

Q&A: Democratizing the beauty store with CVS Pharmacy

Article

Krystal Walker

Director of Beauty Development and Customer Experience at CVS Health



Krystal Walker, director of beauty development and customer experience at CVS Health, spoke with Insider Intelligence about the launch of Skin Care Centers. Building on the success

of the Beauty in Real Life experiential store format, the Skin Care Centers connect consumers with advanced beauty diagnostic tools and experimental education innovations.

Insider Intelligence: How are the Skin Care Centers making the in-store experience more engaging?

Krystal Walker: We've hired aestheticians as beauty advisors who can look at a customer's skin and tell them what's going on. We also brought in some new tools, such as SkinScope, a tool used by dermatologists, and our team was trained in partnership with L'Oréal to ensure that they're well versed in leveraging the tool.

My favorite thing about the in-store experience is we've taken on a solution-based way to navigate the products. There are so many products in the skincare aisle, and we felt there was an opportunity to create more ease for the customer. We're building out the experience and breaking it into different need cases, ranging from cleansing to the melanin experience.

In-store experiences now have to be more engaging. They have to layer in a digital focus because people walk those aisles with their phone in hand and do comparison shopping and research. You need to find a way to make it a seamless experience.

II: Why create a more accessible and personalized beauty experience?

KW: We talk about accessibility all the time, making sure that those special moments are accessible by all because we're all about democratizing beauty. We know that a segment of our customer base is the same customer who walks into a specialty beauty store and later shops at CVS. Why not give them the opportunity to access that level of service in the CVS that's on their daily run, rather than having to drive 10 miles outside of their way?

In addition, we wanted to make sure that we were reflecting the communities we serve, since we know that some underserved populations don't normally have access to a dermatologist. We've built in equity in our MinuteClinics and our Health HUBs, and this is just another extension of the same principle.

II: What shifts have you seen within the beauty market as a result of the pandemic?

KW: We saw a huge shift toward products within the self care and DIY section. Now we're starting to see that peter out slightly, but what's coming back is that customers are engaging in more group social activities. We've seen an uptick in categories that help drive a customer's confidence, ranging from grooming services to cosmetics to skincare.

II: What is the future of beauty products?

KW: Personalization will become increasingly important. Experiences that tie customized products to the customer are key, and you are now able to do that within a CVS store. In addition, relevance and innovation are important to our customers so you need to find ways to keep the customer engaged as they're walking the aisle. For example, we have our ModiFace's Derm Skin Analyzer for the shopper on the go who might not have the 15 minutes it takes to sit down for the SkinScope tool and wants to be able to scan a QR code and keep it moving.

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