

Audrey Morris helps top cosmetic brands succeed

When cosmetic brands, beauty stores, salons, day spas, celebrity makeup artists and top retailers launch a cosmetic or skin care brand, they often have a private label company as their silent partner behind the scenes. **Audrey Morris Cosmetics** serves those markets and more as a one-stop-shop, providing everything needed from formulation to packaging to marketing support. With almost half a century of experience, the company was



Customers learn about their products at the company's Florida showroom.

founded in Canada 48 years ago by the late **Audrey Morris**, a top fashion model. Today, her son, **Wayne Morris**, leads the company, as CEO/president. Audrey Morris Cosmetics, which relocated to Pompano Beach, FL, provides a full selection of both color and skin care products, making it easy and convenient for a business to select what suits its clientele and market.

Beauty Industry Report (BIR) recently sat down with Wayne to learn more about how Audrey Morris provides a high quality line at an affordable price within a timely manner.

BIR: Many large cosmetic brands do not manufacture their own products and instead rely on a company like yours. Why?

Wayne Morris (WM): At Audrey Morris Cosmetics, we do all the detailed research on packaging, products, ingredients and displays, so we can function as a brand's one-stop-shop for all of its cosmetic and skin care needs. Whether we're producing products for a major brand or for a single salon or day spa, we provide one-on-one service to help each customer create its own line. We provide a full selection of both color and skin care products, making it easy and convenient for a business to select what suits its clientele and appropriate market.

All of our customers have a personal customer service representative who understands their needs and has the knowledge, training and commitment to help them be successful. We turn orders around quickly

because we have large inventory on hand to do so. That helps to separate us from our competitors, as well.

BIR: Who are your customers?

WM: Our customers range from salons, spas, schools, boutiques and celebrity makeup artists to beauty supplies, Internet customers and much more. We can service accounts of any size. Our target is to

reach anyone in the beauty industry who needs a high quality line at an affordable price, within a timely manner.

BIR: Your mom started the business almost 50 years ago. Please share a bit of your history.

WM: Audrey was Canada's top fashion model for many years. She opened a modeling agency and school and also headed up the World's Fair in 1967 in Montreal. In 1965, we opened a retail cosmetics store in Montreal and began creating our own products. Over time, we began creating products for other stores and brands, as well. We moved our headquarters in 1979 to Fort Lauderdale,



Audrey Morris offers displays to showcase the full skin care line.

because we saw the growth potential in the United States, and because we knew our Florida location would open the door to other markets, including the Caribbean and South America. We now also export to 15 countries. I am very proud to say that today, Audrey Morris Cosmetics is one of the leading private label houses for color cosmetics and skin care. We have 25 full-time and 10 part-time employees, plus five independent sales representatives. Our capabilities for our customers include an extensive color and skin care line of products to create a brand, black or silver packaging to put together a look, as well as a graphics department to receive

artwork or create artwork for our customers. Once that is complete, we print directly onto the packaging with the customer's logo by pad printing or silk screening. We also offer a selection of point-of-purchase displays to make it easy for the customers to move the merchandise.

BIR: What sets Audrey Morris apart?

WM: In a year that saw most companies happy to stabilize, our sales in 2012 were up 70%, with profits up 500%. I attribute that to my team's service, as well as to the high quality product we offer. My staff is divided into two teams—one team for retail and the second team for private label to make sure our clients select the products, packaging and displays that are perfect for them.

Unlike many private label companies, we combine the newest ingredients and highly pigmented, true, long lasting colors with the help of our team to ensure that our customers select the right product mixes for their customers. Our packaging is durable, elegant, and cost effective. We have a fast turn-around time—usually within 48 hours—because of the large inventories we keep on hand. For example, we have 250,000 pieces of our best selling wet/dry dual finish foundation in stock right now. As a result, we can supply our

clients with a large volume in a short time, without weeks of waiting, as with many other manufacturers, or even months for products produced in China. We offer a variety of displays, including a beautiful countertop

lipstick unit on a spinner that offers 24 different shades with a tester and 6 pieces back-up.

BIR: Your growth is quite extraordinary. To what do you attribute it?

WM: In 2012, we exhibited at 14 tradeshow across the United States and Canada. That, combined with our online presence, has driven



Wayne Morris oversees manufacturing.



Audrey Morris offers highly pigmented lip products in trendy and classic colors.

our growth. Doing tradeshow makes it easy for customers to see, touch and feel the products. They can also purchase products that they are interested in carrying in their line at a great price. Once the product is in their hands, they fall in love and place their order with us. What made it different in 2012 was a better trained and prepared team, willing to go the extra mile for each new potential client whether big or small.

We also provide many incentives to earn the business of new clients.

BIR: You mentioned that you offer fast turnaround on orders. Please elaborate.

WM: Our turnaround time is usually 48 to 72 hours on smaller accounts. Large orders can take 8 to 12 weeks, depending on the availability of raw materials and packaging.

BIR: Many color cosmetic brands are produced in China. Over the years, the quality has dramatically improved. How has Audrey Morris continued to beat that competition?

WM: I believe that products made in the United States are still more superior in quality, and China cannot compete with our lead time.

BIR: Let's imagine I own beauty supply stores and want to create my own cosmetic brand. Take me through the process.

WM: We have a new accounts department that is committed to working with new clients, guiding them and assisting them in every part of the process. We invite them to our showroom and manufacturing facility for one-on-one time with an account executive to present our capabilities and so they can try our products. We review ingredients, features, benefits and application of each product. We work with the client to select the right colors, product, packaging and graphics for its customers.

BIR: What is your operating philosophy and how do you approach each day?

WM: I approach each day with enthusiasm to motivate my team and our clients.

BIR: What is your company's mission?

WM: We are the company that makes things happen today!

BIR: What is your vision for Audrey Morris Cosmetics?

WM: My next step is to create a home party

division. It will both create new career

opportunities for women and men who love products, and it will make it easy for consumers to try and purchase our products from the convenience of their homes.

BIR: What are your most popular products?

WM: From a trend perspective, color cosmetics for the hair are hot. We offer eight brightly-colored pressed powders that are rubbed onto the hair and set with hair spray. They temporarily stain the hair, providing a highlighted effect.

Our No. 1 selling product is our dual wet/dry foundation. This velvety, oil-free mineral powder can be applied wet or dry to create a smooth, matte finish. Its high definition coverage helps to even out the complexion, reduce the appearance of skin imperfections and is excellent for people who appear on camera. It can also be used as a finishing powder over liquid foundation to provide an oil-free, long lasting, velvet finish. We offer 20 colors from the lightest Caucasian color to the darkest shade for women of color.

Lips are a key part of the face, and we are very strong in our lip collection. We provide lip glosses, lipsticks, treatments and an array of lip pencils in both the classic wood and the convenience of our retractable delivery system. No one beats the pigment and texture of our eyeshadows and blushes.

BIR: What trends in color cosmetics excite you the most?

WM: Seasonal color changes from neutrals to brights, pale tones to strong vivid colors. Colors are always changing and exciting. Plus, it's always fun to try new colors and application techniques for the eyes each season. There is no wrong or right when playing up the eyes, whether you prefer a neutral palette, or a more dramatic

look. It's an inexpensive way to wear a new trend without redoing your wardrobe.

BIR: Who are the key members of your management team?

WM: **Tom Fisher** is our controller/chief financial officer; **Mary Ann Lovre** is vice president of product development and **Caroline Roman** is vice president of sales and education.

BIR: Tell us about the education you provide.

WM: Caroline also heads up the training for color cosmetics, and **Maria Strippoli**, account executive, leads the training for skin care products. All the training is done at our company headquarters.

BIR: Tell me about your online marketing, sales and education initiatives, including but not limited to your website and your social media outreach.

WM: The sales team calls all customers once a week and follows up with email blasts twice a week. Our website is always updated with the newest information on color and skin care, as well as all the marketing information needed to make choosing our products a total success.

BIR: Have you had any mentors?

WM: Audrey Morris, my mother and company founder, taught us always to give our customers the top quality products at the best possible price.

BIR: What is the best business advice you have ever received, and who was it from?

WM: My mother taught me that we are a cosmetics and skin care company—we are not a bank. She always said to let the customers do their own financing.

BIR: Any final comments?

WM: I attribute all my success to my faith in God. When He is on your team, you cannot lose.

Reach Wayne Morris at 800-826-8287 or



Wayne Morris

wayne@audreymorriscosmetics.com. To learn more about the company, visit audreymorriscosmetics.com.



Wet/dry foundation is the company's best seller.



Color cosmetics feature rich pigments and luxurious textures.