

Plastic in the Beauty Industry

It's a normal day: you've just bought some new makeup with some very eye-catching packaging; however, it's all made of plastic. Yet, you don't seem to mind that fact. You go onto your phone and instead of seeing some fun videos, you see a video on plastic waste: land is being destroyed and animals are being hurt. So, I'll ask you a question: how many plastic beauty products do you go through in a week?

There is too much single-use plastic used in the beauty industry and by beauty brands, which creates copious amounts of plastic waste. According to Plastic Pollution Coalition, the beauty industry uses around 120 billion units of packaging each year globally, most of said packaging is non-recyclable and is bulked out by the usage of multi-layered boxes and cellophane. Another statistic is in 2018 in the US, around 7.9 billion units of rigid plastic was created just for the beauty industry alone with the UK not being too far behind. This is a terrible statistic as it shows the beauty industry is creating a large amount of plastic waste not just in the US but globally. Whilst some beauty brands are trying to cut down on the use of single use plastic others do not seem to try or even care meaning people like me and you need to stop purchasing from brands who don't try and move to ones who are making them lose money, as that would surely make the ones that aren't trying and or care to stop using single-use plastic and move onto recyclable ones that doesn't harm the planet for so long and end up in the ocean, environment or landfills. As packaging from beauty brands stay in landfills for 450 years leaving other generations to deal with the mass consequences of beauty brands and even the people who still buy from them.

There is a significant impact of single-use plastic waste created by beauty packaging. According to a report made by the British Beauty Council, only 14% of plastic beauty packaging makes it to a recycling plant. However, only 9% of that packaging is recycled, all the other plastic goes directly to a landfill meaning it will sit in a landfill for hundreds of years what's worse is this figure is not changing despite the fact a lot of the plastics being used are ending up in landfills and polluting the earth for centuries to come. A few more saddening facts are that, according to the University of Connecticut is that we lose over 18 million acres of forest each year due to the high demand of products. Equally, over a hundred marine life species are affected by the plastic problem created by single use plastic and micro plastic coming from items such as wet wipes which contain polypropylene, a plastic that will not decompose. In London, hundreds of thousands of wet wipes were flushed down the toilet creating a whole new riverbed in the Thames. If this is not a revelation to beauty products/brands, then I do not know what will be. We collectively need to stop purchasing things such as wet wipes that have polypropylene in them and look to more sustainable options, as it is not only beauty companies job it is ours too.

Controversially, there is a large market value of cosmetic packaging worldwide for example according to Statista 30.4 billion dollars is the value of packaging worldwide. Meaning large makeup brands are making huge sums of money from the packaging we are buying, this type of money is giving large companies more fuel to purchase horrible plastic such as PP which is plastic that will not dissolve quickly and will last lifetimes. Meaning we as people need to act and make a stand about the amount of money brands are estimated to make

each year and make a stand on how much of said money they are spending on single-use plastic creating havoc in our environment and oceans.

Thirdly, there are many alternatives to single-use plastic that can be used for packaging. According to Premium Beauty News there are multiple different alternatives that beauty brands can be using instead of Plastic one of which is glass, companies like Neal's Yard Remedies and Loli use glass containers to store their products in instead of single-use plastic. Another alternative according to a report by Treehugger is cardboard, the brand Soué is using compostable cardboard tubes with metal lids, they even use stickers which aren't harmful, in which people who have a compost bin can put their containers into there and if you don't you can reuse their containers or recycle them. This shows some of the ways brands are being creative and making sure they are being plastic free, which leads into the fact that big beauty brands who make a lot of money each year could be trying to use alternatives, because if smaller brands who most likely do not make as much money can change their packaging then so can the most influential big brands out there.

Finally, there are a lot of companies who have made a change to the types of plastic they use instead of single-use plastic. According to a report made by Beat the Micro Bead, there is around six beauty brands (that they have found), that use zero plastic inside of them. Some of which are Beauty Kitchen who also allows people to send their finished products back so the bottles can be used in the next batch to avoid going to landfills or using up energy to be recycled, another is Neal's Yard Remedies who are using glass jars or bottles instead of plastic packaging, plus they also encourage customers to bring their containers for refills with a discount. A final example of brands making an effort to change their packaging is L'Oréal they promise that by 2025 100% of their packaging will be refillable, rechargeable, recyclable, or compostable. L'Oréal also partnered with Albea to create the first carbon based cosmetic tube. This has been a big step in the beauty industry as brands are now producing new environmentally friendly alternatives. However, there are still stubborn brands out there who are not making an effort to be plastic free, which shows we need to push these brands, by making them lose money to prove a point about how ordinary people like you and me care about what our favourite brands are using. Another thing is if a lot of companies are committing to being plastic free by 2025 why can't the companies that aren't put the effort in because it is achievable, and they cannot deny that it is not.

In conclusion, we need to stop the use of single use plastic in the beauty industry. Some of the reasons I've stated is its harming animals, making new riverbeds in the Thames and its creating copious amounts of plastic units of packaging each year. So, I'll leave you with one final plea please help save the planet even if it's using brands who are trying to save the planet it may seem insignificant, but it really will truly help save marine life and the environment.

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