

Professional Keratin Smoothing Council BIR Feature Interview June 2011

The **keratin smoothing treatment category** has experienced explosive growth over the past several years and made its mark on the professional beauty industry in a big way. As reported by Beauty Industry Report (BIR) in March, a number of the top companies in the category, such as Cadiveu, Keratin Complex, Marcia Teixeira, SalonTech and Aerovex Systems have joined forces to form the **Professional Keratin Smoothing Council (PKSC)** to advocate for this continually expanding segment of the industry. **BIR** recently had the opportunity to chat with the founding members to learn about their plans to safeguard one of the most lucrative opportunities to hit the professional beauty industry in decades.

BIR: Please give BIR's readers a brief history of the keratin smoothing category and why it is a runaway growth segment in our industry today.
Larry Solomon, Keratin Complex, President; Co-Chair PKSC: The category has been evolving for about five years, providing consumers with new ways to repair damaged hair while leaving it soft, shiny and frizz free for several months. The products smooth the hair with ingredients that do not alter the bonds of the hair structure. The results are temporary and slowly wear off over a period of time which varies by hair texture and choice of product. This category of products is a perfect solution for all hair textures. Consumers all across the world are paying as much as \$600 for this high demand service that can be done in two hours or less. In these tough economic times, this service has created a new revenue stream for salon professionals, who report that keratin hair smoothing has literally helped them keep their doors open.

BIR: What is the cause of the controversy surrounding keratin smoothing treatments?

Marcelo Teixeira, M & M International, Marcia Teixeira, CEO; Co-Chair PKSC: Several manufacturers and salon professionals played a role in the creation and perpetuation of the controversy by making claims that their products are "formaldehyde free," while the majority of them contain an ingredient that produces small traces of formaldehyde gas. It can be confusing because formaldehyde is a dry gas, which cannot physically be an ingredient in a cosmetic product. However, formaldehyde is an unavoidable, trace by-product of ingredients in many of these products. These trace levels have been shown to be well below OSHA's permissible exposure levels. While these products do not contain formaldehyde as an ingredient, saying that they are "formaldehyde free" is untrue and misleading because when heated, they do produce very small amounts of formaldehyde gas. As demand for the services grew, salon professionals began performing a higher and higher volume of treatments without

recognizing the need to take appropriate preventive measures; specifically paying attention to proper application and appropriate ventilation to prevent over exposure to formaldehyde. The education provided to them by some manufacturers was either inadequate or not provided at all. The category as a whole came under the scrutiny of Oregon OSHA when they received reports of adverse throat, nose and eye reactions resulting from frequent use of one particular brand, which was one of those claiming to be “formaldehyde free.” Oregon OSHA reported that this brand, along with several others “contained” levels of formaldehyde higher than the companies disclosed, but even then, exposure levels were nearly ten times lower than the maximum allowable OSHA levels. The controversy has since expanded to OSHA at the federal level, along with the CIR (Cosmetic Ingredient Review Panel), FDA, and the Environmental Working Group.

BIR: What would BIR's readers be surprised to learn about the controversy surrounding this category of products?

Claudia Ancantara, Cadiveu Brazil, President; Founding Member PKSC: Regulatory agencies in the US and around the world continue to use antiquated and highly inaccurate methods to measure the level of formaldehyde in not only cosmetics, but in other areas, including scientific research. The lack of standardization has contributed to a wide scale skewing of reported results. As a result, salon professionals and consumers are receiving information that is inaccurate, inflammatory and destructive to our industry and economy. The vast majority of manufacturers marketing products in this category are committed to providing safe products. The PKSC was formed primarily to ensure full disclosure of ingredients, MSDS compliance and the education of salon professionals on safe and proper use of these products. While consumer watch groups and the press often make claims of irresponsible and unsafe practices by manufacturers in the personal care products industry, this Council is calling for regulations and standards that surpass government requirements. We believe it is time to be sure that accurate information is being gathered, evaluated and communicated in order for salon professionals and consumers to make informed decisions about safety.

BIR: What is the Council doing to keep this thriving business healthy and growing? Robert Kim, SalonTech, President; Founding Member PKSC: We have hired one of the country’s leading environmental law firms with a history of advocacy for consumer safety. We've also engaged the services of a world-class environmental laboratory to help establish methods for gathering, evaluating and interpreting test results. This decision, which requires considerable resources, demonstrates our commitment to establishing new standards for how products are evaluated in this market. We have also launched a website that will provide up-to-date, accurate, and fact based information about products in the category. Consumers and professionals can go to www.pksc.org for fact based information. This site will be a portal for all things related to keratin hair smoothing services and products. Salon professionals and consumers should have accurate

information to make informed decisions about the use of products in this category. The environmental testing we are performing will assist the Council in developing standards to ensure that the proper information reaches those who need it most: stylists and their clients. It will also prevent well intentioned advocacy groups from using unreliable and improperly developed data to create fear in the marketplace. We have opened up the membership of the Council to every level of the professional beauty industry. This is our opportunity to stand up and confirm that the majority of salon professionals follow manufacturers' instructions, are intelligent, and informed individuals who have carefully chosen the products they use to provide services. Please visit www.pksc.org to join and support us in our efforts to educate salon professionals and consumers, while establishing high standards of accountability for product manufacturers.

BIR: What type of educational/product knowledge programs do you provide? Lilly Balasanyan, Cadiveu USA, President; Founding Member

PKSC: The PKSC website will launch with landing pages for each company in the Council. Each page will provide MSDSs, complete disclosure of ingredients and proper application instructions. This will be a big step in centralizing data for easy access. Over the next year, our growing member base will launch a national certification program for salon professionals on all issues related to performing these services. This certification will lead to a national recognition program where consumers can find certified professionals in their local market with the most advanced tools, processes, and systems for safety.

BIR: OSHA has really gotten involved and even sent a warning. What do our BIR readers need to know about this warning?

Jeff Cardarella, Aerovex Systems, President; Founding Member PKSC: OSHA's testing shows that some of these products can create irritating levels of formaldehyde during performance of smoothing services. This should tell every stylist that it is important to understand and follow all manufacturers' instructions for safe use and proper handling. This is a good way to help minimize exposure to formaldehyde, as well as the many gases, vapors and dusts found in salons. Another very important recommendation that the Council recommends is that ALL salons evaluate the efficiency of their ventilation systems. Some salons lack proper ventilation as needed to ensure safety for the full range of chemical services offered, including color, bleach, artificial nail services, and hair removal. New technologies have been developed that are highly effective for improving salon air quality. This is an often overlooked tool that ALL salons need in order to protect workers and clients. OSHA's recently issued warning should be a wakeup call for our industry. Salons MUST begin to consider ventilation as an important tool. You can cut hair with shears; you can't have a safe salon environment without proper and effective ventilation. The Council website will provide resources to help salon professionals stay informed and not only meet, but exceed OSHA requirements for safety.

BIR: What type of members do you want to attract to the Council and why should they join? Larry Solomon, Keratin Complex, President; Co-Chair

PKSC: We first invite all manufacturers making products in the keratin hair smoothing category to join, regardless of their ingredients. This is a lucrative opportunity for our industry and we encourage our colleagues to work with us to build something great for our industry, consumers, and the economy. We have created membership categories for all types of manufacturers in the professional salon market, trade show organizers, press, cosmetology associations, industry trade organizations, cosmetology schools, distributors, salons, stylists, students and consumers. We have identified benefits for each of these membership groups. We ask people to join the Council to help us raise the standardization in gathering data, testing and assessing test results so we can all make informed decisions about safety. We all want our businesses to prosper and help our clients feel beautiful, but only if we can ensure that it is done in a safe manner. We ask for your help to assemble the resources to do what no other group has done effectively. This is an opportunity for all of us to make a positive difference. Please visit our website and participate. Become a member – offer your support – join us in growing our voice.

BIR: What is your vision for the Council and the category?

Patty Schmucker, Performance Branding Services; Executive Director –

PKSC: The professional beauty industry has always been a place to which personal care product companies have come to establish their brands in the market. This category of service has given the industry a shot in the arm in terms of revenue and increased our foot traffic with consumers coming back into the salon. The Council seeks to connect with the hearts, minds and hands of other salon professionals and business leaders to offer consumers unparalleled quality in service, products, and safety. With a commitment to corporate responsibility, we will grow our community to bring clear, accurate and scientifically rigorous information to the public in order to enhance the quality of life for salon industry professionals.