

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Shiseido leverages technology to secure beauty sector's future

November 20, 2017



Shiseido believes technology can answer societal issues. Image credit: Shiseido

By JEN KING

Japanese beauty marketer Shiseido is introducing makeup for the digital age, as the cosmetics brand continues to strengthen its relationship with technology.

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Shiseido's Telebeauty concept was launched in partnership with Microsoft Japan, and is designed to show how social issues can be solved through the brand's creativity. Shiseido developed the tech solution in response to the growing number of working women who telecommute for work, but the application may be perceived by some as sexism in the workplace.

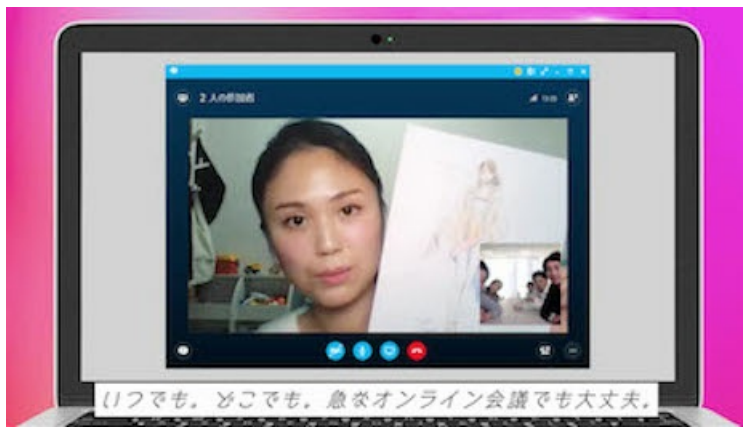
Beauty while you work

Shiseido and Microsoft Japan developed the Telebeauty app for Skype for Business, as many now work from home offices and use telecommuting platforms to connect with colleagues.

As technology advances and it becomes easier to telecommute, it is likely that many company cultures will increasingly adopt a work-from-home model.

For working women, who may have young children or family in need of care, the option to work from home is attractive. Also, when weighing new employment opportunities, flex-time and work-from home options have become a determining factor for many.

Shiseido's Telebeauty works by combining its makeup simulation technology with online video conference systems. Shiseido has invested in augmented reality-powered simulations to help consumers make informed purchases when buying its cosmetics.



*A woman telecommutes for a meeting using Skype for Business while letting Telebeauty take care of her makeup.
Image credit: Shiseido*

In the case of Telebeauty, when a user signs into a video chat session she will appear as if she is wearing makeup to her colleagues. The viewers' screens will show the Telebeauty user's face with a beauty look of her choice, even if she is not wearing any makeup.

Similar to the popular filters seen in Instagram Stories and Snapchat, the Telebeauty user can pick from feminine, trend, natural or cool beauty looks, or stick with her unmade-up face.

Telebeauty digitally processes the user's face to apply makeup instantly and adjusts to the user's complexion to create a natural look.

For some, the use of Telebeauty can be seen as convenient for last-minute meetings where a user wants to look her best, but there are also concerns over sexism in the workplace.

The app seemingly supports the idea that a woman who opts out of cosmetics is not taken seriously in the workplace or is deemed unprofessional if she chooses to forego applying makeup before being seen by her colleagues.

Telebeauty / Shiseido

At launch, Telebeauty was used by Skype for Business' Japanese clients that promote working from home such as Shiseido, Microsoft, Telework Management, Lancers and the OZ Company.

According to Shiseido, since the Telebeauty concept bowed in 2016 it has instill a sense of confidence in its users. Also, the technology is said to have restored emotion in telecommuting.

The idea has caught on quickly around the world, with a total reach of more than \$9 million dollars in 40 countries. Shiseido emphasizes that makeup has the power to change how we communicate and that consumers should "let beauty work for [them]."

The future in tech

Seeing the industry potential, Shiseido has invested heavily in advancing technologies to maintain its competitive edge.

Last December, Shiseido established an internal venture capital organization with the aim to create innovative products and services for the beauty sector.

Shiseido Venture Partners will make investments into new ventures that will help the group develop and innovate its business. Part of Shiseido's "Open Innovation scheme," Shiseido Venture Partner will support ventures from a financial and business standpoint to better the future of the group ([see story](#)).

Thus far, this has included the acquisition of startup MatchCo in an effort to further customize its offerings to consumers ([see story](#)) and Shiseido's investment in its sector's future use of artificial intelligence through the purchase of Giaran, an AI platform meant to heighten consumer experience and personalize beauty purchasing ([see story](#)).