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Beauty Sustainability

The beauty industry has experienced unprecedented growth in recent years, with global revenues expected to increase from \$532 billion in 2018 to \$805 billion by 2023 (Grand View Research, 2018). Sustainability has become increasingly important for many different industries as we move into the future and the beauty industry is no exception. To further understand sustainability it is essential to explore the current initiatives of the beauty industry, the challenges that the industry faces in developing sustainable practices, and how to move forward to ensure the future of the industry is sustainable. Sustainability in the beauty industry is defined as the development and implementation of practices that reduce the environmental impact of products and services, while also considering the social, economic, and ethical aspects of production. This includes the use of sustainable raw materials, responsible packaging, energy efficiency, and ethical labor practices.

Often times when we think about sustainability we think about less pollution or carbon emissions. However, we tend to forget about the ecological side and the harm that is done to animals in addition to the environment. Before we began to see a change in the way we test products many animals were subject to cruel practices. The “Draize Test” for example was responsible for making several rabbits suffer in many different forms. They would drop chemicals in their eyes while having them pinned open or which would lead to them becoming blind afterward. There were also cases found where

animals were being shaven to test for skin irritation which led to untreated skin lesions on the animals. Animal activists were furious with these findings and demanded change. Over time this began to form into the first steps of changing the way we test products in a much more human and sustainable way. Manufacturers and brands started to come up with different ways to test their products without having a toll on the planet or its inhabitants.

When an individual applies lipstick, eyeliner, or even moisture, many are not thinking much of it. We buy beauty products as needed from a store and go about our day but sometimes the way that they got the product to the shelves wasn't so ethical. Many products in the beauty industry are tested on animals to make sure that they are able to be used on humans. However, this has been proven to be unnecessary and ineffective. An article discussing animal cruelty stated "Animal testing is pretty pointless; the science of it is ineffective, as animals don't develop the same diseases humans do. As for cosmetic testing, the potential reactions of animals could be completely unrelated to humans" (ZuaZua, 2017). Animal testing is now not required by law but many companies and brands still choose to use it for their own various reasons. The animals that are commonly tested on are mice, rats, guinea pigs, or rabbits and sadly they are usually faced with inhumane practices. Many of these companies think that in order for them to properly test and develop their cosmetic products, they have to be used on animals first. These animals end up suffering through many of these evaluations because of things such as eye/skin irritation or toxic chemicals in the products. These evaluations then lead to severe damage to the animal or in a lot of cases, death. A lot of these testings have also been deemed pointless because different

animals may react very differently from each other. Just because one animal reacted a certain way, does not mean that another species will have the same reaction. This means that the results obtained from testing on these animals can be very incorrect or irrelevant. A solution for this problem would be to use ingredients that have already been used as safe. Just because the harm done to the animals was cruel, does not mean that the research has to go to waste. We are at a point in time where many non-toxic, safe, and healthy ingredients have been found and there is a wide variety to choose from. Most of them have already been active ingredients in our products for years and have shown positive results. Animal cruelty has become a huge part of the consumer buying process and many customers will not buy products if they have been tested on animals. Cutting out animal cruelty is a great way to make the industry not only more humane but sustainable as well.

Sustainability in the beauty industry is very important because many do not realize how fast waste piles up. There are so many different aspects to beauty which in turn makes it so that there is more waste to be produced. They are responsible for creating about 120 billion units of plastic each year and contributing to the loss of 18 million acres of forest annually (Green Business Bureau, 2021). According to the EPA, only about 9% of plastics actually get recycled and due to the hard-to-clean design of make tubes or dispensers, it is estimated that even fewer products from the beauty industry get recycled. "Every year half a million tons of plastic microfibers are dumped into the ocean, the equivalent of 50 billion plastic bottles. The danger? Microfibers cannot be extracted from the water and they can spread throughout the food chain" (MacArthur). This goes to show that, if not treated correctly, the use of certain

containers can end up having an effect on the food we eat, and how it can potentially be irreversible. If we do not stay mindful of how all this can have a negative impact, then in the future we may see the beauty industry as a whole start to slowly decline.

In order to fix this rapidly growing problem I believe that there are a few solutions. It is important to know that unfortunately “small packaging or components usually can’t be recycled such as loose caps, plastic lip balm tubes, plastic mascara tubes, etc.” so this only makes it harder. This only makes it that much more important that we recycle our finished containers and dispose of them properly. Many brands have also started recycling programs which allows you to bring the containers you are finished with to a store nearby or even ship them. Lastly, I believe the biggest way to change is for companies to start using much more sustainable packaging or for consumers to keep an eye out for the ones that are. The more consumers bring awareness to more sustainable packaging, the more companies will listen and begin to make a shift.

Not only have the containers become a big part of sustainability but the packaging as well. When we order beauty products online we often times get a lot of unnecessary materials and extra layering. The next step the beauty industry can take to sustainability is reducing the packaging used to ship items. In the beauty industry, the main goal for the majority of brands and retailers is to make a profit. To increase profit many businesses will offer incentives to encourage the customer to buy more such as reward points, discounts, express shipping, and more. Now while many of these things dont necessarily affect the planet some of them do and one of them is shipping. In this advanced and modern era that we are currently living in, we take for granted many

things. One of those things is that we can sit at home and order something directly to our house no matter where in the world it is. Although the majority of vehicles used to transport items around the globe do play a part in carbon emissions they are not the main source of the problem. The problem is with the overuse of packaging that is used to ship our items from one place to another. “Each form of packaging uses a lot of resources like energy, water, chemicals, petroleum, minerals, wood, and fibers to produce. Its manufacture often generates air emissions including greenhouse gases, heavy metals, and particulates, as well as wastewater and/or sludge containing toxic contaminants.” (FoodPrint, 2021). When we order beauty products from our favorite brands we don’t realize the excessive use of plastic, paper, cardboard, etc that is used most of the time. Granted, some of the time it is used to ensure that our items are received in good condition but there is still an overuse of these products. If beauty industries pull back on the number of resources they use on shipping then there is great potential to be one step closer to sustainability in fashion.

When processing an item to be put out for shipping, companies should start to think much more eco-friendly. Small beauty products should not be put in huge boxes and wrapped in ample amounts of plastic. Instead, they should not only use the correct box size to reduce the materials used but also switch to boxes made out of recycled material. Sometimes we only want one item so that should be put in a small bag, not a box. Beauty companies should also try to make it so that all items that you ordered are shipped at the same time in the same packaging instead of putting out multiple shipments in multiple packages. This will greatly help offset carbon emissions and help reduce the excess use of shipping materials.

In the midst of many individuals beauty routine usually follows a lot of waste. So many people are so used to what they have been doing for so long that they don't even realize they are doing anything wrong. One of the main problems is leaving the water running when washing your face or using it for anything else during your routine. This can severely hurt the planet and over time really takes a heavy toll. It is usually recommended to splash the water on your face when needed or use a damp towel. This little step greatly helps offset the harm done to the planet. During many beauty routines, a lot of different products tend to be used all at once which sometimes causes messes, confusion, and unnecessary waste of products. For example, ample amounts of tissue or cotton pads end up being used because of mistakes or a mess being made because there is simply so much going on. A big part of sustainability is being able to properly use everything that is given to you without mindlessly being wasteful.

A big push forward for sustainability in the beauty industry is the introduction of eco-friendly products. Many big companies have been known to use a lot of plastics and other materials that end up having no future purpose. They get thrown away and never really get recycled which in turn hurts the earth. Not only should the containers they come in be eco-friendly but the ingredients should be more natural too. Using more natural and renewable resources will greatly help reduce waste from manufacturing plants and lessen carbon emissions as well. There have been a wide variety of resources that have been discovered already to help push this initiative forward into the next step of beauty. Things such as plant fibers, hemp, algae, bamboo, honey, propolis, lanolin and so much more are great to integrate into a sustainable beauty industry. When making sustainable cosmetics brands should use natural oils, plants, and even

bacteria. Natural oils such as palm, coconut, argan, and avocado are great because they are used to drive fatty alcohols. Agricultural plants such as corn and soybeans are used to produce and make oils as well. These are great renewable and sustainable sources that are also cheap to produce. Lastly, bacteria is a new resource that is going to change the beauty industry. A bacteria that is currently under development called *Deinococcus* has shown promising results for its chemical production properties. It has been used “ to create aromatic ingredients and pigments for the cosmetic industry, representing a potential market value in the hundreds of millions of dollars” (Acme, 2021).

Lastly, companies need to begin being more transparent about their sustainability practices. As we move further into the future, consumers want to know if what they are buying is environmentally friendly. We are slowly but surely transforming into a much more eco-friendly world so buyers want to know if the brand is going green. Customers want to be able to make informed decisions when purchasing their desired products. Knowing if there was any animal cruelty involved or if the product has natural ingredients or even if the box is made of renewable resources are all aspects that make the customer feel involved. When the customer knows that the product is sustainable it lets them know that they are also a part of the change.

Moving forward the beauty industry needs to continue to prioritize sustainability in order to ensure its long-term success. Companies should focus on transparency, innovation, and collaboration in order to create more sustainable practices. Governments should also create more regulations to ensure that companies are held accountable. Consumers can also play a role by supporting companies that prioritize

sustainability. Sustainability is becoming increasingly important for the beauty industry and is essential for its long-term success. Companies in the industry need to focus on developing and implementing sustainable practices in order to reduce the environmental impact of their products and services. Governments should also create more regulations to ensure that companies are held accountable. Consumers can also play a role by supporting companies that prioritize sustainability.

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