

A woman with dark hair and eyes, wearing clear safety goggles, looks directly at the camera. In the background, to the left, is a white molecular model with several spheres connected by rods. The overall tone is scientific and futuristic.

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Spa Industry Changes by 2020

By Carol and Robert Trow

The world is changing more and more rapidly, as are the fields of spa and medical esthetics. For example, in 1910—a mere 100 years ago—only 5% of the world's population lived in urban areas; this year, it is more than 50%.^{1,2} There are now two billion daily Internet users; interested consumers are getting self-educated online in a matter of seconds. Google recently announced that it has improved its search engine to save nine seconds per search because users are impatient to wait even five seconds for results. Everybody has digital phones that are used for more than just phone calls. All of this results in an urgency to communicate faster, obtain information quicker and get things accomplished in less time. So, what does all this mean for skin care? A great deal.

Spa professionals and companies will be required to offer more documentation of clinical efficacy, faster results, less controversial ingredients, advanced methods of penetration and more home-use devices that come as close to mimicking professional treatments as possible, and educating clients will be as important as the products and treatments themselves. How does this translate to your day-to-day world in 2020?

Following are the top 25 changes to the spa industry that you can expect to see by the year 2020. Remember, no article can address all potential future issues; this is only meant to stimulate your thinking and planning for the coming decade.

1

The driving force in skin care will increasingly be centered around anti-aging products that are safe, effective and offer documented results. Consumers are more educated and will demand results, fast; client impatience will rise to new levels. The growth will be in treatments and products that offer solutions, not hype.

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Mintel, a consumer research firm, reports that 70% of today's skin care market is made up of facial products, and this will only grow as the population ages. To be successful, spas have to focus on facial treatments now more than ever.

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- 3 Although there will also be a place for hands-on treatments and massage, technology will have a greater role that requires spas to invest more capital for new technologies and equipment. There will be fewer fluff-and-buff services and more demands to show clients the changes they can expect from treatments, procedures or products. There may be a role for automation in skin care; skin care increasingly will be delivered by handheld devices and other transdermal delivery systems.
- 4 Estheticians will need to learn about new delivery systems and ingredients as part of their formal education. Continuing professional education will become a requirement to maintain licenses to practice, similar to most medical-oriented professions. Esthetic education will become more comprehensive with more classroom and practical learning mandated, similar to Europe.
- 5 There is no doubt; the medial alliance with skin care is not going to go away—instead, it will increase.
- 6 Sun care products—for application both before and after exposure—and self-tanners will continue to expand as consumers finally begin to understand that a tan is a scar and sun exposure will lead to health risks and damaged skin. Campaigns linking sun exposure to skin cancers, wrinkles and pigmentation will become more prominent and similar to anti-smoking information. Consumers will pay more for this category than others because their health concerns will outweigh the cost. Those that make safe sun an integral part of their spa will prosper.
- 7 Access to skin care information and education will be more widespread and important. The spa of the future will be as much an educational and wellness resource as a treatment facility.
- 8 With social and viral networking expanding at unprecedented rates, product- and service-oriented spas will live or die based on capturing information about their clients and target marketing to a highly defined clientele. This data will be as critical as the treatments offered, and its collection and scrutiny will be vital to survival. Start now.
- 9 Learn to take advantage of online marketing; blog, network and tweet until your fingers are sore. Seek out an expert in this highly specialized arena.
- 10 Those spas that try to be all things to all people will fail; something for everybody is not practical and specialization will be important. Become an expert in one aspect of skin care and skin health. Skin care consultations will be more intense and clients will expect that they get a “prescription” to address their skin needs, so skin analysis skills will be vital.
- 11 An avalanche of new skin care companies appear yearly; however, only a few will survive. Also, without material clinical documentation, consumers will soon grow weary of private label products. Driven by the desire for fast results and clinically proven products, only highly efficacious products will survive. Less than half of the current skin care companies will be in business in 10 years.
- 12 The trend toward consolidation in skin care companies will continue, with major national conglomerates acquiring boutique companies and marching them to mass distribution channels.
- 13 Mass-market retailers will continue adding skin care store-within-a-store concepts that are staffed by estheticians. Treatment rooms will start to appear with greater frequency in mass-market

Growth will be in treatments and products that offer solutions, not hype.

retail locations, just as on-demand medical services are popping up now. Professional treatments and products will become universally acknowledged.

14 There will be an entirely new family of topical formulations that will push the boundaries between what is a cosmetic and what is a drug. Contention will develop about nanoparticles, because the technology will exist to reduce molecular size to infinitesimal levels. Products will focus on working from within rather than the ablative formulations now in use by many companies. This, coupled with the natural aging process, will exacerbate extrinsic aging. A movement to ensure and document the safety of penetrating products will take place.

15 Government regulators will clamp down on unsubstantiated claims and, with the help of physician lobbyists, will begin moving products to over-the-counter or prescription classifications as opposed to cosmetic designations.

16 There will be more pressure by governmental agencies to limit what a spa professional can and cannot do as physicians attempt to limit what can be done without their direct supervision. Spa professionals will face more competition from physicians for consumers' cosmetic dollars, and will have to establish meaningful relationships with licensed medical practitioners because estheticians may find that their scope of practice will become even more limited than it is today.

17 Stem cell-based products will gain a larger share of the market. The current popularity of fruit stem cells will be complemented by advances in genomics, some of which will only be available from physicians.

18 At-home devices will enhance professional treatments. An array of new at-home devices will be available to consumers for home use that will actually work. These will address hair removal, hair growth, enhanced product penetration, stimulated collagen production, as well as a brigade of light-based equipment to address pigmentation, rosacea, acne, fine lines and wrinkles, and microcurrent facial stimulation. The only question will be how strong these new modalities can be and how a line can be drawn between home use and in-office strength limits.

19 Hair removal and hair enhancement systems will be the norm. Recent advances in science have, for the first time, raised the realistic probability of addressing hair loss in women and men.

20 One of the holy grails in skin care is treating hyperpigmentation. A combination of bioavailable, genetically engineered fruit acids coupled with stem cells will be common. The debate about hydroquinone will end only when a highly potent skin-brightening cocktail is created. A new generation of tyrosinase-inhibitors coupled with organic ingredients is fast-approaching, so expect to see new products offering a cocktail of natural, organic and bioengineered products.

21 There will be better at-home products and the movement to push high-end, efficacious products into the retail and mass market channels will continue. For example, currently many manufacturers are making their lines available to large retail merchants. Retail merchants are hiring spa professionals to work in their stores and are placing high-end skin care on the aisles that lead directly to the prescription counter.

Spa professionals will face more competition from physicians for consumers' cosmetic dollars

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The consumer will wake up to the importance of packaging to protect and enhance ingredients. A new type of airless delivery system is on the horizon, and wide-mouth jars will lose traction. Spa professionals must learn why, in many cases, packaging can be as important to efficacy as ingredients.

23

The debate about preservatives will take a new turn as manufacturers embrace new formulations. The perennial issues of media scare tactics versus objective scientific information will remain a thorn in the side of scientists and manufacturers. Combined with a new generation of airless packaging, the role of preservatives will change.

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A new generation of nutraceuticals is on the horizon. The treatment and prevention of a myriad of skin conditions will be enhanced with condition-specific oral supplements, drinks and food to accompany topicals. Kline & Company reports that beauty-from-within products will grow from \$1.5 billion in 2007 to \$2.5 billion in 2012. Watch out for growing regulation on the part of governmental agencies as they increase efforts to try to temper claims in this realm. This is already a fact of life in the European Union and the United Kingdom.

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Look for more regulation on the issue of organic and natural skin care; presently, manufacturers are playing fast and loose with their own definitions. Although many consumers are seeking green and safe products, fast results will trump all other concerns.

their likes and dislikes, and wants and needs—and target marketing to them via the plethora of online and instant communication options available. Professional associations will have to become better at lobbying in the political arena to protect what can and should be done in a spa environment because there are movements to take many profitable services out of the estheticians' hands. The spa professional will have to be better educated not only in skin science, new ingredients and the use of devices, but in informational management, targeted marketing and advertising. Even with these changes, the personal service aspect of spa will remain. }

REFERENCES

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Carol Trow, RN, began her career as a nurse and transitioned into marketing as the director of marketing for a *Fortune* 1,000 company. She went on to start a marketing firm that specializes in practice enhancement for plastic surgeons, cosmetic dermatologists, lawyers and CPAs. Carol has more than 15 years of experience in the medical skin care field, and together with her husband Rob, owns DermaConcepts USA, distributors in the Eastern United States for Environ Skin Care.



Robert Trow is an authority in the business of skin care, regularly has articles included in professional publications and maintains an active consulting practice. He speaks frequently on current and emerging topics of interest at national and international meetings, as well as to medical spas, estheticians and physicians.

Prosper in the future

To prosper in 2020, you must know your clients better than they know themselves—collect and analyze