

Nip & tuck your way to a promotion

Neelam Raaj | TNN | Mar 18, 2007, 00:00 IST

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NEW DELHI: Hard work and talent isn't all it takes to rise up the corporate ladder. A little nip and tuck can go a long way in giving ambitious execs a leg-up too.

Asim Naware, 36, is all smiles after his osteotomy. "When I smiled earlier, all you could see were gums. I used to be so embarrassed that I kept my mouth tightly shut and most people mistook it for griminess," says Naware, a senior sales executive in an insurance firm. A Rs-50,000 corrective surgery later, he's convinced that both his boss and clients are already warming to him.

Naware isn't the only one looking to enhance his career prospects. Cosmetic surgeons say a growing number of people are going under the knife to get ahead professionally. "The emphasis on looking good has translated into an increase in career-related surgery. It's become popular with everyone — from a politician who wants to get rid of that paunch to a management consultant opting for breast-reduction before a US posting," says cosmetic surgeon Vivek Kumar.

From genioplasty to correct deviated chins to fat grafting for filling out sunken cheeks, Kumar has done a number of surgeries for professionals unhappy with the way they look.

Surgery doesn't come cheap but it's popular across the board, says Sheila Rohatgi, a Kolkata-based plastic, reconstructive and aesthetic surgeon. The young think it will give them an early edge while the middle-aged want to ward off all signs of ageing. Rohatgi says most popular is facial rejuvenation, a non-surgical procedure that costs around Rs 32,000 for four sittings.

For many years, studies have indicated that attractive people are more successful than others. But do looks or size really matter? "Yes", says Ronesh Puri of Executive Access, a headhunting firm. "Looks do not affect the way people do their job, but it can affect the image of candidates. An obese person might be perceived as laidback or lacking in energy. After all, employers make decisions about hiring or not hiring a person in the first few minutes of meeting them," says Puri.

This may explain why so many professionals feel the need to go under the knife. "There has been an almost 20% to 30% increase in the number of such surgeries since last year," says Dr S S Saha, a plastic surgeon with Sir Gangaram's Hospital. His most recent patient - a chef from Mumbai - opted for abdominal liposuction so that he could look good in his uniform. "For most people, it's about improving self-esteem," points out Dr Kumar.

A botox boost for the career? Many seem to be willing to give it a shot.

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