



HOW TO CHOOSE A LOCATION THAT WILL
**MAKE YOUR AESTHETICS
PRACTICE THRIVE**

A hand holding a compass over a map, with a blurred background of autumn leaves.

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As an aesthetics provider, one of the first and most important decisions you make is choosing where to locate your practice.

That old mantra “location, location, location” is no understatement. Location is critical to your marketing, your positioning, your foot traffic, repeat business, visibility, and profitability.

In this guide, we’ll examine how to make an informed and data-driven decision when you choose your site.

START WITH

THE BIG PICTURE

WHEN CHOOSING LOCATION

When you approach the question of site selection, move from the broadest to narrowest considerations. If you are starting from scratch or perhaps pondering a big change, then you would first want to look at macro choices. Consider what region or state best suits your needs, and then the size of community.

The choice of a region or city may be determined by personal considerations, such as where you grew up, where your family lives, where your peers and partner lives and works, and where you love (or can at least tolerate) the year-round climate.

Similarly, selecting a community is a process governed by personal preferences and emotional as well as family ties. But as a general rule of thumb, medical aesthetics practices fare better in larger towns and cities because of the bigger population base. Given that aesthetic services are rarely covered by insurance, a larger metropolitan area is more likely to contain enough people with the interest and income to support your practice.



CENTRALIZED LOCATION OFFERS CONVENIENCE TO

POTENTIAL CLIENTS

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER



Choose a style of neighborhood that fits your practice. Do you want to be in a central business district so you can service clients from nearby offices? Or are you targeting referrals from medical practitioners and want to set up shop near professional buildings? Suburban locations can be good options for serving people close to their homes. Of course, you also want to be in a part of town where clients feel comfortable dropping in. Walk around the neighborhood and see how it feels before making a decision.

LOCAL BUSINESSES:



One important and often-overlooked factor is the type of businesses that are located nearby. Adjacent stores, restaurants, and offices set the tone and the context for your practice's image. Avoid locating near industrial, noisy, or unsightly businesses. We will talk about competition later, but for now, focus on placing yourself in a reputable area with other compatible businesses that have been there for a while, or have favorable reviews on websites like Google and Yelp—their reputations can help to add luster to your new business.

CONVENIENCE:



The neighborhood or district should be convenient for your clients. That means it is easily reachable, and generally central in your target geography. Consumers tend to prefer shorter travel times (think 20 to 40 minutes maximum), especially before and after treatments. Moreover, with the frequency that people move these days, you want to make it possible for a new customer to remain a client even if they move around the region, so stay accessible. Think about proximity to public transit, traffic congestion, and ease of parking.

FOOT TRAFFIC:



Along with the centrality of your location, take other steps to make yourself easy to spot. Although it costs more in overhead, the visibility of a corner or street front location can often be worth the additional cost, and sites in a busy, destination retail area will benefit from extra exposure. You'll need to find a happy balance between areas with higher thoroughfare and lower congestion.

PEOPLE MAKE PLACES:

UNDERSTANDING DEMOGRAPHICS

Once you have scouted for a location that is central, in a reputable area, and has as much foot traffic as possible, balance it with some demographic considerations. Demographics are data relating to the local population and its subgroups, and part of your marketing effort must focus on defining which groups you want to target.

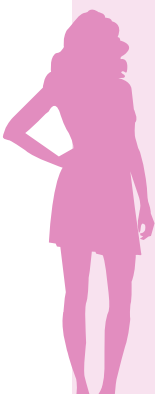
SOME KEY DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS ARE:

GENDER

Women still remain the largest audience for aesthetic services, but the number of men is increasing. Roughly 9/10 aesthetics patients in the United States are women¹.

1. ASAPS. 2016 Cosmetic Surgery National Data Bank Statistics. The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. Available from: <https://www.surgery.org/sites/default/files/ASAPS-Stats2016.pdf> [Accessed Aug 4 2017].

2. Schlessinger B, Schlessinger D, Schlessinger J. Prospective Demographic Study of Cosmetic Surgery Patients. J Clin Aesthet Dermatol. 2010 Nov;3(11):30-35.



AGE

The traditional market for aesthetic services has been middle-aged, but client growth is surging at both the younger and older ends of the spectrum.



AVERAGE INCOME

Since aesthetic services are not covered by insurance, providers should target consumers with enough income or ability to finance treatment.

According to one study, the average client of private practices providing neurotoxins, fillers, and laser hair removals were women and they were largely married, employed, and college-educated².





HEAT MAP AND GROWTH PROJECTION

Demographic information can help you determine your target market. To find an area that will be attractive to these ideal clients, you can use heat maps and growth projection maps. These are available from many different sources depending on your country, and they often incorporate census data.

For example, ArcGIS provides heat maps for the United States showing median income displayed as different colors overlaid on the geography. As well, the U.S. Census has a good interactive explorer tool that displays income clusters in the United States. Some important indicators include population growth rates, median age, and traffic volume.

Once you have found exactly where your demographic is concentrated, reassess your potential locations with a view to convenience and appeal to people in those neighborhoods.



A woman with blonde hair is looking up and smiling at a store window. The window has a white sign that says "COME IN WE'RE OPEN" in blue letters. The background of the window is pink and white. The text "STUDY THE COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE IN SITE SELECTION" is overlaid on a dark grey rectangular box on the left side of the image.

STUDY THE

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE IN SITE SELECTION

You are now starting to focus on some short-list neighborhoods. Before you go any further, make sure you understand how much competition you will face in your location.

A good starting point is to research the existing businesses in the area and determine if they are complementary or competing. A medspa founded five years ago would be classified as competing, for example, while a complementary service would be an upscale gym.

The presence of popular and upscale businesses shows the area is a favorable market for consumers with disposable income.

That being said, the presence of established competitors should not immediately rule out a location. Do more research about other practices to see if there is a unique niche to inhabit, or an untapped demand to meet.

A more quantitative approach would be to examine population-to-provider ratios, since a high ratio would indicate an underserved market. The availability and density of providers offering similar services will set the competition baseline for your practice.

You can also check out the concentration of clinics in a given area by looking at practitioner finder websites operated by vendors of similar devices and treatments as those that you plan on offering. If you are part of a medical office, it can be worth checking resources like the National Plan & Provider Enumeration System in the United States, which is available for you to download. Other information sources include licensing databases, chambers of commerce, and real estate records.

Once you know the lay of the land, you face a few strategic alternatives including locating near similar providers or choosing new locations

BENEFITS OF LOCATING

NEAR SIMILAR PRACTICES

There are several reasons to consider locating close to other aesthetic practices:

1. Enhances your visibility with aesthetics consumers.
2. Establishes your reputation as professional on par with other top providers.
3. Opportunity to attract consumers making price comparisons between providers.
4. Opportunity to draw clients by offering superior facilities, treatments, or services.

Here are some risks associated with this choice:

1. Pricing competition is often a race to the bottom, and not a formula for financial sustainability.
2. Loyal customers will refuse to leave their current preferred practice for yours, leaving very small room for growth.

BENEFITS OF LOCATING

AWAY FROM SIMILAR PRACTICES

As a new practice, there are also benefits to locating where competition is minimal:

1. An unsaturated market has greater consumer potential.
2. No price competition, so you may be able to charge more and gain higher profit margins.
3. Potential to develop a loyal customer base that remains yours even if the market grows and competition moves in.

Here are some risks associated with this choice:

1. Market has not been tested before and may not respond well.
2. New practices might move in and try to poach clients.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT BUILDING IS CRUCIAL

At this point, you have zeroed in on a neighborhood where you'd like to set up shop. Now you're ready to start looking at buildings and offices. A good real estate agent will be very helpful in the process.

As important as the location is, the physical building and its surroundings are also essential considerations for the future success of your practice. You will want to compare several options.

Some important points to keep in mind include:

FINANCIAL

What is the cost? Will you own or lease? What is the length of commitment demanded? Will the landlord make improvements if needed? How frequently can rent be raised? Can you earn a solid profit margin with the fixed expenses of your location?

SUITABILITY

Assess the potential office with respect to your needs, particularly the size and number of treatment rooms, back office and reception space, and waiting room. Does the power and plumbing infrastructure meet your requirements?

STANDALONE OR SHARED SPACE

The decision to own or lease a building may depend on the size of your practice and your budget. Operating as a standalone business will give you more control over the presentation of your clinic, and potentially greater visibility. In contrast, a location in a shared structure—such as an office building, retail complex, or health center—can offer lower overhead costs and the potential to leverage the customer base of nearby businesses.

APPEARANCE

The building you move into must match the image you want for your practice, be it modern, spa-like, friendly, or luxe. Refer back to your demographic data and find a setting that resonates with your target consumer, and makes them feel at ease. Of course, no client wants a dingy, dated facility. Clients appreciate a quiet, clean environment, so look for a space with some buffer from outside noise.

ACCESSIBILITY

How easily can clients find and enter this location? Can people with mobility concerns access your office? If there are steps, are there also ramps, escalators, or elevators on the premises? Is your location hard-to-reach, hidden in a cul-de-sac, or just difficult to locate on GPS systems? What is the parking situation in your area? All of these factors contribute to the overall accessibility of a location.

CONCLUSION

The choice of where to locate your aesthetics clinic is a complex one, and there are many strategies to help you make a decision that will serve your practice for years to come. By assessing the relevant neighborhood data, density of competitors, building features, and growth trends in each location, you have the tools you need to make an informed selection.

At Venus Concept, we've learned from our record of close partnerships with practitioners around the world that the right location and features can make a huge impact on the success of aesthetic offices. We are committed to helping your business grow and thrive.



**TO LEARN MORE, CONTACT US AT
888.907.0115**

