

PROFESSIONAL BEAUTY

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Gender-specific marketing strategies

MIRROR MEN

Grooming is becoming a non-issue for twenty-first century men. Many have fallen in love with themselves, and why not? As Oscar Wilde said: "To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong romance." Have you ever wondered how to lure him to your establishment and how to keep him coming back for return business? Professional Beauty explores the best avenues to create a strong marketing strategy.

By Kyla Annear.

Previously grooming was seen as a woman's habit, but, over the past ten years, men have been forging a new identity for themselves, which has broken with society's taboo of traditional masculinity. Self-worship has increased among them, and more are willing to experiment and improve themselves with trips to the salon and spa for one-stop male grooming. However, just like women, men have special skincare needs and lifestyle habits that need to be understood by therapists, so as to attract first-timers and to keep them coming back for more.

BEAUTY IS SKIN DEEP

It is a fact: men age later than women. Scientists believe that this is because men's skin has more collagen and elastin present, making it more resilient. There is more activity in their sebaceous glands, which are more oily because of their facial hair (which also tends to make them sweat more), and this is why their skin is 20% thicker than a woman's skin. However, as men mature, the ageing of their skin accelerates faster than that of women as the skin loses more elasticity. Men develop bags under their eyes, a more furrowed face, deeper wrinkles >>

male grooming

because the epidermis is thicker, as well as an altered texture. Like women, this has a lot to do with lifestyle, education and negative activities, such as too much sun exposure and smoking, which breaks down the skin's ability to create collagen and elastin. Men's skin can also be quite delicate from daily shaving. This makes the skin more sensitive to damage, irritation and abrasion on the surface, leaving it dehydrated with an increased pH. According to Mimmie Cronje, marketing director of The Business for Wellness: "Daily skincare needs vary between men and women because of their skin and lifestyle differences, and it is therefore important to take these characteristics into consideration and target the specific needs of the male client before selling treatments and products."

SELLING MALE VANITY

For some men, it's an alien idea just to do nothing, but relax - once they get a taste of the spa and salon life, they will wonder why they never started sooner. Today's typical male spa- and salon-goer is aged between 35 and 54, a married university graduate, and has a good amount of disposable income. These men usually commit to the salon and spa lifestyle once they see or feel the results. Before you get him to commit, it's important to know what he is looking for.

Men prefer to select treatments that appeal to their masculinity, and often it's all about the wording. Clarins Day Spa refers to its men's treatments as the skin blitz facial, energising back, neck and scalp massage, and muscle ease body massage. Body and Beauty Clinic refers to a manicure or pedicure for men as foot treatment or hand treatment. Men are typically interested in treatments that are physically effective, i.e. their skin must be rejuvenated or their muscles relieved. They >>



Glasshouse

THE CAVE

Some spas are now including a men-only area. This is often introduced to create a unique male sanctuary in a typically female domain. Men like privacy when it comes to treatments, and in a setting that is masculine, neutral-looking and without the colourful frills that appeal to women. A new trend in South Africa is male-only salons, such as The Space or the Glasshouse, both of which are in Cape Town. Like traditional salons, they include the same treatments, but in an environment where men can feel particularly relaxed. Décor at the Glasshouse is masculine, sleek and sexy with



Glasshouse

The Space



industrial ceilings and exposed pipes and bricks. You won't find any pink here, but chocolate brown, black, silver and green with natural textiles and cowhides. "Men just love it," says owner Erikson, "The overall experience is of a very high standard, and it keeps them coming back."

Erikson has also created the Pedi-Spa area, where guys can have a manicure or pedicure while watching their favourite sports channel on plasma screens and sipping on ice-cold beer. "This sort of environment really helps to break the ice for first-timers and gets the men hooked and ready to come back and try something new," she says.

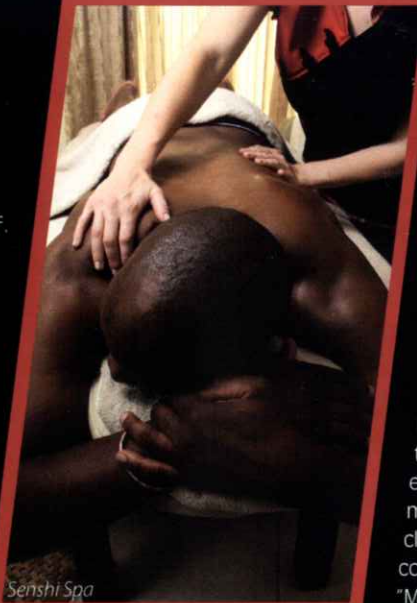
male grooming

also respond to the idea of luxury and benefit, and typically want to be treated as though they are well off. Often they avoid wraps and alternative therapies. Men like a deep tissue or sports massage as they are seen as having a quantifiable physical purpose. Saunas and steam rooms appeal to men because they are not an alien concept and are often associated with sport and relieving muscular pain. "Men want immediate results," says Zubeida Johardien, PR officer at skin wellness spa & clinics. "Obviously this is not always possible. It is therefore imperative that therapists thoroughly explain the treatment, what they can expect, and supply aftercare if necessary. If you want a client to return, never give them false hope."

According to Cronje: "Men are also schedule-conscious. They like to have their treatment within the expected timeframe, so that they can move on to their next appointment. Location is also very important for them, and they prefer their spas to be in busy centres and not in residential areas."

For first timers, there is sometimes the concern about the touchy-feely aspect of a spa treatment, as they feel uncomfortable when a woman, who is not their partner, is rubbing, scrubbing and pampering them. In such cases, it can be a good idea for them to start with a treatment that is less intrusive, such as a facial, as this does not include disrobing and is relaxing. But at the end of the day, professional service offered by well-trained staff will go a long way towards making them relaxed, comfortable and willing to explore new treatments. Gunther Dippenaar, owner of The Space, which is in Cape Town, echoes this concept. "We never drop our standards and integrity simply to increase turnover. We strictly forbid indecent behaviour." Heleen Van der Merwe, head therapist at Clarins Day Spa, agrees: "Our staff are trained not to flirt with the men, and at no time during any treatment may their bust touch the client."

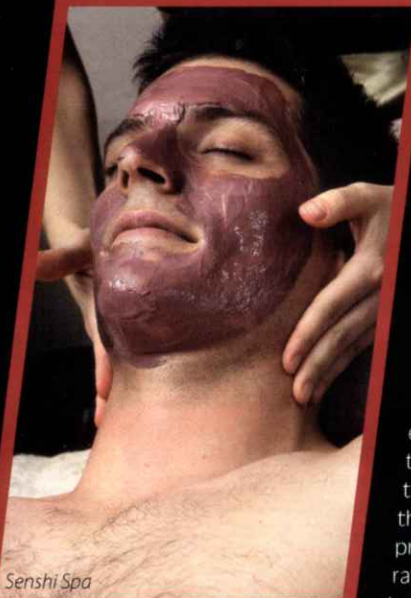
In terms of generating more male grooming business, Hein Van Spaendonck, owner of the male-only Thyme Workshop, understands the importance of women. "Up to 50% of our business is generated by women who are tired of their partner's rough hands and heels, and they are the ones buying gift vouchers as a subtle hint," he says. "Many women inspect our facility to ensure that it is a legitimate spa for men, and



Senshi Spa

"When marketing to men, educate, never patronise, and keep it simple and to the point."

Wayne Perry, director of Men-Ü skincare range for men.



Senshi Spa



Xperience

are reassured when they see the 'SNHP – strictly no hanky panky' warning on the company brochures."

Van der Merwe concurs that women really are the key to drawing in more men. At Clarins Day Spa, the marketing strategy includes introducing women to special offers for couples (an excellent way to initiate men) or men's grooming products, which are clearly displayed near the check-out counter in blue packaging. She adds: "Mothers are also vital to introducing

skincare to their sons. They will often ask about how to take care of their son's skin, especially if it is too oily. We usually advise them on certain products to use or recommend

that they bring their son in for a treatment and consultation. In this way, men can begin grooming from a younger age."

Many men still need to be coaxed into buying products, as they do not understand, nor do they believe, that they are beneficial. A large part of promoting cleansers, moisturisers and other facial products requires educating men. Most, however, tend to want a straight-forward daily skincare regimen.

On the other hand, Carol Erikson, owner of the Glasshouse, believes that men are the easiest clients to sell products to: "They listen to you, and if, for example, you tell them that they need a cleanser, moisturiser and sun-block, they will take all three, no questions asked! They prefer to have only a few necessary products rather than too many, as their routine becomes too much like work. Most men just need good advice on shaving and skincare products because they really don't know any better. Once they have been informed, they can really get quite enthusiastic about using something on their skin that is going to improve it."

Dippenaar adds: "Men are more brand-loyal than women and are inclined to return for more of the same brand when their products are finished. They also tend to waste products more, which means they return to the skin centre sooner."

Tim Britz, brand manager for Nickel, points out: "Men are getting more interested in anti-ageing products. They need to have an easy-on application, multi-functional formulations and immediate results that give men a sense of cleanliness and freshness. When it comes to selling products to men, think like men. Go to them. Don't wait for them to come to you." **PB**