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## Walgreen 'Looks' at Beauty Boutiques

Leveraging Duane Reade cosmetics concept; building new flagship in Chicago's Loop

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**DEERFIELD, Ill.** -- Walgreen Co. is rolling out upscale beauty boutiques inside select drugstores in a bid to attract more women and boost sales outside of the pharmacy--the first step in replicating the merchandising acumen of recently acquired Duane Reade, reported the *Chicago Tribune*. It is also opening a new flagship location in downtown Chicago.

The in-store beauty concept, called Look Boutique, first opened two years ago at a Duane Reade drugstore in Manhattan. The in-store shop resembles a scaled-down Sephora with white display cases, modern fixtures and beauty advisers schooled in scores cosmetic and skin-care lines, said the report.

Walgreen liked the idea so much that after acquiring New York's largest pharmacy chain earlier this year, the company rolled out another two dozen Look Boutiques at New York-area Duane Reade stores as a test. Now Walgreen is ready to take the Look Boutiques to other urban markets.



Walgreen officials declined to say where its first local Look Boutique will debut, but real-estate sources have pegged the 25,000-square-foot flagship store under construction in Chicago's Loop as the most likely candidate, the report said.

The new Walgreens flagship, its largest store nationwide, is slated to open next year and is expected to showcase the best the nation's largest drugstore chain has to offer. Aside from a Look Boutique, there is talk of a manicure and pedicure nail bar, along with an old-fashioned soda fountain.

The Chicago flagship is expected to mirror the Duane Reade flagship in lower Manhattan, which houses not only a Look Boutique, but a sushi station, juice bar, shoeshine stand and food to go.

"What Duane Reade did in New York was to use beauty as one of the core pillars to redesign the store and get their target shopper--women--back in the store," Wendy Liebmann, CEO and chief shopper at WSL Strategic Retail, a consumer behavior research firm in New York, told the newspaper. "What Walgreens is trying to do is to fall more into that specialty-store feeling with something that looks good, feels good and is a lovely experience."

Walgreen opened two Look Boutiques at Walgreens stores in California--in Los Gatos and San Carlos. Another Look Boutique just opened in Houston, and a fourth debuted Friday in Sunny Isles Beach, Fla.

The boutiques range from 1,200 square feet to 2,000 square feet and each has a minimum of five beauty advisers, Curtin said. The shops offer cosmetics and skin-care products not usually found in drugstores, including British brands Becca Cosmetics and Pop Beauty, and Vera Moore for women of color.

Mascaras from Ramy and Pop Beauty approach \$19, about double the price of a typical mass-market drugstore mascara. Anti-aging creams from La Roche-Posay and Vichy, both L'Oreal brands, range from \$50 to \$60. And a night serum from Italian skin-care line Rilastil is \$133.

Based in Deerfield, Ill., Walgreen is the nation's largest drugstore chain with fiscal 2010 sales of \$67 billion. The company operates nearly 7,750 drugstores in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

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