

Unilever: iluminate

Bringing Clinical Skin Care into the Home

Unilever: Illuminage

It's clear to anyone who flips through an issue of *Cosmopolitan* or wanders the beauty section of Nordstrom: The market for products that effectively reduce signs of aging is a burgeoning one. The most effective anti-aging techniques—those that remove unwanted hair, age spots, or facial lines and wrinkles—usually involve the use of a medical laser. Traditionally, such laser treatments were only accessible in a clinician's office and required a trained professional to administer. Not only are these procedures expensive, but they're also inconvenient to schedule and attend regularly. Many women find it difficult to stick with the treatments long enough to see real results.

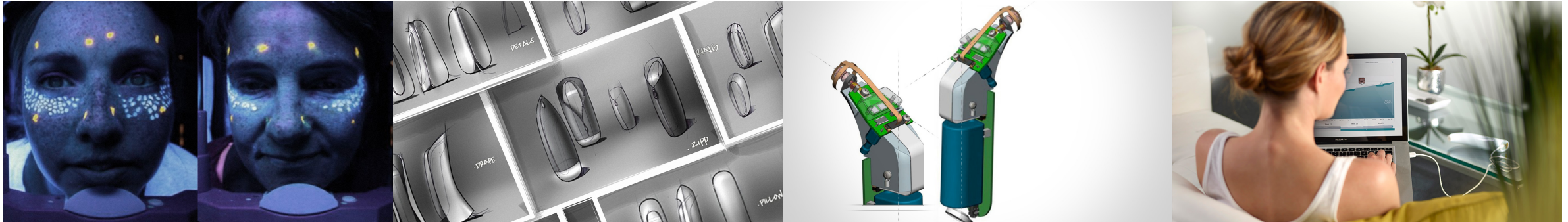
Illuminage, a Unilever brand, partnered with Continuum to bring clinical skin care into the home. The company envisioned a handheld laser that women could use safely and effectively to treat facial lines and wrinkles. Assembling an expansive team of mechanical and electrical engineers, as well as industrial and digital designers, Continuum made this vision a reality.



01. Challenge

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02. Research & Insights



THE GOLDILOCKS EFFECT: DESIGNING JUST ENOUGH

Continuum's team interviewed women between the ages of 35 and 55 in Boston, Los Angeles, and New York. They quickly realized that self-administering a laser therapy was something women would have to learn and maintain. To ensure success, the laser must elicit behavior change—by design. While women wanted to feel confident in the laser's effectiveness, they didn't want a device so technical that it was intimidating. Balancing credibility and ease-of-use in the laser's design proved critical to ensuring its adoption.

AVOIDING THE DRAWER OF DEATH

Women also admitted to abandoning beauty products quickly that didn't fit into their daily routine in a meaningful way. The team designed a device that they would deem "countertop-worthy"—elegant enough to keep on display in their bathroom. This visibility would help women remember to use the laser every day—and save it from what Continuum referred to as the dreaded bathroom "drawer of death."

MINIATURIZING AN EXISTING TECHNOLOGY

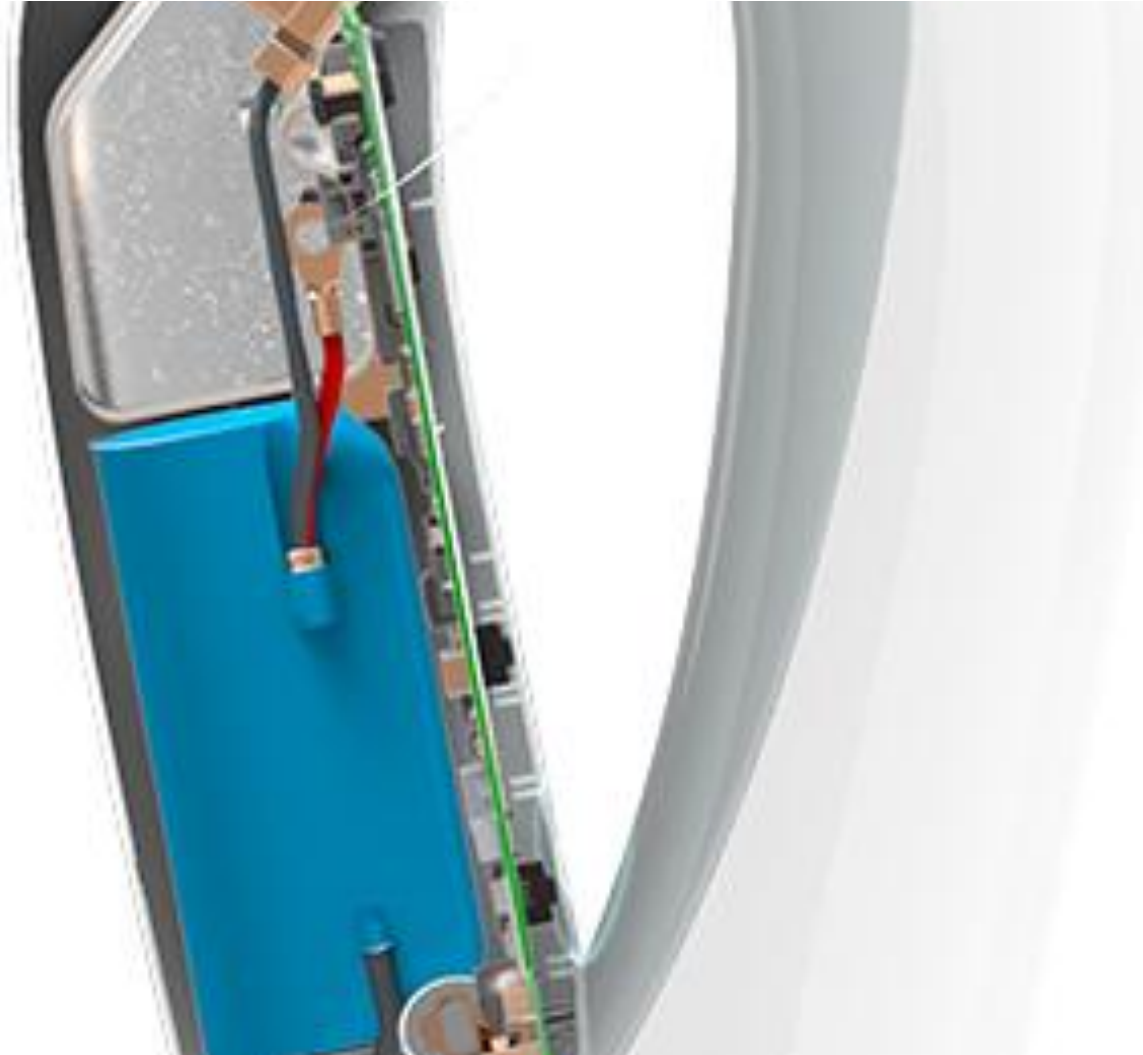
While the laser technology for the device existed, it did not fit in the palm of one's hand. Professional lasers on the market looked like large appliances—not appropriate for personal, at-home use. Continuum applied expertise in mechanical and electrical engineering, as well as software design, to miniaturize the laser technology to a safe yet user-friendly size. After several months of human factors and engineering refinements, the team built 160 first-revision prototypes under ISO compliance. These prototypes were used for final consumer validation, as well as in clinical trials required for FDA clearance.

MEANINGFUL CONNECTIVITY

To achieve the results they desire, women must use it properly and consistently. This drove the team's decision to build connectivity into the device. The laser plugs into any computer or tablet with a USB cord, so women can upload data to track their skin's improvement, access consultative coaching for advice, and engage socially with a community of other users.

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FDA-approved for in-home use, the Iuminage Skin Smoothing Laser has been clinically proven to reduce lines and wrinkles around the eyes and mouth. As the world's first connected beauty device, the Skin Smoothing Laser establishes a new market category at the intersection of consumer electronics and women's cosmetics. It also gives women around the world access to professional-quality beauty treatments from their own home.



03. Solution

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When it launched in the summer of 2014, the Skin Smoothing Laser garnered notable media attention for both its efficacy and design. The device has been mentioned by publications including *W Magazine*, *Shape*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Elle*, *Women's Health*, *Allure*, and *Glamour*, amongst others.

The Skin Smoothing Laser is sold online, as well as at Bergdorf Goodman, Sephora, and Nordstrom.

04. Results

