



TORKIL GUDNASON/TRUNK ARCHIVE

# POWER MOVES

From New York to Los Angeles, Chicago to Dallas, men are finding their boardroom edge in the plastic surgeon's office.

By Sandra Ballentine

**A** square, or “superhero,” jawline. A flat forehead. The right amount of crow’s-feet. A neck that doesn’t spill over a spread collar. Zero age spots. Thanks to Instagram, reality television, and a new generation of hyper-self-aware millennials charging through corporate America—and in a striking moment of gender parity—men are feeling pressure to put their best face forward. In the discreet offices of plastic surgeons and dermatologists in New York City, Dallas, London, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, C-suite executives are fine-tuning their jaws, eyes, necks, and brow lines. And it’s (mostly) not out of vanity—it’s performance enhancement.

“Who cares about your abs?” says one 43-year-old banking vice president. “No one can see those in a 7:30 A.M. meeting. It’s all about what’s above the collar.” These men, often in their mid to late 40s, are using nips, tucks, lasers, and injectables as a way to hold a potential client’s attention longer or to compete with younger colleagues.

More than 1.3 million men underwent some sort of cosmetic procedure in the United States in 2016, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons—from quick dermatologist fixes like Botox, fillers, micro-liposuction,

and skin resurfacing and tightening to more invasive work, including upper- and lower-eyelid lifts, chin implants, and neck lifts.

“I see hedge fund guys, lawyers, prominent doctors and politicians,” says New York City dermatologist Macrene Alexiades. “They don’t want to look 30, but they don’t want to look 60, either, so I keep them in their 40s.” To this end, she uses needle-delivered radio frequency to lift sagging jowls, injects filler to soften marionette lines and deep folds, and tackles extra neck strands with Botox.

The neck and chin area is of particular concern to these men. Peter Kopelson, a Los Angeles dermatologist in demand among Hollywood’s top execs, uses Sculptra, an injectable volumizer, to square out the jawline (a common request in the industry) and Kybella to dissolve fat under the chin. But noninvasive strategies are no match for a full-blown turkey wattle. For this,

New York plastic surgeon David Rosenberg devised the Executive Neck Lift. “The men who come into my office don’t mind wrinkles or a little jowl. But a wattle is deflating,” he says. The procedure appeals to those who can’t afford a long recovery time outside the office. “I use light sedation, like the kind you get for a colonoscopy,” he says of the procedure, which costs between \$25,000 and \$35,000. “You do it on a Thursday, and you’re back in the office on Monday, wattle-free.”

A 60-year-old investment manager of a leading private equity fund is blunt about his decision to have the procedure. “We’re in a field where the companies we want to acquire are younger businesses,” he says. “I didn’t want to look like the old guy in the room.” Add to this the fact that he recently married a woman 20 years his junior. “I would attend work-related functions with her, and she made me look older,” he says. “So rather than chuck her out

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because she was hurting me in business," he says jokingly, "I decided to find another solution."

All of these procedures-cum-boardroom-hacks, long considered the domain of women, are increasingly being viewed by men as required maintenance. Manhattan-based dermatologist Paul Jarrod Frank says around 40 percent of his patients are men and estimates that they spend between \$5,000 and \$20,000 a year in his office on what he describes as "another form of grooming, no different than covering gray hair, getting a nice tailored suit, or having a clean shave at the barber." He describes his custom blend of lasers, lipo, fillers, and ultrasound skin tightening as Viagra for the skin.

hide in boardrooms or on Sun Valley retreats with a bunch of other executives," he says, "but nowadays they need to be out there. They need to be on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram. People want to see the face of a company."

The way that face appears is especially important in moments of crisis, when it comes time for damage control and tense TV interviews. The last thing you want is an angry-looking CEO. More and more, companies are leaning toward leaders who appear youthful and dynamic, and project positivity.

"The phenomenon of men using plastic surgery and other procedures to get and stay ahead in business is growing every day," observes Timothy Marten, of San Francisco's Marten

Marten says. Steinbrech agrees: "They want to look fresher but not feminized." As Manhattan-based plastic surgeon Adam Kolker puts it, "You don't want to smooth men's skin to baby-bottom status." Kolker is not a big fan of volume restoration in men, either. "You have to be careful because it can feminize the features very quickly."

Eye-area tweaks require an especially deft and restrained hand, the doctors note, as nothing is more disheartening (or potentially disfiguring) than bad eye work. But tiny amounts of filler to restore volume, expertly administered Botox to soften crow's-feet and brow furrows, or a carefully executed eyelid lift can make all the difference. As Frank puts it, "When men look in the mirror and don't have hollow rings around their eyes or look tired, it makes them feel stronger and helps sharpen their competitive edge." He doesn't try to make his patients look perfect or pretty, however. "When I do Botox on men, the last thing I want to do is remove their wrinkles or erase their crow's-feet—it looks stupid."

As with all important investments, due diligence is crucial when it comes to buying youth. Most men don't wear makeup or have a hairline that can easily hide badly placed incision scars, so it's important to research and meet with more than one specialist.

Douglas, the 52-year-old president of a global incentive-rewards company did copious legwork before finally selecting London-based plastic surgeon Marko Lens to perform his upper-lid eye tuck, known as blepharoplasty. The preparation paid off. Postsurgery, he appears more awake and brighter (and a decade younger) but not to the point where anyone asks him what he did. "My own kids didn't notice!"

Which brings us to the cardinal rule—conservatism is key. "You never want to overcorrect," Steinbrech says. "Businessmen don't want to look 'done.' They don't want a Kenny Rogers special. They just want to look like better, more vibrant versions of themselves." ♦

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One of Frank's patients, a 46-year-old partner in a New York private equity firm, had his first Botox treatment at 38, in preparation for his wedding. When he realized that what started as vanity had ancillary professional benefits, he kept going. "A big part of my job is convincing people to sell me their companies, so I want to have on my game face at meetings," he says. That means softening his crow's-feet and getting rid of the frown creases between his eyes. "I don't do so much that I look like I'm 20, just enough to roll back the clock a bit. People ask me if I'm working out more or eating better."

"I call it C-level surgery," says Douglas Steinbrech, a plastic surgeon with offices in New York and Beverly Hills. He correlates the uptick in surgery and other aesthetic treatments for men to the rise of social media and high-definition television. "CEOs used to

Clinic for Plastic Surgery. Especially in youth-obsessed Silicon Valley, where looking as old as 40 can mean you won't be taken seriously—or can even be career ending.

**W**hile certain VCs and tech entrepreneurs are obsessed with exponentially extending their life spans, most of them don't want to look as if they've lived forever. As one well-known Silicon Valley patriarch in his early 40s observes, "It seems like half the guys in Buck's [a Woodside diner favored by the tech crowd] these days are swollen or bruised from their Botox injections."

Power-face paradigms shift with job titles and geography (with men in urban centers more likely to undergo cosmetic treatments), but there are some constants. "Even in a time of increasing gender fluidity, most men are after a natural, masculine appearance,"