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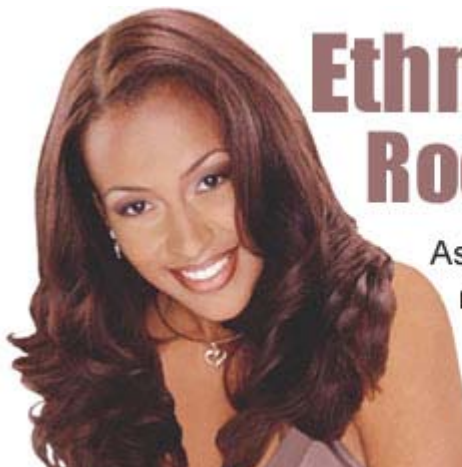
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Ethnic Hair Care Room for Growth

As more women opt for individual
marketers respond with products
to meet every need.

Nanci McArdle
Associate Editor

Every woman, no matter her ethnicity, strives for a good hair day. In order to achieve search for products designed to meet the needs of their specific hair type, and market by launching a slew of products formulated to enhance the texture, color and overall look of hair. Once considered a niche market, ethnic hair care is now a booming segment in the hair care industry. In 2004, sales topped \$218 million in supermarkets, drug stores and mass merchandising stores, excluding Wal-Mart, according to Chicago-based Information Resources, Inc. In the African-American hair care sector, chemical products remained No. 1, but sales decreased slightly from the previous year, according to IRI. African-American shampoo sales jumped 28% to \$9.5 billion, while conditioner sales rose 24%. Shampoo unit sales rose 24%. Conditioner sales increased as well, reaching \$21.2 million, up almost 6.5% from 2003. Unit sales were up 7%. Sales of curl and wave maintenance products plunged, down 14% from the previous year, to \$8.1 million with unit sales decreasing 14%. With the introduction of new hair care products in every category, the competition level is high. Marketers strive to capture the loyalty of this growing segment of the population. To do so, they must offer products that deliver on their promises.

"Consumers are looking for quality products that promise to give them bouncy, shiny, healthy-looking hair," commented Patricia Williams, technical and artistic director, Colomer USA. "We are also looking for products that will give them styling versatility, enabling them to change their look effortlessly."

Offering a variety of options is key, experts told Happi. Women simply want a product that gives them the best possible hair, whether it is curly, straight, colored or natural. And with that number of ethnic hair care products at their fingertips, they don't have to settle. "The variety we are seeing across product types, ingredients and packaging reflects the variety in consumer preferences in our consumer base," commented Taydra Mitchell Wilson, vice president for Mizani, a division of L'Oréal USA. "There is still a strong base of women who are interested in natural hair, but there are so many other looks and styles that consumers are pursuing and that are simply reflecting the choices they are making."

[Color Their World](#)

Women have been coloring their hair for decades, and chances are they will continue. Marketers realize this and continue to launch new hair color options with added benefits.

"African-American women and stylists have been somewhat reluctant to use permanent color for fear of significant damage to hair, but with the introduction of products that deliver long-lasting vibrant color and leave the hair in good condition, more and more consumers are giving it a try," commented Ms. Wilson.

Mizani's Brown Sugar line, launched last year, was designed to inspire brunettes to embrace their roots and take their naturally dark-colored hair to new dimensions, according to company executives. The professional, conditioning crème-based permanent color system is available in 10 shades and two color intensifiers and features Oleo-Technology, which infuses hair with humectants and moisture during the chemical process to prevent dryness and breakage.



African Pride's Multi-Length Texturizing results in just 10 minutes.

"Hair color for women of color is not just about covering gray hair—it's about making a statement," according to Christina C.O. Matthews, beauty external relations manager, Procter & Gamble. "We needed a shampoo and conditioner specifically designed for women of color who color-treat their hair. That was what we needed. Our consumers are the boss, and we strive to continue to offer products that meet their needs."

Color Radiance shampoo and conditioner, launched in February, are the newest additions to the Pantene Pro-V Relaxed & Natural collection, which is specifically formulated to meet the needs of women of color. The duo features an exclusive formula with new amino Pro-V complex and essential oils to fortify color-treated hair, keeping it looking healthy and vibrant. The 12-oz. shampoo and 10-oz. conditioner both have a suggested retail price of \$3.99.



Color Flash from SoftSheen-Carson targets hip, young trend-setters.

Launched in January, Optimum Crème Haircolor from SoftSheen-Carson, a division of L'Oréal USA, is a professional, permanent hair color that also protects against breakage. The 18-shade range goes from jet black to ash blonde and contains conditioning cationic polymers to keep hair moisturized and healthy.

"Optimum Crème Haircolor is the first-ever hair color to provide long-lasting results while addressing the No. 1 consumer concern, hair breakage," said Shawn Tollerson, vice president of marketing for SoftSheen-Carson. "We have created a trifecta of anti-breakage, color vibrancy, and versatility that allows women to have the deep richness of color with anti-breakage protection."

For consumers who want to color their hair at home, Clairol's Nice 'n Easy launched several new products in the past year to make the process easier. Last month, the company launched two new collections—Spice Brown Shades. Both are formulated to offer natural-looking color and visible dimension, which is sometimes hard to achieve with darker hair. Dark Shades is available in six colors and Dark Browns offers three options.

To keep color-treated hair looking shiny, Nice 'n Easy offers ColorSeal Gloss, a weekly treatment that improves the overall quality of the hair and helps color stay truer, longer, according to the company. The gloss, which is a silicone-based after-color conditioner paired with a shampoo, attaches to the hair fiber, forms a protective film over the cuticle of the hair that isn't removed by the next shampoo. Launched last month, the product has a suggested retail price of \$6.99 per 3.5-oz. tube.

According to an Omnibus study conducted by Clairol, 51% of women said that one of beauty challenges is root re-growth appearing before it's time for a full-root application. Nice 'n Easy launched a product to eliminate this problem. Root Touch-Up is a permanent dye designed for root maintenance that allows women to quickly color grays and root regrowth on the part, forehead and temple areas midway through their color cycle. The product is available in 10 shades and retails for \$6.99.

SoftSheen-Carson's Dark and Lovely Color Flash mousse, launched in January, is a permanent mousse featuring a no-drip, easy application that consumers can apply immediately after relaxing their hair. The line is targeted toward young, African-American and Latin women ages 16-29 and is available in seven shades with names such as Raspberry Yum, Plum Orange Candy.

Straighten Up

In 2004, chemical product sales were up almost 6% to \$41.3 million from the previous year, according to IRI. As the demand for healthy hair grows and technology advances, women no longer have to sacrifice the health of their hair if they want straight locks.

"A big misconception is that relaxers are damaging," said Ms. Williams of Colomer. "In many cases, relaxers can make the hair healthier by smoothing the cuticle, allowing for easier manageability."

For those who don't want to commit to just one texture, Lottabody introduced Tress Tranzitions, a line of products formulated for women who alternate between straight and curly hair. The line comprises a shampoo, two products for managing curly hair—Fast Dry Curl Defying foam and Extreme Curling gel and three chemical-free products for temporarily straightening hair—Blow Dry Straightening lotion, Maximum Hold Setting lotion and Press 'n Curl wax. The products contain a blend of ingredients to provide protection internally and externally against thermal stress caused by hair dryers, flat irons and other styling tools.

"We're really excited [about] Tress Tranzitions, which addresses the needs of the consumer who wants the styling versatility to wear their hair curly or straight," said Pumla Cossie, vice president of marketing, Colomer USA.

A Curl's Best Friend

For those who choose to go curly, African Pride launched Multi-Length Texturizer in February. Featuring a natural African herbal complex, the texturizer works in just 10 minutes and can be used by women with longer hair.

"Women of color are no longer locked into having to maintain short, texturized hair," said Standifer, African Pride brand manager for Colomer USA multi-cultural group. "The woman who starts off with short hair now has the freedom and flexibility to grow her hair out curly while maintaining fullness and body with our first new multi-length texturizer system."

Fort Lauderdale, FL-based Paul Brown Hawaii, a line of hair care products formulated for varying types of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic hair, recently introduced Ringlets—a line of hair enhancing products. The shampoo, conditioner and mist contain magnesium, which helps hair to strengthen and smooth curls and waves, making them bouncier, softer and more manageable, according to Paul Brown, president of Paul Brown Hawaii.

"Our products are designed to be used by a multi-diverse society," said Mr. Brown. "They are designed to provide moisture and protein to the hair, no matter what the ethnicity." Paul Brown Hawaii products are available in salons and spas across the U.S.



**Tress Tran
product line
women to
straight.**

Health Concerns

No matter the color, texture or length, if hair isn't healthy, it won't look good.

When it comes to preserving hair health, different ethnicities have different needs, explains Happi.

"More and more Asian people are coloring their hair, which can be damaging to the hair. There is more of a need for products that offer color protection but are less aggressive chemically treated hair," pointed out Mr. Brown.

When it comes to African-American hair, Mr. Brown said many people underestimate it. "People think that African-American hair is strong, but it is so delicate. African-Americans spend more per capita on hair care because they have different needs than they are told," he said.



Photo courtesy of Colomer USA.

The first step in promoting healthy hair, especially hair that has been colored, relaxed or had chemical services performed on it, is thorough moisturization.

Last October, SoftSheen-Carson launched Oil Therapy, a seven-product line of products featuring four natural therapeutic oils that leave hair easy to style.

"Heavy, oily hair dresses are a thing of the past," pointed out Mr. Tollerson. "Optimum Oil 1 features micro-oil technology that actually penetrates the hair with micro-beads of natural, therapeutic oils to nourish, repair, strengthen and protect hair. We found a way to give consumers what they've been searching for—all the benefits of oil without the build-up."

The line includes 3-in-1 crème oil moisturizer, hair & scalp conditioner, dry hair healer, Over-night strengthener and Ultimate shampoo and conditioner.

"Consumers are still looking for the traditional benefits of moisturization and conditioning, but they don't want the traditional heaviness of 'weighing the hair down' that has accompanied hair care," pointed out Ms. Jackson of Mizani. "They are also looking for products that strengthen the hair through all styling processes, and of course, they want products that deliver real healthy hair."

From the Inside Out

As many a hairdresser would say, healthy hair begins at the scalp. New York City-based Dr. Miracle's, a new multi-cultural hair care line, contains products to nourish the scalp. Stimulating Moisturizing Gro oil contains a "thermalceutical" complex that tingles as it penetrates the scalp, as well as vitamins A and E and sesame, wheat germ and avocado oils to heal dryness, flaking and itching. The leave-in treatment strengthens the hair and moisturizes and conditions the scalp. Damaged Hair Medicated Treatment promotes blood flow to the scalp, while the Temple & Nape Gro balm is a gel-like balm that—when applied to the scalp area—stimulates blood flow in the temples and nape areas to create consistent hair growth. The line also features 2-in-1 shampoo and conditioner, as well as Braid Relief, which provides relief and conditioning to the scalp after braiding, locking, twisting

or weaving the hair. It is available in both gel and spray form. Anti-Breakage Strengthening creme revives dead hair follicles while conditioning with lanolin and jojoba oil and Hot Gro Hair & Scalp Treatment conditioner to end slow growth problems with a mixture of essential oils.

"I've created the new Dr. Miracle's line to fill a void in the multi-cultural hair care market with products that have medical and scientific properties to treat tough hair problems," commented Brian Marks, founder and president of Dr. Miracle's. "Consumers actually feel these products working on their scalp and know that they are on their way to beautiful, healthier hair."

The products are available online and at beauty and barber supply stores and retail between \$7.99-\$9.99.

For consumers dealing with dandruff, Crème of Nature introduced Anti-Dandruff Soothing lotion, a medicated leave-on lotion that is applied directly to the scalp for use between shampoos to help control dandruff and soothe the scalp. Formulated with extra conditioners, it can be used on either natural or chemically treated hair.



Dr. Miracle's product into the scalp, promotes hair.

The lotion contains .25% zinc pyrithione, the active ingredient that helps control dandruff. Ms. Williams, that amount is higher than what other anti-dandruff shampoos contain. "A more active ingredient that many of the leading anti-dandruff brands, making the product effective in helping to control itching and flaking," she pointed out. The 6 fl. oz. lotion retails for \$5.99.

Growing the Market

As the U.S. continues to become more multi-cultural, the demand for products to meet specific needs will continue to evolve, according to experts. And there is plenty of room when it comes to this segment.

"The ethnic hair care market is undergoing dramatic changes for the better," commented Cossie of Colomer. "Heightened competition, image, advanced formulas and the more that is done in this market will only benefit the consumer in increased production of quality products."

According to Ms. Jackson of Mizani, moving forward, products will be designed to meet the needs of individuals as opposed to ethnic groups in general.

"I think as the U.S. landscape changes and the global landscape evolves, ethnic hair care will evolve as well. We will start to see products created for hair textures versus ethnic backgrounds, as texture will supersede ethnicity," said Ms. Jackson. "We will have to meet each individual's care and style need, whatever that may be."

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