

Nürnberg, Germany 14.-17.2.2023

# VIVANESS2023

into natural beauty



## VIVANESS: Elfriede Dambacher column

### Language rules are not enough

The world is in a state of transition. This is accompanied by many changes in our everyday life – and even impacts how we read our newspaper in the mornings. Since more gender-neutral language has become an issue, many questions have arisen about the proper way to address people. Language creates reality. In the cosmetic market, the way we use language is also very important. I believe that it is right and important to choose our words more carefully, because language has an impact and should counteract gender-specific discrimination. In an era of diversity, the issue of identity is important. Correctly addressing the target groups that I ultimately want to buy my products is therefore a relevant factor.

But I do ask myself how, in these times of hyper-individualism, it is possible to correctly represent the entire spectrum so that all groups of people feel that they are being spoken to. For quite some time now, the German language rule that puts an asterisk or colon within words to make them gender-neutral has not been sufficient to represent the diversity of people without limiting them to a single gender. The terms “read as a woman” or “read as a man” are two examples of how we are wrestling with gender-neutral modes of address and descriptions. As a result, even reading the newspaper is turning into an unfamiliar experience, as many magazines and newspapers have already adopted these variants. This is an expression of an unprecedented fine-tuning of language that can make reading a challenge, especially first thing in the morning.

In advertisements too, the struggle to use gender-neutral language to address target groups is evident. Gender shift is a hot topic in many sectors. In this context, cosmetics play an important role for one’s own physicality and self-presentation on the web. Emotions, and identification with a brand, are conveyed by addressing people correctly. Creating brand loyalty is only possible if you get the language right. I am interested in seeing what new terms will yet emerge in the natural cosmetics market.

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One thing is clear: embracing diversity brings us together, far more than any mandatory language conventions. The various players in the natural cosmetics sector have always demonstrated diversity and creativity, so it will be interesting to see what develops.

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