

The nutricosmetics revolution promoting beauty through food  
by **Cindy Palusamy**

# A natural niche

The nutricosmetics revolution promoting beauty through food



Cindy Palusamy has been an adviser and strategist for some of the leading global hospitality, beauty and wellness businesses. Clients include Porto Montenegro, Frédéric Fekkai, Assoulina, L'Oréal, Hilton Hotels, Starwood Hotels and Kiehl's. For this piece Cindy has collaborated with Victoria Maddocks of creative agency Victoria Maddocks Agency, who has extensive experience of driving innovation in advertising, packaging, merchandising and store design, and Federico Casotto, the creative manager of Food Lab, a division of Design Group Italia which offers services to the food industry.

cindy@cp-strategy.com

Women looking for beauty products that complement a natural lifestyle are expected to drive demand for the emerging nutricosmetics sector. But market expansion depends on the industry persuading consumers that their products are effective and an essential part of a healthy life. Cindy Palusamy explains where the sector stands today – and why future development is closely linked to retailers and how they choose to promote these niche products in-store.

“Success in field of functional foods and nutricosmetics is not simple. A number of products have been given a high-profile launch only to exit the market soon after as a result of poor sales. Yet growth in the sector continues, especially in the Asian market and – to a lesser extent – the European market.”

For years, doctors and beauticians have claimed that true beauty comes from within. Drink eight glasses of water a day and eat more fruit and vegetables and you'll have glowing skin. Today, a number of beauty companies, food manufacturers and consumer goods companies are taking it one step further by creating products that promote beauty – healthier skin and nails, increased collagen production and the many other claims made by skin creams and lotions – not just 'from without' or topically but also from within. This merging of skincare and food is the result of a trend in multi-use, multiple benefit products that offer more than one benefit in a single convenient package. There is probably a huge latent demand from consumers who are looking for an all-encompassing beauty routine which includes a healthy diet and lifestyle. This is certainly the view of New York agency Victoria Maddocks whose founder, Victoria Maddocks - previously creative director with US cosmetics brand Kiehl's - describes the merging of food and beauty as “a natural extension and evolution of both the beauty and food markets”.

This is the world of nutricosmetics – beauty and personal care products that are eaten or drunk, or even swallowed, to promote an attractive appearance and well-being. At the same time, consumers have been showing an interest in functional food, taking a stand against decades of unhealthy eating. Federico Casotto, head of the Food Lab for Design Group Italia, argues that the wide availability of food at low prices and the marketing strategies of the food companies have led consumers to eat far beyond their needs – leading eventually to some consumers wanting to repair the damage of bad habits. The use of additives – and their demonisation – has also led consumers to question

the ingredients of processed foods. “In recent years a functional approach to food has emerged, focusing on the actions of nutrients in our body,” he says.

We are seeing the market evolve in two directions. In one direction is the Slow Food Movement, which champions the recovery of traditional knowledge and a more balanced relationship with food: little quantity, excellent quality. Those who follow the Slow Food way of life believe that eating organic or local produce is the best way to receive the benefits of nutrients – as nature intended. In the other direction we have the functional approach, where the ‘functional consumer’, instead of seeing meat, pasta and carrots, sees proteins, carbohydrates and vitamin A and often has strong opinions on the action of these constituents in the body – though these functional consumers often lack any real expertise in nutrition.

Success in the field of functional foods and nutricosmetics is not simple. A number of products have been given a high-profile launch only to exit the market soon after as a result of poor sales. Yet growth in the sector continues, especially in the Asian market and – to a lesser extent – the European market. The American market – perhaps surprisingly – seems unconvinced. A brand offering a nutricosmetic product needs to position itself as an authority and convince the consumer that the product is not just a passing fad. Clear communication of product benefits and the ability to deliver on its promise are the priorities here. So how are brands actually doing?