

After picking up stake in Bellezimo, Marico eyes salon distribution

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FMCG major Marico, which has picked up a 45 per cent stake in Mumbai-based start-up Bellezimo Professionale Products for an estimated ₹10 crore, expects to use the buy to focus on the salon distribution channel.

The deal marks the FMCG firm's first investment in a start-up. Marico expects to use the salon channel to market and distribute its own hair and skin care products. Salon distribution is markedly different from the traditional distribution channels.

Said Saugata Gupta, MD & CEO of Marico: "In hair care, there is a convergence between home and

salon. Today salon is a fast-growing channel and a big influencer in inducing hair care habits and products. Instead of starting its journey of manufacturing and marketing skin care products for salons internally, where the company might not have readymade capability, Marico has taken a stake in a start-up."

"The salon channel works differently and we intend leveraging it for the distribution of our hair care and skin care products in future. Salon distribution basically helps as a direct marketing method to reach out to consumers," said Vivek Karve, Chief Financial Officer, Marico.

Bellezimo was founded less

than a year ago by Dinesh Bhat, a former Hindustan Unilever veteran. It has a range of skin lotions and firming and whitening products under the Skyn Pro Natural brand. These will now get prototyped across mom and pop salons across the eastern markets initially.

Small investment

"We have made a small investment in this skincare marketing and manufacturing start-up as we expect it to develop its own distribution over a period of time with its go-to market strategy, which would also lead it to tie-ups with organised salon chains," added Karve.

Meanwhile, Marico is also developing new variants under its Parachute franchise after trimming prices by 6 per cent in October due to reduced copra prices. It has been piloting the Ayurvedic Gold variant across the non-southern markets to address hair-fall concerns.

A Marico prototype usually takes one-three years to get approved, depending on factors like sales, distribution and consumer acceptance.

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