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'FaceLube' Targets Men And Their Hygiene Habits

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The cleansers are sold in auto parts shops, finding real men where they shop

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Candace Chen, FaceLube's founder, is looking to penetrate an untapped autos market (Courtesy of FaceLube)



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For men who like to incorporate their cars into every aspect of life, facial cleansing product FaceLube offers the opportunity for an automotive experience as they wash up.

The company name originated as a reference to oil change places, which are referred to in the automotive industry as "quick lubes" or "fast lubes."

"It's very tongue in cheek and a name that people are unlikely to forget once they hear it," said FaceLube founder Candace Chen.

Offered at Meineke and Autolube, FaceLube comes packaged in the shape of a motor oil bottle and offers a three-step treatment process: cleanser, lubricating treatment and protectant are meant to keep your skin young and "on the fast track."

But it's expensive: The base package of three bottles costs \$125, and goes up to \$285.

Chen, who has been in the automotive industry for over 20 years, pioneered the automatic transmission fluid exchanger (ATF flush unit) in 1993.

"It's so widely accepted now that it'd probably surprise you to know that the idea of it was as radical back in 1993 as placing men's skin care products at automotive retail locations in 2011," Chen said.

She attributes her partnership with Jiffy Lube throughout the '90s as a catalyst to the change in how car owners service their transmissions. In her new venture, she's become something of a chief lubricator in the auto industry.

This newest liquid foray originates from a simple premise: the same men who feel comfortable hoisting an engine out of their 1965 Mustang may not feel at ease cleansing their pours with regularity.

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Chen can move seamlessly as an ambassador between the worlds of autos and beauty.

She is something of an outsider, with a preference for couture dresses and stilettos that's rare in the automotive industry.

"I'm often teased about looking like I should be in the 'beauty' industry," she said. So 18 years into her automotive industry foray, she created FaceLube.

Of course the challenges abound.

"They are about as masculine and meat and potatoes as they come," she said of of auto industry men she's targeting. The physical barriers related to the current retail environment, one generally geared toward women, can make beauty care shopping difficult for men.

FaceLube's sweet spot centers around man trying to get a leg up on first impressions.

"A man's face says volumes about his vitality and state of health," Chen said.

Not many retailers are trying to target men.

"The thing with drug stores like Walgreens is not that they're girly or that buying Neutrogena is embarrassing," Chen said. "It's most of the time their entire men's skin care section will probably fit into a shoe box."

So she wanted to create a viable option on men's own turf in the auto store.

So is this an easy emulsifier for manly men afraid of looking wussy?

"It certainly could have that effect," Chen said. "FaceLube celebrates masculinity and we're not shy about it."

The Bottom-Line: The idea is that the next time you run into Meineke for a muffler, you might also consider cleansing your complexion.

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