

Smart packs



◀ Seram's Interactive Message Ornaments allow brands to interact with consumers or consumers to interact with each other with personalized messages accessed via a QR code



▲ Cosmogen has created a self-heating tube made of two layers that enables products like masks and oils to be warmed up before application

■ ■ ■ Elsewhere, integrating technology into packaging is more complex.

This is perhaps why for the moment, one of the areas that has seen the most developments is QR codes, which are easy to integrate and rely on existing platforms. In his address, Arjo Solutions' Cam specified the importance of using existing technologies like QR codes or tracking numbers to provide added value to the consumer. This also allows the brand to benefit from being able to track products around the world and get real-time data about where products are and where they are selling best, for example. Consumers can benefit by being able to check if a product is legitimate when they have a doubt about its origin, helping to fight the counterfeit and parallel markets, he added.

Using simple means like QR codes also allows consumers to access a wealth of information about a product, including legal information, ingredients listings and allergens, without taking up space on the packaging itself, and in a variety of languages, which is increasingly relevant to brands (although legal requirements in specific countries may stipulate that information is featured on the product itself). Brands and retailers can also use QR codes and Beam technology to encourage loyalty at the point of sale.

Nevertheless, uptake has so far been slow, as QR code readers are not standard on smartphones in most markets, meaning

consumers need a dedicated app to be able to access the information, which does not promote ease of use in-store.

SGD, which introduced silkscreened QR codes on its bottles and jars in 2013, has so far not produced the technology on an industrial level,

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Consumers are so engaged with smartphones, connected sneakers and connected cars, that I'm not sure connected beauty products are what they are looking for, but things can go very quickly

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Packaging executive

the group's international marketing manager Astrid Dulau-Vuillet admits. "It's being done on secondary packaging, which consumers throw out, yet not on primary packaging," she comments, highlighting the potential relevance of using such codes to improve consumer loyalty

after the act of purchase itself.

French decoration specialist Seram, meanwhile, which introduced laser-engraved QR codes to its offer at last year's Luxe Pack Monaco show, is taking the concept further with the intention of allowing brands to create an emotional connection with consumers. At the PCD show in February, the company presented Interactive Message Ornaments (IMO), through which brands can interact with consumers, or consumers can interact with each other—when offering a product as a gift, for example—with personalized messages that are accessed via the QR code. "Until now, QR codes gave access to static information, whereas with IMO, we can create a connection," Seram managing director Antoine Rousselin explains.

The QR codes are linked to a proprietary platform that relays the messages, to which consumers can respond, and are displayed on the user's phone screen on a ribbon format that matches one on the packaging itself. "We want to make packaging more interactive, both for informational purposes and to create emotion," Rousselin says, adding that several fragrance brands have shown interest in the concept.

Seram is also working on developing the integration of fiber-optics, micro-encapsulation and thermochromic pigments in its products, but mainly for the fashion and automobile industry.

Other developments in interactive packaging include boxes that open and close using RFID