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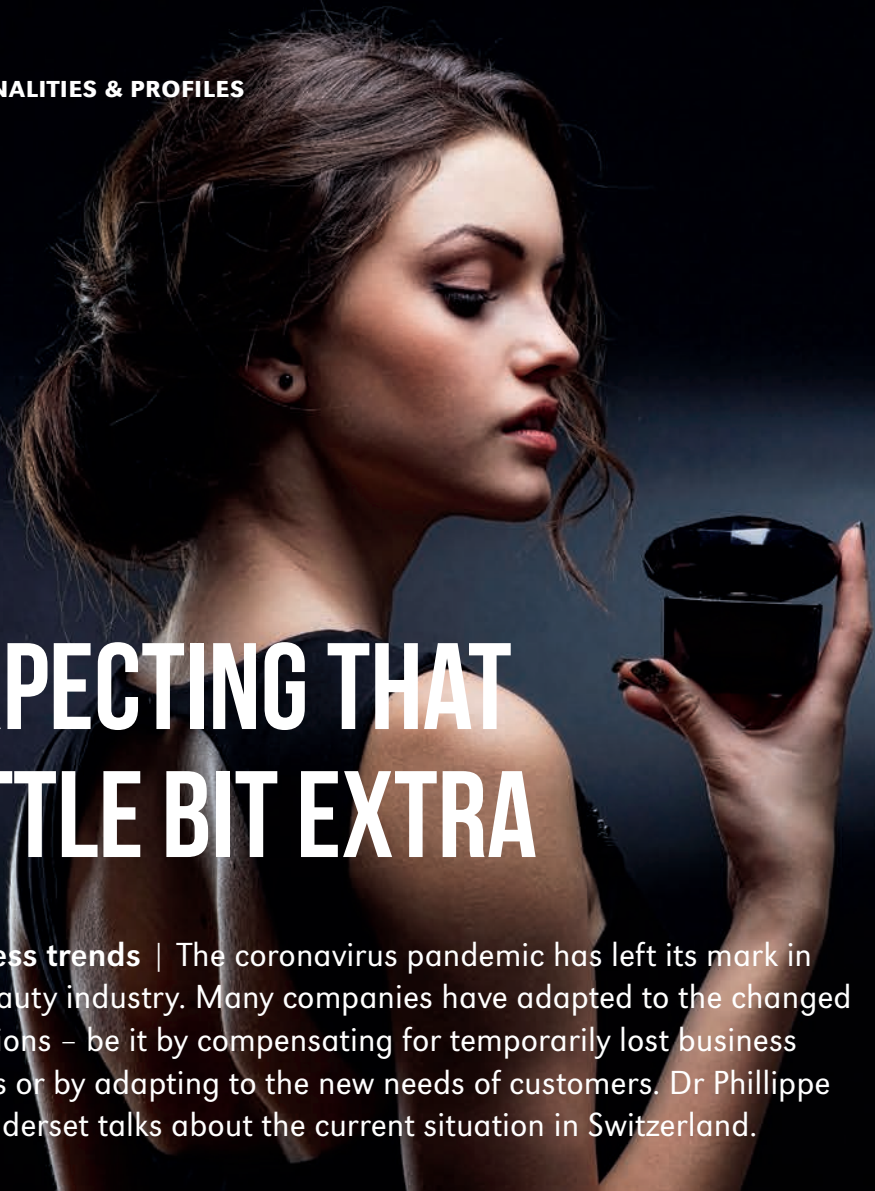
“FOCUS ON LOCAL PRODUCTS”

Dr Philippe Ch. Auderset,
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EXPECTING THAT LITTLE BIT EXTRA

Business trends | The coronavirus pandemic has left its mark in the beauty industry. Many companies have adapted to the changed conditions – be it by compensating for temporarily lost business sectors or by adapting to the new needs of customers. Dr Phillippe Ch. Auderset talks about the current situation in Switzerland.



► **Dr Philippe Ch. Auderset,**
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COSSMA: The last two years have thrown all markets upside down – and with it the Swiss cosmetics industry. What have been the biggest challenges since the start of the coronavirus pandemic?

Dr Philippe Ch. Auderset: Certain sales channels collapsed during the lockdown as many shops had to close. For an industry whose products primarily appeal to the senses, this was challenging. The temporary closure of beauty, hairdressing, massage, and foot care salons also froze interesting sales markets. Customers are increasingly using the **alternative sales channels on the internet.**

This was a great advantage for companies and especially cosmetics manufacturers who were well positioned with their own web shops. Your brand was easily found. Advice telephones, if available, were also gladly used. Sales directly to customers could therefore increase significantly. Many people in self-isolation felt the need to do something good for themselves. The desire for beauty rituals at home increased, more time was spent on facial, hair and body treatments in one's own four walls. This created a constant demand for products for which people were **willing to pay a little more.**

To what extent have difficulties in the raw materials supply chain made themselves felt? What solutions have you found for these?

At the beginning of the pandemic, the demand for disinfectants was very

high. Since many cosmetics manufacturers are also active in this area, sourcing alcohol has long been difficult for the industry. The abolition of compulsory stocks in Switzerland in 2018 was not beneficial. For some time, it was particularly **difficult to obtain good quality alcohol.** The short-term procurement out of necessity meant that organoleptically inferior qualities were also used and foul-smelling products came into the market. Due to the high demand, the **procurement of packaging later became difficult,** both for disinfection and cosmetic products, since certain containers, but especially dispensers and atomisers, were in high demand. Manufacturers often had to compromise on aesthetics and quality. Ultimately, however, it turned out that they were able to meet the demand. Interestingly, certain manufacturers have developed products with additional benefits in the field of

disinfection, which stand out from the crowd thanks to their good care properties and attractive scents.

In order to avoid production bottlenecks, the **health of the employees** was also crucial. This was certainly easier in our industry than in others since most employees always wear special clothing and masks when doing their jobs and the understanding of hygiene measures is already very high. It helped that this was also lived out in the private sphere.

What positive developments have all these challenges and changes brought with them?

The cosmetics industry has played an important role in the pandemic. It provided the basic personal care and hygiene products as well as hand sanitisers, thereby supporting the fight against the spread of the coronavirus.

In my opinion, the **hygiene awareness** of the population has increased, especially in recurring activities. After visiting the toilet, hands are washed or disinfected again. In the past, I had to realise alarmingly often that this hygiene measure was neglected. In general, the situation has caused consumers to reconsider their opinions and needs in relation to care products and to do more for their personal well-being. Quality awareness has increased and with it, the demand for higher quality products.

At the same time, the current situation has prompted the cosmetics industry, both in sales and marketing, to break new ground or to force it. Social media has become increasingly important.

Sustainability is playing an increasingly important role for consumers. How is this reflected in Swiss cosmetics?

During the first lockdown phase, Swiss consumers focused heavily on **local products**. The need for a sense of security and safety has also stimulated demand for Swiss products. Swiss-ness has become increasingly important in Switzerland, which

has benefited many small and medium-sized companies. Trust in a brand has become more important.

The demand for caring hand soaps, whether liquid or solid, has risen sharply. Bar soaps especially have experienced a veritable revival due to their favourable ecological balance. Since then, high-quality products have been in greater demand. When it comes to hand disinfectants, consumers, especially those, who depend on it for their work, are willing to dig a little deeper into their pockets if the product also cares for the skin.

How important is green chemistry in Switzerland? How has it developed over the past few months?

In the past two years, consumers have paid more attention to the ingredients of cosmetic products. They think more about what products they use because they often have more time for that.

Cosmetic products with a **high proportion of natural ingredients**, especially natural plant ingredients, have become increasingly important. The origin of these natural components also plays an important role. Manufacturers who produce locally and use regional raw materials have been able to establish themselves well on the Swiss market.

What trends do you see currently on the Swiss cosmetics market?

The increasing demand for **high-quality local products** is particularly strengthening small and medium-sized companies. The products are perceived by a broader clientele. This increases the chances of being discovered internationally and gaining a foothold on the international market with local, sustainable Swiss cosmetics products.

We will continue to have to deal with pandemics and international conflicts in the future. To what extent will the cosmetics industry have to change or adapt both nationally and internationally?

The past two years have forced consumers to reconsider their personal care habits and priorities. **Hygiene in everyday life** will continue to be important, with or without a pandemic or international conflicts, even if these factors are of course extremely influencing the situation. In the future, consumers will increasingly expect hand soaps and hand disinfectants that have **caring properties and a pleasant scent**, so that using them becomes a feel-good experience. Last but not least, the fragrance industry, which is also deeply rooted in Switzerland, will also be challenged here. □

