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May 9, 2014

Electric Beauty Companies

By [Rachel Brown](#)

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APPEARED IN

Like untold numbers of entrepreneurs before them, husband-and-wife team Glenn and Shannon Dellimore laid the groundwork for GlamGlow at home, around their coffee table. They struggled to cobble together \$80 to pay for the first batch of samples of the brand's mud treatment products, and they toiled to get those products into the hands of family, friends and a few influential people to spread the word, all along encountering naysayers who argued mud (mud!) would never catch on.

But then something unusual happened: GlamGlow took off—quickly. After just 36 months on shelves, retail sales reached \$106 million last year, according to the Dellimores, between just two stockkeeping units—Youthmud Tinglexfoliate Treatment and Supermud Clearing Treatment. Competing with conglomerates that have advertising budgets the size of some states' GDPs, GlamGlow, now sold in 80 countries, skyrocketed to become among the top skincare brands at a growing list of retailers that includes Sephora, Harrods and Douglas.

GlamGlow's success has put the beauty industry on alert—and it's not the only brand doing so. There's a new crop of high-energy indies sending shock waves across retailers,

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Frederick Bouchardy Founder and President of Joya, Co-Founder of Elements.

Photo By Steve Eichner



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large companies and the consuming public. Rather than the me-too model of years past, these budding brands are laser focused on newness and tweaking customary business models, built to leverage technology and social media. They're led both by founders with experience in the industry or outsiders not accustomed to following the established beauty playbook, and the companies are pumping out products quicker and more in tune with customers' desires than has traditionally been the case.

"The big boys are definitely hearing and seeing what is going on," says Glenn Dellimore. "They have told us they look at all of the data that comes in from around the world. I wouldn't say they are worried, but it has opened their eyes to being more nimble, pushing the boundaries and relooking at the strategy of what they provide to consumers. I don't think it will change overnight."

What is happening basically overnight is an onslaught of new entrants into the beauty world. Since its debut in January 2011, Elements Showcase, a platform for emerging fragrance brands cofounded by Frederick Bouchardy of Joya, has gone from 35 exhibitors to between 75 and 150 exhibitors.

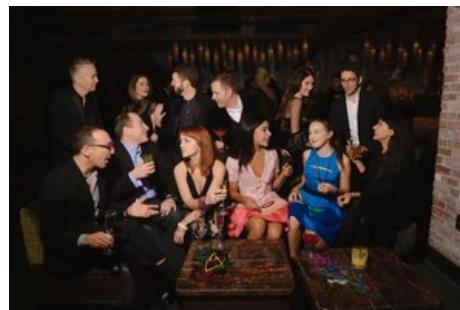
"There has been a huge increase in brands being developed and launched in the last two years. Everybody feels safer about the economy," says David Pirrotta, founder of a namesake brand-management firm that has counted RGB, Rodin, Blind Barber and Sachajuan as clients. "In my office, we get three to eight brands a month sending us product for us to take them on board and help them on sales."

The infusion of newness isn't limited to a particular category. At Barneys New York, which last year launched the color cosmetics lines Surratt and Make, Jennifer Sunwoo, executive vice president and general merchandise manager for women's, says, "In color in particular, we haven't seen much newness or emerging brands in the past few years. It has been exciting that all of a sudden, we did find new color lines. I'm not sure why we haven't seen it in the past few years. Perhaps because the focus has been more on skin care, and the makeup trends have been more about looking fresh and a cleaner aesthetic in terms of face, so there wasn't a lot of emphasis on color, but, if you look to many of the designer runway shows for fall, there was loads of color in terms of shadows, etc., so there is a resurgence in an emphasis on color."

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Stephane Siboni Co-Founder & Co-CEO Ardency Inn Corp. Gilles Kortzgadarian Co-Founder & Co-CEO Ardency Inn Corp.

Photo By Steve Eichner



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Troy Surratt, Susanne Langmuir, Matthew Malin, Rob Robillard, Annie Evans, Peter Hananel, Ariana Mouyiaris, Willa Doss, Hannah Bronfman, Rebecca Perkins, Tev Finger and Andrew Goetz.

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They Are Wearing: Paris Couture Week

In skin care, antiaging has been the traditional powerhouse, but Karen Grant, vice president and global beauty industry analyst at NPD, has noticed the market becoming quite receptive to products beyond wrinkle and line solutions. She credits the device brand Clarisonic for paving the way. “Where a product like GlamGlow before might have been fringe or niche, consumers today are looking for other benefits. With the greater importance of cleansing now, the consumer is looking at the fact that caring for her skin is as important as serums. She was just focused on correction, correction, correction; now she is looking for correction, but care first,” says Grant.

In contrast to skin care, fragrance sales have been universally soft, an issue leading retailers to search for distinct brands and sparking a resurgence in niche and artisanal brands. On that quest, Sephora chief merchant Margarita Arriagada found herself in the Nolita outpost of Atelier Cologne. “Sephora is so forward in skin care and makeup, and they came to the conclusion that in fragrance they were very much following the big department stores. They wanted to try to do in perfume what they had very successfully done in skin care and makeup,” says Sylvie Ganter, the founder and creator of Atelier Cologne who was formerly at Fresh, Hermès Parfums and Selective Beauty. “They approached us and felt we could be an anchor brand.”

Ganter reasons the retail interest is the result of consumer disillusionment with mainstream perfume brands obsessed with launches and celebrity spokespeople. “We are not trying to build a hit perfume. We are trying to build a brand that has strong values and a strong point of view about fragrance,” stresses Ganter. Continuing on about Arriagada’s visit, she says, “It was her experience in the store as a customer that made her feel she wanted a piece of that in her store. We rarely talk about ingredients. We show customers and tell them stories. You can discover what you really like and want to smell like without feeling pressured.”

Making it at retail today, however, is harder than simply being an alternative to what’s already out there or dressing up packaging. Compared to 15 to 20 years ago, when color cosmetics brands like Too Faced, Urban Decay, Bobbi Brown and Stila came on the scene, Troy Surratt, the makeup artist who launched his brand last year, says, “The environment is far more competitive. There were indie brands years ago that were speaking to niche markets and marketing concepts in ways that were never marketed before. Many of the niche consumers have already been spoken to, so figuring out how to do it differently, and where are the holes in the market and speaking to those holes is what I try to do.” The hole that Surratt contends his brand is filling is for luxury cosmetics for a fashion-forward woman who wears Balmain or Rick Owens. “The heritage brands can look very fancy and mumsy. I wanted to create a brand that looked cooler, more modern and more forward,” he says.

Such sharp points of differentiation are unambiguous prerequisites for getting into stores today. “Retailers are so demanding about what they accept and don’t, unless you come to the table with something that is very different from what they have and creates a white space,” says Rob Robillard, chief executive officer of Sensible Organics, the company behind the brand Nourish Organic, and previously the ceo of Living Proof and the general manager of Kiehl’s. “They are now like, ‘Tell me why this idea is so breakthrough that I can’t say no.’”

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