

Beauty in the Face of Covid
Emmy Hernandez
April 20, 2022

Summary by Sadie Schalles

Got “maskne”? Well, the beauty industry has got you covered. Emmy Hernandez, a TMD junior at URI, reported on the impacts the beauty industry has endured due to the pandemic. Emmy broke Covid down into three parts, the beginning, middle, and where they are now.

As an industry that relies heavily on in-store browsing and product testing, it was hard hit when shopping went digital due to the closure of brick-and-mortar stores. Beauty retailers saw an uptick in online sales, but consumers still would rather shop in-store. Technology such as Zoom and Tik Tok, which offered reality augmenting filters, led to consumers needing less makeup since they weren’t leaving the house. This didn’t mean the beauty industry was done for. While stuck at home, skincare products became of greater consumer interest. The requirement of masks resulted in skin conditions like acne, aka maskne, and a reduced desire to wear makeup since the face was covered.

Eventually, stores were able to reopen with limitations. As Emmy explained, Sephora, well known for its in-store product testing, could no longer allow customers to test products themselves. Shopping in-store wasn’t the same, but Sephora and many beauty retailers adjusted their services and policies to reflect these changes. Retailers wanted to make in-store shopping as convenient and comfortable as possible for customers by offering services like curbside pickup and virtual consultations. Supply chain disruptions made it difficult for companies to meet customers' demands, and they are still facing this issue now.

As recent changes to restrictions have allowed for in-store shopping and other activities consumers previously enjoyed to resume, the industry has seen an increase in makeup sales. Emmy predicted challenges she expects retailers will face in the wake of the pandemic. She states that beauty brands that did not adapt their digital presence during Covid will continue to be at a disadvantage post-pandemic as the capabilities of technology continue to advance. Additionally, technology allows consumers easier access to trends, which satisfies their rapidly changing demands. To remain resilient in future crises, brands in the beauty industry need to be able to quickly adapt to customer preferences, meet supply and demand, and be open to changing technology.

