

Manning Up

A Reading, Pennsylvania-based franchise offers a new twist on the old shave-and-a-haircut.

WINNING WAYS

By Kendra Kozen



In the early '90s, beauty industry veteran Howard Hafetz found that traditional barbershops were disappearing from American culture: His research suggested that between 1964 and 1994, 95% of all barbershops went out of business. Based on this research and the fact that industry trends were starting to focus on the male demographic, with more emerging product lines exclusively for males, Hafetz created American Male (americanmale.com), a salon/spa franchise catering exclusively to

men. Today, he operates the company with his son and daughter, and it's growing faster than a five o'clock shadow.

DS: How was American Male born?

HH: I started the first American Male salon as a learning lab for a beauty industry distributor. The idea caught on and soon people were asking about opening their own American Male salon. With almost no marketing, the first American Male salons started opening, and eventually I realized we had a great concept that needed further development and protection. That's when we made the transfer to a franchise.



Howard Hafetz (pictured right), founder/creator of American Male, now operates this successful men's salon/spa franchise with his daughter Jessica (pictured left), vice president of operations, and son Josh.

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DS: Describe American Male as it is today.

HH: American Male is an upscale full-service salon for guys. We offer services in hair, nail and skin care and-the thing every guy seems to love the most-a complimentary beverage of beer, soda, coffee or water with every service. We found that most guys aren't yet ready to *ask* for spa services but they do love receiving them. So we've incorporated lots of spa treatments as part of our general experience. For example, our signature Quality Grooming Experience includes a consultation, scalp massage, haircut, re-shampoo and style. Other services include facials, waxing, hand and foot detailing, and massage.

DS: What has been the most important factor in the growth of the franchise?

HH: I think it's the fact that American Male sells an experience and not just a haircut. *Philadelphia Style* magazine said, "American Male will do for the haircut what Starbucks did for the cup of coffee by changing the whole experience and making it better." The man's personal-care business continues to grow and we're very much on trend. We appeal to men young and old, blue collar and white collar. Every town has top-notch beauty salons for women; we're usually the only outlet just for men.

DS: What are your plans for the future of American Male?

HH: We're looking to expand nationwide. Currently, we have 16 locations from Pennsylvania to California and in both small towns and major markets like Chicago, Philadelphia, and Las Vegas. Our projection is to open 200 salons by 2012.



a full service salon for guys

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