

Help! I'm Covered in Adjectives: Cosmetic Claims & The Consumer

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As consumers we are exposed on a daily basis to cosmetic claims, from brushing our teeth in the morning to using the latest anti-ageing creams. We can't get away from them. Consumers are continually enticed by claims of intrigue and efficacy.

What are these cosmetic claims? How are they actually developed and justified? With most consumers obtaining their information about cosmetic products from the press, internet sources and social media, it is important to discern between fact and fiction.

Now available from Amazon Books ISBN: 978-1-687-89860-9

This book opens with three key questions: why do we even use cosmetics, what is their purpose, and how vain are we all? The answers are by no means exhaustive, but serve as a guide to what cosmetic claims are, how they are made and regulated.

By examining the factors influencing the claims development process, the author aims to introduce consumers to the complexity and nuances of how the industry develops claims for its cosmetic products. They should also be more informed when choosing and purchasing cosmetic products, and be more circumspect when judging what they read in the press, and on the internet and social media. Cosmetic industry professionals, be they marketing, R&D or regulatory affairs, should gain a comprehensive understanding of the processes involved in developing effective cosmetic claims, and obtain more clarity in legislative compliance.

How the skin works, what it is, and some of the problems it faces, including those imposed on it by consumer behaviour, is covered. Types of cosmetic claims and where we find them, are explained comprehensively. The anatomy of claims and how they are constructed and developed are examined, followed by the legal requirements demanded in order to make a claim, and also comments on some key issues faced by the industry as regards claims development. This includes its own shortcomings, as well as challenges it faces from product communications being misconstrued by the consumer, and, at times, the press.

Substantiating cosmetic claims, or at least how the industry should do, hopefully demonstrates to the consumer and industry alike, as with any of the sciences, that cosmetic science is full of nuance and intrigue. Why certain claims were challenged, and what was required in order to rectify these challenges are highlighted, and illustrate to the consumer, a number of communication blunders made by some cosmetic companies.

Finally some thought is given to so-called 'Green' claims in our sustainably challenged world, which we all need to address.

The book closes with more questions than answers since it touches on the most sensitive aspects of who we are and what we want. It revisits the three questions, why we use cosmetics, and how we search for claims to solve a number of our social needs that are clearly not the remit of cosmetics, despite their impact.

This book is presented in a way that will both provoke and appeal to all consumers irrespective of which side of the cosmetic counter they stand — colleagues in the industry or friends and family on the high street.

The reflection in the mirror is never what it seems!

The Author - Dr. Theresa Callaghan PhD is a skin care scientist and cosmetic product claim specialist. With an international career spanning more than 30 years, she is a valuable industry expert within the cosmetics industry having worked for a number of well-respected personal care companies at senior level. In 2008 the author set up her own consulting business, anticipating a need for more discipline of cosmetic claims, and furthering scientific developments involved in that process. The author is also widely published, sits on the scientific editorial board of the International Journal of Cosmetic Science, and is an active member of a number of professional societies.

