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INTERVIEW

AN ART IN ITSELF

Developing fragrances | The familiar scent of a favourite face cream, the invigorating smell of a shower gel, the gentle perfume of a body lotion. They are all subtle, but highly effective. They often stand for more than just the product – they can symbolise cherished routines, desires, and memories. Christian Lüke tells how fragrances like these are brought to life.

COSSMA: At what stage of product development does the search for the right fragrance begin?

Christian Lüke: As a fragrance house, we develop evocative and complementary scents for a diverse range of applications. This is our area of expertise and our passion. Accordingly, part of our job is to convince the client's product development department that fragrance design should be part of the product

development process right from the very start.

Fragrances are not incidental – they are an essential part of the final product. They can even be decisive in the success or failure of the product, its perceived value and the user's experience of the product's performance, its story or message.

What does this look like in practice? Does the cosmetics manufacturer say: I want a fra-

grance that reminds me of "morning dew" or conveys a certain emotion?

Each scent profile briefing is unique. Ultimately, the process is about finding a suitable way to translate the client's wishes into the language of our in-house fragrance development. We can use a variety of tools to do this, such as images, emotions, moods, ingredients, but also product claims.

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The next step is the technical requirements. The process always starts with translating and channelling the specific development vision into the right fragrance direction – and of course into the right fragrance restriction format because the chemistry also must be right.

About chemistry: which raw materials do you use?

That depends entirely on the scent requirements, directions, and restrictions in the brief. There are wonderful essential oils, but also brilliant synthetic fragrances we can use. Creative fragrance developments often include a variety of different fragrance ingredients that are natural, nature-identical, or synthetic.

Natural fragrances are mostly derived from plant-based raw materials using methods such as pressing or extraction. Nature-identical means that these substances are chemically identical to natural fragrances and flavours but have been chemically synthesised. Synthetic raw materials are created entirely by human hand to produce chemical compounds that do not occur in nature.

How about tolerance? Are there any interactions with ingredients in cosmetics that you need to take into consideration?

We adhere completely to the IFRA guidelines, which clearly define what may and may not be used. Furthermore, the specific client restrictions

provide an additional design framework.

How are the fragrances tested for acceptance and the correct dosage?

The test procedures can be quite different, it really depends on the product itself, but also on the customer's specifications, any applicable restrictions, the time frame for panel tests and even the performance of the unscented bases. In general, so-called floor tests or panel tests are very helpful for determining acceptance, the right dosage, and the perfect product mix.

Can fragrances be patented so that they remain unique to a product?

It is extremely difficult to patent fragrances in specific applications. After all, what counts for the consumer is the overall impression of the entire product/scent image, i.e. the interplay of scent and product performance and presentation.

What about further developing signature fragrances – does that call for a different development process?

The process is more or less the same as for a new development. In fact, the sensitivity may well be higher, because it is about maintaining the trust of the consumer. A fragrance that is cherished is perceived as part of the product. And ultimately, the customer's pressure to change also plays a role.

Can fragrances meet the demand for more sustainability?

The general discussion about sustainability and the circular economy is a highly complex issue. After all, if you take sustainability seriously, then it's not just about the type of raw materials used, but also about their sourcing, their availability, their transport – and finally, of course, the desired fragrance. Our goal is to constantly improve in this respect from day to day.

What trends do you forecast for the coming years?

Fragrance trends – and this applies to many product areas – clearly follow cultural, socio-economic, and thus also general trends in society, and these can vary from country to country. Essentially, topics like health, freedom, sustainability, and environmental awareness influence fragrance trends. This leads to more natural and natural looking scents, but on the other hand also to new fantastic dreamy scents to address the emotional desires.

Thus, many emotional themes tend to pop up. Deep longings, such as the desire to go on holiday, will be reflected in the world of fragrances. Our job is to create the most beautiful, bespoke fragrances to keep our customers happy – and their customers, the consumer. We achieve this by always keeping a close eye on existing trends and filling them with life. At the same time, we also dare to set new trends. □

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