions to be answered concerning natural personal care products. What functions do certain ingredients serve? What does natural really mean? And how much of a given product, like shampoo, for example, is really organic or natural? As conventional product manufacturers have become aware of the interest in natural and organic products, some have been exploiting the natural ideal. "Due to the lack of regulation defining a natural product, distinguishing between those products that merely have the word 'natural' on the label and those that maintain this positioning throughout the product's ingredients is difficult," Setzfand said. This issue highlights the need for retailers to be more knowledgeable than consumers.

There is less interpretive leeway when manufacturers label products as organic. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), "Any product labeled as organic must identify each organically produced ingredient in the ingredient statement on the information panel." Knowingly selling or labeling a product as organic that is not in compliance with federal regulations can result in fines of up to \$10,000. However, the word *natural* carries no such force, leading to more conventional manufacturers using the word for its market appeal.

In discussing natural personal care products with curious shoppers, it is important to highlight points of differentiation. For example, if a woman is looking for natural hair dye, some salient selling points could include the fact that natural brands are ammonia free, have a lesser percentage of pigment per volume, do not use resorcinol (a skin, eye and throat irritant) and also have a lesser percentage of peroxide per volume than big-box

store brands, according to Basil Moutsopoulos, director of sales for Tints of Nature North America. "We offer the only hair color line with a soy base, made with organic ingredients, and the first hair color line to be paraben free as well," he said.

Paraben has been systematically removed from many personal care products in recent years because, according to the Organic Consumers Association, it contains estrogenic chemicals and other endocrine disruptors, may be a potential breast carcinogen and could impair fertility.

As ammonia has been replaced in hair dye formulations, the sulfates in conventional shampoos have been replaced by essential oils and extracts of plants and fruits. Sulfates are still used in soaps, shampoos and conditioners because they are relatively inexpensive detergents for cleansing. However, studies as far back as the early 1980s found sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS) to have a degenerative effect on cell membranes because of its protein denaturing properties. Manufacturers have since experimented with plant and fruit extracts to get the same cleansing effect from a biodegradable, noncarcinogenic substance.

### ***Skin Is In***

Natural hair dyes and shampoos are just the tip of the iceberg. Skin care has become a huge part of the natural personal care market. For example, Canus has harnessed the hydration potential of goat milk's in a complete line of lotions. "Goat's milk differs from cow's milk in that it has very short protein and fat strands, and is naturally homogenized," Falardeau said. "Once those strands come into contact with the skin, your skin simply absorbs what it needs to be properly hydrated." She has also recently experimented with plant lipids such as marigold oil, shea butter and orchid oil, all of which have excellent emollient qualities.

Moving away from the petroleum distillates, which are possible carcinogens and may contain harmful impurities, provides an easy-to-understand consumer benefit. "Once they have used these natural personal care items, they are much more likely to expand into other categories such as hair care, skin care and oral care," explained Setzfand.

Natural personal care producers are also looking for natural solutions to different skin conditions. Derma E® Natural Products, for example, launched a Papaya and Soy Milk foaming facial cleanser to gently cleanse the skin without jeopardizing its moisture balance. Also, its Pycnogenol® Facial Cleanser makes use of the patented pine bark extract (from Natural Health Science) plus green tea, chamomile and lemongrass to soothe sensitive skin, restore elasticity, reduce irregularities, and rebuild collagen and elastin skin fibers. The company also offers hair care solutions, such as a tea tree/vitamin E shampoo with jojoba oil, which provides relief for dandruff or an itchy scalp.

Borlind of Germany also produces a line of products for healthy skin. The System Absolute line contains aosalin, a red algae extract that reverses the action of elastase (the enzyme that breaks down elastin), while other products in Borlind's anti-aging category utilize tiger grass, plankton and Vitamin C ester to counteract free radical damage and stimulate cell renewal.

### ***Animal Friendly, Female Friendly***

Non-toxic ingredients work well for natural care product producers, as many have adopted a no animal testing policy. Most manufacturers tout that no animals are harmed or destroyed for the purpose of serving a cosmetic function. Such claims of no animal testing have increased along with the expansion of the natural product market. The Coalition for Consumer Information on Cosmetics (CCIC) formed in 1996 to give some consistency to the cruelty-free claim, promoting a single comprehensive standard for eliminating animal testing in natural product manufacturing. The coalition has a requisite for membership known as the Corporate Standard of Compassion for Animals, which is a voluntary pledge companies make not to test on animals during any stage of product development. The companies' ingredient suppliers make the same pledge, which results in products guaranteed to be 100-percent free of animal testing. Commitments are renewed on an annual basis. This program applies to cosmetics, personal care and household products. Members of the Coalition, like the American Anti-Vivisection Society, argue that aside from being inhumane, animal testing is out-dated.

The no-animal-testing promise has struck a particular chord with females. Moutsopoulos noted, "Statistics show that nationally 85 percent of the customer base in natural stores is female, and a high percentage of that 85 percent is also over 30 years of age."

This is conceivably why many companies market almost completely toward women. For instance, several products in the Derma E® line are antioxidant and anti-aging offerings, promising to dissolve wrinkles and slow the aging process. Falardeau said Canus similarly aims marketing toward “the educated woman of the house.”

Vlad Shenker, president of Clotho Corp., the U.S. rep for Italy’s Verattiva product line, is also concentrating on the female consumer. With an intricate skin care line based on probiotics, called Probiofactor™, Shenker has positioned Verattiva to serve an aging female population attuned to the perks of natural personal care products. Probiotic micro-organisms help reset the level of micro flora on the skin’s surface, producing effective results for aging skin, according to Shenker. Paired with niacin and other vitamins, the probiotics rebalance and tone tired skin. “Probiotics actually helps regenerate the cells of the skin much faster than usual, so it’s a really good anti-aging product,” said Shenker. Verattiva also offers the Idraloe™ line based on 100-percent organic aloe vera gel. The complex hydrates, soothes and restores skin damaged by free radicals.

Since the natural personal care market is a multi-billion dollar industry projected to grow half over again in the next four years, retailers will need to spread reliable information and combat rumors to profit from the boom and build credibility. For their part, manufacturers overwhelmingly recommend consumers try the products to experience the difference and make every attempt possible to distribute samples at retail outlets. In addition, retailers need more training in the biology of skin, hair and nails. “At this point, most retailers are trained by manufacturers who provide more company-specific, non-generic information,” said Linda K. Upton, vice president of Borlind of Germany Inc. Retailers can help consumers by offering credible sources of information and referencing that source when separating objective ingredient information from marketing and advertising promotions.

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## Nailing the Solution

### **Good thing most males don’t have to worry about the dangers of conventional nail polish. Or do they?**

Caution has been urged recently about the use of conventional nail polishes, which contain a cocktail of harmful chemicals, among them formaldehyde and toluene. Chief among these dangerous chemicals is dibutyl phthalate, or DBP, a possible human reproductive or developmental toxin and an endocrine disruptor already banned for use in cosmetics by the European Union. Defendants of the compound say the nearly negligible amount of DBP in nail polish is more harmful to those breathing its fumes than to those wearing it. But male rats exposed to DBP before birth saw the substance’s worst side. A 2005 study indicated DBP disrupted reproductive tract development in male rodents in an antiandrogenic manner.

Pennsylvania-based Honeybee Gardens recognized the need for a safer nail polish and spent eight years developing a complete line of odorless, water-based finger paints. Instead of a solvent base, the manufacturer uses water. DBP and non-DBP products work in a similar manner, but Honeybee’s product assures polish users are aren’t subjected to toxic solvents in most polishes, and acetone in polish removers. Since the polish is water-based, it can be removed with rubbing or grain alcohol.

“The product looks and acts like regular polish, only it doesn’t smell and is totally non-toxic to you and the environment,” said Melissa Hertzler, president and chief executive officer (CEO) of Honeybee Gardens. “As a demo, we actually brush the polish brush across our tongue just to show how non toxic it really is.”