

R.A.W: a new range with outstanding environmental credentials

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A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO BUILDING A WHOLESOME, NATURAL AND AUTHENTIC LINE

R.A.W came from the realisation that there is a thirst for natural products among consumers all over the world. “Today’s consumers are no longer satisfied with products that are merely ‘naturally-inspired’”, begins Daniel. “They want them to be 100% natural and sustainable, with minimal impact on the environment.” Matrix came up with R.A.W as a way to respond to these demands by taking a totally committed approach, backed by L’Oréal’s Sharing Beauty With All programme, and

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by making a holistic promise: “We wanted to offer a range of products with truly outstanding environmental credentials in every area, from formulation to manufacturing methods and packaging”.

The formulas used by the range rely on a short list of natural, effective and highly biodegradable ingredients, with no silicone, sulphates or parabens. “All of our products – from Bolivian quinoa husk to Bulgarian coriander and Moroccan volcanic clay – come from sustainable, fair and traceable supply sources”, explains Daniel. R.A.W is careful to ensure that its formulas are designed according to environmental-respectful principles of green chemistry. “We look at the life cycle of formulas from beginning to end to minimise the resources used in production. We get our ingredients from plants and minerals but also from seaweeds, honey and fungi.” Packaging, too, is designed to have a minimal environmental impact, with shampoo and conditioner bottles manufactured entirely from recycled plastic. In fact, natural ingredients make up at least 70% of the brand’s products, and most products are over 98% biodegradable.

THE TOP PRIORITY: TO NEVER COMPROMISE NATURALNESS

To secure these results, Daniel and his teams had to overcome a series of challenges. “Our top priority was to ensure that we did not compromise on naturalness, despite the severe constraints that we were faced with.”

One of the key challenges was the costs associated with these ambitious goals. “Ensuring and verifying compliance with all of the many criteria on formulation, packaging and production methods entailed huge investments. We worked with the teams of Research & Innovation and Operations to conduct a series of tests. While not all of these were planned, they were vital to making sure that the products matched L’Oréal’s standards in terms of capillary performance results. Inevitably,

such tests come with costs that affect the final price of products.” Another major issue was time, which was in short supply as teams worked to find the resources needed to launch products and meet deadlines. “To give an example, we struggled to source clay, which got contaminated quickly during transportation. Rather than compromising our formula by resorting to a chemical process that would distort the raw material, we pushed back the launch in order to source the right clay.”

#LIVERAW: ENCOURAGING CONSUMERS TO LIVE SUSTAINABLY VIA INSTAGRAM

The other challenge was to spread the word about R.A.W.’s philosophy among salon professionals and consumers. “Consumers don’t want to be lectured on what is or isn’t natural, and what counts as sustainable. They want to be given tools to be able to make their own decisions and make a difference”, says Daniel. In response, R.A.W set up an extensive educational programme for professionals to work with more environmentally-conscious methods in their salons. “We taught stylists and hairdressers from over 700 US salons how to use less water and power as well as to how to make their daily routines more sustainable.” The brand also rolled out its #LiveRaw digital campaign to spread the message about living more sustainably. “Our @Biolage Instagram account is packed with testimonials from bloggers and influencers, as well as fun videos that teach about living more sustainably every day”, explains Daniel. “In one of our video series uploaded on Youtube, we challenged two complete strangers to take a cold shower together in less than five minutes! And of course they had to switch off the water when it came to shampooing with R.A.W products. Those videos were viewed several thousand times!”

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90% POSITIVE ONLINE REVIEWS AND A NEW CHALLENGE IN EUROPE

A few months after the launch, Daniel is delighted that the results reflect the effort put in: “The initial online feedback is extremely encouraging. We are seeing 90% of positive reviews”. Besides the enthusiastic response, he is especially grateful to see consumers acknowledging the quality of R.A.W products. “After using our shampoo, the majority of consumers said their hair felt completely different. “I cannot remember how my hair felt like before” they say”.

The next step is to pursue R.A.W’s global launch. “A few months after the US debut, we are now releasing our products on the European market. This will be the opportunity to see if customers are ready to #liveraw on both sides of the Atlantic”, concludes Daniel.