

A man's first visit to a day spa can be an anxiety-laden experience...



REFINING THE MAN HUNT

Behold simple ways to lure guys using *all* of your menu. The secret? Learn to speak his language, then spin and position your offerings accordingly.

By Russell A. Jackson

Photography by Armando Sanchez

OUR PANEL:

Denise Dubois, owner,
Complexions Day Spa,
Albany, New York

Laurie Knowlton,
owner, Zen 3 Spa
and Bodyworks,
Springfield, Missouri

Leah Komaiko,
marketing strategist,
author and speaker

Debbie Patterson,
owner, Namaste Spa,
Talent, Oregon

Enrique Ramirez,
owner, Face to Face
New York Day Spa,
New York City

Rianna Riego, principal,
Global SpaVantage

With special thanks to Pampered People Spa of Studio City, CA, owner Stacy Cox and Rick Lindland, pictured throughout.

Gone are the days of the dated “Real men don’t eat quiche” attitude—today’s spas are helping to preen and relax more than the occasional husband, boyfriend or stylish gay dude. In fact, men of all ages, tax brackets, backgrounds and lifestyles are increasingly seeing spa services as part of an overall wellness and grooming plan.

But of course, men are still different animals. Luring them in for any service—be it massage, or facial, body treatment or nail care—requires spa pros to speak a specific language. Salon folk have long known that when it comes to XYs, you offer a “haircut,” never a “hairdo,” so it’s high time spa pros wise up to males’ unique receptors, too. And the same goes for fashioning man-friendly facilities. While creating an instant “man cave” is no short order, there are simple ways to tailor your spa space to all the young (and old) dudes. (Think strong showers, superhot steam rooms and well-spaced-out seating in your lounge.) For more insider intelligence, we grilled six experts—from consultants and marketing experts to seasoned spa owners—about the best ways to pitch all types of services to attract male takers. Turn the page to get in on these pros’ courting know-how.

REFINING THE MAN HUNT

It's a rare man who doesn't love a relaxing massage—start him off with this service, and he'll be more apt to try another.



MANLY MASSAGE

One of the best ways to endear your spa to male clients is via superb massage services. Most men are familiar with them, but may not have considered seeking treatment at a day spa.

What's the best way to get him to try massage?

Patterson: Massage is easy, because it's the one service men are used to receiving. Get them to try it at an event, or promote 'sports massage' at local sporting events, and they'll get hooked! Great massage offerings are probably why about 40% of my clients are men.

Knowlton: We pay attention to local marathon and athletic tradeshow schedules. We'll provide on-site chair/table massages at these events; it's a great way to market the spa to men.

Riego: It's a matter of positioning and messaging. Men respond to performance and results-driven services, so offering a good, solid 30-minute treatment is a good way to lure in a first-timer.

What are some typical challenges faced when marketing massage to men?

Patterson: By far the biggest feat is getting them in the door. But once they experience what you have to offer and they understand what it is you are selling, they can become some of the most loyal customers. After all, who doesn't like a healing touch?

Ramirez: They take a little longer than women to respond to, say, a print ad or newspaper article, so patience is key. But the flip side is, once they come to your spa and experience the benefits, they are yours. You also can't rely on word-of-mouth with men, as they tend to be very discreet about their spa visits. They most likely will *not* tell their friends about you, and it certainly won't be a topic of conversation during a Giants game.

Dubois: We have an email club with more than 12,000 names, and we've hosted an annual Men's Spa Night, which gives potential clients an opportunity to come in and experience mini-spa service samplings. Massage at these events have been very successful.

Ramirez: I started using a public relations firm back in 2007, and it has done wonders for

my brand. Men are more likely to visit a spa after reading a blurb or an article about its superb massages and facilities in a respectable publication. Flyers and gym coupons did not really work for us.

Knowlton: We have a corporate wellness program through which we go into companies' offices to perform chair massage. Working directly with these professionals has helped us to attract a lot of regular male clients.

Any pointers for pros performing men's massage services?

Komaiko: Make sure there's a *white* robe and a blanket available.

Riego: Also, make sure he's covered adequately, with correct-sized robes. Keep his feet warm so he's not distracted. Also, remember that men seek consistency and symmetry in a service experience. They want you to anticipate their needs rather than having to ask for, say, a preferred room temperature. And they appreciate little things—a scalp massage may not be part of the protocol, for example, but if you know or sense he wants it, incorporate it. A majority of men do request female service providers.

Got any tricks for upselling add-ons during massage services?

Dubois: A thorough pre-service consultation is crucial—ascertain whether he seeks more of a relaxation or therapeutic massage. Explain the difference, and upgrade if necessary to make it more therapeutic.

Ramirez: It's actually just as easy with men as with women. Educate them about the benefits of the add-on or treatment, and they will agree to it. Also, trust is very important here. Once guys get to know and trust the service provider, they'll sign up for the entire spa menu. I have many guys who come for a massage and, by the next visit, want a facial, massage and body scrub. After a few weeks, I even have them coming to me for waxing and clipping.



These treats may strike him as fluffy at first, but the art is in the upsale here.

BOYS' BODY TREATMENTS

Scrubs and wraps are what a lot of people envision when they think of spa services. But this can be a double-edged sword, especially if the people in question are men with preconceived notions...

Honestly, is it possible to talk men into scrubs and wraps and such?

Ramirez: Men do prefer massage and facials over body treatments, so it really comes down to how the spa owner markets these treatments. Because body scrubs and wraps are guys' least favorites, I would focus more on facials and massage. But in any case, stick to neutral phrases and certainly maintain a 'guys only' section on your spa menu that includes some body treatments. After all, men are just as concerned as women about their appearance; they're just more quiet and discreet about it. In 2011, sales for men's grooming products jumped 30%.

Patterson: Body treatments are a bit harder because they are seen as more of a luxury. I've introduced men to scrubs by incorporating them into facials—I apply an herbal scrub to the legs and feet while they are under the steam. Reflexology is another treatment men love. I use our pedicure tubs to soak the feet, and perform a foot and leg scrub, using essentials oils throughout the treatment. *Aaaaah.*

Dubois: Once you get men in for any treatment, just provide them with quality service and tell them about your other offerings. Guys' big-

gest misconception—we have learned this from chatting with guests at our men's nights—is that the spa is just for women. Once they experience the benefits and results, though, they love it.

Komaiko: Men also tend to think their skin is not as vulnerable as women's, and that a series of such treatments needn't take place.

How can spa owners help men overcome these misconceptions?

Komaiko: You can ease their concerns by being certain to name your spa services for men with similar monikers to those used for women's services – but not exactly the same. Make names and explanations clear and direct.

Riego: Use words like 'performance,' 'active' and 'energy.'

Would you suggest pitching body treatments during the 'upsell' of another service?

Riego: Yes. Men are some of the easiest customers to upgrade, especially when they are relaxed and enjoying themselves. Unlike women, most of them do not focus too much on pricing.

GENDER-NEUTRAL NAIL CARE

Today's professional men are no strangers to the benefits of a well-manicured handshake. But *any* man is liable to jump on board once he experiences the relaxing effects of a mani/pedi.

How do you position manicures and pedicures in a way that appeals to men?

Ramirez: Use guy terms. Just like 'Sports Massage,' think 'Handyman Manicure.' 'Soft, supple hands' will not appeal to men.

Dubois: Keep the language simple, and don't use fancy, elaborate names. Try 'Gentleman's Manicure' and 'Sports Pedicure.' We have a popular men's package called The Works, which includes a master barber cut, brow trim and manicure. Also keep in mind, men want to feel comfortable in the spa environment. Oftentimes, spas sport super-feminine design, and men feel out of place. In our spa, we've created a section for men. We have a private Barber Spa for the male client, stocked with barber chairs and wood-paneled mani/pedi stations, as well as a separate men's locker room with amenities such as a rain shower and steam room. For additional services,

men can directly enter the spa from this area.

Patterson: In creating my spa, I sought to create an androgynous environment that's comfortably classic. In our nail room, we have old-fashioned movie picture posters of Marilyn Monroe, Audrey Hepburn—and Johnny Cash. But by far, my best marketing vehicle to attract men for grooming services was an event dubbed 'A Beer and A Buzz.' I invited local micro-breweries to come in and offer beer tastings while the guys got spa services: manicures, pedicures, facials, waxing and head-neck-shoulder massages. I had wives order the services they wanted their guys to try, drop their guys off and pick them up at the end of the night. A local newspaper heard about it and dispatched a reporter and photographer. I ended up on the front page! You couldn't ask for better advertising.



Maintain a no-nonsense, results-oriented approach to a man's facial—and lay off the “motherly lectures.”

FACIALS FOR THE FELLOWS

They're a bread-and-butter aspect of any day spa's business, but attracting men to esthetic services requires a deft touch. The words that trigger women, for example, just won't work with this half of the population.

What specific language best speaks to men?

Ramirez: Think neutral words. As much as I like the word 'beauty,' that will never work for guys. If you notice, many salons and spas are now using the word 'grooming' all over their ad campaigns—especially those that specifically target men. Men want to look and feel good without feeling like less of a man, so 'natural' is another word that works.

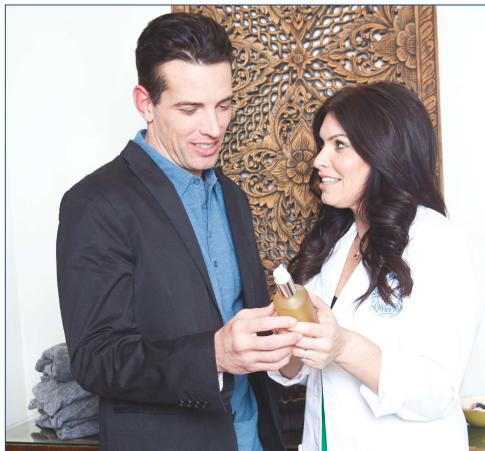
Komaiko: Men also don't respond as well to the expression 'antiaging,' as they seem to prefer more direct, results-oriented words like 'exfoliation' and 'cleansing'—you want to describe the actual purposes and processes that occur, rather than the larger concepts behind them.

What kind of man seeks facials?

Komaiko: In general, men who have women in their lives for whom such treatment is a basic aspect of self-care. Also, men who have to be in the public eye for their jobs in the arts and entertainment industries.

Patterson: Men who care about the way they look will spend money on grooming, especially if they have a wife or girlfriend who encourages them to take care of that unibrow or those ear hairs.

Knowlton: We've attracted males by donating spa gift certificates to local auctions that men tend to attend with their wives or girlfriends. Also,



Establish trust throughout his visit and a successful retail transaction at the end becomes more likely.

I'm the only spa owner in my local Business Networking International Group. I meet and tell plenty of fellow professionals about my business at our weekly meetings—it's great for meeting new men and demystifying spa services such as facials.

Riego: The best way to reach men is through their wives, girlfriends, sisters and friends. Many men get their first taste of spa by accompanying another person, usually a woman. Couple's facials aren't a bad idea. But creating an environment and some promotions that will also make men comfortable coming in on their own is the key.

How can a pro avoid turning off male clients during facial services?

Ramirez: Men seek knowledge and experience without the 'motherly touch.' Some female estheticians like to lecture their customers about their lack of skincare regimen at home—and guys don't respond well to that. Any hint of judgment from their service provider, and they will not return for follow-up appointments. Men still make many grooming mistakes at home, and as grooming experts, our job is to guide and educate—not embarrass or punish—them. So I don't get into that mom or dad role; I'm more like their buddy. ■

Russell A. Jackson is a freelance writer based in West Hollywood, California.

THEY'VE GOT MALE...

...male-friendly spa potions, that is!

Alchimie Forever
(Universal Companies),
universalcompanies.com

Aveda, aveda.com

Christina USA, christina-usa.com

Cuccio, cuccio.com

DermAware, dermaware.com

Equibal, thebodyperfect.com

Eve Taylor, eve-taylor.com

GM Collin, gmcollin.com

GlyMed, glymedplus.com

Guinot, guinotusa.com

Menscience Androceuticals,
menscience.com

Murad, murad.com

Pevonia, pevoniapro.com

Phytomer, phytomer.com

Rhonda Allison,
rhondaallison.com

Skin Authority, skinauthority.com

Sothys, sothys-usa.com

Sranrom, Sranrom.us