



Geoparks Investment
Advisory Council

Insights

How Geoparks Can Revolutionize the Wellness and Beauty Industry as a New Frontier for Sustainability

Cosmetics · Spa and Wellness



In recent years, the wellness and beauty industry has undergone a profound shift, with consumers becoming more discerning about where they spend their money and how their choices impact the environment. There's a growing demand for sustainable, eco-friendly, and meaningful experiences that not only promote physical health but also emotional and spiritual well-being. At the heart of this evolution lies a potential untapped resource—geoparks. These UNESCO-designated sites, known for their stunning landscapes, unique geological formations, and rich biodiversity, are emerging as a promising frontier for wellness and beauty tourism. By integrating wellness practices into geoparks, the wellness and beauty industry can tap into new opportunities for sustainability while creating enriching experiences for visitors.

Understanding the Consumer Wellness and Beauty Space

The consumer wellness and beauty industry has evolved dramatically over the past decade, driven by changing consumer behaviors, a growing focus on sustainability, and an increasing demand for products and services that promote holistic well-being.

The market, valued at an impressive \$6.3 trillion globally, is far more than just cosmetics and skincare; it encompasses a wide range of products and services aimed at enhancing physical, mental, and emotional health (see Figure 1).

Historically, beauty products have primarily focused on external appearance, with skincare, makeup, and haircare being the core categories. However, today's consumer increasingly views beauty through a more comprehensive lens. There's a growing emphasis on holistic wellness, which integrates beauty with health, fitness, mindfulness, and nutrition. Consumers no longer simply seek products to enhance their appearance but are also looking for those that support overall well-being.

This shift is evident in the rising popularity of wellness services such as yoga, meditation, fitness, and mental health support, which complement traditional beauty regimes. The concept of "beauty from within" is gaining traction, as consumers prioritize nutrition, stress management, and self-care alongside their skincare routines.

Fig. 1. The Global Wellness Economy Sector Market Size in 2023



Source: Global Wellness Institute



The Rising Demand for Sustainable Wellness and Beauty Tourism

The wellness and beauty tourism market is booming. The global wellness tourism market, valued at over \$1.2 trillion in 2023, is projected to continue expanding as more travelers seek holistic experiences that promote health, well-being, and environmental responsibility. Consumers today are not only looking for traditional luxury retreats or spas but are increasingly drawn to

experiences that align with their values, especially sustainability.

Sustainability has become a defining feature of the modern wellness and beauty space. Consumers, particularly younger generations, are more conscious about the environmental impact of their purchasing decisions. This has sparked a demand for eco-friendly beauty products, including those that use natural ingredients, biodegradable packaging, and cruelty-free manufacturing processes.

The shift toward sustainable practices is also reshaping how brands operate. Many beauty companies now focus on transparency, offering detailed information about the sourcing, production, and environmental impact of their products. Whether it's vegan makeup, organic skincare, or zero-waste packaging, sustainability is no longer a niche but a mainstream expectation.

In the beauty industry, the rise of natural and organic products reflects the shift towards eco-consciousness. Beauty consumers are actively seeking out skincare, haircare, and cosmetic products that are free from harmful chemicals, cruelty-free, and made using ethically sourced ingredients. The focus on eco-friendly packaging and sustainable production processes has taken center stage. As part of this wider trend, wellness tourism—particularly eco-tourism—is also on the rise, with tourists looking to explore destinations that offer rejuvenation through nature and natural therapies.

In this context, geoparks present a compelling opportunity for the wellness and beauty industry. These natural environments, characterized by their stunning landscapes, mineral-

rich waters, and unspoiled beauty, offer the perfect foundation for innovative wellness and beauty experiences that promote sustainability, environmental consciousness, and authentic engagement with nature.

The Growing Role of Technology and Personalisation

Advancements in technology are also transforming the wellness and beauty industry. From AI-powered skincare analysis to personalized beauty products that cater to individual needs, technology is helping brands provide highly tailored experiences.

Consumers now have access to a wealth of information about their skin type, personal preferences, and specific needs, enabling them to make informed choices about the products they buy.

Moreover, digital wellness tools such as fitness apps, meditation platforms, and virtual consultations with beauty experts are enhancing the overall consumer experience, making wellness and beauty services more accessible and personalized than ever before.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is dramatically reshaping industries

worldwide, and the wellness and beauty sector is no exception. As consumer expectations evolve and new technologies emerge, AI is playing an increasingly vital role in helping businesses innovate and meet the growing demand for personalized, sustainable, and efficient products and services. From revolutionizing product recommendations to enhancing customer experiences, AI is paving the way for a new era in the wellness and beauty industry.

One of the most profound ways AI is influencing the wellness and beauty sector is through the ability to offer personalized recommendations and customization. With AI, brands can analyze a wealth of data, such as skin type, hair texture, lifestyle habits, and environmental factors, to provide highly tailored product suggestions that meet each customer's specific needs. In skincare, for example, AI-powered platforms can help consumers choose the best products based on their unique skin conditions, such as acne, dryness, or sensitivity. This level of personalization goes beyond traditional beauty advice, offering consumers an experience that is both individualized and informed by data. Brands like Proven Skincare and Function of Beauty use AI to create

customized formulations for their customers, ensuring that the products they receive are precisely what their skin or hair needs. For beauty tools, some apps allow users to analyze their skin or hair through photos and receive real-time recommendations for treatments, products, and services. These AI-powered systems are not just enhancing the customer journey but also ensuring a deeper level of satisfaction and loyalty.

Another transformative use of AI in the beauty sector is through virtual try-ons and augmented reality (AR) technologies. AI enables consumers to virtually experiment with makeup, skincare, and hair products before committing to a purchase. Through the use of AR, apps can allow users to see how makeup shades, hairstyles, or even skincare products will look on their skin or hair. Brands like Sephora and L'Oréal have integrated AI-powered virtual try-on tools, which offer a seamless and realistic experience, making it easier for consumers to make informed decisions. By virtually applying makeup or experimenting with different hair colors, customers can better visualize how products will look on them, all from the comfort of their homes. This not only enhances the

shopping experience but also reduces the uncertainty and trial-and-error typically associated with beauty purchases, resulting in fewer returns and more satisfied customers.

Beyond enhancing the shopping experience, AI is also driving product development and innovation within the wellness and beauty sector. Brands can use AI to analyze vast amounts of consumer data, including feedback, social media conversations, and product reviews, to identify emerging trends and formulate new products that better meet the needs of their target audience. This data-driven approach ensures that businesses are creating products that not only align with current market trends but are also highly effective. AI also plays a role in formulation optimization, where algorithms help scientists and researchers identify the best ingredients and combinations to address specific skin or hair concerns. This scientific approach to product development helps companies stay competitive and relevant in an industry that constantly demands new innovations.

In addition to product development, AI has made significant strides in customer service. AI-driven chatbots

and virtual assistants are now widely used in the wellness and beauty space to provide immediate, around-the-clock support to consumers. These AI-powered systems can answer product-related questions, offer personalized advice, and even guide customers through their purchasing journey. For example, The Estée Lauder Companies (ELC) has partnered with Microsoft to create an AI Innovation Lab, leveraging Microsoft Azure OpenAI Service to enhance the beauty giant's global portfolio of over 20 prestige brands. This collaboration aims to accelerate product development, improve marketing strategies, and create more personalized consumer experiences. By using generative AI, the companies are able to quickly respond to social trends and consumer demands, launch localized campaigns, and innovate products more efficiently. The partnership also focuses on sustainability by streamlining product development and reducing waste.

Additionally, ELC's previous collaboration with Microsoft led to the launch of the Voice-Enabled Makeup Assistant (VMA), a tool designed to assist visually impaired users in applying makeup. This partnership signals a major shift in the beauty

industry, with AI playing a key role in creating smarter, faster, and more relevant beauty solutions. By automating customer service tasks, businesses can provide a faster, more efficient experience while reducing the need for human intervention, ultimately saving time and resources.

AI is also a driving force behind wellness technologies, such as fitness and health monitoring devices. Wearables like Fitbit and Oura Ring, powered by AI, help consumers track their health metrics, including activity levels, sleep patterns, and heart rate. These devices provide users with personalized recommendations to improve their health and well-being based on real-time data. The integration of AI into wellness apps allows users to set fitness goals, track their progress, and receive tailored advice, helping them stay on top of their wellness journey. AI also assists in personalized nutrition and diet planning by analyzing individual data to suggest meal plans that align with users' health goals, whether it's weight loss, muscle gain, or improved digestion. By offering customized wellness plans, AI helps users achieve their fitness objectives more effectively and efficiently.

In the realm of skin and hair diagnostics, AI technologies are enabling more accurate and advanced assessments of individual skin and hair conditions. Through image recognition and deep learning algorithms, AI can analyze photos of a user's skin or scalp to detect signs of acne, pigmentation, wrinkles, hair thinning, or dandruff. AI-powered tools like SkinVision allow consumers to assess their skin health by simply uploading a photo, with the system providing feedback on potential concerns, such as the early stages of skin cancer. Similarly, hair diagnostics can help individuals understand their hair health, such as the density, texture, and scalp condition, and recommend products that are best suited for their needs. These technologies empower consumers to take charge of their beauty routines with greater precision, ensuring they use products that truly address their unique concerns.

AI is also enhancing marketing and customer insights for wellness and beauty brands. By leveraging machine learning and data analysis, AI can track consumer behavior, monitor trends, and predict future demand, allowing companies to adjust their marketing strategies accordingly. AI

tools like Google Ads or Facebook Ads use data to target consumers based on their preferences, ensuring that advertising is both relevant and timely. Additionally, sentiment analysis tools enable brands to understand how consumers feel about their products and services by scanning social media, reviews, and customer feedback. This real-time data helps brands fine-tune their offerings and tailor their messaging to better align with consumer sentiment.

Lastly, in an era where sustainability is paramount, AI is helping companies become more eco-friendly. From optimizing supply chains to ensuring ethical sourcing practices, AI can analyze data to improve resource management and minimize waste. Through predictive algorithms, AI can also help brands better forecast demand, reducing overproduction and excess inventory, which are significant contributors to waste in the beauty industry. Furthermore, AI's ability to evaluate the environmental impact of ingredients and packaging allows companies to make more informed decisions that align with their sustainability goals.

As it stands, artificial intelligence is revolutionizing the wellness and

beauty sector by offering personalized customer experiences, improving product development, optimizing marketing efforts, and promoting sustainability. As AI continues to evolve, its influence on the industry will only grow, providing even more opportunities for innovation, efficiency, and customer satisfaction. Wellness and beauty brands that embrace AI technologies will not only meet the demands of today's savvy consumers but also set the stage for the future of beauty and well-being in a world increasingly driven by technology.

Opportunities for Wellness and Beauty Sectors in Geoparks

The unique attributes of geoparks make them an ideal location for a wide range of wellness and beauty offerings. By leveraging the natural resources available in these sites, businesses can create immersive, nature-based experiences that appeal to modern consumers' desire for both relaxation and sustainable practices. Here are several ways geoparks can revolutionize the wellness and beauty industry:

Nature-based Spa and Thermal Experiences

Many geoparks are home to natural hot springs, geothermal baths, and

mineral-rich water sources. These features have been historically used for their therapeutic properties. In regions like Iceland or New Zealand, hot springs have long been a popular choice for wellness tourists seeking relaxation and rejuvenation. By incorporating geothermal features into spa treatments, geoparks can offer healing therapies that benefit both the skin and body, such as mineral-rich mud baths, thermal pools, and rejuvenating facials.

For instance, Iceland's geothermal spas, such as the Blue Lagoon, already combine the benefits of natural minerals in the waters with beauty treatments to create an experience that attracts visitors from around the globe. Geoparks could expand on these concepts, creating natural wellness centers where visitors can engage in therapeutic treatments surrounded by awe-inspiring geological landscapes.

Natural Beauty Products Derived from Geopark Flora and Minerals

Geoparks often host rare plant species and unique mineral deposits that can be harvested sustainably for use in natural beauty products. The rich biodiversity found in these sites can be utilized for skincare and beauty

products such as essential oils, herbal remedies, and facial masks made from local plants. By creating partnerships with local artisans and businesses, geoparks can develop and sell eco-friendly beauty products that reflect the area's natural resources.

The local flora and minerals found in geoparks can be harnessed for a range of products, such as organic skincare lines that utilize plant extracts, algae, or volcanic ash, all of which have distinct beauty benefits. With increasing consumer interest in sustainability, visitors to geoparks will be drawn not only to the natural beauty of the area but also to the chance to take home products that directly connect them to the land they've visited.

Mindfulness, Yoga, and Fitness Retreats in Breathtaking Landscapes

Geoparks provide the perfect environment for outdoor wellness practices, such as yoga, meditation, and hiking. The serene and untouched nature of these sites offers visitors the opportunity to disconnect from the hustle and bustle of modern life, reducing stress and fostering personal well-being. The vast and scenic

landscapes—whether they include rugged mountains, lush forests, or tranquil lakes—serve as ideal settings for mindfulness retreats.

Incorporating eco-tourism principles, wellness retreats in geoparks can offer eco-friendly accommodations, guided outdoor fitness activities, and nature walks that promote mental and physical health. Practices such as forest bathing (*shinrin-yoku*), hiking, and meditation can be integrated into the visitor experience, emphasizing the therapeutic effects of being immersed in natural surroundings. Geoparks, with their extraordinary landscapes, provide a natural setting for people to reconnect with their inner selves.

Healing with Earth Elements in Geopark-based Eco-Therapies

Another fascinating opportunity lies in offering geological therapies that harness the healing properties of the Earth itself. These therapies could include mud treatments using volcanic mud, stone therapies utilizing minerals found in the park, and other treatments that draw from the park's geological resources. The practice of using stones and minerals for healing (known as gem therapy or stone therapy) could be expanded within

geoparks, offering visitors a unique way to experience beauty treatments that have roots in the earth's natural elements.

Geoparks can create niche wellness experiences, such as mineral stone facials or mud wraps, which use local materials to nourish and rejuvenate the skin. These treatments, inspired by the natural environment, align perfectly with the wellness industry's growing focus on authenticity and sustainability.

Sustainability as a Key Pillar for Geopark Wellness and Beauty Experiences

At the heart of geoparks is the principle of sustainability. Geoparks are dedicated to preserving natural landscapes and ensuring that tourism is managed in a way that does not harm the environment. This focus on conservation aligns seamlessly with the wellness and beauty industry's current shift toward more responsible and sustainable practices.

Fig. 2. Creating wellness and beauty experiences in geoparks provides an opportunity for the industry to champion sustainable tourism by



Supporting Local Communities

By offering wellness experiences in geoparks, businesses can help generate income for local communities through tourism, while also preserving cultural heritage and supporting local artisans who create natural beauty products.



Minimizing Environmental Impact

Geoparks, with their emphasis on sustainability, can promote eco-friendly practices, such as using renewable energy, reducing waste, and prioritizing low-impact tourism experiences that leave no trace.



Educating Tourists

Wellness businesses can provide educational programs on sustainability, conservation, and the importance of preserving natural resources. This not only enriches the visitor experience but also helps create a deeper connection with the land.

Conclusion

As the wellness and beauty industry continues to evolve, geoparks represent an untapped opportunity for creating unique, sustainable, and transformative experiences that align with modern travelers' values. The natural beauty, healing properties, and geological wonders found in these locations can be leveraged to create wellness offerings that go beyond traditional spa treatments, providing an authentic connection to nature.

By incorporating sustainability into every aspect of wellness and beauty experiences in geoparks—whether through natural therapies, eco-friendly products, or mindfulness retreats—the industry can tap into a new frontier

that appeals to eco-conscious consumers and promotes environmental stewardship. Geoparks have the potential to become the next global destination for wellness tourism, offering a harmonious blend of relaxation, beauty, and sustainability for those seeking a deeper connection with both themselves and the planet.

As the demand for sustainable wellness and beauty experiences continues to rise, geoparks are poised to become the future of responsible and enriching travel, transforming the industry and offering visitors a chance to reconnect with nature in its purest form.