

Smartlipo® – A Rewarding Tool for Your Practice

An Interview with Kevin Johnson, MD

Advanced Aesthetics – Coeur d'Alene, Idaho



Dr. Kevin Johnson, a General Surgeon in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, may be located in a region of the country that does not bring to mind "aesthetic hot bed" for many people; yet since the addition of Smartlipo in December of 2007, business for Dr. Johnson has continued to grow exponentially. Dr. Johnson notes his practice revenue doubled, and then tripled, as a direct correlation to the addition of Smartlipo. In January 2010 **Advanced Aesthetics** upgraded to Smartlipo Triplex to integrate the newest technology on the market into their practice. Today his office averages 200-250 cases per year.

WHAT PROMPTED THE ADDITION OF SMARTLIPO INTO YOUR PRACTICE?

As a board certified general surgeon, I have been trained to perform surgical procedures on virtually every area of the body. I developed an interest in aesthetic medicine, and specifically the use of various types of lasers, to improve the appearance of patients requesting minimally invasive procedures. I began my educational process which was very similar to what one does when deciding to perform a new surgical procedure. I read, attended workshops, participated in hands-on training sessions with physician mentors, and started treating patients. I carved out time in my general surgical practice to see aesthetic patients, and then I carved out more time, adopted more new treatments, monitored the literature, especially watching for cutting-edge technologies, and slowly grew my aesthetics practice.

The breakthrough event for our practice was the implementation of Smartlipo laser-assisted body sculpting. Our aesthetic practice revenue easily doubled the first year and tripled the second year. With the help of Cynosure's extensive national and worldwide marketing campaign that made Smartlipo a household name, we were, and have been able to maintain, continued growth despite some of the worst financial times in our country's history.

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SO EVEN IN A TIME OF RECESSION, SMARTLIPO WAS A WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT?

Yes, in a time of recession people still continued to have Smartlipo. In the hardest hit years of 2008-2009, we did not see a slow down in patients. The procedure is at a lower price point than a \$15,000 facelift. For us, the procedure was somewhat recession proof, which is a powerful tool to have in this economy. There is no question: Smartlipo was a worthwhile investment. It was a serious game changer for me; previously we were just doing hair removal and adding Smartlipo into the practice provided an exponential leap in revenue.

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WHAT OTHER PROCEDURES DID YOU STILL SEE PATIENTS COMING IN FOR DESPITE THE RECESSION?

Aside from Smartlipo, they were also coming in for the SmartSkin™ CO₂ treatment. We incorporated that technology at around the same time that we upgraded to TriPlex, around January 2010. This was very important because even though we had many patients coming in for Smartlipo procedures, SmartSkin carried us when there were gaps in between patients. The procedure can be offered at a low price point and is a minimally invasive, non-surgical procedure. People with a lower income or less downtime available find this treatment very desirable and are even happier when they see the excellent results that SmartSkin provides. We are also able to add dermal fillers or Botox to upsell these patients and offer combination therapies with the SmartSkin treatment.

TODAY WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR BUSINESS IS SMARTLIPO BASED?

Approximately 70% of our business is now Smartlipo based. The product differentiates us from the competition because it has clear brand name recognition. People search for Smartlipo online and if you have Smartlipo in your office versus another "lipo," people are more likely to find you.

ASIDE FROM THE BRAND RECOGNITION, WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST EFFECTIVE MARKETING TOOL?

In order to market Smartlipo we used a combination of different media. A layered approach to marketing is best: a strong product brand name (Smartlipo), a strong web site, and a strong search engine optimization strategy. TV commercials help highlight

the product and the office brand; ten of our last patients came in from television alone. Print and radio can also be effective with a combined strategy for their implementation; the key is to pay attention and keep track of what is working for your practice. The Smartlipo online physician finder that Cynosure provides is a great tool, and its referrals alone will bring in many patients; but continue to actively market yourself and invest in activities that work in your area.

WHAT HAS THE ADDITION OF SMARTLIPO DONE FOR YOUR PRACTICE?

For me, adopting Smartlipo has not only financially benefited my practice but really, as a surgeon and physician, it is a procedure that is personally rewarding. You can see the effects of your work right away and my patients are extremely happy with their results. The patients are so grateful for their new body; their self-esteem, confidence and attitude toward life completely change. I had one patient that came to me after her Smartlipo procedure and said, "Thank you for giving me my life back!" Responses like that impress upon you that you are making a difference in your patients' lives, which is tremendously rewarding.

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