

# TouchBack keeps hair color perfect between colorings

Several years ago, **Joan Lasker** was having her hair colored. As a brunette, she knew that her gray roots would be visible in two weeks, leaving her with two weeks to go before having her hair colored again. She started trying products to cover the gray around her hairline, but didn't like the results. She couldn't understand why no one had developed an effective temporary touch-up with real hair color. So, she decided to take the lead in forging a new category, and **ColorMetrics** was born. **Beauty Industry Report (BIR)** recently spoke with Joan to learn more about her company and its products, which are helping people love their hair color the entire time between colorings.

**BIR: What's the story behind ColorMetrics and your TouchBack markers?**

**Joan Lasker (JL):** Permanent hair color is not permanent—gray roots are growing and visible within two weeks, and color fades every time hair is washed or exposed to the sun. Women with gray could be coloring their hair every 4 to 6 weeks for 40 years. I want our products to make it easy to keep their color looking fresh and hair undamaged. TouchBack, our instant, non-stop color system, solves the problem by adding back temporary color between "permanent" colorings.

**TouchBack** is a multi-patented design, the only instant touch-up that delivers real hair color from our patented "marker" delivery system. Each marker delivers a minimum of 40 to 50 hairline applications (.27 oz./list \$15). None of the other touch-ups on the market, whether in mascara, crayon, gel or powder delivery systems, will bond to the hair. TouchBack

does—it actually bonds to the hair, because it is made with real hair color

**BIR: Your mission statement is simple: Non-Stop Color...Instantly. Tell me more.**

**JL:** My goal is to create a group of products that will keep hair color looking as perfect as possible between permanent colorings without the use of ammonia or peroxide. We are the only company offering a fully integrated system of temporary hair color products to cover gray roots and boost hair color overall:

**ColorMark**, our original product, provides real hair color in a liquid for instant gray root touch up in 10 shades.

**TouchBack** offers real hair color in a marker in eight shades. **TouchBack Plus Shampoo**, **Conditioner** and **Leave-In Conditioner** give you an instant color boost in eight shades in

formulas that are free of peroxide, ammonia and sulfates. Recently, we introduced **TouchBack BrowMarker**—a marker for the eyebrows—in five shades. This new patented marker enhances brows and blends stray grays. We even developed a special shade—blonde—that works directly on the skin for cases where there may be no brow hair at all. This fits our philosophy perfectly: we want to sell product, but we also want to fill a need. Used together, our products fill the need to maintain and add back color between colorings.

**BIR: How does someone use the system?**

**JL: TouchBack Plus Color Shampoo** (4 oz./list \$15.00), **Color Conditioner** (4 oz./list \$15.00) and **Color Leave-In Conditioner** (3.5 oz./list \$15.00) boost overall hair color and blend grays. When you

reach your desired color level, the **Clear Shampoo** (8 oz./list \$12.50), **Clear Conditioner** (8 oz./list \$12.50) and **Clear Leave-In Conditioner** (3.5 oz./list \$15.00) will help to maintain your color, while also providing the ultimate fade protection against UVA/B rays.

**BIR: Tell me about your background and what you did prior to starting ColorMetrics.**

**JL:** I was at **Vogue** for five years, the majority as a beauty editor, then spent 16 years as vice president of corporate public relations for **L'Oréal USA**. For two years, I was also president of **Cosmetic Executive Women (CEW)**, our 4,000-member trade organization.

**BIR: At shows, I have seen other brands' hair mascaras for covering gray. What separates TouchBack from those products?**

**JL:** Hair mascara is...well, mascara. This product will cover gray. But, it makes the hair noticeably dull, it flakes off when brushed and rubs off on your pillow at night. Both TouchBack and ColorMark are made with real, temporary hair dyes that bond to the outside of the hair shaft and won't flake or rub off when brushed. They blend beautifully with



*TouchBack Markers deliver 40 to 50 hairline applications of real hair color.*



*TouchBack Plus products refresh hair color instantly.*

permanent hair color for a totally natural look.

**BIR: How do you approach each day?**

**JL:** I'm a micro manager. I am obsessive about inventory. When a customer orders, I never want to be out of stock. In our eight years in business, I can count the times that has happened on one hand.

**BIR: How do you distribute your products?**

**JL:** We sell our products primarily through 30-plus full-service beauty distributors, as well as to master distributors and wholesalers. We also sell TouchBack and ColorMark to **Ulta Beauty** and **Sally Beauty** stores. Now, we are beginning to take on distributors overseas.

**BIR: What are the key success factors you look for in selecting a distributor partner?**

**JL:** The distributor needs a dedicated salon consultant team. Skype has made it easy to do Monday morning meetings to keep the sales groups informed and motivated. When we started the company, **John Cortese** was our vice president of sales. He did a fantastic job getting our products into a strong group of full-service beauty distributors. We now have rep groups, including **Van Nest Coleman & Associates** and others.

**BIR: Who is your target market?**

**JL:** Anyone with gray hair.

**BIR: Tell me about your online marketing, sales and education initiatives, including but not limited to your social media outreach.**

**JL:** We have a strong Internet business as a result of our public relations efforts. We use **Tractenberg and Co.** in New York City. Our products are consistently in the national and local press. We focus on creating relationships with and spreading our story via beauty bloggers more than Facebook and Twitter for our social media efforts.

**BIR: What's new and/or hot in your line?**

**JL:** Temporary bright hair colors have surged during the past year. **Streakers, Hot Colors for Cool Hair**, is hot for us right now. Streakers' patented formula bonds to the hair and is the only temporary bright hair color that won't flake off when brushed, unlike mascaras, gel-based products and sprays. Then, you can wash it out when you're not feeling wild. We say that Streakers "let you get ready for a wild weekend with no commitment. Now every Monday doesn't have to be blue. How about pink, red, green, orange, yellow, purple or ultra violet?"

**“My goal is to create a group of products that will keep hair color looking as perfect as possible between permanent colorings.”**

**BIR: What trends do you see having a positive effect on the professional beauty industry, and how is ColorMetrics taking advantage of them?**

**JL:** People are stretching their time between hair color services. Stylists are recommending our products to keep their clients' color looking fresh between salon visits because they are temporary and don't interfere with permanent color.

**BIR: What do you have planned for 2012? Are you working on any new marketing initiatives?**

**JL:** We have just launched the TouchBack Plus line of colored shampoos and conditioners. Throughout the year, we will be working to grow sales of those lines.

**BIR: What is your company's greatest accomplishment in the past five years?**

**JL:** We think we have understood the trends that drive consumers' purchases. Our biggest

breakthrough was getting hair dye to come out of a marker. The product was so revolutionary that within six months, we won **Cosmoprof North America's** first **Discover Beauty Award** for best product and went on to win **Allure's Best of Beauty** for best product in its category and CEW's best new hair color product. I am very proud that my small company creates products that receive big recognition.

**BIR: Have you had any mentors?**

**JL:** My background was public relations. I needed a lot of help in sales, marketing, packaging and production. But, my years at L'Oréal and CEW gave me the ability to pick up the phone and call some of the top experts. **Robert Oppenheim**, former president of **Claire's** salon division, gave me hours and hours of his time, as did the late **Alan Kurtzman** of **Neutrogena** and **Revlon**, and **Guy Peyrelongue**, president of L'Oréal, who advised me to take the product to market on my own.

**BIR: What is the best business advice you ever received, and who was it from?**

**JL:** My father told me to be persistent and don't give up. He was the most persistent person I ever met—he achieved all of his goals.

**BIR: What inspires you?**

**JL:** The emails I receive from customers inspire me. They thank me for creating a product that solves a constant problem. Occasionally I answer customer service calls myself, because I love talking directly with customers from all over the country, getting their feedback directly. I really believe that listening to the customers is the purest form of market research.

**BIR: Is there anything else that you would like to address?**

**JL:** We grew this company from scratch. We didn't order our products from a private label company. We invented them. It's the classic example of recognizing a need for a product

that doesn't exist and creating it. I didn't know it would be so difficult to develop or take as long as it did. But, I am very happy with the result and I'm glad that I was persistent.

Reach Joan Lasker at 505-983-0115 or visit [colormetrics.com](http://colormetrics.com).



*Joan Lasker, CEO/founder*