

NAILS Magazine

Get him in the door... & keep him coming back for more

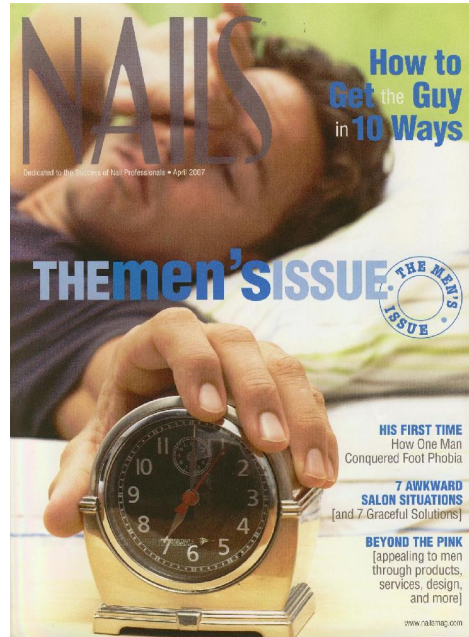
By Erin Snyder Dixon

Drive down any commercial street and you will likely see a sign for a salon or spa. Lucky you! Nail care and other body care services have become so commonplace that many look at them as maintenance rather than a splurge. But competition is stiffening, so why not concentrate on largely untapped markets? Adjust your strategies to include men. Strengthen your current systems to retain the clients you currently have while indulging him in new services.

Even the busiest salons must maintain visibility. Visibility includes any means by which a salon can remind the community at large that the salon is open and vital. Sooner or later a client moves away and there will be space to fill.

Open your doors in a vibrant area of the city. Chanel Mathis of OHM Spa Sanctuary in Newport News, Va., chose a busy area in a recently redeveloped city center. This enticed local businessmen to drop into the spa. The city center is a mixed-use area that supports high-end condos, office buildings, dining, and upscale shopping.

Concentrate advertising and public relations efforts in areas where potential clients congregate, like sporting events and professional development groups. Local business-to-business newsletters and radio stations are also good vehicles to reach your target consumers. Take care to include pictures of men, women, and teens enjoying treatments in your publicity materials.



Volunteer to give a talk at a local organization. Rotary, Kiwanis, churches, synagogues, and after-hours business groups regularly have speakers who give a short talk and take questions. These events are a nice place to be seen and start to build credibility. Keep it light and informational to position yourself as an expert, rather than sales person.

Set up a booth at a wedding planning event, just make sure you take care of the needs of the groomsmen. Men often feel left out at these events. Offer free mini hand massages and a nail buff to keep them occupied while the bride-to-be peruses the kiosk. This will give you the chance to chat up your services and let them see how good it feels to be taken care of.

Grow your own clients by getting involved in local school sporting events. Rhonda Kubik of The Purple Pinky in Ford City, Pa., loves to talk about the high school football

players the salon adopts each season. This encourages school spirit and encourages the players, their families, and girlfriends to visit the salon.

Take one day out of every quarter to visit every business within walking distance. Say hello, renew friendships, and leave a stack of business cards or service menus. Let the local businessmen know about upcoming men's night out socials/specials the salon is having.

Send out press releases on a regular basis to let the public know what's going on. Supporting your local charity? Offering free paraffin dips at the local pub's Sunday event? Giving grooming tips at a "dress for success" event? They are all great reasons to send press releases to your local papers. Most papers will even give you the guidelines to write them.

Have you ever noticed that when you go into your favorite national-chain coffee house it smells exactly like the one at home? When it comes to consistency, the major chains have led the way. What if our clients felt the same level of comfort every time they stepped through our doors? Good energy and great customer service begin with consistency.

You can take some clues from salons that have jumped into the market with both feet. Full-service salons like American Male, a franchise with locations around the country, rely on men to fill their appointment books and have succeeded in a big way. They have developed standards of presentation that not only make men feel comfortable; they make them feel like they are missing out if they don't experience the services. Gender-friendly colors minus the froufrou of yesterday's beauty parlor entice them to settle in and get comfy.

