

# How cosmetic companies use science to back up product advertising

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If claims on cosmetic products' labels are to be believed, users would all look 10 years younger and have luscious, frizz-proof hair. But advertising and truth aren't always aligned. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has called out some companies for promoting products using spurious claims. To avoid such charges, many cosmetic companies are looking to science, reports *Chemical & Engineering News* (C&EN), the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society.

Marc S. Reisch, a senior correspondent at C&EN, notes that the cosmetics industry has been enlisting scientists to test products and demonstrate their effectiveness should the FTC or consumers challenge any claims. They recruit testers to wear products and give feedback. They use specialized microscopes and other instruments to examine hair texture and skin properties to determine products' effectiveness. Some labs are equipped with humidity- and temperature-controlled rooms to test antiperspirants and hot tubs to see if sunscreens wash off.

But still, not all products measure up to their labels. The FTC has recently cracked down on a variety of claims made by small and big name companies. Some market products as "all natural" when their ingredient lists include synthetic ingredients. The commission penalized L'Occitane for falsely [advertising](#) the "body slimming" abilities of two of its creams and L'Oreal for "overstating the science" behind products promoted for boosting genes that produce "youth proteins." Despite some companies' efforts, a FTC spokesperson noted that deceptive use of science was widespread in the cosmetic industry.

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Provided by American Chemical Society

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