



CELEBRITIES SPARKLE THEIR MAGIC

In the arsenal of promotional tools, celebrity endorsement has long been used by marketing professionals to tout consumer products and brands. However, to reach today's savvy consumers and connect more deeply on a personal level, some of Hutchison's businesses are looking to partner with celebrities in unique ways. At both international and local scales, and via different levels of involvement that go far beyond image-leveraging, Hutchison businesses work to develop the products that consumers crave and capture the public's attention for charitable causes.

LEADING THE WAY IN INCORPORATING MODERN CÉLÉBRITÉ into the development of its service offerings has been the A S Watson line of companies. Around the world, A S Watson businesses are partnering with local superstars to showcase the products and services offered by their stores, based on the needs and desires of their clientele.

For instance, Superdrug in the United Kingdom has enlisted Welsh actress Joanna Page as its official Brand Ambassador. Page, who is known for her natural beauty and healthy lifestyle, has worked with Superdrug's marketing team to make sure that their mission to bring quality health and beauty products to UK consumers shines through in Superdrug's promotional materials. She has been a very high profile star of Superdrug's TV advertising, ensuring that consumers are excited by the information they receive about the brand.

Similarly, ICI PARIS XL in the Netherlands has partnered with Dutch celebrity make-up artist Thijs Willekes to bring the best insider make-up tips and tricks to ICI PARIS XL customers. These partnerships go beyond surface-level brand and product promotion, however. Rather than simply lending their faces to Superdrug and ICI PARIS XL advertisements, both Page and Willekes' commitments are much more tangible, frequently visiting their host storefronts to meet their brand colleagues and interact with customers in a one-on-one manner.

Another Dutch celebrity, Koert-Jan de Bruijn, a musician and new father, opened Kruidvat's "Nine Months Baby Fair"

in Amsterdam, playing music from his latest album, which is available exclusively in Kruidvat stores. As the Netherlands' largest baby goods retailer, Kruidvat's fair for pregnant women and mothers has become an important platform for baby care manufacturers to generate important exposure. The event itself, in addition to de Bruijn, earned applause from Dutch media.

On the product development forefront has been Hutchison China Meditech Limited (Chi-Med), who has partnered with Australian celebrated stylist to the stars, Kim Robinson, in the development of a range of professional-grade hair care products under Chi-Med's Sen line.

"For the past decade, women have been bombarded with hair care product choices, with many different voices – including those of celebrities – advising them to buy this or that product," explained Robinson, who has worked with the likes of Kate Moss, Cindy Crawford, Jackie Chan, the late Princess Diana and Anita Mui. "Consequently, most of the shampoos available in Asia have been developed in the West and have not been created specifically for Asian hair. These products are not nourishing enough for Asian hair. Even popular Japanese shampoos, which tend to be heavy, are not suitable for Hong Kong girls."

Thus, Robinson, founder of the kimrobinson and kr+ brands, worked with Chi-Med to develop a line of products for Sen that specifically addresses the needs of Asian hair, based on the principles of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in combination with the latest in Western hair care technology.



A S Watson is partnering with celebrities throughout its retail brands in Europe. (From left to right): Dutch musician Koert-Jan de Bruijn at Kruidvat, Welsh Actress Joanna Page the Brand Ambassador of Superdrug in the UK, Dutch make-up artist Thijs Willekes at ICI PARIS XL.

What makes Robinson's partnership with Chi-Med unique is that it is not a short-lived celebrity endorsement for a pre-existing product, a tactic employed by many other brands and that is familiar, to increasingly sophisticated, consumers. In contrast, Robinson was truly at the heart of the formulation of his own branded products and will continue to incorporate his 30-plus year reputation for style, quality and attention to detail in Asia into his line's future development and promotion. "Sen by Kim Robinson" (SBKR) will also deploy Robinson's social networks of celebrity friends. This allowed Chi-Med to win Sandy Lam as the face of SBKR. Sandy not only represents and transports the brand values (authentic, confident, natural) but also elevates the brand equity, and incremental media value.

Likewise, Andy Castillejos, General Manager at Harbour Plaza Metropolis in Hong Kong, has collaborated with a team of Hong Kong pop stars and popular home décor store Francfranc in a similar fashion to prepare a suite of hotel rooms – designed entirely by the celebrities – in celebration of the hotel's 10th anniversary.

Led by Kelly Chen, pop singer and actress, the team of local celebrity designers comprises Louis Cheung, Vincy Chan, Rubberband, Steven Cheung, Stephanie Cheng, HotCha, Jinny Ng, Adason Lo and Robynn & Kendy, each of whom was responsible for decorating a room. They were chosen by Harbour Plaza Metropolis because they are young, creative and unique, qualities the hotel knows its customers value in

the design of their hotel rooms.

"From past experience, we know that customer satisfaction is always increased when well liked celebrities participate in the product development process," said Castillejos. "However, this project has been well received by the celebrities, too, as they are actually leading the design process as opposed to simply being our brand's spokespersons."

Although the end result – the finished rooms – has been exactly what the hotel hoped for, the process of coordinating not one but 10 celebrities proved to be a challenge for Castillejos, though it was one worth overcoming.

"Coordinating everyone's schedules for site visits, finding time for everyone to shop for their supplies, directing the videographer and photographer and scheduling the singers to personally set up their designed rooms in a busy hotel, was a real challenge," said Castillejos. "It was well worth it, though, as we have already received numerous inquiries as to the availability and booking of these themed rooms. It seems that they have created a product the public truly looks forward to."

One of the celebrity-designed rooms, Kelly Chen's suite, went one step further than the design process. Kelly took the initiative to donate her proceeds from this Harbour Plaza Metropolis project to the Kelly Chen Children Education Fund. The hopes for this promotion are that the hotel's partnership with Chen and her fellow celebrities will positively impact people in need in the local community.



Celebrities in Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong are casting their spells in the promotions of various companies in the Hutchison family.




Kelly Chen is delighted to join the “Home Sweet Home” theme room design for the hotel, “I have always a passion for interior design, and am so proud and satisfied to complete redecorating the whole room.”

Another Hutchison division, ComPass Visa, also sees the value in partnering with celebrities to develop charitable initiatives. In September 2012, ComPass Visa joined forces with local actor Chapman To Man-chak, perhaps best known for his role in “Infernal Affairs”, to raise money for ORBIS, a philanthropic organisation dedicated to creating a world free from preventable blindness.

To, who was diagnosed in April 2012 with Miller Fisher syndrome, a rare variant of Guillain-Barré syndrome that is characterised in part by the paralysis of the eye muscles, inspired ComPass Visa’s “Live Wholeheartedly” campaign. The initiative centred around one of To’s biggest passions: photography.

First, the public was encouraged to upload photos they had taken to the ComPass Visa Facebook page; for every one ‘like’ the photos received, ComPass Visa donated one Hong Kong Dollar (USD 0.13) to ORBIS. Then, for a week in mid September, an exhibition of these uploaded photos, alongside 30 of To’s photographs, was held at the Hong Kong Arts Centre. For every person who ‘checked in’ at the event via Facebook, ComPass donated an additional one Hong Kong Dollar. In total, ComPass Visa donated more than HKD80,000 to ORBIS.

“Celebrities have a strong influence on the public’s actions and have an unmatched ability to relate to the younger generation fluently,” said Castillejos. “Their huge numbers of fans mean that disseminating one positive message or gesture for our community can be extremely far-reaching and effective.”

For these Hutchison companies – and the dozens of others who are following suit – partnering with celebrities has proven to not only intensify their sales numbers and enhance their public images, but also the satisfaction of their customers with their products and services – the true objective behind each of these partnerships. 

Bringing Believable Beauty to the Shelf

What it takes to create a beauty product with a celebrity twist

CHI-MED’S DECISION TO PARTNER with celebrity stylist Kim Robinson to develop a new product range for their Sen line of hair care products specifically for Asian consumers stemmed from their aligning view that what Robinson calls ‘believable beauty’ should be available to all women, regardless of their budget.

“I come from a simple Australian farm; not from a high-society background,” said Robinson of his ultimate vision for his Sen range. “I know that not every girl can afford to visit my salons for a haircut, so I wanted to develop a product that is within an affordable price range and that includes the characteristics of the products I use in my salons. It was important to me that these new products be performance-driven, organic and natural.”

In accordance with this vision, Kim set to work developing his line for Sen, “Sen by Kim Robinson” (SBKR), calling upon his 30-plus years of experience in caring for Asian hair. Five years in the making, Robinson was personally involved in every step of the development process, from working with Chi-Med’s laboratory technicians, to perfecting the aroma, to testing the product – even providing creative direction for the packaging design.





(Left) Robinson works with the R&D in Chi-Med to create the perfect formula for the SBKR hair care range.
(Right) Renowned singer in Asia and longtime friend and client of Robinson – Sandy Lam’s natural and confident beauty perfectly matches the image of the SBKR hair care products.

Seeing a legitimate market gap, Robinson worked to make sure his SBKR products would fulfil the unmet needs of Asian women. “Asian women need a product that is lighter and more tailored for their unique hair type, which tends to be finer than that of western hair,” explained Robinson. “Given that most of the products in Asia are developed in the West, I needed to ensure that my products fulfilled this need.”

Thus, the Kim Robinson line for Sen was born out of Robinson’s keen market eye and expertise in the Asian hair care niche. The results are three product varieties, each of which features shampoo, conditioner and a deep-conditioning treatment mask.

Marketing to the Masses

While Robinson was busy formulating his SBKR line for the unique needs of Hong Kong women, Chi-Med was concurrently busy crafting an aligning marketing strategy. Their strategy has been to reinforce Robinson’s reputation for professional expertise in Hong Kong and remind the public of his work with some of Asia’s – and the world’s – most beautiful women, all while underlining the affordability of the SBKR line.

Furthermore, the strategy aims to fully capitalise on Kim Robinson’s PR value and ability to generate editorial content to multiply consumer touch points through publicity and interviews, make overs, hair trends and tips within this strategy. Robinson has played a direct and integral role in



both social media and public relations, which gives the brand a unique point of brand differentiation.

In line with this strategy of promoting the Kim Robinson for Sen line as a ‘masstige’ product that offers women truly affordable luxury, sachet sampling with coupons on-pack, immediately following SBKR’s in-store launch, will make trying the products even more affordable. Additionally, product samples will be given away at key locations, including in-store sampling, some luxury residential Club Houses, and reaching cross border tourists staying at some of the Harbour Plaza hotels in Hong Kong. “This project is special as it perfectly blends Chi-Med’s Traditional Chinese Medicine proficiency with Kim’s exceptional hair expertise and publicity”, said Ole Walter, General Manager – Consumer Products Division of Chi-Med.

“My hope is that, after seeing our promotional materials and trying my SBKR line first hand, women will begin to budget for their beauty products based on quality,” explained Robinson of his vision for the marketing of SBKR. “Women have so many choices when it comes to caring for their hair; I hope they will recognise that the high quality of SBKR products is worth the investment.”

SBKR products are now available exclusively in selected Watsons and PARKnSHOP stores, with two additional SBKR varieties launched in Watsons in the coming months, and then the entire SBKR line will debut in Taiwan and Singapore in 2013 followed by Mainland China. 