

Ensuring the Success of the Male Professional

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First and foremost, with this article, we want to make one thing clear: this article is not about bashing the abilities or capabilities of one gender over the other when it comes to the cosmetic and aesthetic industry. We know that both genders provide stellar services to clients and are proud of that fact. However, for the focus of this article, we want to assist spas, medical spas, and aesthetic and cosmetic practices on overcoming any discomfort that female clients may have with a male professional.



DURING THE HIRING PROCESS

It is beneficial to have multiple staff members present during the second or third interview process. Examine how male providers interact with the existing team during their time together,

such as the questions the existing team is asking the potential hire and the answers he gives them in return. Take the time to sit back and listen. Do not be afraid to ask him how he would help a female client feel more comfortable with a member of the opposite sex that is treating her.

In addition, ask for references. A strong candidate will be able to offer at least three professional references. Ask his former employers or colleagues how he interacted with both staff and clients during his time in their facility and what their favorite part of working with him was. Find out why he left and if they would work with him again.

The spa owner or manager should take note of any red flags along the way and go with their gut if they do not get answers that make them comfortable enough to hire him. If the owner or manager likes what they hear, they should have the potential new hire provide a treatment on the decision maker of the spa and get key feedback from them as well.

THE INITIATION OF A NEW MALE STAFF MEMBER

First, be sure that the existing internal team is on board with the new male staff member. Whether a male or female, if the team clashes with itself internally, clients are surely going to see the issues externally, thus the reason to have had key staff members involved in the interview process.

Encourage the spa's other staff members and administrative team to receive a treatment from the newest male professional firsthand, enabling them to be able to speak to clients about their treatment and/or show off their work. Whether that treatment is an injectable, facial, or massage, there is nothing like the spa's receptionist being able to credential the new staff member in the following way to a client:



"You're going to love Scott! He gave me a facial last week and my skin has been glowing ever since! Our clients absolutely love him and we're so excited to have him here. He's been a part of the community for 10 years and is so passionate about quality skin care" or "You're going to love Scott! I had my first laser hair removal session with him on my bikini area last week and he was so incredibly professional. Knowing that he's been treating patients for 10 years gives me such confidence in him and, so far, our patients have been raving about his results."



It is all in the scripting. Make sure that the receptionist is not only doing the basics, like getting the contact information for every single caller to the spa, but going the extra mile and credentialing the highly-qualified staff members. Be sure that the receptionist knows where the spa's staff went to school, their favorite procedures, how long they have been treating clients, how long they have been a part of the community, and more. Make sure that the entire team is able to really sell both female and male professionals.

Clients should know when booking their appointment that they will be treated by a male staff member who is passionate about his profession. The worst thing the receptionist can do is make the client uncomfortable by either not credentialing him properly or, worse yet, springing on her the fact that she is going to be undressed in

front of a man she has not met when she shows up for her appointment.

In other words, comfort clients immediately with information to calm any fears.

MARKETING MALE STAFF MEMBERS

Make a big deal out of every new hire, male or female, by immediately promoting them in marketing material. Take advantage of regularly scheduled e-newsletters to highlight a different staff member each month. Include a few easy "Quick Facts" about each of the staff members to showcase their personalities and be sure to include a few of their before and after photographs and/or testimonials from real clients, as applicable. Is there a client who sings the professional's praises and raves about them around town? Consider highlighting that client as well, especially when it comes to singing the praises of the male professional!

Remember to have signed consent forms for any marketing material that involves client names and images.

The same goes for social media: emphasize the amazing work the staff members are doing on social media. Feature photographs of both the providers and clients, together. Capture them smiling post-treatment, showing off the client's glowing skin! The more often a current or potential new client sees other clients credentialing the work of the spa's professionals, the more trustworthy the professionals will become in their eyes. Be sure to include this information on the spa's website as well.



Work with vendors to run specials on certain procedures that male aestheticians, massage therapists, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners are providing. Have meet-and-greet events so that clients can get to know new male practitioners, meeting them in a more casual setting before they shed their clothes for a treatment. Having vendors supporting the event with sample skin care products, food, demonstrations, and bonus products ensures that the costs remain low for the event. After all, when the facility succeeds and sells products and services, the vendor succeeds, too!



COUNTERING ISSUES WITH EXISTING MALE STAFF MEMBERS

Is the spa having problems keeping male staff fully booked while its female staff have a waitlist? Examine why this could be the case. Is this a gender issue or an issue with the individual?

For example, are the female staff members promoting themselves in the community and, therefore, clients are calling the spa specifically asking for that professional? Does the new male professional fit in with the overall brand of the facility? Are there personality clashes along the way with either staff or clients? Does the male staff member come across as abrasive or brash? Do the other staff

members understand that the clients want to get in and get out, while the new male staff member tries to overcompensate and ask about their feelings? Rule out these issues first before moving on to the next issue.

If clients mention that they are not as comfortable receiving treatments from a male, find out why and for which treatments. For example, are women not as comfortable getting undressed for a male massage therapist, but have no problem with a male injector for neurotoxins and fillers? Is laser hair removal in the bikini area an issue, but cellulite treatments do not pose a problem? Let clients booking their procedures know that, should they wish, the spa provides a female escort in the room. This solution should certainly help ease their comfort level.

For the safety of the spa, consult with a legal professional if there are any questions about which treatments should require a female escort when a male staff member is treating a female client. Ask about what is legally required and what is highly suggested. Remember that just because something is not legally required does not mean it is not a good policy to put into place!

If the spa owner or manager is finding that booking is not necessarily the issue, but rather that once clients book appointments, they make comments to the male staff during the procedures, take note of what those specific comments are. Often, the key is how a provider responds to the comment that will

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allow the situation to be made right. For example, when the male staff member assures the female client that a female chaperone will be in the room, this comment can calm any uneasiness.

In addition, a male staff member should always be aware of how he interacts with a female client. He should make sure that there is not any flirtatious interaction that a female client could misinterpret, including both tone and verbiage of what the provider is saying, as well as any unnecessary physical touch. For example, if a male aesthetician is performing a facial, he should ask the female client before the procedure starts if she would like a typically-included shoulder massage instead of assuming she will. Again, let the client know such service is included and not just "a little something extra" he decided to throw in at the last minute. If the male staff member is injecting a neurotoxin, as another example, there is no need for him to rest his hand on her shoulder or leg.

Of course, it should go without saying that both male and female practitioners should be aware of personal space, professionalism, and the spa's reputation at all times.



BRINGING IN MALE CLIENTS

Everything mentioned so far deals with the reactions of female clients to male staff. However, consider this: male clients also receive aesthetic procedures and at an increasingly higher rate each year. Is the spa doing everything they can to bring in male clients that will feel a kinship to your male staff? Consider just a few of the many ideas and options available: Have the team fish where the fish are. Network with organizations that are highly male-populated, such as gyms, golf courses, high-end barber shops, and car dealerships.

Promote the spa in the wedding industry, offering special packages geared towards either couples or grooms. Remember that men need to lose their love handles for their honeymoon too!

Use images of male models in marketing material that look like real men. Chris Hemsworth is dreamy, but that is not what the average male client is going to look like, so include images of someone who is more age appropriate and relatable. If possible, use real before and after images from actual male clients for appropriate treatments.

Include special promotions for female clients, letting them know about male-focused services. These services could include sports massages, back facials, laser hair removal on the back, and male microblading. Utilize the spa's e-mail database to send out this marketing message specifically to female clients and then send out a separate round of messaging to male clients as well, letting them know specifically which services the spa offers. Furthermore, make sure to highlight male-focused themes, like the male summer body or Father's Day promotions.



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