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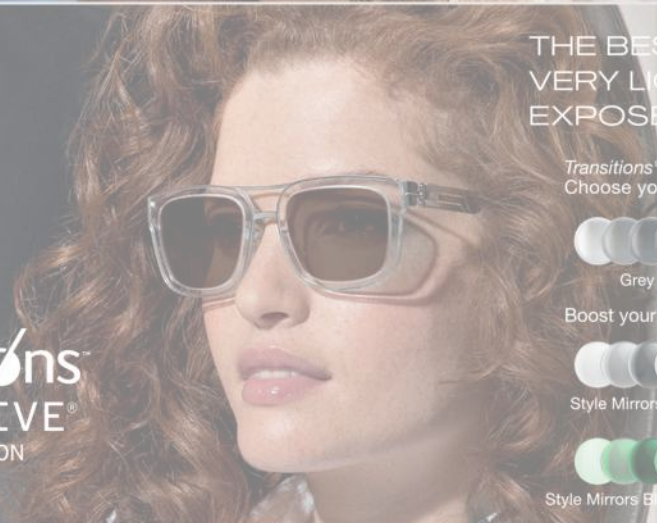
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OPTICAL PRISM

December 2022 | Vol. 40 | No. 12

LOOKING AHEAD

Marketing
ideas for
2023

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way to add
a niche

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with
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Shinola SH5001 by Flexon



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If you ask any ECP why they went into business, their answer will likely be, “to help people see better.” But for many, their training and education may not have prepared them for the business side of the optical business.

Any business has its challenges, especially in these days of staffing shortages and online shopping. The optical business is especially challenging because it's one of the few enterprises that combines health care and retail—which may seem to be at opposite ends of the customer service spectrum.

Meanwhile, advertising and social media are constantly inundating your customers with cheaper, more convenient alternatives, and shopping online has become the norm since the pandemic.

The answer, as this issue of *Optical Prism* illustrates, is to provide customer service that's second to none.

It all starts with the right staff, but how do you find, train and keep the best staff in these days of staffing shortages? In our first feature article titled, “The Great Hiring Hurdle,” writer Amanpreet Dhami spoke to industry experts to uncover the many ways you can build an amazing, customer-focused staff by taking non-traditional approaches to hiring, training and rewarding your people.

Technology can also play a role, because it can help you streamline your business and your staffing requirements. Our second feature by assistant editor David Goldberg looks at the in-office solutions that can help you get ahead, from contactless dispensing and fitting frames with augmented reality to making eye care accessible for everyone around the world.

Adding a niche to your practice is another way to build your business. In our Eye Opener column, business expert Nancy Dewald outlines a step-by-step approach to branching out into niches such as dry eye clinics or myopia control. And in our In Focus column, the experts at Avulux explain how they can help you can add migraine care to your practice.

You'll also want to check out our Vision & Voice page this month for inspiration and advice from your peers on how to run a successful business. But no matter what you do, it only matters if your customers and potential customers know about it. With that in mind, Kristy Koehler from Marketing4ECPs offers monthly marketing ideas in our Marketing Insights column.

With a new year on the horizon, it's the perfect time to reinvigorate your business and make the changes that will take you into 2023 with all the tools you need to build a strong and healthy business. We hope this issue gives you the a wealth of ideas to put you on the road to success.

Happy Holidays, and here's to a bright and shining New Year!

JANET LEES, Managing Editor

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WHAT ARE YOUR TIPS FOR RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS?

“ I follow what I call the Four Cs of Eye Care. First, be curious. Get to know your patient by listening more and talking less. You’ll be amazed at how much easier it is to understand their needs and wants while also establishing a long-term, trusting relationship with them. Also, being curious about new technologies and innovations can help you succeed. Second, be connected. Besides your patients, connect with your staff. Don’t lead from the top down – try a more collaborative approach to business management. Third, be courageous. Don’t be afraid to take some calculated risks by bringing on new diagnostic instrumentation and introducing new services and product lines to get an edge on the competition. It’s better to be first than a follower! And finally, be competent. Know your trade, train yourself and always be learning. Know how to problem solve and provide solutions based on your patient’s needs.”

DR. KERRY SALSBERG, *Eyes On Sheppard*

“Be a rockstar to each and every patient! Building great relationships with your team, your patients, your vendors and other businesses around you helps create a network of advocates that will happily sing your praises anytime they can. Be willing to try new things and fail! Part of growing your business is the willingness to take the shot to try new technology, processes or services. They will not always succeed, but to grow your business and be innovative, you must be willing to try! Build a team culture that fosters relationships and not only will your business succeed, but you and your team will also be happier for it.”

DR. RITESH PATEL, *See and Be Seen Eyecare*



Running a successful business requires three pillars: Culture, Innovation and Process. People make your business – both your staff and patients. Ensuring you are developing a positive and engaging culture is paramount in showing patients that you and your team love what you do, and want to take care of them. This in turn creates a top-notch patient experience. Investing in technology and top-line products shows your patients you deliver excellence in patient care. Finally, streamlining processes with technology and proper staff training creates a patient experience that is seamless, from booking an appointment to taking home that perfect set of eyewear.”

**DR. WES MCCANN,
*Central Optometry***

“Define your ‘why’ – your reason for being in business – and build your entire culture around it. Make your patients the priority; everything revolves around them. Your goal is to make their lives better with all the skills and knowledge you have. Give your patients a reason to keep coming back, an understanding of why eye care is important, a wow experience and new technology. Invest in your staff; they are a reflection of you. You are only as strong as they are. Give them the education and tools to execute your ‘why’ and allow them to help you. And lastly, don’t forget to have fun! Life is too short to not enjoy each and every day with your team and your patients.”

**DR. SHALU PAL, *Co-Founder,
Canadian Contact Lens Academy***

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SHINOLA

The new Shinola Built by Flexon collection introduces modern and reinvented classics in sun and optical styles, featuring Shinola's interpretation of Americana and the iconic colour combinations that distinguish its product line.

The new eyewear lineup introduces three collection stories – Monster, Runwell and Arrow – featuring modern, easy-to-wear shapes with timeless detailing and design tying back to Shinola's accessories line.

The five sun styles and six optical styles feature classic silhouettes, performance functionality and premium materials, along with unique Shinola design elements such as texture and surfacing inspired by the brand's watch dials, and the use of Shinola's signature orange in a tread pattern on the temple tips.

For more information, contact your Marchon sales representative or visit marchon.com

FYSH

Designed for strong, ambitious, game-changing women who embrace their individual style, FYSH Eyewear's two new models offer bold colours and fun patterns inspired by the latest trends, including colour blocking, whimsical shapes, custom lamination and playful motifs.

F-3703 is a classic cat-eye with attitude, featuring custom handmade acetate in dynamic colourways. Custom lamination creates a colour blocking effect on the front, complemented with matching monocolour temples for a sleek and sophisticated look. This frame is available in Black Cream Terracotta, Navy Orchid Teal, Grey Rose Mauve, and Tortoise Raspberry Violet.

F-3704 is a chic frame with a modified-square eye shape, dropped bridge and eye-catching hues. Available in unique translucent colourways, the front has a custom-laminated pattern along the brow line inspired by the Fall knit trends, which carries through to the temples. Beveling along the top enhances the overall design of the frame. Available in Grey Butterscotch, Teal Pecan, Lavender Grey, and Rose Indigo.

For more information, contact your WestGroupe sales representative or visit westgroupe.com



Designed for strong, ambitious game-changing women who embrace their individual style.



F-3703



F-3704



SNOB

SNOB Milano recently introduced its Bio Lux line, with three new models made of plant-derived bio-plastic combined with beta-titanium rods – an extremely light, resistant, flexible material that is also hypoallergenic, non-toxic and biocompatible.

The new product family includes Radetzky, the iconic style launched in 2016. In the Bio Lux version, Radetzky achieves a bold, sophisticated look with opaque colours.

The eco-friendly collection also includes two new models: Targa and Radical. Very wide and slightly square, Targa is reminiscent of men's glasses of the '60s and '70s, which are in style for both men and women today. The new Radical model features a simple round shape to soften facial features.

All SNOB Milano glasses are now fitted with ZEISS Sunlens climate-friendly flat lenses made of eco-friendly nylon.

For more information, contact your SNOB Milano sales representative or visit snobmilano.com



RADEZKY



RADICAL



TARGA



RADEZKY

TARGA

RADICAL



GRIER



MILES

PARADIGM

PARADIGM

Paradigm's latest release takes inspiration from the 1970s for a retro and playful vibe, with subtle nods to New York City throughout the collection.

Grier is an oversized style featuring metal eyerims and acetate inserts, with afunky geometric shape and rich colour palette that bring the two together. Pryor is a sleek, minimalist optical frame crafted in stainless steel, with colourful tinted lenses and a classic aviator style.

The Miles style is making a comeback with ISCC-certified acetate in three new colours – Nassau, Sage and Visor Tortoise – with a small, round shape and a sleek, classic look. Paradigm has also updated its best-selling Morrison frame, sizing it down to fit even more faces. The ISCC-certified acetate comes in four all-new colours.

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THE GREAT HIRING HURDLE

Insider tips to deal with today's staffing challenges
and build a stronger business

BY AMANPREET DHAMI

The passion of those who work in the optical industry is unmatched. As an ECP, chances are that the main drive for your career choice came from your desire to help others, but as we all know, running a clinic is more than just providing patient care or selling glasses. It's a business that requires you to be nimble with solutions – and that means building a team of people to help you succeed.

The past three years have seen a shift in the job market, to the point where staffing challenges are now the order of the day. As attitudes have evolved about the workplace and work/life balance, finding, training and retaining staff have become major concerns for every business, and the optical industry is no exception.

To help empower you in your practice, *Optical Prism* spoke to industry experts about the staff shortages and hiring challenges currently facing the industry, while also gathering tips and innovative solutions to help you navigate the new staffing realities.

From Turnover to **RETENTION**

“I am seeing more turnover in the industry than I have ever seen before because employees have lots of options,” says Nancy Dewald of Lead Up Training and Consulting, who works with optical businesses to meet their unique business goals and address challenges.

“People change their jobs now more than they ever have in the past, at a way faster rate. Turnover is going to happen. It’s not going to stop, but do you have a good onboarding program? Do you have a great training program? Do you have incentives to attract and keep employees?”

By focusing on these aspects, retention will gradually improve and make finding new employees easier.

Retention improves when you understand what your employees value. Today’s employees are looking to be part of a team. They want to be respected and they want their voices heard. Dewald recommends seeking out what is important to your employees and then delivering on those aspects.

Offering employees “added value” need not be expensive – it could be as simple as giving staff their birthdays off. Instead of focusing on the shortages, Dewald challenges optical business owners to get good at turnover by thinking about retaining employees with the goal of offering a great patient experience.

On the other hand, Greg Matheson, owner and operator of Matheson Eyewear and a member of the Canadian Association of Dispensing Opticians, says the solution to the shortage comes down to better wages: “Opticians’ salaries need to be increased in order to be competitive and to draw people into the industry.”

Dr. Michael Nelson, optometrist and past president of the Canadian Association of Optometrists, challenges business owners to alter their mindset. Instead of looking at managing staff as a challenge, he urges owners to consider a more uplifting perspective.

“Assembling an awesome team is one of the best parts of being an owner,” says Nelson. “The ability to recruit and build relationships with a team that you enjoy seeing every day is one of the best parts of being a business owner.”

When staffing is perceived as a source of joy rather than a challenge, it can be approached with a more solution-oriented approach.

Better Recruiting Starts with **Fit**

In Nelson’s experience, hiring is most successful when a team member is brought on board due to their fit within the company culture rather than experience.

Tim Brennan, chief visionary officer at FitFirst, built his entire business on this premise. He says all businesses – including the optical industry, with which he works often – obtain the best staff when fit is considered during recruitment. Brennan sums up his modern recruiting process as “measuring what matters.”

This model challenges the traditional hiring system that puts candidates in yes, no and maybe piles based on what they know and what they’ve done, which results in employers only learning about the actual person 90 days after hiring.

“We’ve reversed the model and we now put them in a yes, no and maybe pile based on WHO they are, then we look at what they know and what they’ve done,” says Brennan.

When businesses look at who a person is first, they are measuring what matters. That means looking at the four measures of fit:

1	Fit with the job.
2	Fit with the manager.
3	Fit with the team.
4	Fit with the organization.

“If one of these factors isn’t aligned, then you automatically have to deal with some friction upon them starting with you,” explains Brennan. “The person could be really great at what they do, but they don’t gel with the team or they get disengaged and you lose them.” By measuring what matters, you can eliminate this possibility of friction.

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How do you measure what matters? Instead of asking behavioural questions from the 1990s, Brennan urges business owners to ask tertiary or third-party questions. Instead of asking about the candidate in an interview process, ask about someone else or something else.

These kinds of questions could include the following:

?	Tell me about the best manager you've ever worked with?
?	What made that manager the best?
?	Now, tell me about a manager you worked for that you didn't like?
?	What did that manager do that disengaged you from work?

From these types of questions, the candidate will tell you about previous managers, allowing you to pick up on the candidate's attitudes around supervision, types of co-workers, customers and guests.

This departure from old hiring techniques does require a deep commitment to changing how you hire, and Brennan emphasizes that this means business owners need to go all in. You can't have one foot on the dock with old hiring methods and the second in the boat with new practices.

Recruit From Non-Traditional Sources

When looking to hire new team members, business owners can also look for candidates in less obvious places.

"There are two buckets that business owners need to think about: You can steal from other people, or you can grow your own," says Brennan. "Growing your own means investing in future candidates, such as fostering long-term relationships with optical students in school, or looking to other industries like retail or hospitality."

If you are able to bring in people and train them, he recommends finding people who are a really great fit but don't have any education and experience. With this in mind, Brennan has designed a free website for the optical industry called Talent Sorter, which

allows employers to learn what optical industry jobs a candidate might be a good fit for, based on answers to a survey.

Dewald encourages ECPs to keep their eyes peeled for potential job candidates when out shopping, dining or utilizing services. When you encounter someone who exhibits good customer service or is a good connector, you can simply give them your info and say, "Reach out to me if you are ever looking for change."

"Anyone who works in retail or hospitality has a lot of great transferable skills," she explains. "You can not teach personality, but you can teach them the skill sets they'll need."

Seek Internal Solutions

Before looking outwards for new hires, Nelson recommends looking at other options internally, such as implementing better systems for efficiency and delegating tasks within the team you already have.

"It could involve delegating tasks to a team member who may not normally do that type of task," explains Nelson. "It could involve adding managers that can help make your existing team more efficient. You can also explore business technologies that can automate or make tasks less reliant on your team members."

Finally, you can invest in your current staff through additional training to make them more efficient and productive. The options are really endless and don't only need to rely on new hires.

"Identify your key players internally and leverage them," advises Dewald. "You may have someone who really knows everything about the office and they don't want to be a manager, but they are a great employee with strong communication skills. So, we train them for onboarding. Take your best optical who really sells the most product and leverage them. Give them the intention and the resources to help others."

"Sometimes we make it more complicated than we need to and we think we need to do it all ourselves. There are a lot of great people in our offices who can help us; we just need to help and empower them."

All signs point to labour shortages continuing to be an issue for the coming years, but don't despair – with a little "outside-the-box" thinking and ingenuity, you can create and maintain a team that is second to none. **OP**



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In the CLEAR

Clear frames are all the rage, and it's no wonder – they're easy to wear, complement almost any complexion, and look great on all face shapes. As an added benefit, clients can experiment with larger frame styles since clear frames don't overwhelm the face as darker frames can.

BY SUZANNE LACORTE



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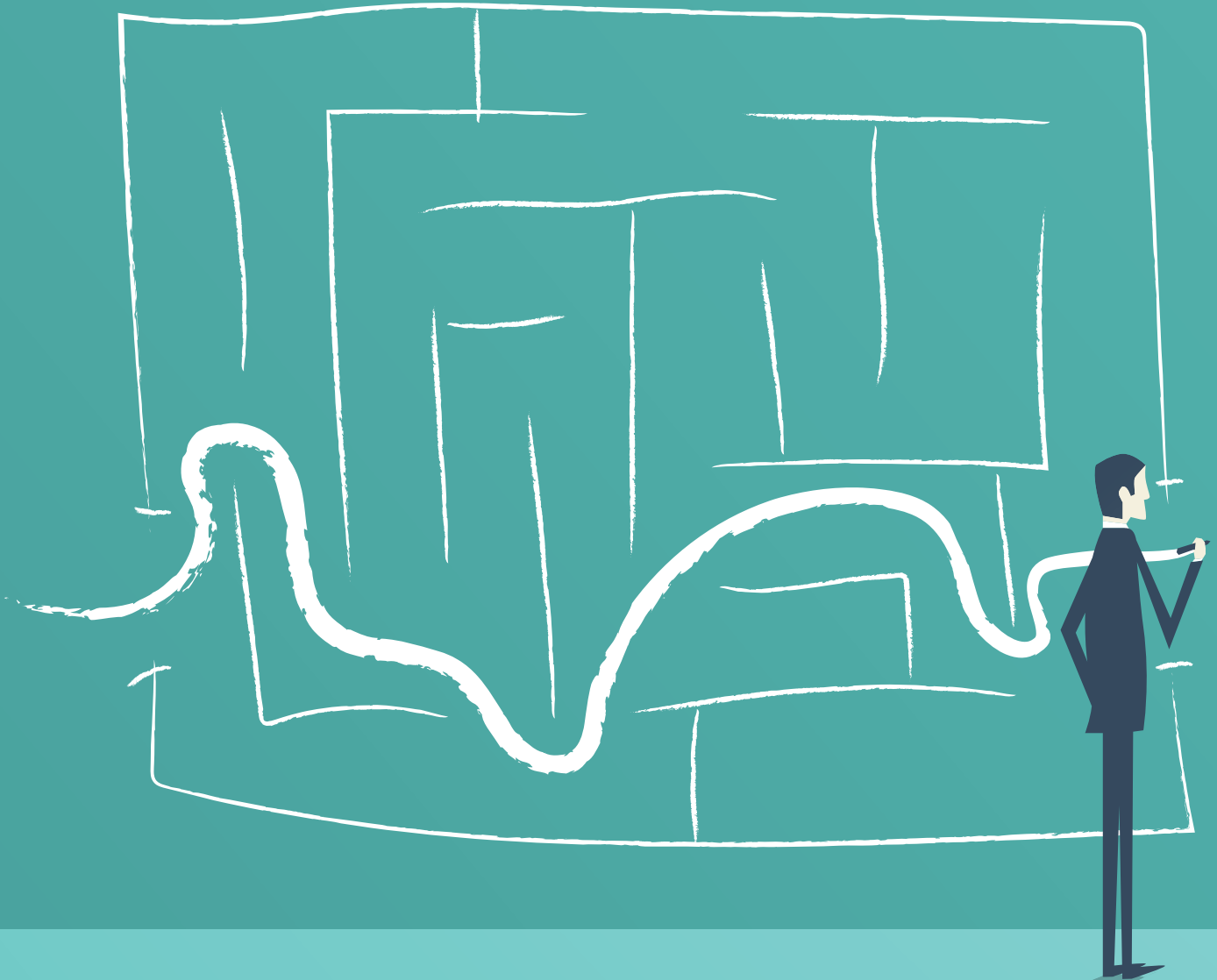
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OPTICAL

Optimization

In-office solutions to help you get ahead

BY DAVID GOLDBERG



The world of eye care is a competitive business, and it's more important than ever to do what you can to gain an edge. How do you stay on top of that avalanche of administrative tasks? From contactless dispensing and fitting frames with augmented reality to making eye care accessible for everyone around the world, here's a look at some hardware and software that allow ECPs to treat clients more effectively and efficiently.

SMART MIRROR

For more than 25 years, ACEP Group has been offering opticians a modern approach to measuring a patient's eyes for a pair of prescription glasses. Introduced in 1994, Smart Mirror was the first contactless dispensing tool. The original product was an old tube-style television set with a camcorder mounted on top – all hooked up to a large computer. But times sure have changed.

Today, Smart Mirror is ultra slim and takes up virtually zero space in the exam room or on the showroom floor. It's simply an iPad pre-loaded with special capabilities to take measurements without glasses. And Smart Mirror Pro technology enables opticians to measure pupillary distances, heights and vertex distances with just one photo. This streamlines the fitting process and increases the accuracy of the results.

Smart Mirror founder and CEO Fabian Bruneau says his device saves opticians about five minutes per patient, so ECPs can see more patients in a day and get a better fit, which reduces the need for follow-up visits.

"If you do the measurements right, you can save a lot of money because you know the first fit is the right fit," says Bruneau.

Smart Mirror removes any surprises for the patient. The iPad allows the optician to present the client with

all kinds of simulations, including the view through progressive lenses, photochromics, polarized lenses and more.

"As the saying goes: A picture is worth a thousand words – well, now the client has that picture with augmented reality to understand what the optician is talking about," says Bruneau.

Smart Mirror has more than 45,000 active licenses around the world right now. Demand increased even more with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. After months of being shut down, opticians reassessed how to do business safely for the sake of their customers, their employees and themselves.

"When you're taking someone's measurements with conventional tools, you're breathing in the air of the other person," says Bruneau. "But we take measurements at a distance and it's safer that way. Besides putting on the frame and slightly adjusting the frame, there are no other touches involved."

With an opportunity for major chains to obtain their personalized version of Smart Mirror, Bruneau and ACEP have managed to develop strong client bases across North America and Europe.

Bruneau sees this revolutionary hardware and software for opticians as a tool with ever-evolving capa-



bilities for ECPs. "It's super easy to take measurements, you look more professional, and patients think it's pretty great that they're being measured by an iPad."

Visit acep.tech for more information.

VISUAL-EYES

Running an optometry practice is challenging. It's easy to get bogged down by the constant barrage of appointment bookings, re-bookings, cancellations and other administrative paperwork that can distract you from the most important aspects of client care and patient retention.

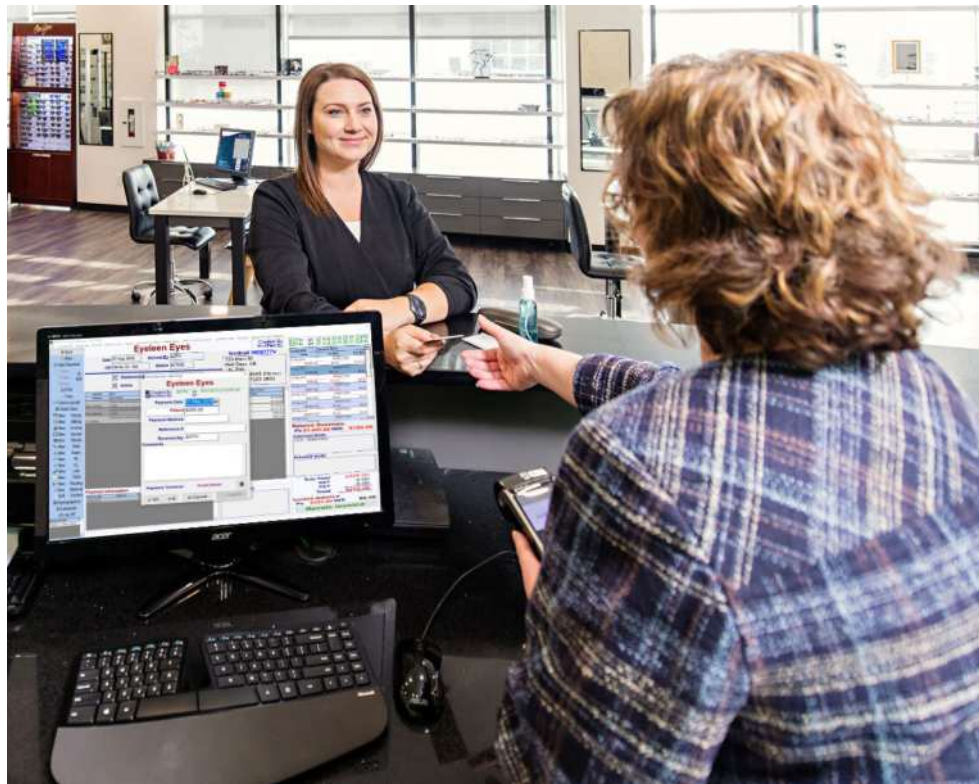
Visual-Eyes is a Canadian-made solution that's already helping more than 420 clients across the country.

"I'm an engineer, so to me, running a business is all about solving problems and making them run as efficiently as possible," says Visual-Eyes CEO Anne Chong. "That's my passion, and it flows within everything we do in terms of streamlining."

Visual-Eyes focuses on improving processes so that practices can focus on their patients instead of the paperwork associated with running a business.

"It starts with optimizing for data entry," says Chong. "There's a logical flow to the user interface, and we've minimized the user's reliance on the mouse. It has been optimized for keyboard entry, which drastically increases data processing efficiency."

The other benefit of the software is its ability to track the client and automate the booking. The program sends an email confirmation to the



patient. When they confirm it, that appointment is colour coded and goes into the calendar so your staff doesn't have to think about confirming with clients.

The name of the game is patient retention, says Chong, whose program links patients together as families so staff never miss an opportunity to remind someone about an overdue annual checkup.

"Visual-Eyes gathers and presents this type of information for you," she explains. "And the staff don't have to go hunting for it. Everything is just readily available."

Visual-Eyes is completely customizable to meet every ECP's needs, whether you're part of a large chain or an independent shop. Customers also get access to learning opportunities and direct support with friendly staff based out of Red Deer, Alberta.

"We're always providing new training opportunities," says Chong. "We'll take the time to help you set up every-

“

Visual-Eyes focuses on streamlining processes so that practices can focus on their patients instead of the paperwork associated with running a business.

thing properly and help you identify what you want to accomplish with our software.”

The Visual-Eyes system allows you to start with the base module and build your system as it suits your office, paying only for the modules you need. The software is offered in a monthly subscription or a one-time payment with annual support.

Visit visual-eyes.ca for more information.



Anne Chong

EYE BUDDY

Created by a dynamic brother-sister duo, this app puts eye tests and daily eye care into the hands of patients.

The idea for Eye Buddy was born out of the pandemic, when millions of kids around the world were suddenly forced into virtual learning on a tablet or computer, while adults worked from home and communicated exclusively via email, texting apps and video calls. All at once, our entire lives revolved



Beyond identifying potential vision issues, Eye Buddy offers treatment methods through the app, including more than 50 exercises that work all 12 eye muscles.

around staring at a digital screen for hours on end – something eye care professionals know is detrimental to long-term eye health.

“Eyesight is something where once you lose it, you can never go back. You can only manage it with costlier glasses,” says co-founder Pradipta Chowdhury, who developed Eye Care Buddy with his sister Purnashree Chowdhury.

“So we asked ourselves: Why is that happening and how can we play a role?”

The first Eye Buddy test identified basic vision issues. The Chowdhurys’ main motivation was the ability to put these tools in the hands of people in developing countries.

“We want to help in any way that we can to combat blindness,” says Pradipta, a University of Toronto graduate who has been accepted to medical school, with plans to become an ophthalmologist like his father.

Beyond identifying potential vision issues, Eye Buddy offers treatment methods through the app, including more than 50 exercises that work all 12 eye muscles. In one game meant for kids who might be suffering from digital eye strain, the program instructs them when to blink their eyes. Disguised as a fun interaction, this can prevent Dry Eye Disease.

For its next phase, Eye Buddy sees a foray into telemedicine. The Chowdhurys have already launched a telemed service in Bangladesh, where many factors make it extremely difficult to procure adequate eye care.

“The big issues are transportation, not being able to take time off work,

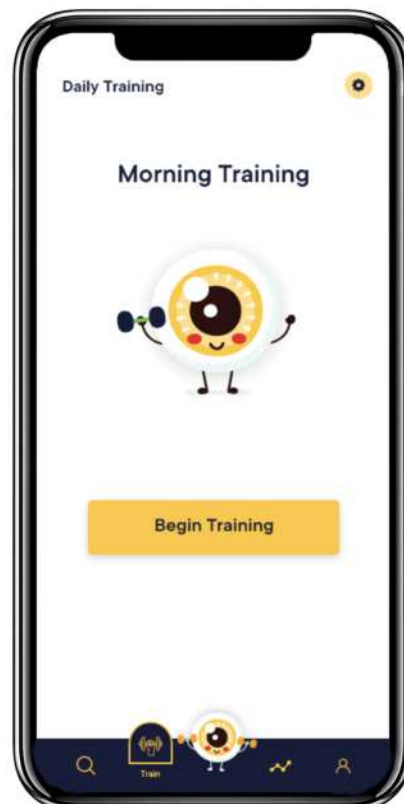


Pradipta Chowdhury

and just an overall lack of access to skilled optometrists or ophthalmologists,” explains Pradipta.

“We want to build a tele-optometry app so we can work with the best doctors to bring the best health care to populations everywhere. We’ve started in Bangladesh and now we’ll try to work with other markets in the United Kingdom and Canada. **OP**

Visit eyebuddy.app for more information.



SUSTAINABLE SYNERGY

How molecular recycling is building a greener future for the eyewear industry

BY DAVID GOLDBERG

Each year, humans produce more than 300-million tonnes of plastic, only a small percentage of which is collected and recycled into new, usable products. That sobering statistic inspired the eyewear industry's biggest names to rethink manufacturing and the sourcing of materials.

"Our goal is to expand the use of sustainable materials as much as possible, to progress in our sustainability journey," says Francesco Rinaldi Ceroni, North American president and CEO of Safilo Group. "Sustainability is at the core of our business strategies and is based on developing projects and initiatives that can contribute to addressing the global challenges of tomorrow."

With that in mind, Safilo will become the first player in the market to adopt Eastman Tritan Renew in its polarized lenses. Starting in August 2023, Tritan Renew polarized lenses will be featured in Under Armour eyewear, one of Safilo's licensed brands, and will be progressively rolled out across the group's broad portfolio of top sunglass collections.

This recent technical breakthrough allows Safilo to introduce Tritan Renew's 50% certified recycled content material in collections with polarized sunglass lenses without sacrificing quality or performance, in a process Eastman has worked for years to refine.



Tritan Renew is powered by a revolutionary new recycling technology that transforms single-use waste into basic building blocks that are then used to make durable, high-performance, food-safe materials. This process offsets the use of fossil fuels, resulting in lower greenhouse gas emissions.

"Although we were well known by eyewear producers, we were less visible to the broader industry," says Rachel Oakley, global segment manager of eyewear at Eastman.

"More recently, we have focused on how we can help solve the plastic waste crisis, and we have developed molecular recycling technologies to produce sustainable materials at large scale. We are now able to offer materials with recycled content that looks, feels and performs the same as regular materials."

Molecular recycling is the process that breaks waste materials down into molecules, which companies then reassemble into new plastics. Molecules are the fundamental building blocks of plastics, and they are the same whether they come from fossil feedstocks or plastic waste. This means that when plastic is manufactured via molecular

recycling, it has the same properties as plastic made from traditional materials.

"Our vision is to achieve full circularity of plastics by taking hard-to-recycle waste and reintroducing it into our material production process," says Oakley. "Eastman is currently investing in new molecular recycling facilities in the U.S. and France to meet the rapidly growing need for high-performance sustainable polymers."

The introduction of Tritan Renew is just the latest collaboration between Safilo and Eastman. In early 2022, Safilo introduced Eastman's Tritan Renew and Eastman Acetate Renew into the Polaroid Spring Summer collection. Eastman materials can also be found in various Safilo collections from Tommy Hilfiger, BOSS and Levi's.

"By working together, Safilo and Eastman are proving that sustainable eyewear doesn't mean compromising on style or quality," says Eastman's Oakley. "We look forward to continuing to work with Safilo to bring sustainable materials and solutions to additional brands in their portfolio, as we explore new opportunities for the eyewear industry." **OP**

A *Passionate* PURPOSE

FYidoctors and Visique give back to communities across Canada
through Enhancing Life Month

BY AMANPREET DHAMI



As we approach the holiday season, many of us reflect on how to “pay it forward” by giving back to our communities. For FYidoctors and Visique, divisions of FYihealth group, the answer lies in their heart-centred Enhancing Life Month. Born out of FYihealth’s core values and DNA, this program makes an impact in local communities across Canada through charitable efforts and human connection.



How it all Began

The Enhancing Life program is a non-profit endeavour that provides grants to a variety of Canadian charities and community outreach programs. FYidoctors and Visque encourage their clinics across the country to participate through donations and philanthropic community events.

To reach this year's fundraising goal of \$300,000, clinics and offices selected a charity to work with and participated for the entire month of October. Beyond October – now known as Enhancing Life Month – individual clinics will continue to raise funds based on what is going on in their local community and their chosen charity.

The program mission was derived through the active participation of employees within FYidoctors, explains Dr. Sheila Laplante, chair of the Enhancing Life Month and an optometrist in Gatineau who joined FYidoctors in 2016.

“In 2019, we did a corporate responsibility survey to know what's important to the doctors and the clinics, to learn how they saw this,” says Laplante. “The answers from the survey were how the Enhancing Life program started. The teams decided how this would be done and what's important to them.”

Personal Connection

What enhancing life means to each clinic or team participating is unique to them. Each clinic is asked to select a charity they want to work with.

“What I have suggested to every clinic that I chat with is to have a conversation and see what you all care about and can rally behind,” says Kerri Nicholls, an active participant in the Enhancing Life campaign who also leads FYidoctors clinics from British Columbia to Ontario within the foundation. “That's really what enhancing life comes down to. We see good results when the cause is close to a team member or their local community.”

Nicholls's own clinic works with a Toronto-based charity called Making Faces, which provides workshops to teach acting skills and improvisational games that build confidence in children with facial differences in communities across Canada.

For Nicholls, Making Faces was the right fit because her middle son, Kenton, was born with a cleft lip and palate, making the fundraising efforts personal. “It is incredible and heartwarming to see my team members support a child of mine,” says Nicholls.

“

In 2021,
the fundraising
goal was \$200,000,
and we raised
over \$300,000.
The clinics
absolutely crushed
our goal.

— DR. SHEILA LAPLANTE

The personal connection knitted into each clinic's charity of choice fuels growth for the foundation every year. In 2019 and 2020, the Enhancing Life program raised more than \$250,000 in total – an amount surpassed in the following year alone.

“In 2021, the fundraising goal was \$200,000, and we raised over \$300,000. The clinics absolutely crushed our goal,” says Laplante proudly.

This year's goal was \$300,000, and FYidoctors confirms that the company exceeded that target for the 2022 campaign, which ended October 31.

This same growth and enthusiasm is seen through the percentage of clinics participating. In 2020, 37% of clinics from FYidoctors and Visique were involved during Enhancing Life Month. This grew to 55% in 2021 and in October of this year, clinic participation increased to 69%.

“Our goal is for 100% clinic participation, and we can do it!” says Darcy Verhun, President of FYihealth group. “The impact in local communities where we live and work could make a real difference with all of our clinic locations supporting a local organization.”

Adds Laplante: “We’ve been growing every year since the start of COVID-19, as many organizations need the support from their communities.”

Human Connection

At its essence, the foundation relies on a comprehensive network that connects people from different clinics and offices to charitable causes across the country – demonstrating that there is no distance or barrier to doing meaningful work.

“We have connections within the clinics as it’s a team-building effort. The connections and conversations between different clinics throughout the country are all connected through a fine thread, and stories are shared about all these amazing nationwide charities,” says LaPlante.

Stories abound of connections and friendships that have sprung up between clinics and charities as a result of these partnerships.

Diane Dupay, the founder of Famous PEOPLE Players, a charitable organization based in Toronto, has worked closely with FYidoctors’ Bloor Street, Toronto clinic since 2018. The partnership has forged great relationships.

“Diane Rego, now an FYidoctors Practice Coach (clinic manager), started raising funds for and working with Famous PEOPLE Players three years ago – she’s been a tremendous help,” says Dupay. “She and her team are truly lovely and so hardworking. FYidoctors is currently supporting our Stars of Tomorrow program. I like working with Diane and the FYidoctors team so much, because together it’s really all about the vision – what you can see physically and how you can see your dreams.”

Ted Kim, founder of Chilliwack Bowls of Hope Society, has had a similarly positive experience working with the FYidoctors Chilliwack office. For almost a decade, Practice Coach Patti Stuart and her team have been working with Bowls of Hope. On any given volunteer night, the team chops up to 500 pounds of veggies to help the charity feed at least 1,000 students a day in local schools. Without this food, these students could go hungry. The charity also offers nutritional programs to families with the aim of fuelling children’s minds and bodies.

“A big hat’s off to Patti; she’s consistently thinking of Bowls of Hope and finding ways for her employees to be involved in this program,” says Kim. “I am consistently blown away by the willingness of the amazing community involvement this program receives, and we couldn’t do it without the work of FYidoctors and their team members.”

These are only a handful of the heartwarming stories of the work FYidoctors and Visique teams are doing through the Enhancing Life Month – a shining example of how the right intention, values and efforts can help the optical industry fulfill a larger philanthropic mission of enhancing life, to make the world a better place. **OP**



Migraine Care for ECPs

Adding migraine and light sensitivity management to your practice



Migraine disorder affects about 15% of Canadians, and in the past it has been managed almost exclusively by family doctors and headache specialists. That is changing. Eye care providers are now in a position to be the first line of defense in managing migraine and light sensitivity for their patients.

This is because of new, clinically proven lens technology, developed by Avulux, that is available to eye care providers in Canada. Think of it as eyecare meeting medicine.

Avulux's physicians and engineers designed a lens that filters up to 97% of harmful blue, amber and red light while allowing in soothing green light. Independent studies have shown that by precisely filtering light, Avulux lenses may help people living with migraine.

"Eye care providers can now help a patient population that has lacked solutions to a problem that is so debilitating, it often prevents someone from being able to function in their daily life," says Dr. Charles Posternack, CEO of Avulux. "We're talking

Eye care providers are now in a position to be the first line of defense in managing migraine and light sensitivity for their patients.

about more than just a headache and reduced productivity. Migraine patients often experience a complete inability to function. They find

themselves needing to isolate in a dark room, often for hours at a time. But they can find help from their eye care provider."

By implementing a migraine and light sensitivity management program with Avulux, eye care providers will have the opportunity to diversify their product portfolio, which can support revenue and practice growth while also offering a higher level of care to patients.

Implementing a new program into your practice can sound like a daunting task but Avulux has simplified the process and offers a complete ECP Welcome Kit containing all the tools you will need to be successful. Avulux has teamed up with Plastic Plus, a Toronto based optical lab, to make the lens available to all ECPs in Canada. **OP**



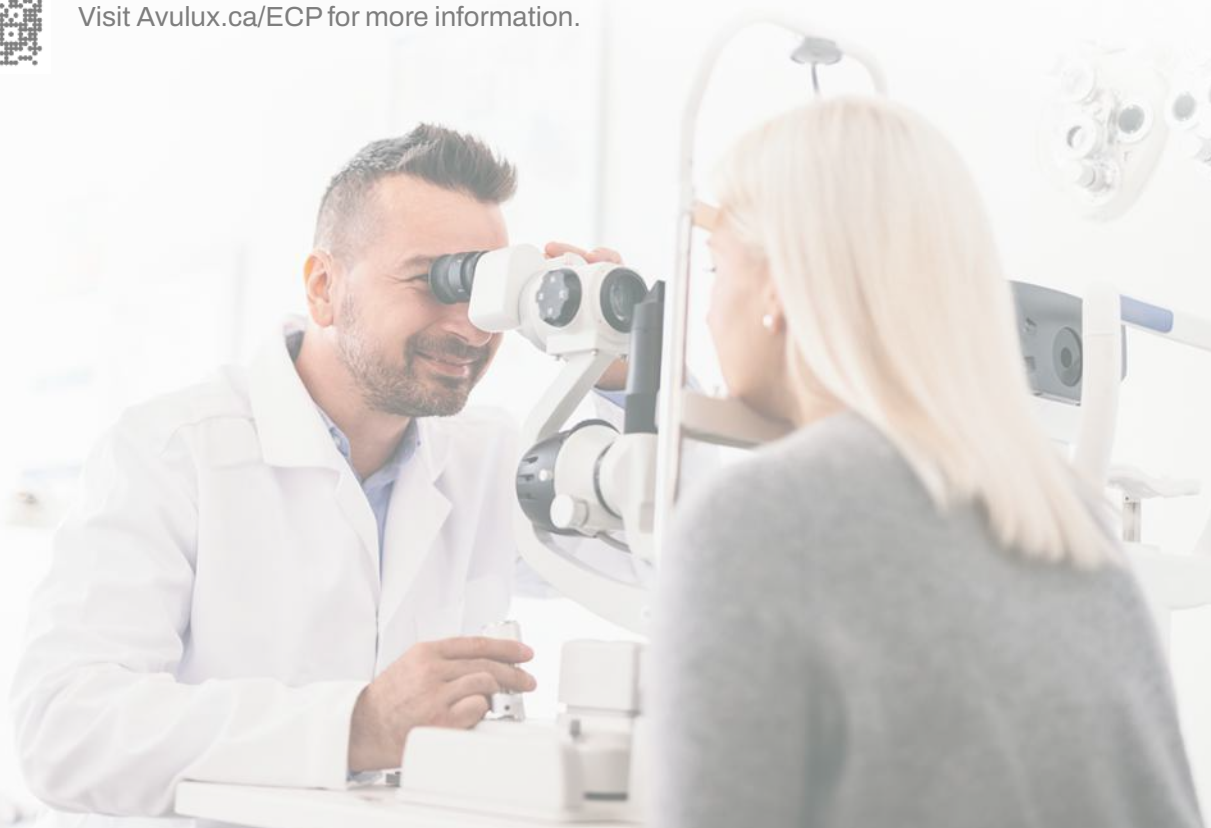
Avulux makes supporting patients with migraine and light sensitivity easy.

Migraine disorder affects about 15% of Canadians. Eye care providers implementing a migraine and light sensitivity management program with Avulux have the opportunity to offer a higher level of care to patients and diversify their product portfolio.



Avulux lenses are available to eye care providers in Canada through our partnership with Plastic Plus.

Visit Avulux.ca/ECP for more information.



EYE *level*

A selection of important, innovative or unique eye-wear and eyecare products we're loving this month.

1 INTRODUCING THE INTUITIVE COLORIMETER™

This device helps eye care professionals identify the custom filter solution for patients with migraines, post-trauma vision syndrome, learning difficulties and other neurological conditions. Medically tinted light filtering lenses can reduce persistent visual, perceptual and vestibular problems. The Intuitive Colorimeter is the FDA-approved, Health Canada-registered Class 1 medical device used to pinpoint the optimal tint. opticalm.ca



2 EYE CHART WHISKEY GLASS

Enjoy your favourite scotch or whiskey from this custom-etched glass, or give them as gifts to your patients and suppliers. You can also personalize them with your name and logo. Engraving is sand carved, leaving a deeply etched image that will never wear or wash off. [etsy.com/ca/listing/1047335361/eye-chart-whiskey-glass-optician-etched](https://www.etsy.com/ca/listing/1047335361/eye-chart-whiskey-glass-optician-etched)



3 STAY GLASSY BAG

This zippered bag works for eye glasses, cosmetics or any other items you want to keep organized for home, work, travel or leisure. Made from high-quality canvas material with marble print, these bags are durable and water-resistant with a sturdy black zipper. Size: 9.2 x 6.8 inches. [amazon.ca/POFULL-Optometrist-Travel-Cosmetic-Optician/dp/B09GV91LYR/](https://www.amazon.ca/POFULL-Optometrist-Travel-Cosmetic-Optician/dp/B09GV91LYR/)

4 WHERE AIR MEETS WATER PLATTER

This stunning platter, "Where Air Meets Water: The Eagle and the Orca" is proudly made in Canada and features original artwork by Indigenous artist Corrine Hunt. Made from recycled glass, this amazing piece makes for a great Christmas gift and is FREE with any order of 10 or more AYA Optical frames. Available in 12-inch or 8-inch sizes. [claudiaalan.com/aya/optical-frames](https://www.claudiaalan.com/aya/optical-frames)



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- 2008 Eye care Director of the Year Pearle Vision, North America
- 2007 Field Performance Consultant of the Year, North America



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BRANCHING OUT

The smart way to add a niche to your practice

BY NANCY DEWALD,
Lead Up Training and Consulting



These are exciting times as the scope of our industry increases and we can resolve many patient struggles. That said, in my travels I see treatment rooms, equipment and resources that are not being used to capacity.

Owners and staff are excited to add dry eye clinics and myopia control but often run out of steam, as these additions to a business take a lot of time, planning and follow-up. Furthermore, these investments tend to add stress to the owner's additional costs and responsibility without an immediate payoff.

With that in mind, following are a few key steps on the road to success.

“

A goal without
a plan is just
a wish

— ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPERY

”

1 WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

What is it that you hope to achieve? What is the opportunity or the problem you are solving? It is critical to be clear on this, as going forward it should serve as a vision for your team and a touchpoint for decision making.

A mission statement should guide you and keep you on track. It might sound something like this:

- Our Dry Eye Clinic is here to educate patients about dry eye and relieve the discomfort of dry eye symptoms, regardless of the severity, helping as many patients as possible.
- Our entire office will understand and educate all candidates on Myopia control to help slow down the progression and ensure the best visual outcome.

2 FOCUS ON ONE OPPORTUNITY/ NICHE AT A TIME

Add one niche properly, then move on and duplicate the process.

When we try to do too many things, we overload our staff and patients. This overload is why things fail to be done properly and fall by the wayside. I often tell my clients, we can do it quickly or we can do it properly.

A mission statement should guide you and keep you on track.

3 COMPLETE A BREAK-EVEN ANALYSIS

This exercise will help set realistic expectations. This should be done when making any large purchases. It is important to take into consideration all of the costs associated with the project. For example, when investing in Radiofrequency and Intense pulse light therapy to treat dry eye, costs include the expense of the machine and related equipment, labour to operate the machine, consumables, marketing, insurance, overhead, etc.

Once you understand your costs, determine your pricing and calculate the breakeven.

THE FORMULA IS AS FOLLOWS:

Revenue Per Unit

(what are you charging?)

–

Variable Costs

(costs that fluctuate per use)

=

Contribution Margin

–

Fixed Costs

(costs that remain the same)

4 BUILD YOUR PLAN AND GET THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN PLACE

“A goal with out a plan is just a wish” – Antoine de Saint-Exupery

No truer words were ever spoken. Develop a plan and align with the right people. Follow up on progress, starting with weekly frequency. Once you see progress, you can decrease the frequency.

Acknowledge progress and problem-solve obstacles together. For more on implementation, see my article in the June issue of *Optical Prism* titled “5 Steps to Success – Implementing something new should not be so difficult.”

One last thought: Consider connecting with peers not offering this treatment and agree on terms for referral opportunities. They may offer services you do not provide, and vice versa. By working together, you can meet all of your patients’ needs. **OP**

Nancy Dewald is a business development professional, workshop facilitator and optical industry veteran. She is CEO and founder of Lead Up Training and Consulting, which specializes in identifying business gaps, implementing solutions and developing leaders. To find out more, visit: leaduptrainingandconsulting.ca



EVENTS CALENDAR

2023 JANUARY

January 27-29, 2023

Event: Opti 2023

Place: Munich, Germany

Website: opti.de

2023 MARCH

March 16-19, 2023

Event: Vision Expo East

Place: New York, New York

Website: east.visionexpo.com

2023 SEPTEMBER

September 8-10, 2023

Event: 4th World Congress of Optometry

Place: Melbourne, Australia

Website: worldcouncilofoptometry.info

September 27-30, 2023

Event: Vision Expo West

Place: Las Vegas, Nevada

Website: east.visionexpo.com

September 29 - October 2, 2023

Event: SILMO Paris

Place: Paris, France

Website: en.silmoparis.com

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CONTINUING
EDUCATION





LOOKING AHEAD

Marketing ideas for every month in 2023

BY KRISTY KOEHLER, Marketing4ECPs

Keeping your patients invested in their eye health – and in your practice – takes some creativity and advance planning. Find tie-ins for well-known holidays like Valentine’s Day and Christmas, but think outside the box, too!

Medical awareness months are great educational opportunities, but it can also be fun to celebrate the weird, wacky and wonderful commemorative days that come up in the calendar. They can help keep your social media and email marketing fresh and interesting!

Once you realize how many marketing opportunities present themselves every month, you’ll be wishing there were more than 365 days in a year.

January

Patients are usually health-conscious at the beginning of the year. Help them with their wellness goals by reminding them that eye health and overall health are linked. “New Year, New Eyewear” campaigns are always popular, but it’s also Glaucoma Awareness Month.

Start a conversation with your patients about glaucoma risk factors

and the importance of eye exams! It’s National Soup Month, too, so share an eye-healthy recipe like a carrot soup in your January newsletter.

Glaucoma Awareness Month

National Soup Month

January 1: New Year’s Day

January 4: World Braille Day

February

This month is a great time to build awareness about AMD and low vision. Fancy Instagram grids that show off red and pink frames will help to spread the love for your practice. “Show Your Eyes Some Love” is a great campaign theme for the early part of the month.

AMD Awareness Month

Low Vision Month

February 14: Valentine’s Day

March

The last day of the month is National Crayon Day – try running a fun colouring contest on your social media channels. Highlight prescription safety glasses for Workplace Eye Wellness Month, and celebrate the incredible women who work in your practice on International Women’s Day.

Workplace Eye Wellness Month

March 8: International Women’s Day

March 23: World Optometry Day

March 31: National Crayon Day

April

Earth Day is a great opportunity to share sustainable brands, eco-friendly frame lines, and contact lens recycling information. April is also Rosacea Awareness Month, so your marketing can showcase

technology that targets both dry eye and aesthetic concerns.

If you use Instagram reels or are active on TikTok, try creating an entertaining video for International Fun at Work Day. Show your patients how much fun your office staff have on the job – after all, helping people pick out eyewear is a good time!

Rosacea Awareness Month

April 1: International Fun at Work Day

April 22: Earth Day

May

During National Sun Awareness Month, remind your patients about the dangers UV light can pose to their eyesight. Show off the sunglasses in your optical gallery and tell your patients how a good pair of shades can protect their vision. Vision Health Month will give you plenty of opportunities to educate patients, and Mother's Day is a great time to run ocular aesthetics promotions.

Vision Health Month

National Sun Awareness Month

May 14: Mother's Day

June

National Zoo & Aquarium Month provides endless social media posting possibilities. Did you know that the eyes of a giant squid measure up to 10 inches across? Neither did your patients! Animal eye facts are a fun engagement generator.

As Cataract Awareness Month, June is also a great time to educate patients about the importance of sunglasses, especially with the warmer weather coming up.

Cataract Awareness Month

National Zoo & Aquarium Month

June 20: Father's Day

July

There's no better time to encourage your patients to shop local than Independent Retailer Month. Call attention to the reasons why buying eyewear in person, at your practice, is far superior to shopping for glasses online.

Independent Retailer Month

July 5: National Injury Prevention Day

August

As parents are gearing up for back-to-school, August is the perfect time to encourage them to book an eye exam. Highlight the ways in which eyesight and learning go hand-in-hand, and remind patients that simple school screenings just aren't enough.

Back to School Shopping

September

By mid-September, kids are back in school and your patients have returned to their routines. Screen time is increasing and it's a good time to talk about digital eye strain. Offer blue light blocking lenses. On World First Aid Day, share some emergency eye care information.

National Guide Dog Month

First Day of School

September 11: World First Aid Day

October

World Sight Day reminds patients to prioritize their eye care. During Children's Vision Month, spotlight

your myopia control methods. Halloween is a great time to remind people that even though coloured contact lenses might enhance a costume, they aren't always safe and should only be fitted by a professional.

Children's Vision Month

October 12: World Sight Day

October 31: Halloween

November

Let your patients with diabetes know about the specialized care your clinic provides, and be sure to share some educational information about the ways diabetes can impact eyesight. November is also the time to remind patients to beat the holiday rush.

For many, the benefit year is ending and the calendar is filling up. A reminder to book early and avoid disappointment, especially with upcoming holiday schedules, is appreciated.

Diabetes Awareness Month

December

This month, show off the fanciest frames in your gallery for the parties and social events on your patients' calendars. Capture the Boxing Day shopping crowd with a frame sale. And of course, be sure to tell your patients about any holiday closures!

December 3: Giving Tuesday

December 24: Christmas Eve

December 25: Christmas Day

December 26: Boxing Day

December 31: New Year's Eve

Kristy Koehler is a senior email marketing strategist at Marketing4ECPs who spends her days crafting creative content in email form for eye care practices all over North America. Find out more about Kristy and Marketing4ECPs at marketing4ecps.com.

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