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World's Biggest Fragrance And Flavor Firms Join Forces To Champion Science In Public Policy

by [Lauren Nardella](#)

Firmenich, Givaudan, IFF and Symrise have decoupled from the Fragrance Creators Association, launching their own trade association to focus on providing technical expertise in North American policy matters. “Any advocacy work has to be based on fact,” says Shawn Blythe, president of the Fragrance Science and Advocacy Council, which intends to partner strategically with FCA and other sister groups.

The newly minted Fragrance Science and Advocacy Council unites the world's leading fragrance and flavor companies in an effort to drive science-based public policy in North America.

Announced on 16 March, the FSAC comprises Firmenich SA, Givaudan, International Flavors & Fragrances Inc. and Symrise AG, with a focus on bringing technical expertise to the fast-evolving legislative and regulatory landscape, according to the release.

In an interview with HBW Insight, Shawn Blythe, FSAC president and board chairman and chief integration officer at IFF, said it is premature for FSAC to identify specific priorities.

But he said the group will be closely tracking fragrance-relevant developments at the US Food and Drug Administration and US Environmental Protection Agency and could be “front and center” in discussions regarding fragrance ingredients.

Blythe mentioned chemical assessment activities under the EPA's updated Toxic Substances and Control Act – which already is bending in new directions under the Biden Administration – as an area of high interest.

"Typically, it will be one of these four [fragrance] houses that will own the majority of the science and safety assessment data," Blythe said of FSAC's members, which commanded roughly half of the global fragrance and flavors market in 2019, according to Statista.

He added, "I think there's a certain opportunity where we can bring technical expertise to a regulatory agency as needed."

FSAC could help to educate "on a scientific basis rather than an emotional basis," Blythe said.

FSAC plans to cooperate with other trade groups and not duplicate their efforts, stepping into advocacy roles when it can "bring something different to the table," according to Blythe.

He said first tasks include reaching out to sister trade associations, including the Fragrance Creators Association (FCA), Personal Care Products Council, American Cleaning Institute, Household & Commercial Products Association (HCPA) and National Candle Association to gauge where its resources may be best utilized.

"The industry has always benefitted from a collaborative effort among those organizations, because in many cases the issues that are addressed at a federal or state level impact all of those organizations," Blythe said.

Firmenich, Givaudan, IFF and Symrise formerly belonged to FCA, some as recently as 2020.

In recent years, FCA has been increasingly focused on consumers as consumers have become increasingly interested in fragrance safety and transparency issues.

FCA launched a website in late 2019, fragranceconservatory.com, to offer consumers a gateway into the world of perfumery and fragrance ingredients, key regulations, and industry safety practices and sustainability efforts. (Also see "[Fragrance Creators Association Launches Online 'Conservatory' To Bolster Consumer Confidence](#)" - HBW Insight, 12 Dec, 2019.)

The group then elevated finished product manufacturers to full members in 2020 to facilitate

greater industry collaboration. “At the end of the day, we serve the public,” CEO Farah Ahmed told HBW Insight at the time. (Also see "[Fragrance Creators Association Pronounces Finished Product Firms ‘Active’ Members; CEO Ahmed Discusses](#)" - HBW Insight, 24 Jul, 2020.)

FCA's foremost priorities in 2021 include advocating for science-based regulations and education and promoting newer, greener chemistry and technology. (Also see "[Fragrance Creators Advocacy Off To Brisk Start On Capitol Hill](#)" - HBW Insight, 20 Mar, 2021.)

'Leading New Conversations'

FSAC intends to focus predominantly on business-to-business audiences, "leading new conversations on topics not already covered by existing trade groups," according to its announcement.

Blythe expects the association to play a leading role in defending fragrance ingredients before federal and state policymakers, and potentially also against consumer and special interest criticism.

"Regardless of where the attacks come from, any advocacy work has to be based on fact, it has to be based on science," Blythe said.

He said FSAC could help to educate “on a scientific basis rather than an emotional basis.”

Blythe welcomes partnerships between FCA and FSAC and suggested there may be instances when FCA takes on front-facing communications and FSAC brings the technical expertise behind it.

"They are very good at public-facing advocacy," Blythe said. "We're going to bring the science, we're going to bring the technical advocacy, but we're not going to compete with [FCA] on how to tell that story because they do it very well."

Blythe was named chief integration officer at IFF in February, after serving for more than a decade as the firm's VP of global regulatory affairs. He took on the new role as IFF completed its merger with DuPont's Nutrition & Biosciences business. (Also see "[IFF Plus DuPont N&B Equals \\$11.2Bn Revenues](#)" - HBW Insight, 23 Feb, 2021.)

He also chairs RIFM's board of directors and has a seat on the board of governors for the Flavor and Extract Manufacturers Association.

FSAC is an independent entity but receives administrative support from Ignite Solutions, a consortium management program founded by HCPA in the mid-1980s, originally to address federal data requirements for pesticide registration, according to hcpaignitesolutions.org.

Including FSAC, Ignite lists on its website around 40 current, cooperative efforts that "enable industry participants to better respond to EPA and other state, federal, and international agency requirements and promote the development of more effective products."