A project by COSMOPROF WORLDWIDE BOLOGNA, in collaboration with Adecco

YOU SEE A PRODUCT. WE SEE PEOPLE.

“WHAT MATTERS IS SEEING WHAT IS INVISIBLE TO OTHERS.”

Robert Frank, photographer and filmmaker

A paper dedicated to the unseen professions that make Italy’s cosmetics industry possible.

This is not a story about packaging, campaigns or brightly lit shelves.
It is about the people who, behind every everyday ritual in front of the mirror, help determine what can actually reach the market. A human, cultural and contemporary portrait of an industry that continues to grow, and that, now more than ever, needs to recognize the talent working behind the scenes.

An Industry That Creates Beauty — And Generates Billions

EVERY LIPSTICK TELLS A STORY. EVERY CREAM CONTAINS A COLLECTIVE BIOGRAPHY: CHEMISTS, PERFUMERS, FORMULATION SCIENTISTS, REGULATORY EXPERTS, STABILITY TECHNICIANS AND SENSORY EVALUATORS. CONSUMERS WILL ALMOST NEVER MEET THEM, YET THEIR WORK IS ESSENTIAL TO MAKING SURE A PRODUCT CAN EXIST, PERFORM AS INTENDED, BE SAFE AND ULTIMATELY REACH THE SHELF.

Italy's cosmetics industry is anything but a niche business. It is one of the country's industrial flagships, with a value chain internationally recognized for quality, innovation and high-value manufacturing.

According to Cosmetica Italia's 2025 Annual Report, the sector reached record sales of around €18 billion in 2025, up 2.9% year on year. Exports — a major engine of growth — rose to €8.6 billion, up 4.1%, accounting for almost 48% of total industry sales.

Behind those figures is an **ecosystem of roughly 1,300 companies and more than 35,000 direct employees**, around two-thirds of them based in Lombardy. The result is a production system that places Italy among the world's major cosmetics hubs, alongside France, the United States and South Korea.
In a global market worth more than €555 billion in 2024, Made in Italy beauty has continued to grow faster than the European average, driven particularly by make-up, skincare and premium fragrance.

And yet, in the public imagination, the cosmetics industry is still largely defined by what appears on the surface: the face of a campaign, the packaging, the advertising, the finished product. **Everything that comes before remains invisible.**
That is precisely where much of the industry's real competitive advantage lies: in scientific, technological and regulatory expertise without which innovation would never make it to market.

The Invisible Jobs Reshaping Beauty

THE COSMETICS INDUSTRY IS GOING THROUGH AN UNPRECEDENTED TRANSFORMATION, DRIVEN BY THREE MAIN FORCES: SCIENTIFIC INNOVATION, SUSTAINABILITY AND DIGITALIZATION. COMPANIES INCREASINGLY NEED PROFESSIONALS WHO CAN COMBINE HIGHLY SPECIALIZED EXPERTISE WITH A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF CONSUMERS, REGULATION AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES.

Among the roles becoming increasingly strategic are **AI and machine-learning engineers** working in cosmetic research, **next-generation Formulation Scientists** specializing in biotechnology and sustainable ingredients, **Regulatory Affairs Specialists** with international expertise, **Bioprocess and Biotech Engineers**, data scientists focused on consumer insights, and **Sustainability and ESG Managers**.

These professions are very different, but they share one very defining trait: **they operate almost entirely out of the spotlight.**

They help determine a product’s quality, safety, regulatory compliance and, ultimately, its success.

This first paper focuses on three of those invisible professions: the Regulatory Affairs Specialist, the Cosmetic Formulation Scientist and the Fragrance Evaluator. They are little known outside the industry, but they play a decisive role in turning a creative idea into a product capable of succeeding in the market.

REGULATORY AFFAIRS CONSULTANT

If Beauty Is A Language, Regulatory Affairs Is Its Quiet Grammarian.

The function sits at the intersection of innovation, research, marketing and the law, helping ensure that a cosmetic product can be placed on the market safely, legally and credibly.

In the European Union, the key framework is Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009, one of the world's most comprehensive cosmetics regimes. But a global Regulatory Affairs professional must work across very different systems. In the United States, cosmetics are governed by the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act as amended by the Modernization of Cosmetics Regulation Act of 2022 (MoCRA), under FDA oversight. China applies its own registration and filing regime administered by the National Medical Products Administration (NMPA), while ASEAN markets operate under a harmonized directive implemented through national notification systems. The job, therefore, is not simply to "know the rules": it is to understand how the same product, ingredient or claim may be treated differently from one market to another — and to translate those differences into practical product decisions.

What The Job Really Involves

REGULATORY AFFAIRS CONTINUOUSLY MONITORS LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL REQUIREMENTS. IT HELPS DETERMINE THE CORRECT REGULATORY STATUS OF A PRODUCT. FOR EXAMPLE, WHETHER IT IS A COSMETIC, A DRUG OR MEDICINAL PRODUCT, A MEDICAL DEVICE, OR ANOTHER REGULATED CATEGORY, BECAUSE THOSE BOUNDARIES VARY BY JURISDICTION.

It prepares and maintains the technical and scientific documentation required for the target markets: in the EU, this includes the Product Information File and Cosmetic Product Safety Report and notification through the Cosmetic Products Notification Portal (CPNP); in the United States, it can include MoCRA facility-registration and product-listing support and records substantiating product safety; in China, registration or filing dossiers; and in ASEAN countries, the relevant Product Information File and national notification requirements. The function works with toxicologists, safety assessors and other technical experts, checks ingredients against market-specific restrictions, reviews labels and verifies claims — from "paraben-free" to "clinically tested" — because a few words on a pack can carry very different legal consequences around the world.

It also interfaces with authorities during inspections or regulatory inquiries, supports Marketing in reviewing promotional materials, and **contributes to post-market safety surveillance**, including adverse-event monitoring and any required corrective actions or reporting.
One of the most delicate parts of the job is often telling Marketing: "It sounds great, but legally, we cannot say it that way."

The Skills It Takes

A Regulatory Affairs Specialist combines a strong scientific and technical background with an in-depth understanding of national and international regulatory frameworks. For a professional working from Europe, EU cosmetics legislation is a core reference point, but international work also requires fluency in the rules of major export markets — including U.S. FDA requirements, China's NMPA framework, Gulf Cooperation Council markets and the ASEAN region.

That **knowledge** must be matched by **precision** in document management and an **ability to interpret and apply rules** that are constantly evolving.

A grounding in **cosmetic toxicology and risk assessment** is also essential, as are **strong technical skills** and familiarity with ingredient databases and market-specific notification, listing and registration systems.

In an international role, **the real skill lies in understanding not only what the rule says, but which rule applies where** — and at what stage of product development. Because Regulatory Affairs cuts across the entire organization, specialists must also collaborate effectively with Research & Development, Quality, Manufacturing, Procurement, Marketing and Legal teams, translating regulatory requirements into concrete solutions for product development and commercialization.

“The Miracle Ingredient That Could Not Exist”

DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW CREAM, THE MARKETING TEAM WANTED TO DESCRIBE IT AS “CLINICALLY PROVEN TO REGENERATE THE SKIN.” IT WAS A POWERFUL PROMISE, AND POTENTIALLY A REGULATORY PROBLEM. THE REGULATORY AFFAIRS TEAM FLAGGED THAT, DEPENDING ON THE JURISDICTION AND THE OVERALL PRESENTATION OF THE PRODUCT, A CLAIM OF THIS KIND COULD MOVE THE PRODUCT TOWARD THE LEGAL TERRITORY OF A MEDICINAL PRODUCT OR DRUG, TRIGGERING A VERY DIFFERENT REGULATORY PATHWAY AND POTENTIALLY PREVENTING THE COSMETIC LAUNCH AS PLANNED.

The solution came through an apparently small but decisive change: the claim became “helps improve the appearance of the skin.” Only a few words had changed, but the regulatory meaning was fundamentally different. The product could then be positioned and launched in the intended markets in line with the applicable rules. **Consumers would never notice the intervention, yet that choice of language may have avoided months of delays, additional costs and a major reworking of the project.**

Many professionals in the field summarize their work this way: “**We study today to prevent tomorrow’s problems.**” Regulatory Affairs, in fact, becomes involved long before a product takes final shape. It reviews ingredients, formulas, documentation and communications while the cosmetic is still an idea.

A decision made early in development can determine whether the commercial launch runs smoothly — or fails altogether.

Few functions have such a cross-disciplinary view of the business. Regulatory professionals understand ingredients and safety, interpret the rules of different markets, work closely with Research & Development, Quality and Marketing, and contribute to strategic decisions about where and how a product can be launched. Ultimately, Regulatory Affairs is the compliance conscience of a cosmetics company: the function that helps turn innovation into products that are safe, compliant and genuinely ready for market.

THE COSMETIC FORMULATION SCIENTIST

The “Chef” Of Cosmetics: The Person Who Turns A Marketing Idea Into A Real Product.

If Regulatory Affairs makes sure a cosmetic can comply with the rules, the Cosmetic Formulation Scientist (often called a Cosmetic Scientist, Formulator or R&D Specialist) is the person who physically creates it. They **select ingredients** and **develop texture**, **fragrance, stability and performance**. It is no coincidence that formulators are sometimes described as the “chefs of cosmetics,” with one crucial difference: their recipe must not only be pleasing, but also stable, safe, effective for its intended cosmetic purpose, scalable for industrial production and increasingly sustainable.

What The Job Really Involves

It begins with a brief that might call for a premium anti-ageing cream, a sulfate-free shampoo, a vitamin C serum, or a vegan or certified product. From there, the formulator **combines dozens of ingredients:** emulsifiers, surfactants, preservatives, polymers, cosmetic actives, fragrance components and more, **to achieve the desired result**. They prepare scores of samples, test variants, and check stability, colour, scent, pH and viscosity. Formulas are subjected to accelerated testing at elevated temperatures and under demanding environmental conditions, helping ensure that the product a consumer uses in seconds remains consistent after months in storage and distribution.

Formulators work every day with Marketing, Regulatory Affairs, Quality, Procurement, Manufacturing and external laboratories.

It is one of the most cross-functional jobs in a cosmetics company, and one of the professions most exposed to failure. Formulas separate, change colour, fail microbiological testing or simply cost too much. A good formulator therefore learns to see unsuccessful prototypes not as exceptions, but as a normal part of the process.

The Skills It Takes

Becoming a Cosmetic Formulation Scientist begins with a strong scientific education. Common academic backgrounds include chemistry, industrial chemistry, pharmaceutical chemistry and technology, pharmacy and biotechnology; disciplines that provide the foundations needed to understand formulation chemistry, raw-material behaviour and manufacturing processes.

Technical knowledge, however, is only the starting point. What makes the difference is the ability to experiment, and a form of creativity governed by scientific discipline. Formulating a cosmetic does not mean reproducing an existing recipe; it means continually improving it, optimizing cost, enhancing performance, making it more sustainable and responding to a market whose expectations never stop changing.

Then there is one quality that is often underestimated: patience.
In an R&D laboratory, experiments that fail are part of the work. Every formulation requires trials, corrections and new attempts. In this profession, failure is not an anomaly but a learning tool; success is the result of method, perseverance and hundreds of tests.

Patience — And A Touch Of Serendipity

There is a particular satisfaction in creating something that millions of people may one day hold in their hands. For a formulation scientist, seeing a product born in the laboratory appear on a perfumery or pharmacy shelf is the moment when months — sometimes years — of research, testing and intuition finally become part of a consumer's everyday life. **"I still take a photo every time I see one of my creams in store," many professionals say.** It is a small gesture that captures the pride behind a job that is so often invisible.

Behind every successful formula, however, lies a path full of the unexpected. One laboratory had developed what seemed to be the perfect lip balm: texture, scent and stability all exceeded expectations. Then came the hardest test: several hours inside a truck under the summer sun.
The result was a surprise: dozens of misshapen sticks and the need to rethink the formula so it could withstand the real conditions of the supply chain.

That is the everyday complexity of the job: turning a wish into something possible. As often happens between Marketing and R&D, a request for the "ideal" cream — natural, as effective as a professional treatment, preservative-free, sustainable, affordable and stable for three years — exposes the formulator's true challenge: finding the point of balance between vision and science, promise and possibility.

And sometimes the most interesting innovations come precisely from what was never planned. A minor adjustment, a seemingly secondary trial or a variation introduced almost out of curiosity can produce an unexpected texture or superior performance, eventually becoming the final formula. In cosmetic research, as in science more broadly, discovery often begins by paying attention to what happens along the way.

Behind the scenes: the voice of someone who does it every day

We spoke with Maria Giovanna Bruno, R&D cosmetologist and product-development expert. Her account may be one of the clearest ways to understand what the job really means.

What is the invisible side of your work the part nobody sees, but that makes the real difference?

The invisible side of my work, and the one that makes an enormous difference to the final product, is **the cultural and technical translation between two worlds that speak completely different languages: brand marketing and the R&D laboratories** where everything begins. When a luxury client asks for a texture that feels like “a caress of silk on the skin,” or a colour that evokes “the light at dusk,” my invisible task is to break that poetic vision down and translate it into scientific parameters for the chemists: viscosity, rheology, pearl-particle size and the choice of emollients. Conversely, when the laboratory encounters a technical or regulatory limitation, I have to explain to the brand how the concept can be adjusted without losing the exclusivity and magic consumers expect from a prestige product.

That mediation requires immense patience and almost microscopic precision. No one sees the hours spent adjusting a pigment by a thousandth of a gram to obtain a precise foundation shade, or the continuous stability tests needed to make sure a lipstick retains an exceptional sensory feel while also withstanding heat. It is an invisible architecture: the client sees beautiful packaging and an impeccable formula, but behind it lies a constant balancing act between pure chemistry and the brand’s dream.

Every texture, every scent, every feeling of “this product is right for me” begins with a precise formula. How much of your work is science, how much is creative intuition, and what does it really mean to carry responsibility for something millions of people may apply to their bodies every day?

In my experience in make-up, science and creative intuition do not exclude one another; they feed each other. I would call it a fifty-fifty relationship. **Creative intuition is the spark**: the ability to anticipate a trend, imagine a transformative texture that has never existed before, or understand the deep identity of a brand well enough to create a product consumers will immediately feel is "theirs." **But in luxury, intuition alone is a castle in the air.** This is where rigorous science (formulation chemistry) comes in, turning the dream into stability, performance and safety. Without scientific precision, a brilliant texture idea could separate in the bottle after two months or simply fail to perform on the skin.

Holding that responsibility is an exercise in seriousness and respect. When we are talking about products that millions of people will apply to their body, their face or close to their eyes, the key word becomes integrity. It means working with absolute rigour across increasingly demanding international rules, skin-tolerance testing, safety assessments and sustainability criteria, without cutting corners. To me, that responsibility means recognizing that the real magic of cosmetics does not lie only in an extraordinary finish or the comfort of application, but in the invisible confidence that every ingredient has been studied, tested and balanced with the consumer in mind. **It is the perfect fusion of the emotion of beauty and the certainty of science.**

Turning an idea — perhaps a simple marketing request such as "I want a cream that makes skin glow" — into a stable, safe and effective formula takes expertise few people ever see. What is the hardest point in that journey, when an ingredient refuses to behave as expected, and how many trials does it take before you reach the version that ends up on the shelf?

The hardest moment is absolutely the transition from laboratory scale to industrial production: the scale-up. That is exactly where chemistry decides whether to cooperate or teach you a lesson in humility. A formula can be heavenly in a 100-gram beaker, but once you try to make a 500-kilogram batch in an industrial emulsifying mixer, fluid dynamics, cooling rates and shear forces all change completely.

The "I want a cream that glows" example is perfect. To create that glow effect, we often use complex blends of interference pearls, treated pigments and oils with specific refractive indices. Problems arise when the pearls begin to settle in the bulk formula, or when brightening actives change the pH, destabilizing the emulsion or altering its viscosity. The texture can suddenly shift, becoming too fluid or, worse, separating. That is when the bridge-building really begins: you cannot simply tell the brand's marketing team "it cannot be done." You have to work with the chemists to find a solution — perhaps changing the rheology modifier or the surface treatment of the pearls — without changing the visual effect the client has already approved.

How many attempts does that take? For a high-end prestige product, it is almost never just a handful. Between the first laboratory screenings, accelerated stability tests at 40°C and 50°C, packaging-compatibility tests and industrialization trials, it is easy to exceed 50 or even 100 iterations. Reaching the shelf means surviving an extremely severe process of natural selection: the final version is the lone survivor of a very long series of invisible rewrites.

Natural ingredients, sustainability and new technologies are driving a genuine revolution in cosmetic formulation. Which innovation excites you most right now, and how do you think it will change the products we find on shelves five or ten years from now?

The revolution that excites me most is the convergence of advanced biotechnology and green chemistry, especially when applied to the performance expected of prestige make-up. For years, luxury beauty carried the false assumption that a natural product could never match the sensory qualities of traditional silicones. Today, thanks to processes such as precision fermentation, we are overturning that idea and developing bio-based, biodegradable ingredients capable of reproducing exactly the silky, weightless feel major brands demand from a high-end foundation or primer.

Five or ten years from now, I imagine this evolution will radically change what we find on shelves through an almost complete hybridization of make-up and skincare. The boundary will disappear: we will no longer simply have make-up with a skincare active added to it, but formulas in which the colour base itself is designed to deliver active skincare benefits while it is worn. Behind the scenes, Artificial Intelligence will accelerate that process by helping us predict the stability of natural molecules before we even enter the laboratory. **The future of the sector will be a form of “conscious luxury”: cleaner, more sustainable formulas without compromising emotion or performance.**

Where did your passion for this industry begin, and when did you realize this was the work you wanted to do?

My passion is rooted in a visceral childhood memory: watching my mother in the mirror as she put on her make-up. To me it was not a routine, but a sacred ritual. I remember the powdery scent of her lipstick and the way that veil of colour seemed to light up not only her face, but her confidence. **I was fascinated by a material that could give visible form to emotion.** There was something deeply magical about that transformation, and I wanted to decode it.

As I grew older, that sense of wonder found its true shape when I discovered that behind the enchantment of a finished product lay a rigorous, complex scientific architecture. That was when my vocation emerged. I understood that my place was not simply to contemplate beauty, nor to remain isolated in the silence of a chemistry laboratory. I wanted to be the link between the two: the person able to take the poetic vision of a luxury brand and translate it, gram by gram, into the exact reality of formulation science. **Becoming a bridge between the laboratory and the client became my way of turning the invisible alchemy of science into the pure emotion that makes beauty come alive**.

Three adjectives that define your work

The first is alchemical. Walking into a laboratory and watching separate elements come together to create a magical texture still feels to me like seeing an enchanted potion take shape. It is the alchemy of combining the exact rationality of science with the intangible, poetic dream of luxury.

The second is translational. I see myself as a mediator between different worlds. My job is to listen to the big desires of luxury brands — desires expressed in the language of emotion and light — and translate them into the language of chemists, made of formulas and milligrams, making sure the original poetry is never lost along the way.

The third, and the one I love most, is invisible. That word captures the essence of what I do. The biggest part of my work is the part no one sees: the months of trials, the small failures in the laboratory, the technical secrets that make a cream stable. When someone holds a beautiful lipstick in their hands, they should not have to think about the effort of chemistry; they should simply feel the magic. My success lies precisely in protecting that invisible architecture, so that only the enchantment reaches the shelf.

THE FRAGRANCE EVALUATOR

The Conductor Of Perfumery.

THE FRAGRANCE EVALUATOR IS ONE OF THE MOST FASCINATING, AND LEAST VISIBLE , PROFESSIONALS IN THE VALUE CHAIN. THE EVALUATOR ACTS AS THE BRIDGE BETWEEN THE PERFUMER, WHO AUTHORS THE FRAGRANCE ITSELF, AND THE BRAND THAT WILL BRING IT TO MARKET. IF THE PERFUMER IS THE COMPOSER, THE EVALUATOR IS THE CONDUCTOR: THE PERSON WHO MAKES SURE THE COMPOSITION IS ALIGNED WITH THE CONSUMER, THE FINAL PRODUCT AND THE IDENTITY OF THE BRAND.

What The Job Really Involves

The evaluator translates the client's needs into creative direction for the perfumer and assesses whether the fragrance being developed truly meets the project's objectives. They help design, test and validate fragrances for cosmetics and personal-care products, working on olfactory selection, sensory analysis and quality assessment of fragrance raw materials. They may run triangle tests, rankings, intensity tests, trained sensory panels and consumer tests to evaluate perception, longevity and compatibility with the cosmetic base.

They monitor olfactory stability over time, check batch-to-batch consistency, assess the fragrance's impact on product colour and texture, and prepare fragrance briefs and olfactory profiles. They also work with Regulatory Affairs to **ensure compliance with applicable fragrance requirements** — including IFRA Standards, which are industry standards rather than a single global law, and market-specific rules on fragrance allergens and restricted substances. Finally, they support Marketing in translating a brand concept into an olfactory story: because **a fragrance needs to be narrated before it can be smelled.**

The Skills It Takes

The work of a Fragrance Evaluator sits at the intersection of **sensitivity, method and scientific knowledge**. It can draw on training in sensory science, cosmetology or chemistry, combined with constant and highly disciplined olfactory practice. **The evaluator's primary instrument is the nose, but this is not simply an innate gift**. It is a skill built over time through continuous practice in recognizing, analysing and describing notes, olfactory families and accords, with the same precision a musician uses to distinguish the nuances of a composition.

That sensitivity is paired with **specific technical expertise:** knowledge of sensory-evaluation methods, IFRA Standards and the regulatory restrictions that apply in the markets where a product will be sold, as well as the ability to interpret test results and turn them into concrete guidance for formulation and marketing teams. **The Fragrance Evaluator is, in many ways, a translator:** someone who brings consumer perception into the creative and production process, turning sensations and emotions into criteria that can guide product development.

It is a profession that demands constant training.
The evaluator's nose, like the sensory panel they work with, must be continually sharpened through experience, comparison and daily practice.

The Skills It Takes

One of the most fascinating aspects of the Fragrance Evaluator's work is the ability to turn intuitions, sensations and often hard-to-define requests into precise directions for the creative process. The language of business meets the language of perfumery through instructions that may sound simple but are extraordinarily complex to translate: more citrus brightness, longer-lasting character, a cleaner sensation, something more sophisticated, less sweetness. In this sense, the evaluator is a simultaneous interpreter between different worlds, translating consumer desire into a concrete olfactory direction for the perfumer.

Much of the work comes down to differences that are almost imperceptible. Samples that may seem identical at first "listen" — because fragrance, too, has its own kind of listening — can reveal decisive nuances to someone with advanced sensory training. The greatest challenge, however, remains the same: describing what cannot be seen. Unlike an image or a colour, fragrance lives in a profoundly subjective space. The same accord may evoke comfort in one person, nostalgia in another, and feel too intense to someone else. The evaluator's task is to build a shared language across those different perceptions, creating a bridge between emotion and design.

Once, an international client asked for a fragrance to be made simply "more blue." No explanation, no further detail. An apparently impossible request — but one that captures the heart of the Fragrance Evaluator's profession: turning a mental image into an olfactory direction that can eventually become a formula.

Behind the scenes: the voice of someone who does it every day

Federica Cinque, Chief Commercial Officer at New Cosmesy S.r.l., describes the work in her own words.

What is the invisible side of your work: the part nobody sees, but that makes the real difference?

The invisible side is time and listening. A perfume does not come only from a moment of inspiration; it also comes from hundreds of trials, modifications and conversations. It means listening to the client, understanding the market and the raw materials, and above all learning to trust your own nose and intuition, even when they are telling you something other people cannot yet see. **A great deal of my work is about taking away rather than adding**. Finding the perfect balance means having the courage to remove even beautiful notes when they do not tell the right story. It is a job built on sensitivity, discipline and an enormous amount of patience.

Recognizing, describing and judging hundreds of olfactory nuances takes years of training. How do you really educate the nose? What is the greatest challenge in translating something as instinctive as scent into words, and what happens when your verdict goes against the expectations of the whole team? Can you share an example?

Training the nose means exercising it every day. It is like building an infinite memory: smelling raw materials, comparing them, memorizing them and continually creating connections. Over time, you learn not only to recognize ingredients and their smell, but also to understand how they behave, how they evolve on the skin and what emotions they can convey.

The hardest part is translating a smell into words. To describe a perfume or an odour, we often use memories, images and sensations. A fragrance rarely smells only of rose or vanilla; much more often, it may evoke an open window in spring, an old library, sunlight on skin or a feeling experienced while travelling.

I remember one project I am particularly attached to. I had to create five fragrances for a menswear brand. Of all of them, there was one I felt was deeply mine, and it was far more daring than the others. I had combined the depth of incense with the delicacy of violet petals, creating an unusual contrast. Before meeting the client, I held a team meeting to decide what we would present. Almost everyone was against bringing that fragrance. They thought it was too different, too risky. I was convinced it had the strongest personality.

When I met the client, I decided to present it second because I wanted to know immediately how they would react. The response was instant. After smelling it, the client stopped me and said: “The first two are confirmed. For the other three, we trust you.” And so I selected the remaining three fragrances for the collection myself.

That day taught me something I still carry with me. **In this job, technique is essential, but technique alone is not enough**. You need the courage to trust your instinct and your sensitivity. A truly special fragrance is often born from the very thing that initially seems too different.

Perfume evokes memory, emotion and identity. What still fascinates you about this work today? How do you try to “predict” whether a fragrance will resonate with the public, and what opportunity opens up for people who can read the desires of an entire generation through scent?

What continues to fascinate me is that perfume is probably the most invisible language we have, and at the same time one of the most powerful. It enters memory without asking permission and can say more about a person than words ever could. I do not believe there is a formula for predicting the success of a fragrance. But there is an ability to observe people, understand how tastes and consumer habits are changing, and recognize emotional needs before they become trends. Today people are not simply looking for fragrances that smell “good”; **they are looking for scents that express an identity, a state of mind, a way of being... a story.**

Three adjectives that define your work

Creative, because every fragrance starts with an idea and I have the opportunity to bring something into existence that did not exist before. **Visionary,** because the winning part of a project is anticipating what people will want, not following them. **Disruptive**, because that is where I believe the difference is made: the most memorable fragrances are the ones bold enough to break the rules, and creating them means not being afraid to take risks.

Behind every product, a person

There is a moment every morning when someone opens a drawer, chooses a lipstick, sprays a fragrance and looks in the mirror. It lasts only a few seconds. But before those few seconds come years of work: study, failed tests, formulas rewritten by hand, difficult meetings, intuitions defended when no one else believed in them.

There is the word changed at the last minute to make a launch possible. The hundredth version of a cream, the only one to survive the selection process. The daring note that was almost discarded and that someone now associates with a specific memory. These are not technical details. They are how beauty actually happens: an invisible architecture built by people whose names may never appear on the finished product, but without whom that product would not exist.

We will continue to give a voice to the people who build beauty, one invisible gesture at a time.

Sources

Cosmetica Italia, Research Centre — 2025 Annual Report (July 2025) and institutional releases on preliminary 2025 results (March 2026). Federchimica — Observatory on the Italian cosmetics sector. Assolombarda — “Cosmetics in Lombardy” Observatory Report, 2025 edition.

Direct interviews: Maria Giovanna Bruno (R&D cosmetologist and product-development expert — Intercos Group); Federica Cinque (Chief Commercial Officer — New Cosmesy S.r.l.).

Editorial note for the English edition: regulatory references have been adapted for an international readership. Market requirements vary by jurisdiction. The Regulatory Affairs section has been aligned with the EU Cosmetics Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009, current U.S. FDA/MoCRA requirements, China’s NMPA cosmetics registration and filing framework, and the ASEAN cosmetics notification model. IFRA Standards are described as industry standards and are distinct from country-specific legal requirements.