

# The Beauty Benchmark

Spring 2011

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2 To Derm or Not to Derm — That Is Your Question



### INDUSTRY INTERVIEW

## Gus Bezas – President, Global Strategic Development, Milbar Laboratories



Recently we chatted with Gus Bezas about the state of beauty branding. Gus is the president of global strategic development at Milbar Laboratories, the global leader in the art and science of cosmeceutical development. He is responsible for identifying and implementing emerging technologies to support the innovative drive of Milbar.

### TBC: What do you think has changed in the beauty industry from 10 years ago?

GB: Several key areas. First, more dollars are being spent by the consumer and she's willing to pay higher retail prices. Second, distribution has reached unprecedented levels of sophistication and penetration. For example, at Milbar, we formulate products for clients that distribute at 16 venues of distribution, such as prestige department stores, drugstores, specialty and electronic retailers, direct response, the Internet, catalogs, MLM...and the list goes on. Third, the explosion of online shopping. The Internet has become the new beauty counter.

Consumers are very tech-savvy and comfortable shopping online. Combined with retailers such as QVC and HSN, the Internet has intrinsically changed how consumers both shop for and learn about beauty.

### TBC: What do you think has stayed the same?

GB: One thing that hasn't waned is the consumer's desire and quest for the latest, greatest antiaging miracle. When it comes to skincare, this is the most important purchasing decision a consumer makes, and she still wants to look as young as possible, with the most advanced products available.

### TBC: Do you think formulating will evolve?

GB: I think product formulation will evolve in tandem with the growth in cutting-edge scientific ingredients. Strategic alliances and collaborations with bio-tech, pharmaceutical labs, and raw material companies will continue to flourish, allowing us to create ever more sophisticated offerings, and finally,

I think licensing deals are creating new paradigms. The source of ingredients and the story behind the products is becoming (and will continue to be) a hugely important part of formulation as consumers bond more intimately with their brands.

### TBC: How important do you think clinical testing is to the success of a new product?

GB: Clinical testing is extremely critical, and in today's tight beauty landscape, it has become the price of entry. Consumers demand it, and brands won't survive without it. At Milbar, we are always analyzing emerging technologies, and I think where clinicals are concerned, we are going to see the evolution of ever more sophisticated forms of testing — for example real-time clinical tests monitored via social media so consumers can not only give immediate feedback, but interact with other users simultaneously. But also, brands not only have to conduct tests and adjust them to meet heightened consumer expectations of results, benefits and safety.

global strategic development at Milbar Labs, Inc.

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a solid reputation, a well-known name, and a familiar brand image, *even if the product doesn't necessarily offer great benefits or results and even if the new product is guaranteed to outperform the old one.* At TBC, we've seen this time and again during focus groups. Participants love the idea of a new product ("Wow, it's so interesting!"), they are intrigued by the bells and whistles ("I love how this makes my skin feel!"), and they may even really, really want all the promised benefits — but if they don't feel that brand is

and that groups, and really listen to what she has to say before you even think about gondola space or shelf talkers. We all know that consumer approval is the key to success in our industry. But with over 158 million women living in the United States, how do you know if your brand will capture the attention (and dollars) of so many? Don't miss your mark — or give your market share to anyone else — established brand or not. Instead, set your brand up for immediate success by following a proven method of launch success with careful concept and consumer testing.

To download our corporate brochure, see examples of our work, and meet the TBC team, please visit our website at [www.benchmarkingco.com](http://www.benchmarkingco.com). And don't forget to follow us on Facebook and Twitter for the most up-to-date news and information!