

# Case Study: Smartlipo® – A Tool for Practice Growth in a Challenging Market

**Kevin Johnson, MD**  
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*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"; yet since the addition of Smartlipo, business for Dr. Johnson has continued to grow during challenging times. Even during the recent economic downturn, his office averages 450-500 Smartlipo 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, specifically the use of various types of lasers, to improve the appearance of patients requesting minimally invasive procedures. I began my educational process 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 then started treating patients.

The breakthrough for our practice was adding Smartlipo laser-assisted body sculpting. Initially, our aesthetic practice revenue doubled the first year and tripled the second year and overtime, the number of cases has grown from 250 to approximately 500 per year.

## So even during the recent economic downturn, Smartlipo was a worthwhile investment?

Yes, in a time of recession people still continue to have Smartlipo Triplex procedures and the device is a reliable foundation for my cosmetic practice. I started with Smartlipo during a recessionary period in 2008-2009 and added the newer Smartlipo Triplex during the most recent downturn. During both periods, we did not see a slow-down in patients. Many of our patients will treat at least 2 areas and a good percentage over 4 areas. The procedure is somewhat recession proof, which is a powerful tool to have in this economy and with all the changes that are

occurring in healthcare. There is no question Smartlipo was a worthwhile investment. It was a serious game changer and adding Smartlipo provided an exponential leap in revenue and allowed me to grow during challenging economic times.

*“Smartlipo Triplex continues to be the financial foundation of my practice and even grew during the recent economic downturn. Today my office averages 450-500 cases per year.”*

*- Kevin Johnson, MD*

## What other procedures did you still see patients coming in for despite the recession?

Aside from Smartlipo Triplex, patients are continuing to come in for skin renewal with the SmartSkin™ CO2. We incorporated the technology the same time we upgraded to Smartlipo Triplex and during the first recession, SmartSkin helped carry us when there were gaps in-between patients. People with limited disposable income or require less downtime, find this treatment very desirable and are even happier when they see the excellent results. The procedure is at a lower price point than a \$15,000 facelift and many patients are just as happy.

## Today what percentage of your business is Smartlipo based?

Approximately 70% of our business is Smartlipo based. The product differentiates us from the competition because it has clear brand name recognition. In my opinion, Smartlipo Triplex is state-of-the-art and Gold Standard technology for body contouring. Patients ask for it by name because they are no longer interested in longer recovery times. People search for Smartlipo online and if you have Smartlipo in your office versus another "lipo," people will come to your office.

## Aside from the brand recognition, what has been your most effective marketing tool?

Having Smartlipo Triplex as the foundation of my cosmetic practice has allowed me to continue investing in my practice and developing a robust online website. A layered approach to marketing is best: a strong product brand name (Smartlipo Triplex), a strong web site, and a strong search engine optimization strategy. Initially, internal email marketing to existing patients is the most cost effective marketing tool. The Smartlipo online physician finder that Cynosure provides is a great tool, and its referrals alone bring in many patients.

## What has the addition of Smartlipo done for your practice?

For me, adopting Smartlipo has not only financially benefited my practice, 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 changes.

Adding another revenue stream to your practice with Smartlipo is simple because you really only have your fixed costs and procedure costs. It's kind of a no-brainer financially, because the numbers with Smartlipo Triplex work out so well. When you look at the number of patients needed to be profitable each month, it's a very small number based on the percentage of people who want the procedure.

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- Kevin Johnson, MD



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