

Rebuilding Consumer Trust in Skincare, Beauty, and Beyond

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 HEALTHLINE MEDIA





It's time for transparency and clarity in skincare

When it comes to well-being, consumers understandably want information they can trust.

But all too often, **consumers find reasons to lose trust**. People turn to social media for inspiration — but find unrealistic imagery that erodes their confidence. They find misinformation online and aren't sure what to believe. And underserved consumers, especially People of Color, can struggle to find resources and products that are designed for their needs.

Today, we are seeing positive trends emerge in the skincare sector to actively fight these challenges.

Realistic imagery that drops the filters and focuses on skin and body positivity

High-quality, scientifically backed information designed to educate and empower

Diversity-first and personalized solutions built to meet the needs of more people

Brands and marketers can step up to join these trends and help our audiences feel more confident and motivated. In this report, we explore how consumer demand is leading to **exciting changes in skincare & beauty**, with implications for the broader wellness industry.

Consumers are eager to build healthy habits, especially in the wake of the pandemic. Now is our chance to provide the resources and solutions that will empower them on their journeys to well-being.

Consumers are ready for realistic imagery

From social media influencers to billboard ads, consumers are inundated with unrealistic images that all too often makes them question their own bodies. When “perfect” skin, physiques, routines, and diets are everywhere, people can get a warped idea of what normal and healthy look like.

THE TREND:

More consumers are waking up and pushing back. They have experienced the link between distorted perception and poorer mental well-being. Today, the tide is turning toward realistic, relatable wellness & beauty imagery that helps people feel good about themselves as they are.

A positive perspective: Viewing body-positive social media content can lead to improved mood and body appreciation among young women.¹

Looks aren't everything: Positivity doesn't resonate with everyone. The body neutrality movement is about helping people appreciate what their bodies can do, not how they look.

Step away from social media: 53% of people in our survey said that cutting down on usage could help improve their mental well-being.²

Transparency is trust: The #filterdrop campaign continues to push for transparency and labeling from advertisers and influencers regarding the use of beauty filters.³



Social media impacts the self esteem of younger populations

Despite the positive trends, social media has an outsized impact on girls and young women. Camera tricks and photo filters can give people inaccurate expectations for healthy looks like. This can have a real impact on health & wellness, with studies suggesting a link between social media, negative body image, and disordered eating.⁴

80% of girls have used an app to change their appearance before the age of 13.⁵

1/3 of young women won't post a picture of themselves online without a filter.⁶


39% of young women and girls say they are upset they can't look in real life like they do online.⁷



INDUSTRY TAKEAWAY:

Reconsider the imagery you use to convey “healthy” and “beautiful.” Do your photos set accurate expectations and celebrate various body types, skin colors, ages, and identities?

More companies are choosing to take social media breaks and encourage their followers to log off, too! Healthline & Psych Central's 10-Day Digital Disconnect Challenge gave followers tips for setting boundaries with the goal of improving mental well-being.



Consumers are looking for actionable, expert guidance

Facing a sea of questionable wellness content online, consumers struggle to find trustworthy guidance. They may turn to peer reviews and influencer posts, but are unlikely to find what they need, because these recommendations are not personalized to their needs.

THE TREND:

Audiences want scientifically backed, high-quality health & wellness information that empowers them to take action. Foundational, clear knowledge helps people take confident steps forward in their goals.

Expertise vs. experience: 41% of U.S. consumers trust expert reviews for health & beauty products — but 41% trust consumer ratings and reviews as well.⁸

Effectiveness matters: 43% of consumers want health & wellness companies to have research to support the effectiveness of their innovations.⁹



For clearer skin, people need clearer information

There's a lot of wellness information out there. In skincare alone, there was a 295% increase in articles written in just 6 months between 2021-2022.¹¹ But this content is not necessarily helping consumers understand what their skin needs or how certain ingredients could help.

65% of consumers have no idea what ingredients to look for in skincare products.¹²

73% of women agree it's not always clear what certain ingredients in skincare products do.¹³

70% of beauty consumers say they are overwhelmed by too many product choices.¹⁴

INDUSTRY TAKEAWAY:

Empower your audience by providing accurate, useful information that has scientific backing. Greater foundational knowledge creates more confident wellness consumers.

Provide high-quality information in an accessible way. Be sure to break down your guidance into small steps that anyone can understand and use.

Consumers deserve wellness solutions personalized for their diverse needs

Depending on factors like skin color, ethnicity, and identity, people may have trouble finding support, resources, and products designed for them. When brands show a lack of understanding for diverse needs, consumers quickly lose trust.

THE TREND:

Consumers are actively seeking out brands that design for diversity, and they are finding more options than ever in today's market. They are also drawn to personalized solutions that give them a feeling of a control and potentially greater effectiveness.

Tech-based personalization is here: As part of the online shopping boom during the pandemic, consumers are increasingly engaging with AR/AI experiences in skincare and beauty — a market already worth \$2.7 billion and growing.¹⁷


Opportunities to expand markets:

Our survey found low levels of current adoption, but high levels of interest, among certain consumer groups, including People of Color and Boomers, as well as rural, low-income, and lower-education demographics.¹⁵

People want diversity in guidance:

A Healthline Media survey found that only 22% of African American and Hispanic/Latino respondents believe health resources understand their needs “very well.” But 86% value online health resources that understand their ethnic background.¹⁶





When skin color impacts skincare

63% of 2,000 Women of Color surveyed said they feel “ignored” by the skincare industry, and there aren’t enough effective products for them.¹⁸

Only 3% of dermatologists are Black, and about half of dermatologists agree that their medical training didn’t prepare them to treat Black skin.¹⁹

INDUSTRY TAKEAWAY:

Look for ways to connect internal DEI work to external strategies, so you can actively demonstrate to consumers that your company’s commitment to equity goes beyond the surface level.

Not all health & wellness experts can speak to every race and ethnicity. Seek out diverse spokespeople who understand the experiences and needs of more people.



Consumer trust is worth the effort

The health & wellness market is booming, and consumer enthusiasm is high. Now is the time to step up, cut through the noise, and establish long-lasting relationships with your audience, built on foundational trust.

Realism in your imagery goes a long way for building consumer confidence in this era of “optimizing” beauty filters.

Expertise and fact-checking to back up your content help your brand stand out in a crowd of confusing, contradictory advice.

Empathy shines through when you design for diversity and offer tools for personalizing the consumer experience.



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