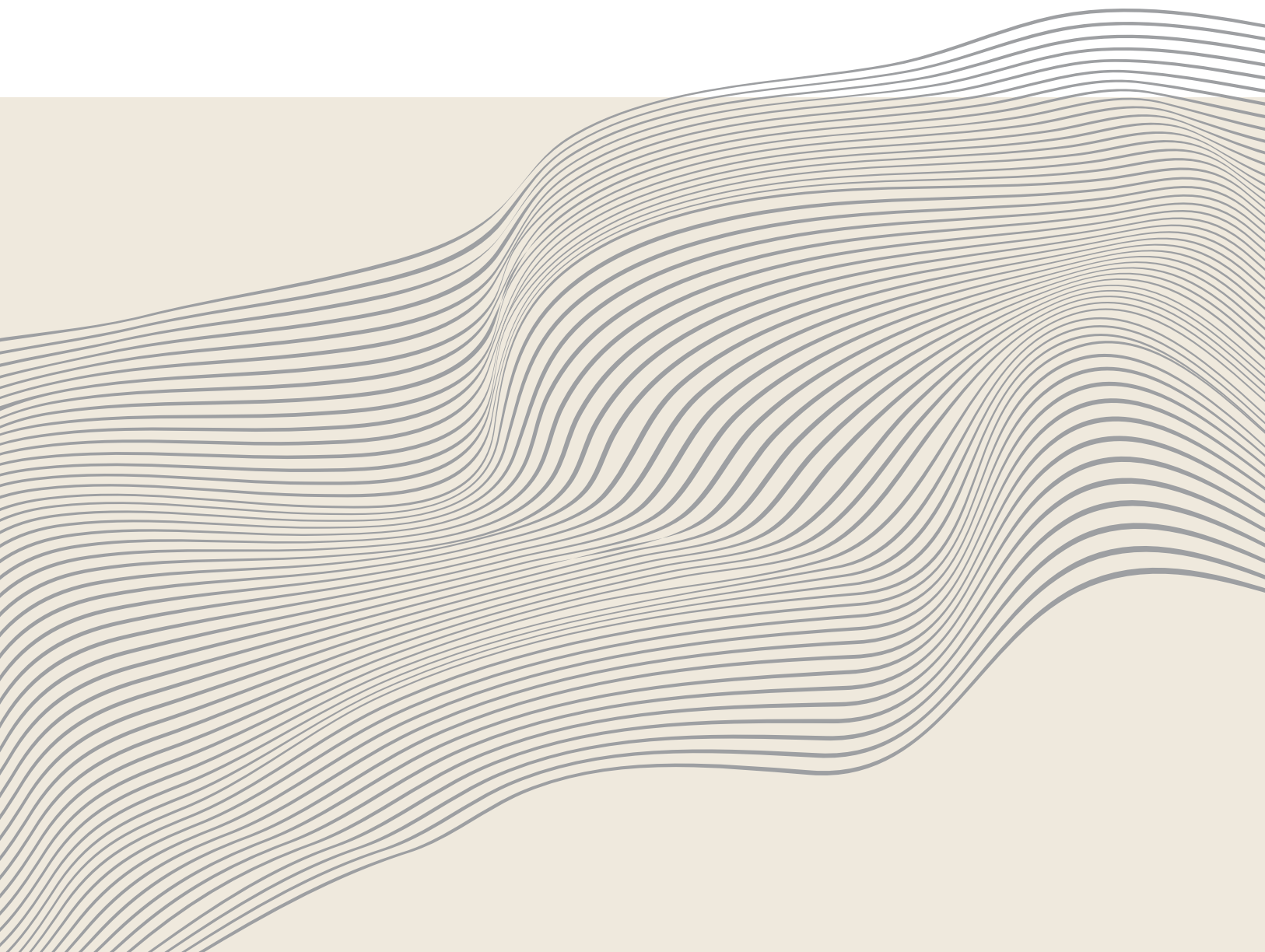


MBS Intelligence

# Covid-19 and the beauty industry

Where are we now, and what comes next?





# Contents

Introduction	4
<b>The beauty landscape today</b>	<b>6</b>
Product category analysis	8
Price point and professional	10
The global beauty industry	12
<b>Key themes from Covid-19</b>	<b>14</b>
The future of retail	16
Digital transformation	18
<b>Further considerations</b>	<b>20</b>
Leadership priorities	22
About Us	24

# Introduction

This report brings together key themes from conversations with more than 80 CEOs, Chairs, Executive Directors and investors from across the beauty sector. We spoke with industry leaders from fast-growth brands through to the world's biggest and best-known companies, right around the world from LA to Sydney and from Moscow to Rio. These broad-reaching conversations have given us an understanding of Covid-19's impact on the beauty industry, painting a clear picture of where we are now, and where we are going.

**Beauty is** one of the consumer-facing sector's most exciting industries. Over the past few years, the space has played host to dozens of high-value mergers and acquisitions, some industry-defining innovation and the birth of countless challenger brands redefining the beauty landscape.

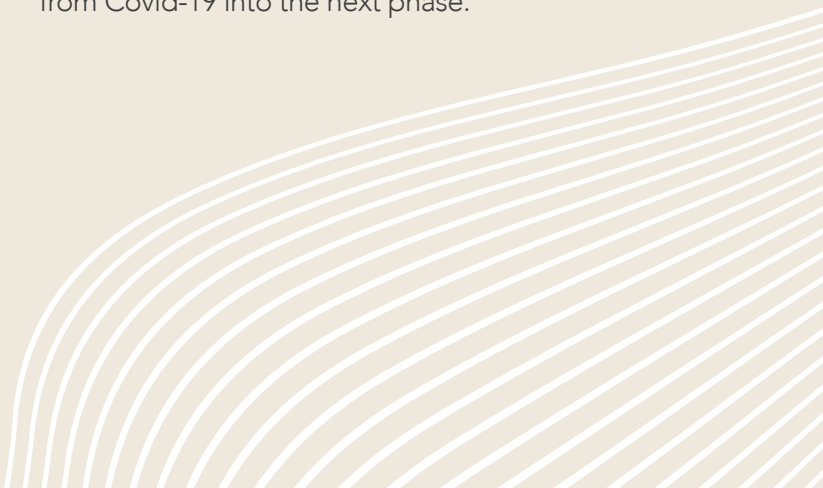
With the industry poised on the cusp of boom, Covid-19 has presented never-before-seen challenges to the sector: shuttering stores, halting product development and forcing the closure of entire sub-sectors.

At the height of the crisis, we saw brands race to pivot their propositions, reaching consumers via online channels and adapting their product offerings to suit customers in lockdown. As a result, Covid-19 has fast-tracked a number of macro-trends, and set lasting change in motion. The crisis has simultaneously accelerated the move away from colour cosmetics and towards skincare; brought the wellness agenda to

the fore; encouraged brands to re-evaluate their retail offering; and forced businesses to recognise a strong digital proposition as vital for survival.

The economic fallout from Covid-19 will be felt for years to come. Indeed, the consulting firm McKinsey has estimated that global revenue for the beauty industry alone could fall by up to 30%.

With a recession looming, and consumer buying habits changing fast, beauty businesses must adopt an agile approach, taking learnings from Covid-19 into the next phase.



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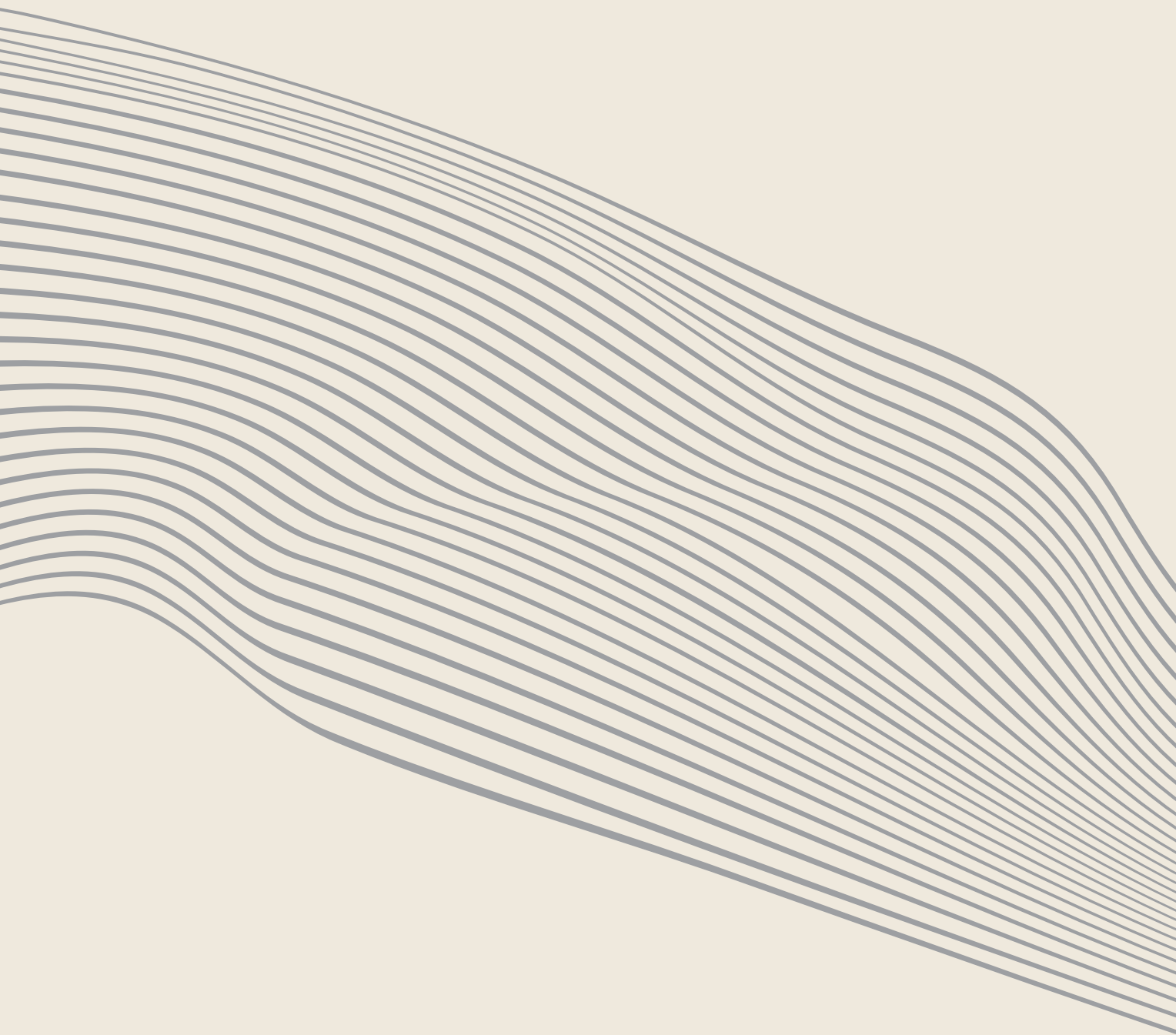




# The beauty landscape today

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The impact of Covid-19 will be felt in the beauty sector for months and years to come. Already, the pandemic has served to accelerate existing consumer trends and widened the gap between the luxury and mass markets. In this section, we take a look at the sector as it stands, analysing product categories, channels and geographies.





# Product category analysis

“Skincare has held up nicely”



## Haircare

Across all channels and geographies, haircare was consistently identified as one of the best-performing categories during the crisis. This is perhaps unsurprising, reflecting consumers finding DIY solutions to cut and style their hair during lockdown. The electricals category fared particularly well, with one US consumer insights firm reporting a 23% spike in sales of hair dye and a staggering 166% increase in sales of men’s hair clippers.

On the core products – shampoo and conditioner – we detected mixed views across the sector. In mass market, respondents reported that sales had dipped, largely due to customers washing their hair less frequently during lockdown. In the premium channel, by contrast, sales of shampoo and conditioner went up – perhaps reflecting the trend towards pampering and self-care.

Looking ahead, it will be interesting to see if this shift towards at-home hair cutting and styling will become a permanent feature of the market. While some consumers with less disposable income may limit the number of visits to the salon, those in the professional services space told us that they anticipate the trend for DIY haircare to be fleeting. As one told us, *“people will always want to go and get their hair done. It brings people together.”*



## Hygiene

At the outset of the crisis, there was a sudden rush towards antibacterial products, as governments across the world encouraged an increase in handwashing and sanitising to keep the virus at bay. The beauty industry sat at the heart of this movement, as businesses pivoted their manufacturing capabilities towards hygiene-related products to meet demand. LVMH, for example, blazed the trail when it adapted its fragrance factories to product antibacterial hand gel.

Inevitably, the hygiene category has performed well during Covid-19. Hand cream sales have also spiked, as consumers look to offset the drying effects of many antibacterial products.

But this trend towards hygiene and health was not a short-term fix, nor will it fade once the virus subsides. Indeed, Covid-19 has given way to a whole new product category: antibacterial beauty. We are seeing the development of products – especially fragrances – that not only perform their primary function but also keep unwanted germs at bay.





## Wellness

Across all channels and geographies, Covid-19 has fast-tracked the trend towards health and wellness. In particular, respondents reported a spike in bath-and-body products, as consumer sought to counter the stresses of the pandemic with home spa treatments.

The fragrance company Diptyque, for example, reported that candles sales increased 536% in the weeks after lockdown.



## Skincare

Overwhelmingly, our conversations revealed that the skincare category had performed well across all channels and geographies. This reflects a number of short-term and long-term trends.

Firstly, consumers have turned to skincare as a direct result of Covid-19. One beauty executive explained this: *“lockdown has given people more time to focus on their skincare routine, while simultaneously requiring people to offset the dehydrating qualities of masks.”* At the same time, customers are moving away from colour cosmetics, freeing up cash to spend on skincare.

Secondly, the rise in skincare reflects a long-term shift towards wellness, pampering and a natural aesthetic. In particular, executives from the luxury channel said they attributed the rise in premium skincare to this macrotrend.

“Covid-19 has fast-tracked the trend towards health and wellness”



## Fragrances

The performance of the fragrance category has differed from market to market. In Europe and the US, for example, sales of perfumes were down 13% in the first quarter of 2020 according to the market research firm NPD.

Elsewhere, however, the fragrance category has retained its popularity. Our conversations revealed that in Latin America, for example, consumers will always buy perfumes, no matter the economic or social climate.



## Colour cosmetics

Of all the product categories impacted by Covid-19, none has been more affected than colour cosmetics. As social venues and workplaces shut, demand for eyeshadows, blushers and other products dipped dramatically. As one beauty executive put it: *“colour cosmetics has taken a hammering... there’s just no need for warpaint.”*

Looking ahead, the industry is split on whether Covid-19 will mark the decline of colour cosmetics or whether we will see its resurgence. Some argue that home working has acted as a leveller – making it more acceptable to appear bare-faced in front of colleagues, while others predict a boom in colour cosmetics when events restart and venues reopen.

# Price point and professional

## Mass

The mass market channel has performed well during Covid-19, following largely the same trends as in the luxury segment.

Executives from across all geographies noted a particular move towards bath-and-body, hand creams and skincare. Many also noted that mass market colour cosmetics had seen a particular dip because of retail's closure, halting opportunistic low-cost makeup purchases in shops.

One respondent noted that, in mass, he had seen consumers opt for products from well-known businesses instead of buying items from challenger brands. *"People are coming back to the brands they know,"* he said, *"and it seems as though the young indie brands have lost their appeal."*

We have also seen this trend play out on a product level, where sales of hero items have increased and sideline products have dipped.

This trend towards tried-and-tested products and brands is indicative of consumers making increasingly risk-averse purchasing decisions in light of a global recession, especially when considering the lack of sampling opportunities available. Indeed, according to one executive, consumers displayed similar behaviour following the 2008 financial crisis.

Looking ahead, it will be interesting to see if mass brands renew their focus on trustworthiness and reliability, as opposed to attracting the consumer by mirroring the rhetoric of up-and-coming challenger brands.

## Middle market

In the same way as in many consumer-facing sectors, Covid-19 has further polarised the beauty industry. The pandemic, and specifically its economic fall-out, has served to widen the gap between the premium and mass channel.

As a result, the middle market is suffering – and our conversations confirmed that this is true across all geographies. As one executive told us: *"the middle ground is collapsing."*

On the premium side, consumers are choosing to purchase investment products that will last; while in mass, the oncoming recession is leading consumers to opt for more value-focused products instead of choosing to treat themselves.

While the vast majority of business leaders predict the continued decline of mid-market, one executive from a leading UK retailer held an opposing view: *"I think we'll see mid-market get back on its feet,"* they told us, *"with less disposable income and changing routines, I think we'll see more people opting for middle-market products."*

## Luxury

Despite the downturn in luxury goods more generally, the premium beauty channel has continued to grow during Covid-19. Some executives suggested that this is because of the 'lipstick effect' – the theory that consumers will always buy luxury goods in times of recession, but opt for lower-cost items, such as lipstick. Indeed, the notable uptick in sales of premium nail polishes (the consumer insights organisation NPD recorded double-digit growth) suggests that nail polish might be Covid-19's iteration of the lipstick effect. Looking ahead, it will be interesting to see if luxury goods brands expand their beauty proposition in order to cater to this consumer trend.

Premium skincare has remained especially resilient. Indeed, one executive noted her surprise at this, stating that: *"normally in a recession people go down a price-point but this hasn't happened here."* Another affirmed this view, saying: *"skincare has been strong. People are investing in more expensive products."*

Indeed, we are also seeing beauty's success in premium retail. Selfridges reported that beauty has been by far its strongest category since lockdown, and the beauty category at Net-a-Porter was up 158% in the second half of March compared with last year.

We have also seen the trend towards buying new products in the luxury channel. Unlike in mass, where sales of core brand products have increased, luxury consumers have seen Covid-19 as an opportunity to try out new beauty products. *"We saw a shift during lockdown,"* one executive told us, *"from people buying for replenishment to people buying for newness and discovery."*

## Professional services

For beauty businesses trading through the professional services channel, Covid-19 has presented never-before-seen challenges, forcing the complete closure of salons and spas around the world. The professional services sector is broad-reaching, comprising of businesses from traditional hair and nail salons to up-and-coming challenger brands offering everything from acupuncture to facials to teeth whitening.

Indeed, the tactile and hospitality-focused nature of the professional services channel has made it particularly vulnerable to Covid-19, as neither aspect can be fully re-created online. As one respondent aptly put it: *"a Botox injection can't be done through your internet."* One US-based multinational conglomerate affirmed this view, telling us: *"of all our categories and channels, professional was the worst hit."*

Despite these challenges, however, we have seen admirable displays of agility in the professional services sector. One company explained how it had found an alternative route to market amid the disruption: *"people still wanted the product, so we decided to do the delivery on behalf of our client for no extra cost. So despite seeing a 100% shutdown of our customers, we were still operating at 70-75% of pre-Covid."*

Another treatment-based skincare business told us that it had been able to retain 50% of its paying members through lockdown, despite not being able to trade. *"For those who have stuck with us,"* the business told us, *"we are offering a £450 skin treatment when we reopen."*



## Chicago

*"As a retailer that was allowed to stay open, we saw triple digital growth with the premium beauty stores close."*

## New York

*"Amazon have won the game in the US."*

*"In America, everything is mass."*

## London

*"It's pathetic that beauty ecommerce is only at 10% in the UK. It really needs to be nearer to 30%."*

## LA

*"Sexual wellness is all the rage here."*

## São Paulo

*"Brazilians will never stop using fragrances, no matter what."*

## Milan

*"People are bored of gimmicky brands. Customers aren't expecting products to change their life, just make them feel good. Honest communication is going to be key going forward."*

# The global beauty industry

To put together this report, we conducted conversations with more than 80 leading executives from around the world. Our discussions paint a varied picture of the global beauty sector, where trends fluctuate from country to country.

## Moscow

*"Beauty is harder to sell than fragrance or skincare during lockdown, as it's more tangible."*

## Shanghai

*"Chinese consumers are very open to ecommerce. Here, online sales helped to significantly off-set the lack of bricks and mortar stores."*

## Paris

*"France is starting to get back to normal life."*

*"Beauty has really proven its place."*

## Geneva

*"The sentiment here is that the industry will remain attractive to investors and consumers."*

## Dubai

*"There is still a place for retail. People will always want to see, try and test products."*

## Hong Kong

*"The service element and the personal interaction, particularly in Asia, is hugely important. People don't come to our stores for a digital experience, people have that on their phones."*

## Sydney

*"We were going through a transformation anyway – Covid has just accelerated it."*

# Key themes from Covid-19

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Throughout our research, we identified a number of core ideas running through our conversations. Regardless of geography, channel or product specialism, beauty executives are engaged in discussions around the future of retail, digital transformation, and the rapidly-evolving consumer and business priorities.

A decorative graphic consisting of numerous thin, parallel, wavy lines that curve from the bottom left towards the right side of the page, creating a sense of movement and depth.





# The future of retail

“The past few years have seen the emergence of a new retail strategy”

**Covid-19** has fast-tracked the conversation around the role of retail in the beauty industry. Our conversations confirmed suspicions that the sector remains split, some arguing that this marks the end of retail as we know it, and others suggesting that retail will return to its former glory. A full exploration of this debate can be found opposite.

Around the world, beauty businesses employ different retail strategies. In the US, for example, beauty retail is dominated by Amazon, which has ongoing partnerships with almost all beauty brands – regardless of product type or position in the market.

In the UK, by contrast, premium organisations are more critical of trading through mass channels such as Amazon or in supermarkets. Following the closure of most high-end department stores and branded beauty retail sites during Covid-19, it will be interesting to see if premium brands re-think this strategy, and adopt a more risk-averse approach that optimizes the use of another business' infrastructure and delivery networks.

Moreover, the past few years have seen the emergence of a new retail strategy, whereby brands streamline their store estate in favour of DTC online operations. The remaining sites are used as brand-builders: experience-led destinations designed to further brand awareness rather than sell product. Glossier's retail offering is a prime example of this.

One executive suggested that this is the future of retail, stating that: *“bricks and mortar will remain, but as a cathedral – used to express your brand and establish loyalty.”* Covid-19 has complicated this development in the sector. On the one hand, digital transformation is likely to encourage businesses to re-think the number of retail sites in their portfolio, and focus on value-adding features for their remaining stores. On the other hand, social distancing measures look set to stay in place for quite some time, casting doubt over whether businesses will be able to achieve the experience-focused retail offering required for this new strategy.

Another theme that resonated strongly when discussing retail was the issue of sampling. Our conversations revealed that luxury beauty brands and retailers are more concerned about this than those in the mass channel. As one executive said: *“you'll happily buy a £3 bottle of shampoo without trying it or it being recommended, but in luxury when you're spending £80 on skin cream or £25 on mascara a trial is expected.”*

One retailer explained how they were approaching sampling: *“We're in Phase 1 – no contact. Phase 2 – a customer can test on his/her hand. Phase 3 – a customer can test on their face. At the moment, we have no indication as to when makeup artists can test on customers' faces.”*

## Debate: the future of retail

Beauty industry executives are split on what the beauty retail space will look like in the months and years ahead. While seasoned leaders from large multinationals predict that beauty retail will recover from Covid-19 and resume operations, younger executives from smaller businesses say that retail needs more value added to survive.

### Retail's abiding prominence

One side of this debate posits that traditional bricks-and-mortar retail has a place in the beauty industry – in the format of luxury department stores, value retailers and branded outlets. One leading cosmetics business compared industry fears to the 1999 debate around the emergence of duty free: *“look,” they told us, “it’s the exact same fear as travel retail. Ecommerce is just another channel to compete with – not the end of retail as we know it.”*

The leaders on this side of the discussion argue that any retailers which collapse were probably always going to – and that retail which gives customers the chance to browse and try on products will abide.

*One executive said: “physical retail is still very much needed – what we’re seeing online is only best sellers, people gone online to replenish what they already have, not to try new things.”*

Another affirmed this view, citing the importance of physical interaction and sampling: *“I really believe that there is nothing more memorable than personalised interactions. How-to videos/online consultations will never match that. In fragrance, for example, how can someone explain what patchouli smells like? You need to let it settle on the skin to reveal top, mid and base note. And in makeup – you can’t mix three different foundations to match your skin tone online.”*

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### The end of retail as we know it

“The weak will not survive” was a sentiment that resonated strongly in our conversations with beauty executives from younger brands.

Looking ahead, this side of the debate posits that replenishment-focused retailers will likely be outrun by experience-led organisations, such as Glossier, with a high-level of technological integration in-store. For a business to succeed and draw in customers, they suggest, retail has to be exciting, entertaining and go beyond functionality and convenience. With this in mind, this side of the argument suggests that premium beauty retailers will be able to capitalise on their luxury credentials and personal customer service, while value-end retailers will find themselves overtaken by digital players or other areas of retail where beauty products can be found, such as grocery and fashion.

One executive commented: *“businesses need to start getting rid of space... they won’t need it. The clever ones will start to use stores in different ways.”* Indeed, we can expect buying habits to adapt in a post-Covid-19 world. As the economic fallout from the crisis is felt world-over, consumers will make more considered purchasing decisions. Young executives suggest that the same will happen when customers are shopping: they will only visit stores that have a clear purpose and proposition, and provide their visitors with a unique experience. As one executive put it: *“People won’t just pop to the shops. They will be more purposeful.”* This is especially worrying considering that one respondent told us that 45% of all makeup purchases are spontaneous. Retailers based on convenience are going to have to work much harder.

# Digital transformation

“This is a manifestation of the fourth industrial revolution”

**Across all** sectors, Covid-19 has accelerated digital transformation at an extraordinary pace. As lockdown measures shuttered stores worldwide, beauty brands raced to engage consumers online, and retailers expanded their omnichannel approaches at a significant pace and scale.

The digitisation of the beauty industry is not a new phenomenon – indeed, beauty is leading on digital in the consumer goods space by a long way. However, the crisis has fast-tracked the macrotrend, forcing businesses to find digital solutions for almost all areas of beauty, including customer engagement, marketing, product innovation and testing. Indeed, as one executive pointed out: *“Covid-19 has really made a difference in the market between the already digitised beauty brands and those lagging behind.”*

Covid-19 has also encouraged entirely new demographics to move online. Many respondents mentioned the impact of the ‘silver surfer’, as elderly customers access beauty products and services online.

## Digital winners

It will come as no surprise that the beauty businesses that have come out on top during Covid-19 are the ones with a strong digital offering. One brand, which trades across a global retail estate but has a strong online presence, told us that the shift from bricks and mortar to online was “seamless” during lockdown – so much so that that brand has seen sales rise since Covid-19 began. Another online-only beauty retailer told us that sales are currently up between 80% and 100% year-on-year.

Moreover, beauty businesses that operate predominantly in the DTC subscription space have fared well. Not only does a predominantly digital channel mean fewer overheads, but a subscription model also brings revenue security.

We have also seen forward-thinking brands step up to provide online beauty and styling advice. Aveda, for example, created a series of videos on Instagram dishing out tips on everything from setting textured hair to styling grown-out haircuts – and views have increased over 200% since the launch. MAC’s Virtual Try On tool, which allows shoppers to try on 200 eyeshadow and lipstick shades, saw a threefold increase in consumer engagement since lockdown began.

Moreover, Covid-19 has presented a key opportunity for online beauty platforms, as brands ramp up their exposure on third-party sites to reach more customers.

## Covid-19 acting as a catalyst for digital transformation

Despite their reputation among digital-native brands for being online laggards, many large organisations have been able to pivot with ease during Covid-19. For these businesses, Covid-19 has acted as a watershed moment, jump-starting (sometimes long overdue) digital transformations.

One global cosmetics and personal care group shared that it was 18 months ahead of schedule on digital transformation. The group told us it had:

- Established a personal chat service, capturing data to learn more about its customer base;
- Built a new distribution centre in just 17 days; and
- Grown its digital consultants from 17,000 to 30,000.

Another large retail business shared a similar story, reporting that it had:

- Turned 50 shops into hybrid (or 'dark') stores to support its online business, with a plan to convert another 50; and
- Gave new roles to its shop floor staff, who became virtual replenishment advisors.

Another major manufacturer, based in the UK, told us that it had doubled its Amazon channel in light of Covid-19.

Indeed, while young brands are known for their nimbleness, Covid-19 has proved that, in some cases, traditional businesses are able to rise to the challenge. As one retailer said: *"the effectiveness of your dot com offering is increasingly being defined by the size of your warehouse."* With this in mind, asset-heavy businesses with property that can be used or repurposed are better placed to survive – and thrive – in a post-Covid-19 world.

## The future of digital beauty

From virtual try-on to ingredient transparency, the biggest developments in tech do not take long to leave their mark on the beauty industry, and leading brands have been embarking on high-tech overhauls for the past few years. Covid-19 looks set to accelerate this trend, and force businesses to integrate technology into their retail and product offering alike.

With fewer customers visiting stores, and therefore unable to physically try out a product, we can expect brands to heavily invest in digital try-on technology. One US retailer identified that finding digital solutions to skincare diagnostics and cosmetic testing was one of the businesses' key priorities.

Even in store, we can expect tactile elements of retail to be disrupted for quite some time. Organisations must focus their resources on finding solutions in-store. One beauty executive – who leads the Russian operations of a multinational beauty conglomerate – gave an example of contactless perfume testers that were in operation, but noted that each was extremely costly to run.

As a result of this, Covid-19 looks set to wave in a new era of M&A activity in the beauty industry, as multinationals acquire technology startups that can support their digital transformations.



# Further considerations

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“The conversation around brand authenticity has been fast-tracked since lockdown”

## Brand authenticity

What consumers expect from brands has changed over the past few years. Today, consumers are looking for authentic brands with a strong purpose, and a clear view on the issues that matter. As one leader articulated: *“brands have developed a far better sense of purpose and have become better at defining what they stand for.”*

Another executive affirmed this: *“beauty is in an interesting place of change. Customers no longer want to hear that a product will change their life – just that they’re buying from a brand that is genuine, and that will make them feel good.”*

The conversation around brand authenticity has been fast-tracked since lockdown, when brands doubled down on engaging with customers online. Looking ahead, we can expect the post-Covid-19 era to centre around genuine communication and clear messaging.

## Transparency

Covid-19 has made transparency a key priority for beauty businesses. For example, Covid-19 threw into sharp relief the disadvantages of not knowing your supply chain. The pandemic revealed the weaknesses in many companies’ supply lines; not only the vulnerability to a sudden change in demand but also the reliance on an international supply network. Above all, Covid-19 has proven the need for simple, agile and flexible supply networks that can pivot with ease - and those beauty businesses that can accurately identify where improvements need making will come out on top.

Looking ahead, the winning organisations will invest in their supply chains, especially around transparency. This is crucial for two reasons. Firstly, from an operational perspective, in order to mitigate risk and better cope with future crises. Secondly, from a consumer vantage point. Particularly at the more premium end of the market, customers have become increasingly demanding of supply chain transparency, seeking to support brands who employ sustainable and ethical methods to produce items.

Moreover, with a global recession on the horizon, beauty businesses must prepare themselves for customers who are making increasingly more considered purchasing decisions, around key issues such as sustainability, diversity and supply chain transparency.

## Private equity interest

Over the past few years, the beauty sector has played host to some exciting private equity activity, as funds look to capitalise on burgeoning trends in the beauty space. As recently as May 2020, for example, we saw KKR buy a majority stake in the US multinational beauty company Coty for \$3bn.

Looking ahead, we can expect this trend to continue, and private equity funds remain drawn to the beauty industry's resilience. Indeed, recent research by The MBS Group – based on conversations with more than 100 private equity partners and investment directors – identified beauty as a key area of interest for funds in the wake of Covid-19.

## Innovation

In light of the pandemic, organisations in the beauty sector must remain resolutely focused on innovation and new product development, even while juggling survival and trading strategies for the new normal. With consumer habits changing fast, organisations that do not prioritise innovation will find themselves out-run by quicker, more forward-thinking businesses.

This crisis presents a key opportunity for contract beauty manufacturers specifically, which can partner with retailers and brands to help drive creativity and innovation.





# Leadership priorities

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## Digital

When asked how Covid-19 would impact the beauty industry's talent landscape, almost all respondents pointed to the increasing need for digital talent.

With this in mind, and even more so than before, there will be a scramble for digital talent in the beauty industry. Indeed, a quick look at major beauty brands provides some insight: organisations like Estee Lauder, Shiseido and Coty have been employing bold talent strategies for years, prioritising digital expertise over knowledge of the beauty sector. Almost all of these businesses have a Chief Digital Officer in place who came from a digital business – not a makeup or beauty brand.

There are a few areas that will need specific attention, the first of which is data and AI. With challenging trading conditions and customer behaviour changing fast, knowing your customer base will be more important than ever. As such, beauty businesses must ramp up their efforts on data and AI, bringing in the right talent to roll out AI-led programmes, focus on customer loyalty and also navigate the complex issues around data, ethics and AI.

Secondly, beauty businesses must hire the right talent to establish a strong online channel. No longer is digital predominantly a growth engine: it is vital to success. IT leaders have demonstrated agility in this field thus far, but businesses must ensure teams have the right skills around customer engagement, supply chain and fulfilment to consolidate short-term progress into long-term success. Indeed, a recent Bain report posited that less than 50% of businesses are likely to achieve their automation performance goals, despite 80% of companies having accelerated automation initiatives since Covid-19 – thereby highlighting the need to hire the right talent to guarantee sustained digital transformation.

Lastly, the winning businesses will renew their focus on solutions to digital problems with try on, sampling and colour matching.

Overwhelmingly, our conversations showed that digital is the main priority for all beauty businesses – regardless of channel, geography or type of business.



## Other key leadership priorities include...

### Agility

The flexibility shown by leaders in the beauty industry must be sustained beyond Covid-19. Overwhelmingly, beauty executives identified agility as a key trait they were looking for when hiring new talent in the weeks and months ahead. As one leader put it: *"people need to be able to work with new models and new behaviours."*

### Communication

Many executives noted how communication priorities have shifted since Covid-19. *"People are bored of gimmicky stuff,"* one executive told us, *"people are now looking for purpose and meaning from beauty brands – and that can be difficult to get right."*

### Hygiene

Anecdotally, some executives told us of the existence of a 'hygiene director' in some businesses.

# About Us

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## About The MBS Group

For more than 30 years, The MBS Group has been a leading sector-specialist executive search firm advising all consumer-facing industries. Clients consider us to be the partner of choice when searching for critical leadership roles that make a difference. We work at board level and on executive positions across all functions of strategic importance. For more information, visit [www.thembsgroup.co.uk](http://www.thembsgroup.co.uk)

## About our beauty expertise

MBS has a strong track record of working with beauty companies of all sizes, from mass through to luxury and across the world. We have decades of experience focusing on the needs of private founder and family-owned dynasty organisations as well as private equity-backed and publicly-owned businesses, each with their own specific needs and nuances. We have helped legacy beauty businesses modernise and transform, as well as helping others enter the space for the first time.

At The MBS Group we are networked into beauty industry's global talent pool – and have a proven track record of understanding the types of candidates who successfully transition into the sector. We spend time getting to know an organisation, studying its brands and culture so that its DNA is retained even as the business grows.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank and acknowledge the 80+ executives who generously gave up their time to participate in this research.

We would like to thank our team at The MBS Group – Moira Benigson (Chair and Founder), Elliott Goldstein (Managing Partner), Huw Llewellyn-Waters, Elizabeth Shelley, Mathew Dixon, Thirza Danielson, Scarlett Mayne, Francesca Sevilla-Rebelderia, Daria Koren, Jess Rowland, Olga Gargan and James Wardlaw – for their invaluable contribution.

With special thanks to Imogen Sewell and Simon More for writing and editing this report.



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