

大 学 生 英 语 活 页 文 选

BUSINESS ENGLISH READINGS

经贸英语

趣文阅读

(高级)

主编 叶兴国



上海外语教育出版社



大学生英语活页文选

经贸英语趣文阅读 (高级)

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前 言

随着中国加入世界贸易组织,社会对经贸专门人才的需求正在发生深刻的变化。培养复合型国际商务人才已经成为高等院校的重要任务之一。经贸界和英语教学界已经形成共识;商务英语是复合型国际商务人才必须具有的知识 and 能力结构的重要组成部分。为了使经贸类专业的大学生能够适应经济全球化的趋势和我国加入世界贸易组织后全方位,多层次、宽领域的对外开放格局,我们编写了《经贸英语趣文阅读》。

本书的第一个特点是文章权威性强。文章大部分选自耳熟能详的经贸类权威刊物,如《财富》、《经济学家》、《商业周刊》、《读者文摘》、《美国新闻和世界报道》、《劳动力》、《哈佛商业评论》、《今日世界》、《当代管理》、《每月评论》、《时代周刊》、《新闻周刊》、《福布斯》、《远东经济评论》、《世界贸易》、《商业战略研究》、《金融战略》等。

本书的第二个特点是材料新。所选文章都是最近发表的。如初级本中的文章论述的事情或刚刚发生或正在发生或即将发生,如中国入世、卫生经济,安然公司和世通公司的财务丑闻、海尔开拓海外市场、日本的经济衰退、电子商务和网络广告等。中级本则收入了有关阻截 SARS 病毒、好莱坞盗版困境、手机的信用卡功能、电脑行业巨头戴尔公司进军家用电子产品市场等最新动态。高级本的文章则涉及方兴未艾的亚洲廉价航空市场、神经营销学、新一代电脑、世界石油市场新秩序、CEO 高薪、亚洲的足球商业化倾向等话题。

本书的第三个特点是内容丰富。除了上述最新内容,文章分析探讨的都是一些发达国家和发展中国家共同面临的问题,如初级本涉及了科技创新、公司诚信、最佳国际品牌、亚洲经济竞争格局,收入贫富悬殊、人口老化和移民、经济发展和环境污染、自由贸易和贸易保护,以及如何从事海外经营等主题。中级本还涉及了广告业五大准则、家庭理财成功范例、独辟蹊径的环境问题解决方法和电子商务网站经营情况,以及最新的管理、营销和个人发展等方面的最新理念。高级本则涉及了房产投资、广告媒体多元化、特许服务、经营效率,和 IBM、诺基亚、麦当劳、丰田等跨国公司的经营等内容。

《经贸英语趣文阅读》主要供高等院校国际经贸类专业一、二年级学生使用。也可供具有相当水平的国际经贸从业人员阅读。本书计划出版三册,分为初级、中级、高级。每册共 30 篇。为了让大学生尽早阅读真实的,而不是专门为课本编写的经贸英语文章,我们没有对文章做任何改写。初级本每篇文章 1 000 字左右,中级本每篇文章约 1 250 字,高级本每篇平均约 1 480 字。有些文章做了删节。对于初、中级读者来说,文章有一定的难度。为了降低难度,英文生词的中文释义在文中加括号给出。高级本的中文释义相应减少。课文后加了一些注释并配了理解和词汇练习。

本书由上海外语教育出版社立项,编写过程中得到各方面的关心帮助,商务英语专业研究生胡文辉、聂智也参加了本书的编写。对关心和帮助本书编写的同志,在此一并表示衷心感谢。

由于编者水平有限,书中难免有不妥甚至错误之处,我们恳切希望使用本书的教师、学生和其他读者提出宝贵意见。

叶兴国

2005 年 11 月于上海对外贸易学院

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Passage 1

Business English Readings (高级)

The Insider

Finding the schools that yield the best job-applicant ROI, companies are narrowing their campus recruiting efforts, focusing on fewer schools with top applicants.

By Joe Mullich

The Shell Group of Companies needs a constant influx of new talent, especially in areas like engineering and geosciences (地质科学), where the best and the brightest graduating college students are highly sought after. Three years ago, in its search for candidates who wanted to work in the energy industry, Shell maintained an on-campus presence at about 84 colleges and universities. Today, Shell primarily targets just 26 schools.

The obvious assumption is that this cutback was financially driven. In the 1999 - 2000 recruiting season, employers were spending about \$6,207 per hire for each college student, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers. CareerXroads' Gerry Crispin, analyzing data from Staffing.org, figures the average cost per college hire is probably now closer to \$4,100. With about 500,000 college students getting jobs annually via the courting (招募人才的) efforts of corporations, it's still more than a \$2 billion effort.

Shell, like many other large companies, is concentrating its college recruitment efforts on the schools that provide the best ROI (Return on Investment). In turn, Shell is expanding its pro-

grams at those target schools, trying to develop closer ties in order to identify the most talented students as early as their sophomore year. Shell has found that if it waits until students are juniors or seniors, it might already be too late. Competitors may have already wooed (争取) them and in some cases extended an offer of employment upon graduation.

Shell is not alone. Rather than try to visit 20 campuses and recruit one student from each, most firms have realized that they get a better payoff — and land better talent — by going to four campuses and hiring five students from each,⁽¹⁾ says Steven Rothberg, president and founder of Minneapolis-based College Recruiter.com. The bypassed schools are now reached largely by technological means, such as online résumé searching, job postings and direct e-mail campaigns.

The goal isn't necessarily to save money; it's to spend it better. "My experience has been that successful employers spend more, not less, money overall once they discover which schools work well for them," Rothberg says. "The money you spend visiting the schools is insignificant compared to the money saved and generated by a

more productive workforce. Successful employers tend to look to long-term measurements rather than short-term savings." For Shell, the streamlined (改进的) approach seems to be working. Jerry Wilson, campus recruiting and university relations manager, won't reveal specific numbers, but he says that since Shell moved to a targeted campus effort, recruiting costs have dropped, the time-to-hire cycle has shortened and the acceptance rate (签约率) has jumped. The biggest indication of the improved ROI may be that 80 percent of Shell's 400 to 500 new hires each year now come from those 26 target schools.

The \$ 750 awards

In the past, Wilson says, the attempt to maintain an on-campus presence at more than 80 schools spread the firm's resources too thin, with too few recruiters trying to create a presence at too many schools. Now, Shell uses a dedicated team approach for the target schools. Each team is headed by a senior Shell executive, called a "campus ambassador," and another executive dubbed a "campus manager," who meets with the school's various department heads and manages the overall strategy for his assigned campus. The teams are composed of 7 to 10 experienced Shell employees, each of whom commits to spending 15 to 20 days a year on campus. They meet with key campus contacts; make presentations in classrooms and before student groups and conduct interviews.

The team members also have more time to develop relationships with the school, enabling them to decide, for example, which programs to sponsor for the greatest impact on their recruiting efforts.^② Last year, Shell invited 17 members of the Society of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists from Texas A & M University to spend a day at its Houston headquarters, where they heard presentations on Shell's emerging technologies, the company's support for sustainable development and its Hispanic Employee Network. It wasn't a recruiting event *per se* (本质上), but a way to strengthen the relationship with the campus and introduce students —

even freshmen — to the company.

Like most companies, Shell offers internships to promising students. This year, it is also offering several "pre-employment programs" to help differentiate the company. One program is a Personal Development Award, which gives \$ 750 to help students pursue some venture of importance to their personal or educational development. From Shell's perspective, a key benefit of this program is early identification of top students. Unlike internships, which are geared primarily to juniors and seniors, the Personal Development Award is open to sophomores and seniors *en route* (一直到) to graduate studies. The program will give the students an earlier introduction to Shell, and alerts the company to promising students at the beginning of their college careers.

Objective measures

In evaluating which 26 schools to focus on, Shell used a number of factors, including the quality of the academic program, the number of students enrolled and the diversity of the student population.

Kevin Gray, an editor at the National Association of Colleges and Employers, says that while many employers are refocusing their efforts, not enough are using exacting standards to select target schools.

The best companies re-evaluate their target schools on an ongoing basis, using objective factors. The Applied Physics Laboratory at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore recruits at 78 target schools. Every year, Johns Hopkins evaluates the schools and ranks them in three tiers to determine where to put resources. The key to this approach, Gray says, is selecting recruitment criteria that are important to the organization. Johns Hopkins, like many organizations, tries to determine specifically whether students are a good cultural fit.

Gray says that even when a company drops its level of commitment to a school, it's important to maintain some kind of tie; otherwise, it can be difficult to re-establish a connection if re-

cruiting needs increase. Some companies cut back their on-campus presence while increasing their technology links to the schools. WetFeet, based in San Francisco, publishes online directories of more than 50 professions, which students pay to access. Some firms sponsor these directories, putting their logos on them and providing them free to students through the college intranets.

Internet saving time

More companies are using webinars and other online tools as a way to reach narrow groups of students, says Steve Pollock, president of Wet Feet. For example, Shell has run such an online session for students in the petroleum and geological sciences. Julie Hur Pascoe, Shell campus attractions and branding manager, says that with tech-savvy (有技术头脑的) geosciences students, it was important for Shell to demonstrate that it uses the most technologically sophisticated recruiting tools.

Webinars can cost from \$10,000 to \$40,000, depending on the amount of marketing involved and the number of users in separate

locations. Whether this costs less or more than sending recruiters on traveling missions is only half of the ROI calculation. A webinar can save hundreds of hours of recruiting time, quickly reaching multiple people on many campuses. Merrill Lynch used a webinar to enable its chief technology officer to chat online with students. "The firm has bankers out on campus in force," Pollock says. "But this was a more selective group that is harder to reach."

The chat session gave the company a sense of the key issues for students, and the transcripts from such events are posted on the Merrill Lynch Web site for a year afterward.

Many firms have no contact with students outside career fairs. Accenture, a global consulting firm in New York, tries to keep in touch with top prospects all year. The firm sends customized e-Cards to prospective recruits, providing specific information relevant to them, says Bill Ziegler, the firm's global recruiting director. Accenture also sends greeting-cards to students from online galleries such as Blue Mountain.

1,336 words

(选自 *Workforce*, March, 2004)

Notes

- ① Rather than try to visit 20 campuses and recruit one student from each, most firms have realized that they get a better payoff — and land better talent — by going to four campuses and hiring five students from each. 译文: 大多数公司不再从20个大学分别招1名学生;而是到4个大学各招5名。他们意识到这样做效果更显著,同时又能觅得更优秀的人才。
- ② The team members also have more time to develop relationships with the school, enabling them to decide, for example, which programs to sponsor for the greatest impact on their recruiting efforts. 译文: 各成员有更多的时间拓展与校方的联系,使其能够做出判断,比方说哪些项目需要赞助以便在招募人才方面,可以施展最大影响。

Exercises

Multiple Choices:

1. But the Fed cited a loophole, and its decision allows certain banks to take on Wall Streets directly in wooing business borrowers.
A. repudiating B. spurning C. rebuffing D. obtaining
2. When Apple Computer co-founder Steven Jobs burned out 10 years ago, Silicon Valley company brought in marketing-savvy John Sculley.
A. semplice B. indiscreet C. shrewd D. tactile
3. Long-range forecasting has become a sophisticated and quite profitable industry in that country.
A. refined B. advanced C. callow D. sophistry
4. The stockholders swarmed in force to the bourse in the final hour of trading when the Dow Jones industrial average abruptly lurched into a hair-raising sky dive.
A. in effect B. in operation C. in large numbers D. in violence
5. So many consumers are intrigued by the prospect in cyberspace.
A. impecuniousness B. outlook C. prostration D. exploration

True or False:

1. Most firms find it efficient and better to narrow their campus recruiting efforts, hunting for talents in fewer schools.
2. Shell, like many other large companies, is focusing on fewer schools with top talents; and this aims to save money in order to yield the best job-applicant ROI.
3. Shell, thanks to the streamlined approach, now uses a dedicated team for more than 80 schools to maintain an on-campus presence to develop closer ties to identify the talented students.
4. To give the students an early introduction to the company, Shell offers some pre-employment programs like the internship, one of which is primarily to sophomores and seniors.
5. Recruiting via the online tools turns out to be a time-saving way and can quickly reach multiple people and land the top talents the company really needs.

Passage 2

Business English Readings (高级)

Pushing the Buy Button

Companies are starting to turn to powerful brain-scan technology in order to figure out how we choose which products to purchase.

By Clint Witchalls

The woman lying in the huge, doughnut-shaped magnet having her brain scanned is perfectly healthy. Radiologists (放射学家) at the Neurosense clinic in south London aren't looking for lesions or lumps. Instead, they've set up a periscope that allows her to view a series of videotaped advertisements. She doesn't have to do anything but watch — and perhaps daydreams about whether a particular brand of chocolate seems yummy, or what it would be like to drive that new family sedan. While she's thinking, the doctors are looking to see if certain brain circuits are active and, if so, how excited they get.

Her experience could foretell the future of marketing. Sellers have always expended a great deal of time and energy trying to figure out what potential buyers really think (as opposed to what they say when you ask them). Now, using powerful brain-scan technology, they can do so scientifically. Ford of Europe uses such "neuromarketing" techniques to better understand how consumers make emotional connections with their brands. Daimler Chrysler has funded several re-

search projects at the University of Ulm in Germany, using brain-imaging technology to decode which purchasing choices go into buying a car. Firms like Oxford-based Neurosense have sprung up to make neuromarketing a bona fide (真正的) business tool. "The 1990s were declared 'the Decade of the Brain'," says Justine Meaux, a neuroscientist and marketing strategist at BrightHouse, an Atlanta, Georgia-based neuromarketing company. "We learned more about neuroscience in those 10 years than in the entire history that preceded them. I think business neuroscience is just one more field of inquiry."

Since the 1950s, the best tool for identifying which ads and products people will like has been the focus group. The problem is, it's notoriously unreliable, largely because social dynamics get in the way of truthful answers.^① Some subjects want to please the focus-group leader. Others want to dominate the group. "Almost every focus group throws up (产生; 出现) someone more vocal and bossy, who either inspires others to follow or react against [them] or both," says Tim Ambler, senior fellow at London Business

School. Perhaps that's why only one in 100 products survives in the marketplace after the typical product launch.

Imaging technology, on the other hand, holds out the promise of objectively measuring a person's reaction by seeing how his brain is responding. Given that 95 percent of human cognition (认识) takes place unconsciously, there's a lot more information to be had by going straight to the source and observing which regions of the brain are active. Forget what the focus-group participant is telling you — look at those lovely spikes^② on her left inferotemporal cortex (下颞皮层).

The roots of neuromarketing go back to neuroscientist Antonio Damasio's assertion a decade ago that humans use the emotional part of the brain when making decisions, not just the rational part. That's precisely what marketers wanted to hear. Since then, researchers have turned to fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging), which maps blood flow to different areas of the brain, to explore what goes on in the act of buying. The idea is that when the "buy" regions of the brain go into action, they draw a bigger blood supply to support their work, which shows up — millisecond by millisecond — on an fMRI scan. (According to researchers, the act of deciding whether to make a purchase lasts 2.5 seconds.)

When the possibility of buying something first occurs to a person, the visual cortex, in the back of the head, springs into action. A few fractions of a second later the mind begins to turn the product over, as though it were looking at it from all sides, which triggers memory circuits in the left inferotemporal cortex, just above and forward of the left ear.^③ Finally, when a product registers as a "strongly preferred choice" — the goal of every advertiser — the action switches to the right parietal (颞腔壁) cortex, above and slightly behind the right ear.

"We can scan people looking at lots of different images, find out afterwards which ones they remembered and then go back to the scan data and find out what was specific about the brain activity that occurred in response to the remembered images," says Michael Brammer, chairman of Neurosense.

Companies still need to come up with several product designs and ad campaigns for screening (甄别). But fMRI scans should help them narrow down which ones work across the broadest range of people. Or neuromarketing could be useful in finding out how a consumer experiences a product. For instance, does the brain respond first to the crunching sound of a candy bar, or to its flavor? Neuromarketers are still exploring exactly what kind of information they can tease out of test subjects with questionnaires and fMRI scans.

The use of brain research to sell products has created some controversy. Detractors (诋毁者) fear that once the "buy button" in the brain is identified, unscrupulous companies will use this knowledge to get us hooked on their products, to the detriment of (有损于) our health, our wallets and our sanity. Already, they point out, aggressive marketing contributes indirectly to obesity, diabetes, alcoholism, lung disease and gambling. Others object to the commercial use of medical equipment. In December, Gary Ruskin, executive director of Commercial Alert, a public-interest watchdog, sent a letter to Emory University, which conducts research on behalf of BrightHouse, asking it to stop its experiments.

Neuromarketing researchers argue that the technology shouldn't be stopped just because it might be abused. "This is a descriptive technique — it describes what the brain is doing," says Neurosense cofounder Gemma Calvert. "With fMRI you can't modify brain behavior. You can't make people go out and buy something."

Companies like BrightHouse are trying to distance themselves from the term neuromarketing, which has a sci-fi feel to it, and their clients and funders often prefer to remain anonymous.

Perhaps the best defense is that the research may help scientists understand the workings of the brain. "I cannot think of a more important issue these days than understanding the neural substrates (基质) of cultural messaging," says Read Montague, director of the Human Neuroimaging Lab at Baylor College of Medicine in

Houston, Texas. "As far as I know, humans are the only creatures that will die for an idea. However, we know very little about the neural substrates that allow some ideas or messages to insinuate (潜入) themselves in our nervous system and control behavior." Why, for instance, do people have strong preferences for Pepsi or Coke, even though chemically the two soft drinks are virtually identical? That's a tough one, even for brain scientists

1,126 words

(选自 *Newsweek*, March, 2004)

Notes

- ① The problem is, it's notoriously unreliable, largely because social dynamics get in the way of truthful answers. 译文: 问题是, 这种工具的不可靠是众所周知的。究其原因, 主要是各种社会影响的因素妨碍了问题答案的真实性。
- ② spikes 一神经元的内部与外部之间局部电位差所表示的一种局部化信号。它持续约一毫秒, 在轴突上以每秒十米的速度传送。
- ③ A few fractions of a second later the mind begins to turn the product over, as though it were looking at it from all sides, which triggers memory circuits in the left inferotemporal cortex, just above and forward of the left ear. 译文: 转瞬间, 大脑开始反复考虑这个产品, 似乎从各个角度对它进行观察。这一活动把刚好位于左耳上前部的左下颞皮层里的记忆电路激发起来。

Exercises

Multiple Choices:

1. His lack of proper education was a serious detriment to his career.
A. remorse B. relinquish C. disadvantage D. juggernaut
2. Though detractors love to hate her plastic perfection, the Barbie doll with the impossible figure has long been the most popular girl at the region.
A. commentators B. critics C. pros D. propagators
3. "These individuals," observes Dr. Warner, an expert in immunology, "are natural experiments, and hold a great secret that we are still trying to decode."
A. investigate B. delve C. camouflage D. decipher
4. Arguing that Gregorian chants cannot be adapted, the critics called the former monks "shameless and unscrupulous."
A. shrewd B. discreet C. unethical D. fastidious
5. A gifted American psychologist has said, "Worry is a spasm of the emotion; the mind catches hold of something and will not let it go." One can only gently insinuate something else into its convulsive grasp.
A. pass subconsciously B. place smoothly and stealthily
C. manifest clearly D. penetrate quickly and actively

True or False:

1. In the past, focus-group leaders could get truthful answers from the subjects by questionnaires and interviewing.
2. According to the article, compared with the focus group, neuromarketing is more objective and reliable.
3. Scientists can utilize fMRI to find out how a consumer experiences a product by observing the action of visual cortex, left inferotemporal cortex and right parietal cortex.
4. The research of neuromarketing frightens some critics; they think it will be misused by unprincipled companies to harm people's lives.
5. Although some products are virtually identical and hard to distinguish, brain scientists can explain by virtue of brain-scan technology, why a customer chooses one particular product rather than another by brain-scan.

Passage 3

Business English Readings (高级)

Beautiful Idea

How L'Oréal, the global beauty giant, refocused its marketing machine on BLACK AND ASIAN CONSUMERS to spur growth.

By Jennie James

Until she discovered L'Oréal's ethnic-beauty institute on Chicago's South Side, Regina Hatcher had dry, straw-like hair — the price she paid for chemically straightening it. But one Sunday, the African-American security officer, 35, received a tip from a friend whose daughter had turned to the center, formally called the L'Oréal Institute for Ethnic Hair and Skin Research, for help following a disastrous perm. "They got her hair back more healthy and shiny," said Hatcher, who promptly booked an appointment for herself — hoping that L'Oréal's stylists and researchers, armed with a vast array of shampoos, conditioners and gels, could also sort out her tresses (卷发). The result? "It was extra soft and bouncy," Hatcher boasts. "I got a lot of compliments." People even hit her with the ultimate admiring cliché: "What did you do to your hair?"

The answer could be worth a pretty penny for L'Oréal. Over the past decade, the world's largest cosmetics concern has transformed itself from a French company focused on white women into a global titan (巨人) whose skin, hair

and cosmetics products are tailored to consumers from Dallas to Delhi. L'Oréal has a strategic gift for taking cosmetics brands, giving them an innovation injection and a marketing makeover, and then rolling them out across the world: anti-aging potions for American boomers or lipsticks for young Chinese. L'Oréal is even working on beauty from the inside out: how about a skin-support that you swallow?

In the U.S., L'Oréal is turning its attention to the rapidly expanding ethnic-beauty market, projected to be worth up to \$14.7 billion annually by 2008. Ethnic-beauty care in the U.S. has been dominated by black-centered companies that are close to their customers. Over the past five years, L'Oréal bought two of them, SoftSheen and Carson, and integrated them into a single entity that the company sees as a world-beater. Researchers at the Chicago institute will help develop products that SoftSheen/Carson can take well beyond the U.S. "You can't pretend to be No. 1 in the world," says Alain Evrard, L'Oréal's managing director for Africa, "and forget about 1 billion consumers of African

origin.”

In the global \$60 billion beauty industry, being first feels familiar to L'Oréal. Last Friday, the company reported that profits jumped 16.2% to \$1.9 billion in 2003 — its 19th consecutive (连续的) year of double-digit earnings growth. According to Morgan Stanley, L'Oréal is the only cosmetics company over the past five years to have maintained or grown its market share in categories like cosmetics and hair care, both globally and in the U.S. Consider Maybelline, the U.S. mass-market cosmetics house that L'Oréal acquired in 1996. The French giant revamped (更新) the brand's drab packaging, relabeled it Maybelline New York to give it an urban edge and took it on the road.^① From 1996 to 2002, sales of Maybelline outside the U.S. grew 93%. Propelled by products like the glistening Water Shine Diamonds lipstick, which cashes in on the trendy wet look for lips, Maybelline is now the preferred cosmetics brand for 44% of Chinese women.

Although L'Oréal takes a global approach, the company is keyed to the chronological and cultural differences of its consumers. The result of this market segmentation: a long-term global-beauty jigsaw (拼板玩具), coming together piece by piece. “We're going to have to imagine things that appeal to both ends of the age spectrum (范围) and to very different ethnic consumers,” says Lindsay Owen-Jones, 57, the Brit (英国人) who has been at L'Oréal's helm (处于领导地位) for the past 19 years. “There used to be one ideal consumer. Tomorrow there are going to be many different ideal consumers ... and we're going to have to be good at guessing what they want.”

Africa is a case in point. SoftSheen/Carson already has a strong presence in South Africa, where in 2002 it accounted for about 41% of that country's estimated \$90 million black hair-care market. But L'Oréal wants to have as big an impact in other African markets. Oddly enough,

this is where the U.S. comes in. Africans, says Evrard, “believe that if [a product] is good for the highly demanding U.S. black consumer, it might also be better for them.”

Although many consumers know it for skin-care products like Plenitude, L'Oréal had its origins in hair care. In 1907 French chemist Eugene Schueller developed a line of synthetic hair dyes, known as L'Aureale, or Halo, and started selling them to Parisian hair stylists. Almost a century later, Schueller's once tiny company presides over a host of high-profile beauty names such as Lancôme and Garnier. The company's top 14 global brands account for more than 90% of its \$14.3 billion in consumer sales.

Despite the number of headline brands, there is very little cannibalization (自相残杀) — a feat that L'Oréal pulls off because of its extraordinary commitment to positioning and marketing.^② Merrill Lynch analyst Sandhya Raju estimates that L'Oréal spends about 30% of its revenues on advertising and promotion, against an average 25% spent by its principal competitors. Take L'Oréal's move into China, where L'Oréal's sales grew a torrid 69% in 2003. In L'Oréal's view, it is selling products to an archetypal (典型的) Miss Yu, who is 18, still lives at home and would like to buy rouge or lipstick; to an imaginary Mrs. Li, who is in her late 20s and has a good job and some disposable income (税后收入); and to the thirtysomething prototype (原型) Mrs. Wong, married, with one child, and more inclined to use skin care than makeup. Even the type of transport is factored in (包括在内) — L'Oréal reckons that if Miss Yu rides in a car, she's probably a Lancôme consumer, but if she rides a bicycle, she's made for Maybelline.

Acquisitions will permit L'Oréal to continue diversifying its revenue base and product range. In December L'Oréal bought Mininurse, a Chinese mass skin-care brand with a 5% market share. It bought a majority stake last year of Shu

Uemura, a Japanese concern in which it owned a 35% stake. In the past decade, Western Europe's share of L'Oréal's overall sales has fallen about 12%, while the share of regions like Asia has risen more than 20%. L'Oréal also has its eye on India and Mexico. "It's a superb sales model," says Andy Smith, an analyst at Citigroup Smith Barney, of L'Oréal. "They've managed to identify all the hot spots of growth in the industry and dominate those areas."

As ever with L'Oréal, innovation is as likely to dominate the company's thinking as where to find the next group of willing consumers. In 2002 L'Oréal spent \$594 million on research — about 3% of turnover and double that of its nearest rivals. In the stark laboratory not far from the Paris headquarters, for example, scientists are coming at the dermis (皮肤) from both sides — developing skin products that are applied externally as well as those that are ingested. High above the earth, a European space-agency satellite is transmitting data to L'Oréal about where global-pollution levels are strongest — so L'Oréal can adapt its moisturizers (保湿系列产品). There's even a team of people trying to figure out how to biologically trigger total color recall in human hair, potentially making hair dye a thing of the distant past.

Scientists are also working on the line extensions for Inneov, L'Oréal's line of edible beauty supplements, developed with Swiss food giant Nestlé and launched last year. The promise is simple: take one of the little dark pink pills every day, and the firmness of your skin will improve. By the end of the year, consumers may be able to buy Inneov pills to thicken hair and tackle cellulite (脂肪团). On the horizon, a pill to enhance sun protection. "We started with a product that demonstrably shows you have firmer skin," Owen-Jones says. "This is not snake oil (骗人的万灵油)."

L'Oréal is convinced that boomers will fight

aging to the death and so demand more and more scientific solutions to that annoying biological problem. Company research shows that L'Oréal's consumer used to be between ages 20 and 50. Now she's between 15 and 70. A decade from now, L'Oréal predicts the range will extend from 12 to 90 years old. With the beauty-supplement market worth about \$800 million, it could be a while before Inneov pays its way. "Maybe not for 10 year," says Merrill Lynch's Raju. "But they want first-mover advantage."

Yet for all this apparent foresight, L'Oréal's recent stock performance has at times been less than lustrous. Its price-to-earnings ratio has more than halved over the past three years, suggesting the market feels that its growth prospects have slowed.^⑤ Analysts cite the company's big ad and promotions budget and the fact that its manufacturing is less efficient than that of its competitors. Says Citigroup's Smith: "L'Oréal has the cost structure of a prestige cosmetics house, yet only 25% of its products are in the prestige category. The rest is mass market." Such criticisms draw a scathing response from Owen-Jones. "Analysts work like politicians," he sniffs. "They spend their time justifying that they've always had a point of view." He refuses to restructure. There are "so many other places you can invest if what you want is bloodletting (消耗资源)," he says.

Owen-Jones has the good fortune to run a company that is not entirely beholden (感激的) to analysts. Because of a complex arrangement, just over half of L'Oréal's stock is controlled through a holding company that includes Nestlé and Liliane Bettencourt, Eugene Schueller's only child and — thanks to her L'Oréal stake — one of the wealthiest people in Europe.

Owen-Jones accepts that L'Oréal might have the odd off year (萧条年份), but in the long term, he sees no reason why all the markets shouldn't keep on growing, even the most devel-