

# Cosmetic Promotions Fetes 20 Years, Expands Reach

**NEW YORK** — At a time when many beauty companies are struggling to stay in business, one cosmetics firm is celebrating its 20-year anniversary.

Cosmetic Promotions Inc., a business providing demonstrators, training and other marketing tools to the mass beauty industry, marks the milestone with fresh ideas to keep growing in tough economy times. "I've seen so many changes in the years I've been in the business," said company founder and chief executive officer Joann Tyson. "But the good news for my business is that when times are tough, companies look for ways to boost their business. Our clients need us more as staffs get cut and they need their sales to go up — so they turn to us to help them. When times are good there is more money for marketing."

Cosmetic Promotions, she said, especially helps vendors concentrate on national campaigns while her firm can tackle customized marketing programs for each retail chain. A few examples include a fragrance modeling event at 400 J.C. Penney Co. Inc. stores (each four-hour event averaged sales of more than 17 pieces of products) or the Rite Aid Corp.'s Glam Camp where product samples are delivered into teenagers' hands at community events across the country. Cosmetic Promotions is also called upon for staff demonstrations at store opening events.

Years ago, Tyson recalled, companies turned to her to create premiums for gifts with purchase. Then in-store demonstrations became more popular, especially with new launches. Recently, the economy has prompted a small downturn in demonstrations, but she's offset that with sample boxes of new items shipped directly into one chain's stores to introduce beauty advisors to the new items. "I am always thinking of new ideas to help manufacturers and retailers," Tyson added.

Now, to take advantage of her cadre of more than 1,000 makeup artists and models, she's making up her services to other product lines such as beverages. "I have great people who know the industry, so why not extend our services," she explained. She added that 89 percent of first-timer purchases

are the result of a trial or sample. "Our in-store events typically sell one week's worth of products in four hours," Tyson said.

While venturing into other sample-friendly categories, beauty remains her focus and the reason she started her business. In her teens, she worked applying makeup to models and behind a beauty counter at Sears. After college, she worked in the business with Almay and then Nat Robbins as a national sales manager. It was at Almay the seed was planted for Cosmetic Promotions, after she created a successful end-cap deal with Eckerd Drug. Her first task at Cosmetic Promotions was to spearhead a newsletter for then-drugstore chain powerhouse Revco. It was while working on the newsletter that she struck up a partnership with retail beauty executive Judy Wray, who continues to tap Tyson's creative juices now that Wray is at Rite Aid.

Rite Aid, in fact, is a big client and one that has found a unique way to keep demonstrations in store alive by getting vendors to share a makeup artist. For example, a program to introduce consumers to new items at Rite Aid features demonstrations of four noncompeting brands who share the cost of the demonstrator. Although drug chains are the heart and soul of Cosmetic Promotions business, the company has branched into food chains such as HEB and mass merchants including Kmart Holding Corp.

"It seems like yesterday we started the business. I can't believe it is 20 years. I've seen brands come and go, like Clarin and the Cutex Polishing pen. Now pens are back and so much better. I miss the chains that are gone like K&B," Tyson recalled. "But the one thing that is impressive is how smart consumers are today. You can't tell them a product can get rid of wrinkles. They are too smart and they use the Internet to research everything."

When questioned if a new line can launch successfully in the business today, she pointed to Yes To Carrots. "If you have a fabulous product with a point of difference, you can make it. Just when you think there's no room in skin care comes along a product like Yes To Carrots," Tyson said.

critical mass  
by Faye Brookman



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