



# Get Male Patients Through the Door: How to Market Cosmetic Products and Procedures

With the right techniques, you can cost-effectively maximize marketing efforts, attract male patients, and increase the demand for cosmetics in your practice.

By Joel Schlessinger, MD

**F**or quite some time, cosmetic surgery generally has been thought of as a female-oriented area. While this may still be true to an extent, the percentages of male patients desiring cosmetic surgery seem to keep pace with the increased numbers of procedures each year.\* This alone makes consideration of marketing to male clients a worthwhile venture.

The number one cosmetic surgical procedure performed on men is chemical peeling, followed by nose reshaping and laser hair removal. Microdermabrasion and Botox are also popular among men, and filler substances, liposuction, eyelid surgery, hair transplantation, and breast reduction round out the top 10 procedures for male patients.\* Marketing these procedures is not too difficult. In fact, I recommend that you use very similar techniques as for women, with a simple mention of men or slight change in the advertising. In order to promote awareness, you will need a specific advertising methodology for some procedures, such as hair transplantation. This article will address several marketing venues in cosmetic procedures with a special emphasis on marketing to males.

## In-Office Marketing and Follow-Through

Since in-office marketing is the least expensive form of marketing, it deserves top consideration in any article about marketing. Most dermatology practices tend to be weighted more heavily towards women, however men still comprise anywhere from 30 to 50 percent of most practices. It's rather easy to market to men once they are inside the office. One point to note is that most women visiting a dermatologist have a significant other, and this woman will probably be the main impetus for the male to seek treatment from the practice. One of the most common scenarios in our office is for the male patient to show up and note his referral source as wife, mother, or girlfriend.

Our office places brochures in the rack that specifically address laser hair removal for men and women, indicating to men that they can be good candidates for this procedure. Additionally, when we place pictures on the walls of the rooms in which procedures are performed we try to approach an even mix of men and women in the pictures.

Pictures of liposuction aimed at men are divided into male flanks and male abdomen in our wall displays, while the laser hair removal shots show male backs prominently. In fact, these pictures are frequently the ones that both males and females comment on while in the room. This probably happens because women are thinking that if it works on a man, it certainly should work on them.

Also note that the attitude of your staff should be open toward men, or else the men may perceive that they aren't welcome and subsequently avoid a procedure. Typically, if patients of either sex indicate that they believe their concerns are vain or petty, we try to reassure them that such is not the case and that we value their business. This is especially important with the male cosmetic patient.

Although it is very difficult to get men to consider procedures, we find that their rate of conversion is higher in general than that of women. Interestingly, whereas many women will end a consult saying that they need to consult their spouse regarding costs, most men don't feel compelled to do the same!

Once the consultation has been completed, follow-up is just as important for men as it is for women. It is absolutely necessary to call those male patients who don't schedule, although it may be more difficult to reach them than it is to reach female patients. We find that e-mail works well for men and is less obtrusive than a phone call. We therefore obtain a signed permission form at the office allowing us to e-mail our patients after the consultation and try to do so in most cases.

## External Advertising

Numerous options exist for external advertising and warrant consideration. In some cases, it's best to use ads that appeal to both men and women, whereas other situations warrant man-specific messages. Here are some areas to consider.

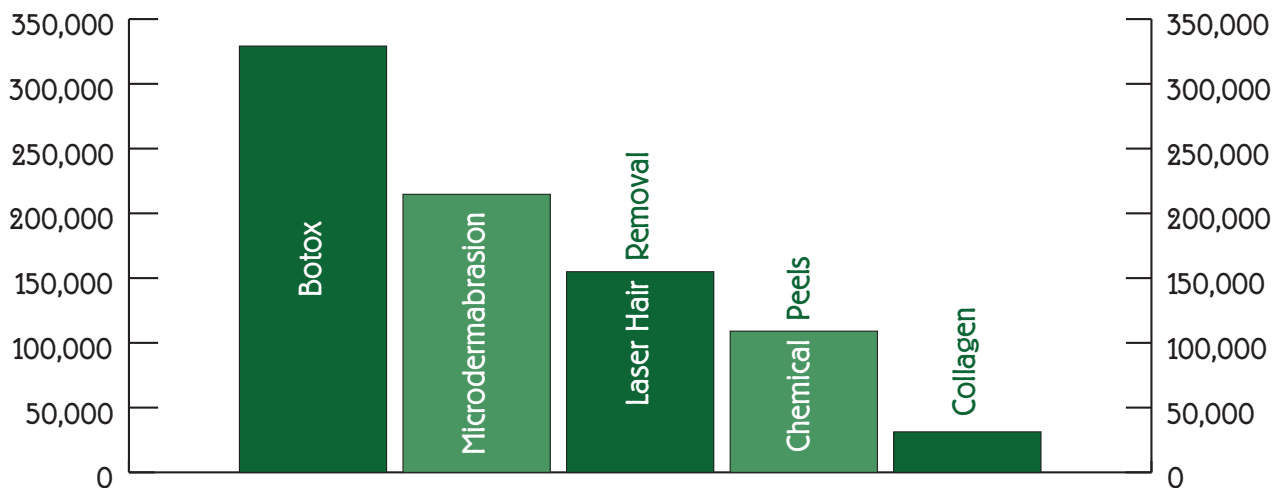
**Newspapers.** Depending on the procedure we market in the newspaper, we attempt to make the advertisement applicable to both men and women. While we usually include a picture of a woman for most ads other than liposuction, we use several ads that have both women and men in the picture.

While certain procedures should more obviously be marketed to women (such as fillers for lips), men are nonetheless can-

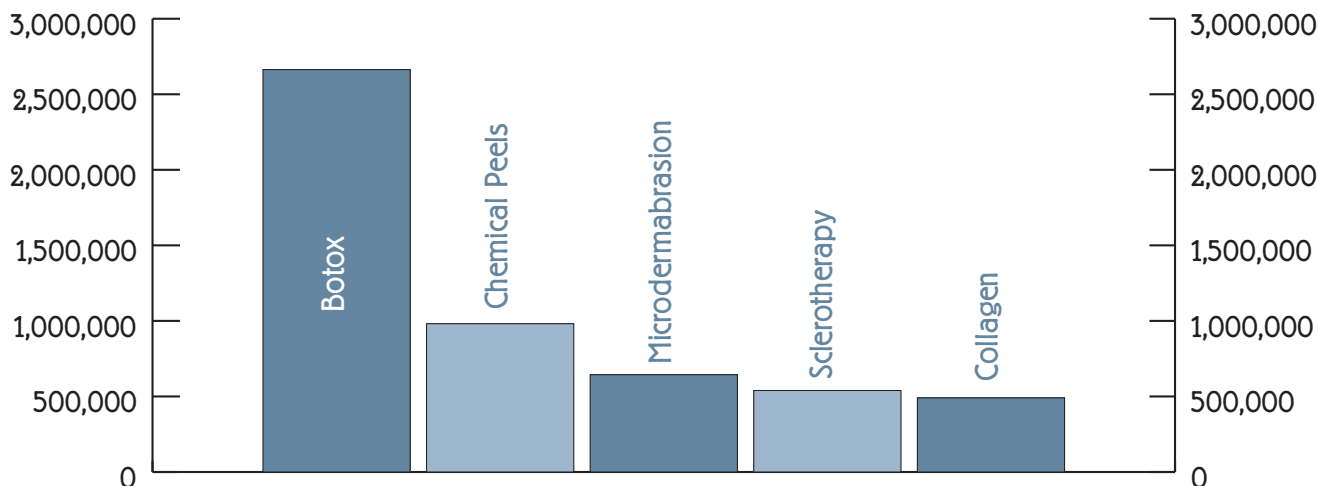
didates. In print, we will usually say these procedures can be done on both men and women, which encourages the option for men.

For procedures that are nearly 100 percent performed on men, such as hair transplantation, the advertisement naturally is aimed squarely at men. For these, we consider carefully whether the ad should be placed in male-oriented sections of the paper or in neutral sections, such as the main news. We typically place these male-focused ads in the Sports section but have found that wherever we place them, the return on investment is lower than ads aimed at females in female-oriented sections of the paper.

## Top 5 Minimally-Invasive Cosmetic Procedures for Men\*



## Top 5 Minimally-Invasive Cosmetic Procedures for Women\*



## Percentage of Patients Seeking Cosmetic Services\*

2003



2005



**Radio Advertising.** While we have placed ads aimed mainly at men on radio, we feel that men tend to approach cosmetic procedures through a long-term decision-making process, rather than the spur-of-the-moment decision-making for women. For this reason, we tend not to place male-oriented advertising on the radio other than studies that aim at both men and women. Interestingly, one area in which men tend to indicate interest equivalent to that of women is studies of medication advertised on the radio.

**Seminars.** We have found that seminars for men are very poorly attended, probably because men are much more private about their cosmetic surgery concerns than women are. At our seminars, we will usually have approximately a 20:1 ratio of women to men. The men that do attend are usually more likely to book surgeries, which is why it is a good sign when they do attend.

**Television.** Television can be a good source of information for men. Whenever I am interviewed on TV, I try to mention the fact that both men and women are doing cosmetic procedures, which is something that surprises most TV station interviewers. On this point, too, we see many men who state their referral source as TV appearances and information from TV.

While my practice doesn't advertise on TV, I see many practices that do. The main procedures I see in such ads are laser hair removal and hair transplantation. I do not know from personal experience whether TV ads are a good return on investment.

**Magazines.** Magazines are excellent vehicles for male-oriented

advertising. Advertisements can be placed in city/state-oriented magazines, and in business, cultural, and sports-oriented periodicals. In considering the potential return from an article, note that many men feel more comfortable about a procedure once they have read a detailed description of that particular procedure.

### Specific Procedures and Men's Response to Them

**Botox.** Men tend to be fairly open to Botox once they make an initial acquaintance with this procedure. We perform this service mainly on the glabellar area and the periorbital rhytides and find that most men come back for repeat procedures. Don't forget that men usually require more Botox than do women. If you do not acknowledge this fact, the results on men may be less impressive than on women, and men will find less reason/motivation to return for repeat treatments. We always state in advance that men will require more units of Botox than women and tell male patients they may even need a touch up in two weeks. Also, we always schedule a follow-up after the first injection for both women and men in order to gauge the response.

**Fillers.** Fillers such as Restylane and collagen can easily be used effectively on men for melolabial and nasolabial creases. Occasional bruising is a significant concern for men, as they don't have the familiarity or comfort level in hiding this with makeup. This is why we always stress that bruising can and will occur and is very important to consider prior to the procedure. Several men (as well as women) have thanked us for this pre-

## Products for Men

In addition to cosmetic services, some men (or their significant others inquiring on their behalf) may be interested in skin care products. Although very few products are specifically marketed for men, there are some that seem to excel in that area. Our male patients tend to enjoy those products that are non-fragranced and typically eschew the ones that are too complicated.

Therefore, we typically have a 'male line' and 'female line' that are brought into the patient rooms when showing products to men versus women. The male lines consist of two or three products at most, while the female lines can include up to four or five products. Women generally are more accepting of toners and spot removers, while men seem to want just the basics.

Lines I am familiar with that have male-only products are Phytomer ([www.phytomer.com](http://www.phytomer.com)) and Sothys ([www.sothys.com](http://www.sothys.com)), while most of the major lines such as Obagi ([www.obagi.com](http://www.obagi.com)), SkinCeuticals ([www.skinceuticals.com](http://www.skinceuticals.com)), Skin Medica ([skinmedica.com](http://skinmedica.com)), and exCel AFA's ([www.xlafa.com](http://www.xlafa.com)) have product lines that can go either way. These products aren't heavily fragranced. The lines tend to be well accepted and have packaging that shouldn't embarrass a male if his girlfriend or wife sees them at the sink.

warning. Many of them have had conferences or important business to attend to that would have been impossible if we had not told them to delay treatment until a more appropriate time.

**Non-Ablative Laser Treatments.** In contradistinction to the "typical" cosmetic procedures performed in our practice, the majority of our male cosmetic patients come in for procedures using laser/IPL (Intense Pulsed Light) for unwanted spider veins on the face or rosacea. These patients are quite pleased in general and usually self-refer after seeing brochures on our walls or pictures on our displays. Again, it is important to warn of potential bruising prior to the procedure or else the patient could be quite unhappy.

## Skincare Data Snapshot

**\$18.4 billion** Estimated 2008 sales of functional personal care products for beauty regimens in Europe and the US (from \$14.9 billion in 2003).

**32%** Estimated percentage of skincare sales in facial care, hand and body care in the US that will be for use in beauty regimens.

**96.1%** Percentage of all personal care usage occasions by men in 2003 that were part of the daily grooming routine.

**92.7%** Percentage of product users in the US and Europe who use functional beauty products to maintain their health (preventatively).


From summary: "Functional Beauty Regimes 2004", November 2004. Available at [www.market-research-report.com/datamonitor/DMCM1097.htm](http://www.market-research-report.com/datamonitor/DMCM1097.htm)

**Tumescent Liposuction.** Men are usually outstanding candidates for tumescent liposuction of the flank, abdomen, and/or chest area. We find that many of these patients come in for other dermatologic procedures and bring up liposuction during their visit. It helps to have staff members who take these concerns seriously and will bring them to my attention if the patient mentions them.

**Laser Hair Removal.** Men comprise about 50 percent of our laser hair removal revenue, although they make up only about 20 percent of our patients for this procedure. The reason for this is that men typically will have the procedure done to their backs or chests, which are more expensive to treat than the typical female areas. Accordingly, it pays to market in any way possible to men for this procedure.

**Hair Transplantation.** This is the most male-oriented of all the procedures mentioned above. We no longer perform this procedure, but marketing for it is typically in-office, in magazines, and in sports-oriented news. Our return on investment was fairly low on this as well as other male-specific advertising, but that doesn't mean that it can't work.

## Consider It Done

Male cosmetic surgery procedures comprise approximately 10 to 20 percent of cosmetic revenue available and should play a significant role when developing your annual budget for advertising and conceiving advertising plans. With appropriate planning, cost-efficient and effective advertising can provide a good mix of male and female patients with little effort on the part of the dermatologist. 

\* Data taken from the ASPS ([www.plasticsurgery.org/public\\_education/2004Statistics.cfm](http://www.plasticsurgery.org/public_education/2004Statistics.cfm)) and ASDS (<http://www.asds-net.org/Media/NewsReleases/media-Newsroom-05surveyimages.html>).