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DeveloPlus' New Take on Covering Grays

NEW YORK — A company that helped solve the problem of a bad at-home hair color job, with an item called Color Oops, now sets its sights on solving one of the biggest complaints with do-it-yourself products — telltale gray.

"Seventy percent of those who color their hair do so to color gray," said Edward Geopfert, vice president of sales and marketing for DeveloPlus, the firm behind both Color Oops and the latest launch, No Gray. "But many are disappointed with the products on the market. We talk to colorists and stylists and it is the number-one problem we hear."

DeveloPlus estimates 90 million men and women perform at-home dye jobs to cover gray. That number is mushrooming in the weak economy as more consumers forgo salon visits or extend the time between professional hair color treatments by occasionally doing their own.

No Gray was developed to mix with hair dye or tint to prohibit the gray from breaking through for up to six weeks. When mixed with conventional market items, No Gray adds pigment to the color mixture. The formula penetrates the cuticle layer and reduces the surface tension of water enabling the color pigmentation to cling to the hair resulting in more uniform penetration.

"Retail buyers have recognized this a real problem-solver for the home hair color market and believe consumers, both men and women, understand the need and how to use it," said Geopfert.

Available in three packages, the retail price for a woman's single application is \$2.99, the double package is \$5.75 and a men's version is \$2.99. Chains currently stocking No Gray include Walgreens, Duane Reade and Bed, Bath and Beyond.

Print advertising in magazines such as Marie Claire, Cosmopolitan, Woman's Day, Star, First, Glamour and Fitness will break later this year.

A buyer for a major chain said what is nice about No Gray is that it boosts the turns of hair color since shoppers buy it in addition to the hair color. "So you have more items sold and a higher ring for the two products," she said. "In hair color, you have

to get people to buy more frequently, higher tickets, or multiple products."

No Gray follows on the heels of DeveloPlus' unique Color Oops, a formula that allows users to change an existing hair color. While first a hit with shoppers who were disappointed with an at-home hair color experience, Color Oops is now selling to consumers who merely want to change their hair color frequently. "It is now a fashion product and that has helped us build upon our sales from year to year," said Geopfert, who added a user could be blonde one week and a redhead the next. "We passed our sales projections for the year in June and I am sure it is because of the fashion positioning," he said. More than \$1 million is spent on print ads for Color Oops and a TV commercial is in the works.

Geopfert suggested retailers situate No Gray next to Color Oops in hair color planograms. While hair color is certainly a category undergoing stockkeeping optimization, he said both Color Oops and No Gray are "niche" products not duplicated by other brands.

The 20-year-old DeveloPlus also markets Splat, a vibrant hair color line that now also includes bright hues of hair extensions, and a hair color called Satin for professional beauty supply stores.

Although buyers note a move to more people coloring their hair at home, drugstore hair color sales for the 51-week period ended May 17 declined 1.95 percent to \$489 million. However, units sales of lower-priced products rose (Revlon Colorsilk, for example, jumped 12 percent in sales), as did the items designed to just cover roots. And, Color Oops — which is not a mainstream color product — exhibited a 21 percent jump in sales to hit almost \$2.5 million in volume. Also, in a limited, but growing number of doors and only a short time on shelves, No Gray has already cracked into the top 100 hair color stockkeeping units — a sku intensive category — ranking number 73.



No Gray