



The scary truth about boardroom Botox

Can non-invasive cosmetic treatments save your career?

BY SYDNEY LONEY | PHOTOGRAPHY BY LUIS MORA

“One patient told me that all the people being hired in her company were younger, and she felt pressure to fit in,” says dermatologist Dr. Katie Belezny.

Every six months, Allana Davis has a little work done. Sometimes it's to refresh the fillers under her eyes so she looks less tired, sometimes it's a quick shot of Botox to plump up the Cupid's bow around her lips, or to smooth out the faint hint of a furrow between her brows. The Toronto business owner and makeup artist, who is only in her mid-30s, took the plunge and got cosmetic-procedures about six years ago—and she did it for her job.

“I feel the pressure to maintain my appearance and keep looking ‘refreshed,’” she says. “I need to attract 16- and 17-year-old clients, so I see these procedures as an investment in my career.”

While the quest for eternal youth (or the next best thing, *looking* eternally youthful) isn't new, one of the underlying reasons behind it is people are increasingly worried that every telltale line is putting their jobs at risk.

“There is pressure—and a double standard—for many professional women to demonstrate they have the experience to be a senior leader in an organization, but not look the age commensurate with that experience,” says one senior executive at a mid-size company whom I spoke with. In her early 60s, she started with Botox, then added fillers and “skin-tightening” treatments into her regimen. She goes in every three to six months to keep up her “refreshed” look. She was also, however, resolute about her request for privacy, since she doesn't want her colleagues to know she's had work done in an attempt to blend in with her younger co-workers.

“Patients tell me they feel that appearing younger gives them an advantage at work,” says Dr. Katie Belezny, a Vancouver dermatologist and clinical instructor in the Department of Dermatology at UBC. “Even if it's simply about feeling more confident, that alone can be a major career benefit. One patient told me that all the people being hired in her company were younger, and she felt pressure to fit in.”

Howard Lende has felt that pressure. “I'm in real estate and, like a lot of businesses, it's people-oriented,” the Toronto realtor says. “And what do people look at? They look at your face. It's a two-second test when you meet someone.” Lende, who is in his 50s, has tried several non-invasive proce-

dures over the years: Thermage for skin tightening, IPL for age spots and injectables for fine lines. He says having the procedures keeps him confident—and competitive. “You know when everything feels perfect, you're dressed great, have great shoes on—it just gives you more energy,” he says. “Your face is like part of your wardrobe, and in this business it's your calling card. With just a few subtle changes, nothing too invasive, you feel better, hold your head up higher, walk stronger.”

Naturally, all of this skin tightening and wrinkle eradicating comes

at a cost. Botox, which lasts up to four months, can start at around \$450 a session, while fillers start at around \$600, IPL at \$500 and microneedling (to stimulate collagen production) starts at around \$900. Davis says it's worth it. “I don't want to erase everything,” she says. “And I'm very open about having it done, which I think is important because it helps normalize it. In the end, I want to look like myself, and these procedures allow me to age a little more gracefully. In this industry, I don't have a choice.”

Davis explains that many of her executive clients also have cosmetic procedures done out of a perceived need to “stay relevant and look ‘fresh and approachable’ at work.” Several of her clients joke that they've got a standing “lunch date with Lisa” in their office calendars. It's code for what is, in fact, an appointment at DLK on Avenue, Dr. Lisa Kellett's cosmetic dermatology clinic in Toronto.

Many non-invasive treatments literally can be done over a work lunch hour without anyone knowing, says Kellett, who has noticed a steady increase in people booking procedures in order to look as well rested as their younger colleagues. “People are staying in the workplace longer, and society has changed,” she says. “Fifty today isn't what 50 used to be. And when the work is done well, you shouldn't see it. If you're 50, you should look like a good 50—you don't want to look 20.”

Both Belezny and Kellett see patients who invest in minimally invasive treatments to prolong their careers across a variety of industries, from tech to advertising to entertainment. Many start the process around age 35, but women as young as 20 will also come in for “preventative” treatments in hopes of warding off the aging process. “Neuromodulators like Botox or Dysport are especially common because they're easy, non-invasive ways to start and, if you don't like it, the effects disappear,” Kellett says.

Of course, we know this heightened interest in

fillers and injectables has a lot to do with social media sites, where you can scrutinize pics of high-school friends for signs of crow's feet (come on, you've done it, too). Celebrities who appear immune to aging is another factor. “Jennifer Lopez is 49 and she looks as fresh and vibrant as ever, which sets the bar higher for everyone else,” Kellett says. But a growing number of people are seeking surgical procedures not because they want to feel more attractive, but to simply be more employable.

It seems ageism is rampant in the workforce. Recent research by a U.S. staffing company found that roughly one in four employees make judgments about their co-workers' job capabilities based solely on their age. And heaven forbid you're over 40 and looking for a job. Australian researchers found a third of people 45 and older experience some form of age-related discrimination during their job searches.

Hollywood is riffing on the problem. *Younger*, now in its fifth season with a sixth in the works, is about a 40-year-old woman passing herself off as 26 to land a job at a magazine where 30 is considered borderline geriatric. In the show's first episode, Liza (played by Sutton Foster who, according to Wikipedia, was born in 1975) is admonished by a friend: “Nobody wants to hire a 40-year-old has been.” Of course, Liza just needs a quick makeover (highlights, fuchsia lipstick and remembering to say “hashtag” a lot) to mask the extra 14 years she has on her co-workers. In real life, it's not so easy. Women in particular are beginning to feel that covering a few grey strands no longer cuts it, especially if they want to switch careers in a competitive hiring market—or simply keep the jobs they have.

Many women are opting for a more aggressive approach. Lynne Mitchell* is a company vice-president in her 50s who had a mini facelift to tackle the signs of aging on her neck. “The neck is a tricky thing,” she says. “It can be very aging, like the hands.” There was some swelling, but not much bruising and, because the stitches were hidden in her hairline, she was able to return to work after two days.

“I feel more confident,” she says. “If you can take a few years off here and there, then why not? Now when I'm out in public, I generally feel I look good—over 55, but good!” Still, Mitchell says it's important to be realistic about the results. “If you're looking for a miracle to stop aging, don't do it, because you'll never be satisfied,” she says. “I got my neck done and then more aging happened elsewhere on my body, so it's really impossible to stay on top of it with surgical procedures.”

Belezny says that even though patients tell her they want to “look younger,” she tries to shift the conversation away from anti-aging. “I prefer to focus on specific personal goals to help people feel great and rejuvenated whatever their age,” she says.

Maybe a similar shift in focus will eventually make its way into the boardroom—before “willing to get Botox” becomes an implicit part of the average job description.

*Name has been changed

“Your face is like part of your wardrobe, and in this business it's your calling card.”

THE FIRST TIME ALY RAISMAN FOUND HER VOICE

How the Olympian summoned the strength to speak out against her abuser

The first time you got your heart broken, the first time you took a risk, the first time you felt free... Life's inaugural experiences have a way of leaving indelible marks. In our My First series, we ask inspiring women to share a meaningful “first” of their own, something that helped shape who they are today.

Olympic gymnast Aly Raisman was one of 150 women who gave a victim impact statement at the sexual assault trial of former Team USA doctor Larry Nassar this past January. Here Raisman recounts how she gathered the courage to speak out against Nassar, who began

molesting her when she was 15. “Imagine feeling like you have no power and no voice,” she told her abuser in court. “Well you know what, Larry? I have both power and voice, and I am only just beginning to use them.” Raisman, who is using that voice to support #FaceAnything, an Olay initiative encouraging women to be authentically themselves, shares how she found strength.

“In 2015, a few years before the Larry Nassar story broke publicly, I was using my voice to report the abuse, but people weren't listening to me. It was tough, but I kept talking about it because I knew it was right.

If you're facing abuse, know that you matter—your voice matters. If somebody is hurting you, it's not your fault. It's the abuser's fault. Whenever you find the courage to tell someone, do it and don't stop until you get answers. Nobody deserves to feel unsafe.

No matter how hard it is, you're not only fighting for yourself. You have to hold the people around you accountable because they're just going to keep doing it to others. It's very hard to get everyone to understand abuse, but the #MeToo movement caused a shift.

It can be very hard to talk about, especially publicly.

I've been writing in a journal about what I'm grateful for. Meditating, therapy and talking to people I trust helps, too. It's important to try new things. I did my first runway show today for Olay's #FaceAnything event and I wasn't wearing any makeup, which was empowering.

I was born physically strong and very driven. But having a lot of muscles doesn't mean that you're mentally strong. It's the same with being fearless—it doesn't mean you're not afraid, it means you're doing it because it's the right thing to do.”

—As told to Katherine Lalancette



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