



THE WORLD OF MASKS

Interview | Heiko Hünemeyer of Schaebens reveals how the Company succeeded more than 20 years ago to build up a niche market in the facial skin sector.



► **Interview with:**
Heiko Hünemeyer
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COSSMA: What were the major milestones in the development of your cosmetics sector?

Heiko Hünemeyer, Managing Director, Schaebens: As Managing Director, I would like to focus primarily on the last 30 years, during which I have been actively involved. Starting in 1987, we changed from being generalists to being specialists. Since the early 90s, our range of products

switched towards cosmetic products. From the mid-1990s we then hit upon the simple idea of developing cosmetic products with the same claims that we make for pharmaceutical preparations and marketing them. This enabled us to distinguish our products from the competition. From the very beginning our slogan has been: "Maximum effect with minimal side effects". We put this simple but smart idea into practice

for the first time in 1997, as we started using four-sealed edge bags as a new primary packaging for masks. Instead of larger amounts of the product with many uses, the single-use bag allows the consumer to use a practical product dosage that helps to reduce significantly the application concentration of preservation materials. Since these materials may cause skin irritations and allergies, the special form of packaging improved enormously the skin compatibility of our cosmetic products. At the same time, our formulas were improved for maximum efficiency.

In 2011, the market research institute **AC Nielsen** ascertained that, with respect to volume, our facial care held the leadership position both in the German drugstore and the food retail market.

Since 2016, we have been active in the field of TV advertising with the aim of increasing our brand awareness. Our gross advertising budget for TV commercials in the period from 2016 to 2018 amounts to approximately 20 million € and provides evidence for 1 billion advertising contacts. The advertising budget for Social Media amounts in 2017 to more than 0.5 million € and will increase until 2019 to over 1 million €.

Since for quite a long time now the amount of skin incompatibilities triggered by our products is lower than one per one million cosmetic products sold, we have started this year to label some of our cosmetic products as “hypoallergenic”. Furthermore, now we also label our products with the supplement “free of” and list the product efficacy as a percentage.

How did you come up to specialise in the field of face masks?

Masks probably rank among the oldest types of cosmetic application of all. Presumably the first masks consisted of peloids or muds which were enriched with herbs and oils.

Although at the end of the last century masks were a very popular type of application, they were available as “ready-made” products only in a limited selection in mass markets and offered in large jars or tubes for multiple applications.

After an extensive national and international research, we became aware of the tremendous potential that lies in masks. After all, facial masks offer the benefit of being not only particularly effective, but also of providing a feeling of relaxation and the experience of wellbeing.

Since the product launch of our masks in the German market, the market has expanded rapidly. Masks have become the type of cosmetic application mostly frequently purchased in the entire facial care sector, and their development potential has not yet been fully exhausted.

In Asia the frequency of use of masks is more than four times as high as in Germany. Until around 2016, there were predominantly cream, gel, peloid and peel-off masks in the German-speaking countries. Recently, sheet masks in a variety of types have been launched.

Which trends determine the global market for facial masks?

In Asia, facial masks traditionally have had greater importance

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than in Europe and are offered in an incredibly large selection, in particular as sheet masks. In the German and European markets, cream, gel, peloid and peel-off masks are still in the lead. On the basis of the positive experiences made up to now, we expect that sheet masks will become established in Europe in the long term. In addition, we are persuaded that in the future the interest in German facial masks from leading brand suppliers will grow strongly in Asia. The reason for this is that all of these different mask variants have both specific advantages and disadvantages for the intended aim of application and wellbeing.

Which were the main innovations in the sector of masks up to now?

Innovations in the last 20 years have been very numerous. The **Schaebens Dead Sea Mask** is characterised by its very high proportion of mud from the Dead Sea. The **Schaebens Chocolate**



The versatility of masks is unlimited

Mask, which was created upon the suggestion of our employees, is both a cosmetic product and a food item. This mask is not only edible, but tastes good too. The **Schaebens Eyes & Lips Mask**, with its extremely skin-friendly formula, is packed in a bag that has four 1,5 ml compartments. For the professional **Schaebens Hydraulic Gel Mask**, 2 different contents are mixed together in the bag before the application. The **Schaebens Multi Masking Mask** contains in one bag 3 different formulas to be applied simultaneously for various application areas on the face. We have optimised our formulas to such a degree that the amount of skin incompatibilities has dropped to approximately 0,7 cases per 1 million products sold, significantly below the industry average. Thus, the probability of a skin incompatibility for our highly effective masks, applied to the sensitive face, is only of 0.00007%.

Which were the main innovations in the sector of concentrates?

The potential for innovation is there, as is the case with masks, both in the formula and in the packaging materials. As to concentrates, the primary packaging consists of a gel capsule, also called twist-off capsule, and the secondary packaging consists of a blister or push pack. The capsule neck, that is the outlet opening, must be twisted off or cut off to open the twist-off capsule. The capsules can be filled with highly concentrated active substances.

This procedure eliminates or reduces significantly the use of skin irritating ingredients, such as preservatives and emulsifier.

The blister packaging as secondary packaging ensures that the twist-off capsules do not dry out, in contrast to storage in a pot, where the contents can become hard.

Which are the main innovations in the range of the products based on salt from the Dead Sea?

All products in the Dead Sea series contain unusually high-dose active ingredients from the Dead Sea. Thus, the **Schaebens Dead Sea Mask** and all other products of this series contain mud salt from the Dead Sea.

Despite their high active substance concentration, the products are very well tolerated, and they are therefore suitable as basic care for skin conditions with neuro-dermatitis and psoriasis. According to the **Nielsen Market Research Institute**, this product series is Germany's most sold acne series.

Which are the main innovations in the health and spa sector?

In all our product categories, we continuously launch innovations. In the product range OTC, e.g. the food supplement **Schaebens Aloe Vera Drinking Gel** is conceived in such a way that it is suitable both for internal and external application.

In the product category dermatology, the medical products **Schaebens Eczema Cream** and

MASKS

are the **most commonly purchased** form of application in the facial care

Sheet masks will become sustainably established in Europe

1997: The **seal-edge bag** for masks is used as the new dosage form for masks

The seal-edge bag allows for a formula with **minimised side effects**

The **development potential** of masks is still far from being exhausted

Schaebens Psoriasis Balsam are especially innovative.

Within the product category special cosmetics, e.g. the special care product **Schaebens Tattoo Cream** has achieved for the first time a target group of over 10 million people in Germany by means of distribution through the drugstore market and the food retailing trade.

For all these product examples, our company is market leader in Germany in the drugstore market and the food retailing trade.

How important are the masks, concentrates, Dead Sea products and health/spa sectors seen proportionally?

Our masks generate a share in sales of approximately 60%, the concentrates approx. 15%, the Dead Sea products approx. 10% and the health and spa products approx. 15%

Which are the most important products overall?

The most important product categories are the **Schaebens Mask** series and the **Schaebens Concentrate** series. In these two series, the **Schaebens Dead Sea Mask**, the **Schaebens Moisture Mask**, the **Schaebens Peel-off Mask**, the **Schaebens Eyes & Lips Mask** as well as the **Schaebens Mature Skin Concentrate** and the **Schaebens Hyaluronic acid booster** rank among the leading individual products.

Are the products developed and produced inhouse?

Our enterprise is even authorised to produce drugs. Several million products of the cosmetic and health sector are produced every year inhouse. However, in order to ensure an even larger development and production potential and to not limit our work only to our own capacities, we commission development and production

“OUR MOTTO HAS ALWAYS BEEN: "MAXIMUM EFFECT WITH MINIMUM SIDE EFFECTS"

Heiko Hünemeyer, Managing Director, Schaebens

orders externally as well. This is how we have managed to expand the scope of our product range enormously.

How does your marketing structure look today and in the future?

We use a classical key account management. The largest sales outlet is the drugstore market. Our biggest trade partners are the **dm drug store**, **Rossmann** and **Müller**. Almost hundred percent of our range of products is distributed through all these trade partners. Our products are sold additionally in the classical food retailing chains and with growing importance also online. The online sales channel will take on increasing importance in future. The export business will continue to expand significantly. The challenges for the future are commercial concentration and expansion of the export trade.

Are there differing product preferences in other countries?

In many Asian countries, there is a very special demand for “whitening” products. At present, we deliberately do not offer these products, since they do not correspond to our claim “Maximum effect with minimum side effects”. Starting in autumn 2017, we will introduce a new export design for masks and concentrates particularly for export. This was carefully developed following a series of extensive consumer surveys in France, England and Spain with the support of a well-known brand agency.

Our concentrates or twist-off capsules in particular, encounter unexpectedly large interest in many countries. So far, this product concept seems to a large extent unknown outside the German-speaking countries and, due to its cosmetic benefits, offers both for the trade and for the consumer considerable advantages.

What are at present the largest challenges for a medium-size enterprise to cope with the competition of the global players?

We love challenges. A successful further development is hardly possible without challenges. So, e.g. in the most important mask product category for us in Germany, a completely new competitive environment has been created, due to the introduction of various new brands, including **L'Oréal**, **Garnier** and **Bioré**. Apart from the challenges, however, enormous advantages come from it as well, as a result of which we strongly boosted our promotional activities, which made these products even more attractive to the consumer. Although in the entire cosmetic sector it is becoming increasingly difficult to generate significant sales growth, the turnover of our company is steadily increasing. While the average rate of turnover growth was only 8% in the last 10 years, it rose to 12% in the last 5 years and even to 17% over the past three years. Currently, our growth in sales is above plan again in 2017. Since, even by our standards, an unusually large number of innovations is planned in 2018, we are looking towards the future with optimism. □

Additional information on the history and the brand can be found on the Internet – see download panel



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