



2026 TRENDS

Skincare

TREND 1

Skin Health as Overall Health

TREND 2

Personalized and Predictive Health

TREND 3

Science-Backed Beauty and Dermatologist Partnerships

TREND 4

Eco-Design and the “Refill Everything” Economy

TREND 5

Expansion of Influencer-Led Brands

The skincare industry is entering 2026 amid an ongoing evolution in how consumers define [beauty and wellness](#). Skin health is increasingly viewed through the lens of overall wellbeing, connecting topical care to [nutrition](#) and sleep. This holistic mindset is shaping demand for products that deliver visible results while supporting long-term vitality.

Scientific credibility and [personalization](#) are now the key to innovation. [Artificial intelligence](#) is enabling new levels of customization, helping consumers match products to their genetic profiles and skin conditions. Influencer-led brands are also transforming market dynamics by merging authenticity with rapid growth strategies.

In this report, we examine the key trends defining skincare in 2026 and explore how leading brands are adapting their strategies to connect with consumers.



TREND 1

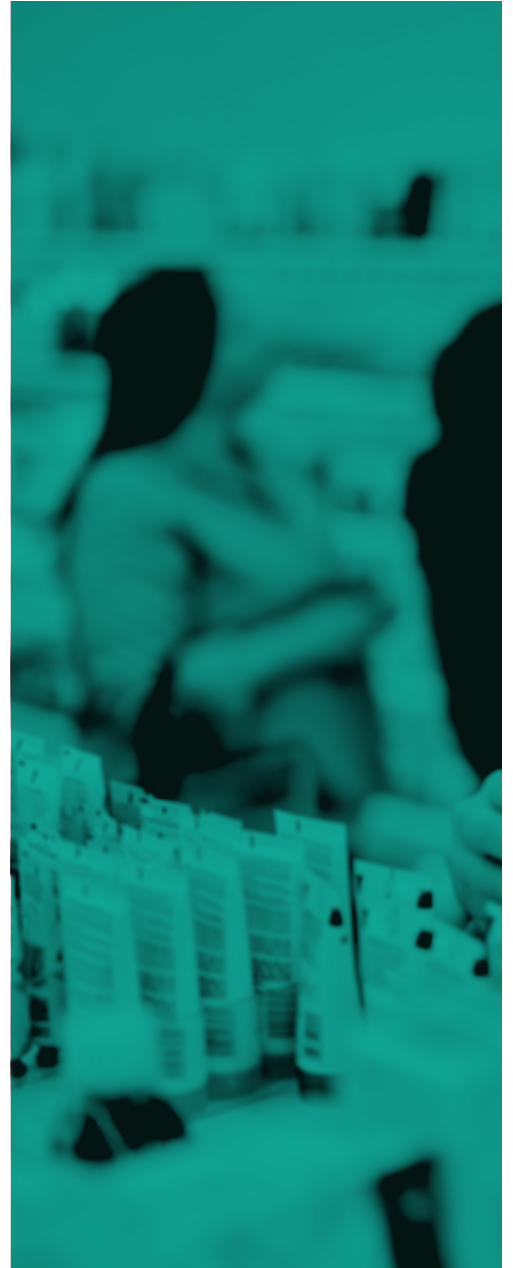
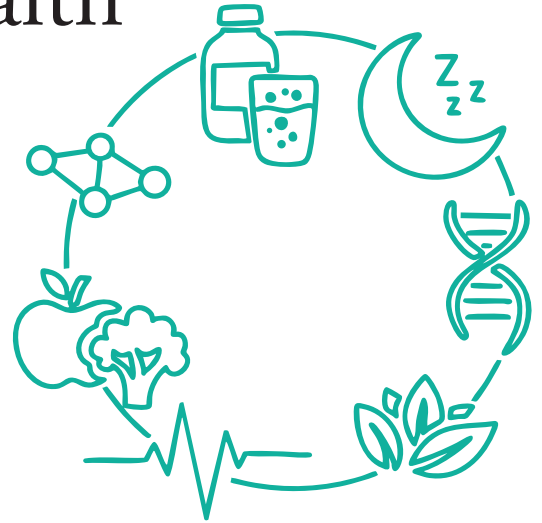
Skin Health as Overall Health

Skin health is being redefined as an extension of total wellness. The [line between beauty and health continues to fade](#) as consumers connect their skin with diet, sleep, emotional well-being, and stress management.

Collagen and probiotic blends now appear in both topical and ingestible formats, reflecting the growing connection between inner health and outer results. The edible beauty infusions market is expected to grow at a compound annual rate of [12.6% through 2035](#), with collagen support representing more than half of the segment.

This approach has reshaped consumer behavior. Shoppers are [moving away from instant cosmetic fixes](#) and prioritizing lasting vitality and microbiome balance. Language and messaging are also evolving. Brands are replacing superficial claims with education on the [microbiome](#) and ingredient transparency. Scientific literacy has become a driver of trust as consumers seek to understand not just what products contain but how they work.

Companies that merge skincare with wellness principles and data-backed efficacy will strengthen their relevance in 2026. Success in the skincare industry will depend on translating health science into accessible, results-oriented routines that reflect the consumer's broader wellbeing goals.



TREND 2

Personalized and Predictive Health

Advances in technology are making personalization a defining feature of skincare. Smart devices and [AI-driven diagnostics](#) now create routines that respond to each user's skin, environment, and habits. These tools apply machine learning to [analyze imaging data](#) and recommend adaptive formulations that change with time and lifestyle.

[Data analytics](#) is equally important in shaping product design. Insights on climate, region, and skin diversity allow brands to refine formulations and deliver precision-based solutions. [One-third of beauty companies](#) now offer skin or color matching, an increase since 2024.

La Mer's AI skin diagnostic system and Kylie Cosmetics' digital shade finder illustrate how personalization is moving from luxury to mainstream adoption, as [74% of consumers](#) now seek products tailored to their individual needs. [Genetic profiling](#) is also helping brands move one step further by mapping specific single nucleotide polymorphisms to anti-aging ingredients and compatibility profiles.

Even packaging reflects this shift toward clinical precision. Brands are embracing [clean, minimal aesthetics](#) with [dosage-style labels](#) and neutral color palettes to signal science-backed design. As personalization becomes central to skincare, the ability to responsibly [manage consumer data](#) and deliver measurable improvement will determine which brands lead the market.



TREND 3

Science-Backed Beauty and Dermatologist Partnerships



Evidence-based skincare has become a defining marker of quality. Consumers expect proof of performance, demanding dermatologist-tested, clinically validated products rather than unverified claims. This demand is [driving new partnerships](#) between skincare brands, dermatologists, biotech innovators, and research institutions that combine formulation expertise with peer-reviewed results.

[L'Oréal Groupe's acquisition](#) of a majority stake in Medik8 exemplifies this trend. The British B Corp-certified brand has built its reputation on professional-grade actives supported by independent studies and rigorous testing. As Olivia Houghton of The Future Laboratory notes, brands must now “provide product certainty in uncertain times.”

[Transparency](#) is critical, and ingredient lists are being expanded to detailed explanations of mechanisms and skin interactions. This focus on science has also raised the barrier to entry for emerging brands. New entrants must prove both efficacy and ethical integrity to compete.

Science-backed beauty is reshaping marketing and development alike. Companies that invest in research and communicate results with clarity will establish stronger credibility and capture the growing consumer base seeking both performance and trust.



TREND 4

Eco-Design and the “Refill Everything” Economy



[Sustainability](#) has evolved from a niche differentiator to an industry norm. The “refill everything” movement is driving innovation across packaging and retail models. Brands are now investing in circular systems that minimize waste and encourage reuse through return programs and recyclable materials.

Vital Proteins has redesigned its collagen peptide packaging, introducing a blue paperboard tub that uses [90% less plastic](#). The Body Shop has also expanded its [in-store refill program](#), offering reusable bottles for hair and skincare and working toward zero-waste packaging. These initiatives demonstrate how [sustainability can strengthen consumer loyalty](#) while reducing environmental impact.

Brands are also prioritizing design simplicity in [packaging innovation](#) efforts. Mono-material packaging, post-consumer recycled content, reuse models, and biodegradable components are becoming standard across new product lines. Minimalism communicates purity, while transparent labeling connects sustainability with trust.

Moving into 2026, eco-design will continue to shape how consumers perceive brand value. Aligning sustainability with convenience and performance will position companies for long-term growth.



TREND 5

Expansion of Influencer-Led Brands

Influencer-led brands are entering a new phase of maturity. [Creators](#) who built communities through social media are transforming those audiences into lasting businesses.



New entrants like [POV](#) are capturing attention through storytelling and niche positioning, while established names are moving into large-scale retail. [Rhode](#), for instance, launched as a direct-to-consumer brand and later expanded into Sephora before its one-billion-dollar acquisition by e.l.f. Beauty in 2025.

This growth model signals a broader shift in how brands are built. [Influencers](#) offer genuine experiences and speed to market that traditional companies struggle to match. Their ability to engage directly with consumers through videos and collaborations creates trust that translates into measurable sales performance.

As these brands expand, [M&A activity](#) is expected to increase. Large corporations are pursuing influencer-founded labels to access loyal audiences and culturally relevant marketing channels. In 2026, authenticity will remain a powerful currency in beauty at the intersection of credible performance and transparent messaging.



Looking Ahead

The skincare landscape of 2026 reflects a broader evolution in how consumers define and relate to their health. Innovation now depends on trust and personalization as much as it does on product performance. AI and eco-design approaches will continue to reshape the category, rewarding companies that balance scientific progress with ethical and environmental purposes.

The most successful brands will view skincare not as a product category but as a platform for wellbeing and education. Connecting data-driven insights with authenticity and measurable outcomes will set the direction for the next year of growth.

To continue the conversation about skincare industry shifts in 2026, [contact Clarkston's experts today](#).

ABOUT CLARKSTON CONSULTING

Businesses across the consumer products industry partner with Clarkston Consulting to enhance strategic decision-making, improve operational efficiencies, implement new technologies, and promote business growth and market diversification. Leveraging deep functional and industry expertise, our people discover, design, and deliver solutions that fit your business, your goals, and your future. At Clarkston, your purpose is our purpose.

For more information about how we can help your company, [please contact us](#).

