

In baby care more than any other personal care market, trust is paramount. It is at once the secret behind Johnson & Johnson's outright leading position worldwide and the basis on which organic and natural brands are making their claims. Its importance is such that for the most part, says Alexandra Richmond, senior beauty analyst at Mintel: "Parents are most unwilling to experiment with babies' and children's toiletries. Brand reputation is a key purchase motivator of buying toiletries for the younger family members, which is why the over 100-year old company Johnson & Johnson enjoys such a high level of trust and market share."

In 2008 the global baby care market was worth \$5.84bn, rising 6.7% on 2007 and J&J's domination of this market is extensive, taking 56% and 39% value shares in the UK and US respectively (Euromonitor) and contributing up to 70% of the UK's total ad spend in 2009 (dated to August). According to J&J, Johnson's Baby has been used on around a billion babies globally. Irina Barbalova, head of personal care research at Euromonitor states that in the UK "the overwhelming strength of the leading player means the market is to a large extent directed by the innovation and new product development of this one player".

Ashwin Mehta of Healthquest, brand owner of multi-award winning natural brand Earth Friendly Baby adds: "The baby toiletry sector is a bit odd because of

the domination by J&J. In supermarkets there is little shelf space for anything else."

So how has J&J gained the trust of millions of parents all over the world? Maxime Buffat, EAME research & development franchise leader, Johnson's Baby and Johnson's explains: "We have been researching, learning and caring for babies for over 100 years and we employ hundreds of scientists globally. Our top priority is assuring that our products are safe, mild and gentle. We have long standing collaborations with medical and scientific experts worldwide and we are a leader in research on fundamental understanding of the needs of a baby's healthy developing skin, hair and eyes. As an example, a year ago we celebrated the 50th birthday of No More Tears which was first created by Johnson & Johnson in 1959. We were the pioneer in baby mildness with the creation

of No More Tears and very mild surfactant systems. Thanks to this heritage, our scientists have a real understanding and expertise of baby skin, hair and eyes to deliver what is best for babies."

As is the case with multinational brands, J&J is able to maintain high visibility with significant advertising and promotional activity as well as investing in NPD on a regular basis. For example Johnson's Baby introduced its pink lotion range last May incorporating Johnson's Baby Lotion in two products – Softwash and Soft Cream – while also launching a Europe-wide



Playing it safe

Baby toiletry brands have one of the toughest jobs in the C&T market – to gain the trust of parents. And when product safety in both chemical and natural baby care products is a hotbed of debate, this is not easy to do, reports Jo Allen

online campaign last year to promote its No More Tears anniversary.

Boots, the second biggest baby care company in the UK with 9% share (Euromonitor), prides itself on the unique trust which it has built up with UK consumers over the years, using the 'Trust Boots' tagline on its advertising since 2005. It too celebrated a birthday last year, marking 75 years of Boots Baby by revamping the packaging for Boots Baby products which the company guarantees, are "the mildest, most gentle and most rigorously tested baby products possible".

LICENSED TO THRILL

Licensed goods are big players in little people's lives. They account for about £1 in every £6 that is spent on kids, with Ben 10 being the hottest boys property, while Disney Princess and Dora The Explorer remain big business for little girls. "The market for children's toiletries continues to be buoyant," comments Angela Hall, md, H&A, children's licensed toiletry manufacturer. "As an established market, it is key in our view to continue to add value as well as creating fun and innovative products that appeal to both children and mums alike."

Products tend to fall into two main categories: classic and hot. Classic Disney franchise Winnie the Pooh was acquired by H&A and a new range is launching this year

including fruity bath jellies and collectable skittle bubble bath bottles. For boys, and in addition to its Ben 10 license, the company has also acquired Star Wars the Clone Wars. This range will include a talking Yoda wash buddy with lenticular style packaging detail. Dora The Explorer is celebrating ten years this year and her toiletry collection has been



refreshed with a more feminine and playful look. The company was also signed by BBC Worldwide for its pre-school brand 3rd and Bird. The musical inspired range includes Birdy bath squirter and other bathtime accessories.

New to licensed toiletries is Ethos Concepts, a company which is launching Roary The Racing Car and Fifi and the Flowertots ranges which include soaps, shampoo, shower gel and bubble bath in Boots this summer. Armen Saboonchian, md says: "Fifi has never had a toiletry license before so we are very excited about having a completely new range on the market." Bottle shapes for the bubble bath and shower gel are based on flower pots and the range features a lavender and strawberry scent.



Mothercare

The new packaging features colour coding and highlighted benefits to make product selection simple.

Baby care dominates the children's toiletries market with products targeting babies estimated to account for 94% of the UK's total value sales in 2009 (Mintel). Another trusted name in all things baby, Mothercare launched All We Know, its own range of baby toiletries, wipes and cotton wool in January. The line, which contains extracts of chamomile and olive oil, is dermatologically tested and tested by Mothercare's panel of independent midwives. "When a product underperformed we amended the formulation and re-tested to create the perfect balance and offering," assures the company. All We Know was also tested by parents and

babies including 150 newborn babies to ensure the claim 'suitable from birth' is supported. The 330ml range includes bubble bath, shampoo, lotion, oil, body wash, nappy cream, mild baby soap, fragranced and fragrance-free wipes, a baby traveller pack and a baby bath case, designed to be a gift for new mums.

Around 11 million parents of children under eight in the UK are price motivated when it comes to buying children's toiletries (Mintel) and with value for money being a desirable asset in today's climate Pampers launched a value range last July. This includes Simply Clean Wipes which are available in scented and unscented varieties and incorporate a lotion to help restore baby skin to its natural pH.

A NATURAL FIT

For some parents though, the confidence of a big brand name is not enough to drive a sale. Richmond says: "Mintel's research shows that new parents are far more likely to trust products that claim to be natural or organic with almost three in ten saying they'll take a product on face value and not check its ingredients." Mounting media coverage of certain synthetic chemicals used in cosmetics and toiletries has most notably

TABLE 1: RETAIL VALUE OF BABY CARE MARKET BY COUNTRY, 2008

Country	US\$m	%07/08
World	5,841.6	6.7
US	811.5	-0.5
France	225.1	1.6
Germany	185.3	1.0
Italy	226.8	1.0
Spain	203.6	5.8
UK	231.8	1.0

Source: Euromonitor International

TABLE 2: GLOBAL BABY MARKET SIZES BY SECTOR, 2008

Country	US\$m	%07/08
Baby toiletries	2,189.9	7.3
Baby hair care	1,313.4	6.8
Baby skin care	1,808.1	6.1
Baby sun care	530.2	6.3

Source: Euromonitor International

affected the baby care market. What is 'best for baby' has increasingly been questioned. "The organic movement really raised awareness and people are looking closely at product ingredients and safety. Mainstream press regularly covers the dangers of parabens and other potential carcinogens in beauty products, so the entire industry is trending that way. The momentum is undeniable," says David Vartabedian, sales director of luxury organic and natural line Original Sprout. Much of the market's new product activity is now driven by launches with an organic or natural positioning. According to Mintel GNPD, in the first six months of 2009, 36% of UK babies' and children's toiletries launches claimed to be organic and 14% claimed to be all-natural. Richmond says: "The rise in value-added products such as free-from launches has helped grow average spend by 8% between 2006 and 2009."

Spa brand Cowshed developed a baby care line last year that is free from parabens,



Brands like Mothercare's All We Know and Cowshed's Baby Cow trade on safety

petrochemicals, sulphates and artificial colours. Baby Cow is based on meadowfoam oil with five products for hair and body. Meanwhile Daniel Galvin Jnr added a Melon & Cucumber scented variant to his range of products, namely Organic Baby Shampoo, Baby Hair Juice Body Moisturiser and Baby Hair Juice Bath & Body Wash.

US brand Erbaorganics, the sister company of Ervaviva, recently launched its organic baby and mum-to-be lines in the UK. Having been concerned over certain chemicals used in skin care, husband and wife founders Robin Brown and Anna Cirronis started producing the products after the birth of their first son. The result is a line of five baby products: shampoo, body wash, baby lotion, diaper cream, body oil, and a travel kit. They contain 75%-99% certified organic ingredients such as aloe, echinacea, lavender and chamomile and are free of parabens, pesticides, SLS, artificial colouring and fragrance. The brand donates 15% of the purchase price of Erbaorganics Baby Oil or Baby Wash to the World Wide Orphans Foundation.

The Body Shop also launched an eco-conscious line last year with Buriti Baby, a range that features naturally derived ingredients including some that are sourced through Community Trade suppliers. Based on the mild, gentle oil from buriti tree nuts the five sku line includes Buriti Baby Body Butter, Body Lotion, Shampoo, Body Wash and Body Massage Oil.

FROM NICHE TO INTERNATIONAL

For Little Me, the past year has been about expanding the brand both internationally and at home. Tracey Chalkley, brand manager at KMI Brands notes: "Last summer we went into Mothercare and Toys R Us in the UK, and last September we launched in New Zealand and Australia. We are looking at other markets internationally as well as further in the UK." And natural niche brand Miamoo, brainchild of *The Apprentice* and *Beat the Boss* star Saira Khan will also be expanding internationally, having signed a deal with one of the largest pharmacy distributors in France. By the end of the year Khan also hopes to have developed a natural conditioner and a



Mothercare

natural sun lotion. "These are the two products that most of our customers ask for," says Khan, adding, "Customers are really questioning brands, their ethics and values. It's here that small niche

companies are starting to grow, and in the long term I think this is where Miamoo will grow."

Earth Friendly Baby has expanded into 15-20 countries in the last two to three years, having established its

main UK base and won multiple awards. Mehta tells **SPC**: "Earth Friendly Baby has a good reputation because it has grown out of the health store market." The brand is also established in Waitrose and has a sister brand, Pure Adore, a small line of three products with a lower price point in Asda. However not all natural or organic niche brands are so lucky. "Overall, compared to many years ago, people are spending more per child and they are aware of the environment so natural and organic baby care is a growth market. But in the independent health store market there are so many niche natural baby care brands launching every year that they can't all be sustained. The ones that have been established in the last few years are the ones who are likely to survive."

One success story from the US is Original Sprout's Natural and Organic Family Collection, a range of hair and skin care products with the tagline 'Worry-free luxury for babies and up'.

"Parents and stylists trust the formulations because they work without carcinogens and common offenders found in other products," says the company. "Original Sprout has been growing at a rapid rate, an indication of the level of demand (for natural baby care products)," says Vartabedian. The brand



Philanthropic projects which support babies and children are proving popular with brands such as The Body Shop (left) and Erbaorganics (above)

is distributed in the UK (including Urban Retreat in Harrods), Canada, Mexico, Dubai, Saudi Arabia, France and Monaco. It is also nationwide across the US, where over the past year pressure has been mounting on the government to more strictly regulate personal care products for greater safety as the country is, says Vartabedian, “far behind the EU’s Cosmetic Directive and Japan and Canada’s cosmetics regulations”.

With so many people equating natural with safe, whatever the facts, it is little wonder that demand for organic and natural baby care products has grown

Stacy Malkan, a spokesperson for the US-based Campaign for Safe Cosmetics says: “US laws lag behind the rest of the world so companies can claim compliance while continuing to use multiple toxic chemicals. Current cosmetic regulations are from 1938, more than 70 years old. It’s time to update the laws to require companies to be honest with consumers and to use the safest ingredients.” Last year the health advocacy group released a study in which 48 baby products including bubble bath and shampoo tested positive to 1,4-dioxane or formaldehyde, or both. While not intentionally added to the products, 1,4-dioxane is formed during the ethoxylation process and formaldehyde is created when other preservatives break down over time. Johnson’s Baby Shampoo was among the brands that tested positive in the report, but J&J released a statement at the time and printed in an article in *The Washington Post* which said. “We are disappointed that the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics has inaccurately characterised the safety of our products, misrepresented the overwhelming consensus of scientists and government agencies that review the safety of ingredients, and unnecessarily alarmed parents.”



US regulations are moving toward more product safety, believes Vartabedian. “California passed Proposition 65 which is a step in the right direction.” And last March Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif) was quoted as saying “I intend to soon introduce legislation requiring greater oversight of our cosmetics industry. We need to ensure that the chemicals that are used in our everyday products are safe.”

SAFETY DEBATE

With cases such as this grabbing headlines and with so many people equating natural with safe, whatever the facts, it is little wonder that there has been increased demand for organic and natural baby care products. Mintel says that the number of free-from launches (parabens, alcohol etc) in baby and children’s toiletries rose to more than six in ten in 2008 and 2009. But the safety debate is complex for both parents and brands. Richmond notes: “Being natural, organic or free from chemicals and preservatives might help allay parents’ fears, but niche brands still have their work cut out for them if they are to convince parents that their products are 100% safe.” Interestingly J&J moved into the free-from scene when it reformulated its Johnson’s Baby Wipes last year to be alcohol, paraffin and paraben-free and Buffat says that the natural and organic market “is something we are currently investigating. However we do not want to compromise the safety of babies as well as the mildness and gentleness of our products. Indeed natural products are a mixture of many components. The safety of all potential residues has to be reviewed carefully and the reproducibility of the different batches is a challenge to ensure that all raw materials used are safe, mild and gentle for baby skin, and the safety, purity, mildness and gentleness of Johnson’s Baby will never be compromised.”

Vartabedian believes: “The market will always have room for both traditional and natural products but as natural products become more popular the pricing will become more competitive, making natural products more attractive and available to a broader market.” But, he observes: “Discerning customers won’t settle for natural for long if there isn’t sufficient product performance to keep them loyal. We anticipate a move toward performance in addition to safety.”

For J&J the aim is enhancing product



SAFETY IN THE SUN

Heightened concern over the harmful effects of sun exposure on children has led to a boom in sales of baby sun care products, rising 6.3% worldwide in 2008 to \$530.2m. New products in this sector highlighted the benefit of antioxidant ingredients and vitamins in sun care formulations such as Simple Baby Sun Sensitive Protecting Suncare Cream SPF50 and Simple Kid’s Sun Sensitive Protecting Suncare Lotion SPF 50, both featuring sunflower extract and pro-vitamin B5. User friendly formats remain particularly popular in children’s suncream too, with Garnier Ambre Solaire launching Kids Rapido Non-Stop Spray with a multi-angle nozzle for quick and easy application.

performance too. “Our objective is to remain as current as science evolves and that’s why J&J is continually investing in research to better understand baby skin and therefore develop products which fit baby skin needs best but which are also pure, mild and gentle,” says Buffat.

Baby care manufacturers may be targeting the very youngest consumers but in having to meet the approval of the most stringent of consumer groups – parents – it seems product development is far from child’s play. **cb**