

*This is a translation of the German OEKO-TEST review dated 2009 (original German text: [OEKO-TEST Cosmetics Manufacturer Review](#))*

## **OEKO-TEST Yearbook Cosmetics & Fashion 2009**

### **What does luxury really mean?**

Who are the best? To find out, we evaluated the tests for cosmetic products from previous years, determined average scores and compared the results of all the companies tested. The fact that we are not particularly popular in the cosmetics industry cannot be denied. The ÖKO-TEST principle to advocate cosmetic products, which do not use controversial or other substances of concern, displeases many manufacturers.

### **Brands appeal to the brain**

Why do we buy expensive Chanel make-up instead of no-name products from discount stores? What unites us with brands? Market researchers now try to clarify that phenomenon with medical techniques. Using functional magnetic resonance imaging, which converts metabolic activity in the brain into images, researchers observe which brain areas are stimulated when viewing a brand or advertising. One finding of this neuro-marketing: well-known brands activate brain regions responsible for positive feelings and rewards. In individuals with a strong affinity towards a brand, the activity in the part of the brain where it comes to rational decisions is reduced. In return, the blood flow in areas of emotional character increases. That does not happen for people who are neutral towards a brand. Marketing specialists have been saying: "Strong brands ease contemplation and make sure that purchasing decisions are made from the belly." In other words: If you are a fan of a certain brand, you might shop without rhyme or reason.

After all, it is easier and cheaper to operate with well-known substances instead of replacing some aggressive preservatives with less problematic formulations. In the past few years, more than 1.800 beauty products were tested for objectionable substances for our monthly comparison tests in the ÖKO-TEST magazine. In the process, the assigned laboratories tested more than 70 product groups including everything from all-purpose creams to toothpaste.

For our big comparison we did not use all products; only companies and vendors who were represented by at least ten items in our tests were used. Thus, a total of 1.865 products from 36 companies were included in our comparison. For most products, the vendor was listed as the manufacturer or the corporation to which the brand belong. Brands of discount stores, drug stores and supermarkets, however, were associated with the trading companies such as Schlecker and Aldi.

## The Test Result

### Our recommendations

- It is best to rely on natural cosmetics companies, which set high standards for their products and certify them through BDIH with their Controlled Natural Cosmetics logo.
  - High prices and expensive advertising campaigns have nothing to do with quality. Luxury brands score Inadequately in our tests, as do many well-known, heavily advertised brands.
  - Reasonable private labels of drug stores, discounters and supermarkets are in the middle of the field. Many of them are very good, but there are also some bad products. Tip: More and more, you can find affordable store brands in natural cosmetics quality, e.g. Alverde (Dm), Alterra (Rossmann), Blütezeit (Plus), Terra Naturi (Müller).
  - For the average scores the entire spectrum is represented. Only four received an average grade of "very good" and another four got "good". Twelve suppliers are in the middle with a "satisfactory". Products from 16 companies, however, had to be assessed with a Inadequate grade of less than 3.5.
- 
- The natural cosmetics companies Laverana (1.18), Weleda (1.28), Wala (1.33) and Logocos (1.40) shine with "very good" scores. In general, their products are marked with the BDIH logo, which certifies natural cosmetics, and the products are therefore subjected to strict criteria.
  - Absolutely catastrophic are the results of the L'Oreal Group. The world's largest cosmetics manufacturer has by far the most products in our tests. A total of 264 items of various brands add up to the "Inadequate" average score of 5.36. The cosmetics manufacturer. The Body Shop was - with halfway decent rating of 3.33 - still listed separately, although it was bought by L'Oreal in 2006. Significantly more time has passed since the acquisition of the Darmstadt Wella hair products manufacturer by the U.S. company Procter & Gamble. We therefore included the Wella products with Procter & Gamble. P & G's overall average is 4.94.
  - Just like L'Oreal and Procter & Gamble, the German company Schwarzkopf & Henkel offers many hair dyes, which we judged as very critical due to the aromatic amines in the products. In total, Schwarzkopf & Henkel was represented with 128 products and achieved a score of 4.52.
  - The German Beiersdorf Group serves the mass market with brands such as Nivea, Florena and 8x4. Compared with the other big companies, Beiersdorf comes off best with a score of 3.41 and 136 tested products.

While the cheap brands are not showing a splendid achievement, they are often better than the expensive luxury brands. Chanel, at least, achieved a good four (3.59), Estée Lauder, among others responsible for the brand Clinique, achieved a score of 3.89. The results of other premium brands are simply catastrophic: Dior (4.86) with "Inadequate" and Clarins (5.62) worse with "insufficient".

<b>TEST: Cosmetics Manufacturer</b>		<b>Number of Products Tested</b>	<b>Overall Rating</b>
<b>Company</b>	<b>Major Brands Tested</b>		
<b>Lavera</b>	Lavera, Laveré	57	<b>Very Good</b>
<b>Logocos</b>	Fitne, <b>Sante</b> , <b>Logona</b>	92	<b>Very Good</b>
<b>Weleda</b>	Weleda	32	<b>Very Good</b>
<b>Wala</b>	Dr. Hauschka, Walavita	46	<b>Very Good</b>
<b>Börlind</b>	Annemarie Börlind, Puravera	40	<b>Good</b>
<b>Elektrobio</b>	Heliotrop, Neobio	25	<b>Good</b>
<b>Mann &amp; Schröder</b>	Aldo Vandini, Dulgon	19	<b>Good</b>
<b>Müller</b>	Cadeavera, Duchesse, Sensident, Terra Naturi	22	<b>Good</b>
<b>DM</b>	Alverde, Balea, Dontodent, P2, Sundance	85	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Rossmann</b>	Accent, Alterra, Cerrus, Isana, Perlodent, Rival de Loop, Sun Ozon, Yung	89	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Plus</b>	Blue Moon, Blütezeit, Charlton, Hairwell	33	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Rewe</b>	Ja, Robinsun, Today	35	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Penny</b>	Alldent, Auraté, Keyté, Mild, René Kern, Sanft, Tamoré	42	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Schlecker</b>	AS, Rilanja	65	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Aldi Nord</b>	Biocura, Eldena, Eurodont, Kyrell, Mildeen, Sana	35	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>The Body Shop</b>	The Body Shop	42	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Aldi Süd</b>	Caribic, Friscodent, Kür, Lacura, Ombia, Prince	51	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Beiersdorf</b>	8x4, Atrix, Eucerin, Florena, Hidrofugal, Labello, Nivea	136	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Lidl</b>	Cien, Corpal, Dentalux, Iseree, Maverick	44	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Dr. Scheller</b>	Apotheker Scheller, Manhattan	22	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Chanel</b>	Chanel	22	<b>Sufficient</b>
<b>Estée Lauder</b>	Aveda, Clinique, Estée Lauder	27	<b>Sufficient</b>
<b>Johnson &amp; Johnson</b>	Bebe, Neutrogena, Roc	39	<b>Sufficient</b>
<b>Kao Brands Europe</b>	Guhl, John Frida	15	<b>Sufficient</b>
<b>Unilever</b>	Axe, Dove, Lux, Pond's, Rexona, Timotei	53	<b>Inadequate</b>
<b>Schwarzkopf &amp;</b>	Aok, Bac, Diadermine, Fa,	128	<b>Inadequate</b>

<b>Henkel</b>	Gliss, Poly-Marken, Schauma, Theramed		
<b>Sara Lee</b>	Delial, Dusch Das	14	<b>Inadequate</b>
<b>Yves Rocher</b>	Yves Rocher	43	<b>Inadequate</b>
<b>Avon</b>	Avon	11	<b>Inadequate</b>
<b>GlaxoSmithKline</b>	Dr. Best, Odol med 3, Parodontax, Sensodyne	16	<b>Inadequate</b>
<b>Dior</b>	Dior	14	<b>Inadequate</b>
<b>Procter &amp; Gamble</b>	Blend-a-Med, Bruno Banani, Max Factor by Ellen Betrix, Herbal Essences, Lacoste, Oil of Olaz, Pantene Pro-V, Wella	113	<b>Inadequate</b>
<b>Coty</b>	Adidas, Astor, Jil Sander, Lancaster, Rimmel	56	<b>Inadequate</b>
<b>L' Oréal</b>	Biotherm, Garnier, Maybelline Jade, La Roche-Posay, Lancôme, L'Oréal Paris, Vichy, Kiehls	264	<b>Inadequate</b>
<b>Colgate-Palmolive</b>	Colgate, Dentagard, Gard, Palmolive	25	<b>Inadequate</b>
<b>Clarins</b>	Clarins	13	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>