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Lumene Expands U.S. Footprint

BY FAYE BROOKMAN

NEW YORK — Lumene is proving that an unknown brand to most American consumers can achieve relevance in the U.S. market, despite rampant stockkeeping-unit rationalization, consolidation of retailers and an overall tough economic climate.

Lumene, a well-established brand in Finland, came to America's shores in 2003 through an exclusive launch in CVS Pharmacy, which devoted major real estate to both its skin care and color cosmetics lines.

The success in CVS, especially in skin care, has enticed other retailers to add the line, which, in addition to 7,100 CVS doors, is now in 3,400 Walgreens units, 400 Ulta stores and 103 Sears locations. It is also offered in select Target, Wegmans and Meijer stores.



Lumene's growth beyond CVS is in a sense a testament to the marketing power of CVS, which helped make Lumene a recognized brand. It also serves as a textbook example of how to conquer American shoppers for the myriad European brands hungry for domestic expansion. "I think we'll see many European beauty companies eyeing the U.S. now," said Faith Hope Consolo, chairman of Prudential Douglas Elliman's retail marketing and sales division.

What retailers said helped Lumene stand out in a crowded skin care market is its Finnish ingredients such as Arctic heather. Buyers singled out Lumene for breaking through the clutter and selling at a time when other European imports, including at Isadora at Walgreens and a cadre of foreign brands at Target, didn't resonant with shoppers. "Lumene is in a great spot for people looking for luxury and high-end ingredients at mass," said Joe Pastorkovich, vice president, North America. "Also, the natural Arctic super ingredients play a role in the brand's appeal," he added.

With its newly minted distribution, Lumene is taking the next step, repackaging to help shoppers even better comprehend the products and adding more high-technology ingredients. These moves come at a time when consumers research ingredients on the Internet and feel

prepared to make their own selections at mass locales. The company plans to have the new packaging in place for early next year.

The fresh look for Time Freeze offers suggested age ranges (using a scale on the box) to help shoppers easily find what's right for them. There is more imagery hammering home the Finnish heritage including a Finland stamp. There are cutouts so shoppers can see the items and a color scheme helps identify the different target uses of items.

Under the Time Freeze banner is a new eye treatment featuring Metabiotics Resveratrol to help prevent signs of aging by promoting firmness and collagen production of the skin.

Proprietary ingredients including Arctic cloudberries have helped Lumene stand out on shelves. That message is augmented with a new Vitamin C+ collection introducing Arctic cloudberry nectar. The nectar has detoxifying properties to make skin look brighter, explained Tiina Isohanni, global vice president of category management and innovation for Lumene, who said there are hundreds of other ingredient stories Lumene has in its pipeline.

A new Spa line is inspired by the Finnish nature and Arctic spa tradition of sauna. The Spa line is enriched with Arctic roseroot and contains 90 percent natural ingredients and 100 percent natural fragrance. The collection includes cleansers, scrubs butters, a serum and lotions. Prices are at less than \$15.

Finally, in its premium beauty range there is a new advanced formula featuring Arctic Sea buckthorn. The combination of Arctic Sea buckthorn nectar with Arctic Sea buckthorn oil creates a protective network of 16 natural antioxidants to safeguard skin against free radicals and harmful environmental influences, said Isohanni.

Retailers said shoppers once again are looking for natural products, especially those that perform. "We think shoppers are educated about what they are looking for in skin care and we have new products that are priced right and new packaging that is going to really stand out on shelves," concluded Pastorkovich.