How to Attract more Millennials into your Practice

The field of aesthetic plastic surgery often markets to people 40 and older, and with good reason. But you may be surprised to learn which age demographic also accounts for a large (and growing) number of plastic surgery procedures. Baby Boomers (those born between 1945-1965) and Millennials (those born between 1980-1995) may represent opposite poles on the cultural spectrum, but they share one surprising trait: they're both having aesthetic procedures in record numbers.

All over the world, the under-25 population is now the mathematical majority. In terms of the sheer number of procedures, the U.S. accounts for approximately 20% of all surgical and nonsurgical treatments, closely followed by China, Brazil and India. However, when tallying the per capita rate of cosmetic surgery procedures (the total percentage of the population that undergoes cosmetic surgery), South Korea tops the list. Approximately one of five South Korean women has had some kind of plastic surgery, compared with one in every 20 U.S. women. Several Asian nations, for instance, often have many patients requesting eyelid surgery to appear more "western." And there are similar trends among Millennials in Greece, Italy, Brazil and Colombia. Of course there is high demand for breast augmentation surgery all over the world, though Greece leads in this area; South America, however, boasts the greatest overall percentage of invasive face-and-body procedures. And injectable fillers, such as Botox, enjoy worldwide popularity among the exploding market of people under 30.

What is driving this increase? Young people often choose aesthetic procedures to help them resemble their favorite celebrities or achieve a specific look. Along with a growing social normalization of aesthetic plastic surgery, there is also what might be termed "the selfie effect." Millennials spend so much time on social media taking, posting and looking at photos of themselves that they are more aware of their appearance than ever before…and more willing to take action to get the look(s) they desire.

The popularity of social media is clearly more than just a fad, and is especially significant for marketing to this age group. Millennials are far more media-savvy than previous generations, and typically don't respond to traditional marketing such as magazine ads. Instead, they trust word-of-mouth recommendations and websites that are not overtly focused on sales.

Here are some basic steps you can take to welcome an influx of new and younger patients to your practice:

- Maintain a strong social media presence (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, and/or other platforms) that allows patients to stay in touch with you and - whenever possible - share testimonials. In Brazil, for example, Millennials account for more than half of all social media site visits. That's a market you cannot afford to overlook.

- Develop a mobile app for your practice. Apps not only let you stay connected to your clientele, but they're an excellent way to collect data on what patients are looking for.

- Offer digital coupons that can be integrated into emails, text messages and social media content. Everyone likes a bargain, and such campaigns can help build patient loyalty and trust.

- Make sure your reception area is welcoming to patients of all ages: brightly-colored posters, art deco furniture or a tea station are nice touches, and a mix of popular music (played on low volume) is sure to appeal to a wide audience.

With the Millennial market in particular, it's important to emphasize safety and responsibility in all types of aesthetic procedures Younger people might be tempted to have injectable fillers at in-home "Botox parties," but the risks of such procedures far outweigh the (slight) savings in cost. It's vital to reach patients early in their decision-making process to help them understand the importance of working with a board-certified aesthetic plastic surgeon in an accredited facility.