Floratech discusses its approach to waterless formulation

By Simon Pitman

Floratech was one of the earlier ingredients providers to tackle the waterless trends and has consequently developed some advanced ingredients and technologies.

What has contributed to Floratech’s expertise in this area is the fact that company is based out of Arizona, from where it supplies a range of locally sourced botanicals that are grown with little to no irrigation.

Taking advantage of these types of botanicals, the Floratech development team have been able to develop a significant number of cosmetic and personal care waterless concepts, which currently include a water-free cleansing balm, a water-free cleansing oil gel, a silicone-free heat protection serum and a clear, silicone free under eye rejuvenator.

Cosmetics Design spoke to Steve Brown, Floratech president, to find out about where the company sees the trend going, what the challenges are to waterless formulation and the kind of solutions that the company is focusing on to help its customers in this area.

How much interest are you seeing in waterless solution? Has it grown significantly recently? What sort of specific solutions are formulators and brands most interested in?

We see waterless as a trend. Our customers are increasingly asking about anhydrous systems, such as serums, facial cleansers and hair care including dry shampoos, bar shampoos and conditioners. Some of these
systems are pretty innovative.

**What are the biggest challenges of going waterless?**

Three common challenges are oxidative stability of the oil phase, the product texture from first point of contact through activation/dilution and use, and consumer resistance to a higher price per volume. Floratech addresses each of these by providing oil phase ingredients that are extremely resistant to oxidation, that provide a range of aesthetically pleasing textures during use from start to finish, and that deliver functionality to overcome initial price resistance. Floratech's oil phase emollients often provide benefit ranges competitive with water dispersed actives.

**What is consumer perception about waterless alternatives to conventional skin care and hair care products?**

There are probably several reasons that waterless appeals to consumers. Although nobody is allergic to water, some are allergic to biocidal preservatives and chemical fragrance solubilizers or at least find them irritating. Other reasons might include minimizing plastic waste, reducing product size for either travel or saving space by the bathroom sink, or the ever-present eagerness to try new innovative products. I'm sure there are others as well.

**What formulation 'tricks' can be employed to help sway consumers towards waterless?**

At retail, waterless products need to justify their price premium per gram. Formulation adjustments such as removing water, preservatives and solubilizers are all seen as beneficial to many consumers. Also, volume-price resistance can be reduced if the waterless option is both natural and functions well. Finally, consumers might justify choosing the waterless option to help the environment by reducing the volume of packaging, fuel consumption, and plastic in our landfills. These benefits should be clearly communicated to consumers at retail.

**How do you see waterless formulations evolving in the future?**

We foresee ever more products requiring the consumer to add water to activate the product during use. We already see this in serums, bars, emulsifiables and powders. We predict the waterless trend will be an important driver of product innovation going forward.

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