



**MICHAEL
JOHNSEN**
CATEGORY
SPECIALIST



Diet star appeal

Eric Nussbaum,
NxCare

NxCare last month landed actress and model Carmen Electra as its spokeswoman for the company's combination beauty-enhancing, weight loss pill NV.

While attracting a beauty icon like Electra is nothing new—Trimspa successfully tapped Anna Nicole Smith as its weight-losing spokeswoman—it does beg the question whether having a celebrity spokeswoman is becoming a key to entry in the diet aid category.

Drug Store News caught up with Eric Nussbaum, NxCare director of sales, for a few words on the celebrity trend and where the diet aids business stands today.



Drug Store News: What is the appeal in having a celebrity spokeswoman supporting a weight loss aid?

Nussbaum: Generally speaking, the diet supplement category has not been overly progressive in terms of marketing approach and technique. If you look at other packaged-goods companies with products relating to glamour and image, it is much more common to see celebrities appropriately matched to brands and acting as spokespeople. NV is a sexy product ... it is both a weight loss product and beauty supplement. Carmen Electra embodies a beautiful, shapely energetic woman who is glamorous and at the same time a public figure all women can relate to.

Drug Store News: What are the opportunities today in the weight loss category?

Nussbaum: If you look at weight loss, it is now clearly becoming a vital issue with regard to consumer health at large. Obesity is becoming the leading cause of death in North America. It is a huge issue. We're more responsible to say that we're here to address obesity—that's a medical issue—our product is a preventative aid to trim pounds and help people not fall into the obesity category, as well as a way to simply become healthier in regard to keeping closer to medically recommended weight levels. Categorically, this is a supplement and is not marketed as a "wonder pill." At large, retailers and partners need to continue to broach education to sales staff and consumers in order for them to understand that supplements are part of the answer to addressing this issue.

Drug Store News: What is the point of difference surrounding NV?

Nussbaum: It is a hybrid product, meaning it is both a weight loss product and a beauty supplement. Not only does NV effectively help women lose weight quickly, it also contains ingredients that nurture hair, skin and nails. When added to a healthy diet and active lifestyle, NV will help women shape a sleek, trim figure and look radiant.

Drug Store News: The OTC approval of GlaxoSmithKline's Alli (orlistat) is expected sometime this fall, how will that impact the overall diet aid category?

Nussbaum: Because it is FDA approved, it will hit the market with a lot of impact. That OTC approval will be a significant point of difference. Alli will be taking shelf space and will have major marketing dollars behind its launch.

Foot care manufacturers step forward to cater to women's podiatric needs

As the majority of shoppers who walk through retailers' doors are women, it only makes sense that you would more likely hear the click of high heels or the soft padding of a woman's loafers than the clod of a man's boot or shoe meandering past the foot care aisle.

For that reason, manufacturers operating in the footcare space have been tailoring their packaging and products more toward females, and retailers have been steadily shifting more foot beauty products, such as foot creams and pumice stones, into that set.

The category's leaning toward marketing to women appears to be paying dividends. Sales of all foot care products, including insoles and antifungals, are up 4.3 percent to \$565.1 million for the 52 weeks ended Aug. 13, 2006, according to Information Resources Inc., across food, drug and mass retailers (minus Wal-Mart). Implus, which began introducing insole products designed for women's dress shoes in 2003, has exhibited the greatest amount of incremental growth in that period at \$1.5 million. This year, Implus has introduced a line of socks that contain aloe—called Spa Therapy Super Soft Socks—and a line of insoles that are more design-conscious than their predecessors with leopard and zebra prints.

"[Foot care] is more of a total solution today," commented John Andrews, vice president of marketing at Implus Footcare. Foot care may be a destination center for such OTC remedies as wart removal and antifungal, he said, but it also can be a destination center with more cosmetic appeal to consumers. "The 'For Her' category is absolutely blowing through the roof right now," he said, and it attracts a younger consumer to that section of the store.

Creating a destination center for all items footcare mirrors consumer shopping behavior, commented Lisa Kable, founder of Artemis Woman, a company that has secured distribution through Wal-Mart and

Target in the past six months and is now looking to expand into drug outlets. "The big thing driving this [trend toward a greater emphasis on women shoppers] is that having good-looking feet is so big right now," Kable said.

"Women are spending more money on these [foot care] products," she added. The trend is driven by fashion—shoes with peek-a-boo toes are en vogue—and age.

Earlier this spring, a Schering-Plough survey found that not only are women more likely to be shoppers in the category, but they may be the primary destination shoppers, as well. According to the survey of 513 women, 90 percent of respondents reported that when their feet looked and felt great, it gave a boost to their self-esteem. But looking good can at times come at a cost: foot pain. Approximately 86 percent claimed that painful shoes could ruin their day and 60 percent admitted to curtailing activities on account of foot discomfort.

"When it comes to shoes, women do not want to sacrifice style for comfort," said shoe expert Meghan Cleary, author of "The Perfect Fit: What Your Shoes Say About You." "The modern woman wants it all: to be able to wear her stilettos, but be comfortable during the day."

Schering-Plough introduced its For Her line of foot care products earlier this year, a lineup that includes open-shoe insoles and clear-ball foot cushions in addition to its selection of regular insoles marketed toward women. The Dr. Scholl's For Her line also includes a range of deep-moisturizing foot creams and scrubs and pedicure implements, all specifically designed for the thick skin on the feet.

The recent ban on gel insoles imposed last month on air travelers is not expected to have any significant impact on the category. "On gel products, we haven't seen any downtrend [for the month of August]," reported Andrews.



Retailers are boosting the cosmetic appeal of their foot care sets to make the section into more of a destination.

WHAT'S HOT

Kits are prepared for disaster

In the aftermath of recently thwarted terrorist attack plots and such natural disasters as Hurricane Katrina—both Louisiana and Mississippi residents are still rebuilding one year after that storm tore through the Gulf Coast—America has been primed for a pitch on disaster preparedness kits. And it doesn't hurt that that pitch is coming from the Red Cross.

Currently, sales of all first-aid supplies are up 4.4 percent to \$1.6 billion, according to AC-Nielsen for the 52 weeks ending Aug. 12 across food, drug and mass (minus Wal-Mart).

Target recently put together an emergency preparedness supply kit designed for four people that

retails for \$29.99. The kit includes gloves, ponchos, a blanket, a flashlight, snap lights, a radio and batteries, as well as several incidentals like bandages, first aid ointments and antiseptic wipes and a list of essential supplies not included in the kit. A portion of the proceeds was donated to the Red Cross if purchased by the end of August.

Earlier this year, the American Red Cross announced its own licensing initiative designed to emergency preparedness. A portion of the sales of these products goes back to the Red Cross.

The licensees include a line of latex gloves from Magla, a line of baby health and wellness products from RC2/First Years and Water-Jel Technologies on several burn care products.



Target's emergency preparedness kit