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Seasonal, Impulse Items Sought to Lift Sales

NEW YORK — Retailers and manufacturers came to the cosmetics and sun care Efficient Program Planning Sessions, held last week at the Sanibel Harbour Marriott in Fort Myers, Fla., looking for ideas that can snap shoppers back into a buying mood.

At the cosmetics show, retailers' picks included ideas to expand seasonal sales beyond Christmas and to add impulse items that can be easily merchandised in areas other than just beauty. More than 40 retail firms were represented at the cosmetics meeting, along with 27 cosmetics and fragrance suppliers. The sun care show was attended by 50 retail firms, including CVS Pharmacy and Kmart, and 30 suppliers. Buyers looked for concepts to expand sun care beyond the summer months and noted some overlap between the two categories, such as bronzers.

For one buyer, the meeting offered an opportunity to seek seasonal volume building beyond holiday. She found ideas from Karmin Industries to stimulate activity around events, such as Valentine's Day, back-to-school and Halloween. "They are cute, novelty items," the buyer said.

Mitch Takefman, vice president of Karmin (formerly Forecast), said savvy retailers are on the prowl for items to take advantage of traffic in stores and add another "register ring." His firm is taking upmarket-style items and making them "accessible" to mass. A few examples include his firm's take on the vampire trend with a collection called Nightfall. The tattoo-inspired motif is captured in another grouping of lip, eye and nail products. The items are priced at \$4 to encourage impulse sales.

One trend Takefman has noticed is the cycling back to nostalgic packaging, such as traditional heart-shaped boxes and "the cute little soaps your mom wouldn't let you use."

Karmin has off-shelf merchandising solutions for big-box chains as well as small stores. "We give fixturing that produces big profits that buyers can sell management on," he said. "You have to change up what you sell so when customers come in, they always see something new. You need a wow factor, especially when all the stores are starting to look alike."

Marie Todd, senior vice president of Lotta Luv, said retailers were interested in men's items, as well as more impulse, low-price-point items to net add-on dollars.

Many chains wanted impulse bins with novelty items they could position in beauty and other high-trafficked areas. Lotta Luv took the opportunity to show a new men's lip balm called ChapFix.

The sun care meeting also offered retailers opportunities to heat up sales. Retailers identified foundations with sun care properties and sun care with bronzer or glitter as overlapping areas between sun care and cosmetics.

One item that stood out, according to several buyers, was the Cool Off Towelette from It's 2 Cool. The pre-moistening towelettes provide a way to cool down during the heat. They are infused with herbs, plant botanicals and essential oils. With most of the U.S. gripped in a heat wave, several buyers grabbed handfuls of samples to survive the summer. Off Beat had unique licensed

sun care products that also got the nod from chains as summer seasonal hits for next year.

Summer, in fact, could have put a small dent in attendance. Although the show is always deemed productive, some manufacturers noted the timing could have interfered with some vacations. "The show is a bit small and not what it used to be. But it is still good and a good value for the money," one vendor said.



Karmin's Nightfall collection display.