

OPTICAL PRISM

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Tomorrow's TALENT

Envisioning the future
with GenZ optometrists

FROM SHORTAGE TO SOLUTION

Canada's optical
industry is facing
a turning point

The Oval Office

Oval frames take
centre stage

Seeing ZED

Discover how eye care professionals can stay
relevant and competitive in the Gen Z era

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Time management
tips for your
practice

ZENERATIONAL WEALTH

Gen Z purchasing
power packs
a punch

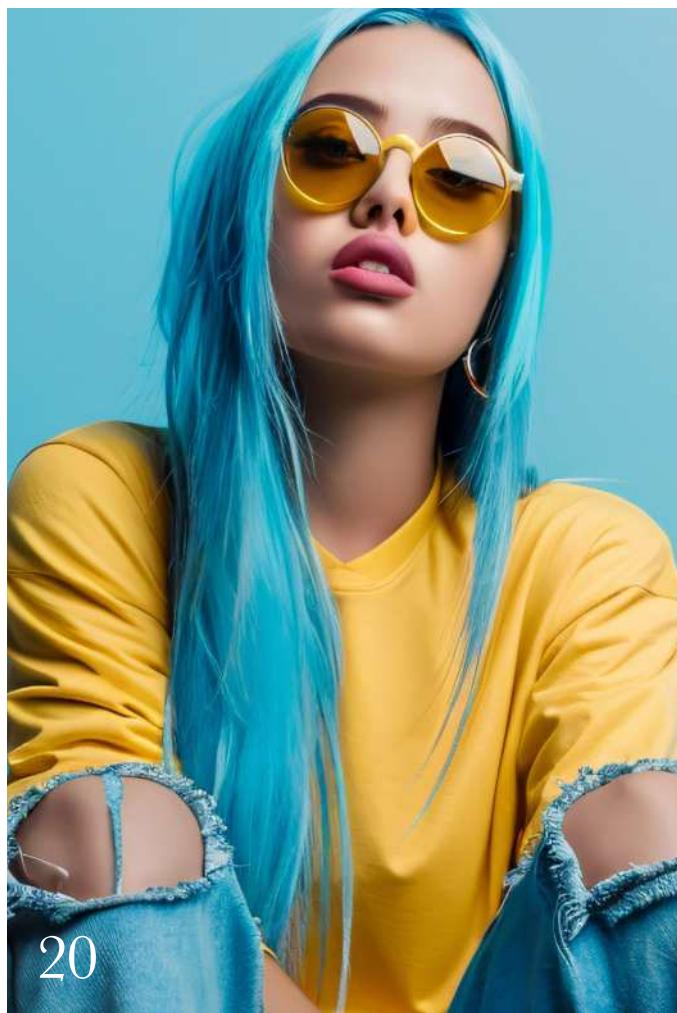




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Cover image courtesy of WestGroupe

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- Cool looks kids actually want to wear.

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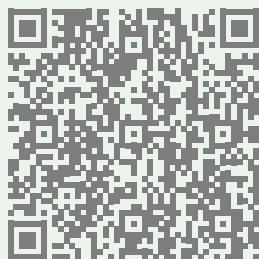
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PHOTOGRAPHY BY JESSICA WAUGH

“Gen Z is on track to become the largest and most powerful consumer generation in history... Gen Z’s shopping preferences are more than just viral, fleeting trends: they are the driving force of growth in retail commerce.”

- ROY AVIDOR
CEO of Cymbio, Forbes Councils Member

Meeting Gen Z Where They Are

If there's one thing Gen Z isn't, it's easily impressed. Raised with unlimited options, endless information, and constant screen time, they've developed sharp filters for what matters, and what doesn't. When it comes to eyewear (or a career path), they're not buying into the same old sales pitch. What they want is authenticity, purpose, and, above all, connection.

In this issue, we zoom in on Gen Z's growing purchasing power and how it's reshaping the optical industry. Spoiler alert: they're not shy about spending on high-end frames, as long as the product, the message, and the mission speak their language.

We've packed this edition with smart strategies for capturing Gen Z's attention and earning their loyalty. From building a strong digital presence (yes, TikTok matters) to creating experiences that feel personal and inclusive, we explore what's working right now to connect, convert, and keep this generation engaged.

But it's not just about sales. We're also spotlighting how universities and optical businesses are rethinking their approach to attracting Gen Z talent. If we want more young people to pursue careers in optometry and optical sciences, we need to meet them where they are — emphasizing flexibility, mental wellness, work-life balance, and the chance to make a meaningful impact. Eye care checks all those boxes. Now it's about making sure they know that.

This conversation couldn't be more timely. In this month's Visibility column, Nick Samson recounts his experience at an industry round-table where leaders warned that Canada's optical sector is nearing a tipping point: retirements are rising, enrolment is declining, and fewer newcomers are entering the field. It's an eye-opening read that offers a possible solution to the growing shortage.

So whether you're trying to understand what drives Gen Z, how they shop, or how they envision their future — we've got you. Dive in, take notes, and maybe even rethink a few things. Because if we meet Gen Z where they are, the future of our industry looks very, very bright.

SUZANNE LACORTE
Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

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FRESH LOOKS

Ibiza Vol. 5
Collection by
Etnia Barcelona

Fresh LOOKS

Keep your eyewear options fresh with the latest models
from these leading companies

**IBIZA**

Etnia Barcelona introduces IBIZA VOL. 5, a limited-edition capsule inspired by the free spirit of Ibiza. The collection features four iconic models in six bold shades—red, black, green, yellow, blue and pink—evoking summer essentials like beach umbrellas, towels and swimsuits.

Stripes, a key seasonal trend, appear throughout the designs, adding playful energy. Each frame is crafted with layered laminations

that add depth and character, blending Mediterranean warmth with avant-garde flair. IBIZA VOL. 5 showcases the brand's ability to fuse vibrant colour, bold design and artisanal detail—delivering eyewear that's both expressive and timeless, rooted in island soul.

For more information contact your Etnia Barcelona sales representative or visit etniabarcelona.com

WOOW

The new WOOW collection is a playful tribute to the Paris 2024 Olympics and life's everyday victories. With bold lines, vibrant hues and inventive materials, WOOW frames channel energy, joy and team spirit into every design. The KICK OFF concept features thick, vintage-inspired shapes crafted from bio-materials with sporty, collegiate colourways. KEEP GOING frames mix boldness

and refinement with stand-out temple accents. TEAM SPIRIT celebrates unity with chain-link-inspired temples and vivid bridges. Whether you're pushing limits or just having fun, WOOW invites you to wear your confidence proudly and playfully.

For more information contact your Design Eyewear Group sales representative or visit designeyeweargroup.com

**J.F.REY**

Allure of Metal is a striking 11-piece collection of colourful women's frames by J.F. Rey, where high-quality metal meets bold, expressive colour. Designed for elegance and individuality, the line explores contrasts—fluid lines and sharp angles, strength and lightness, softness and edge. Each frame blends two to three hand-applied shades for a vibrant, nuanced look.

Satin finishes and sculptural acetate inserts on the temples add a jewellery-like detail. With graphic lines, airy geometry, and rich textures, this collection captures light, celebrates colour, and enhances the distinct beauty of every face.

For more information contact your J.F. Rey sales representative or visit jfrey.fr/en

FRESH LOOKS



VO5639U



VO5639U

VOGUE EYEWEAR

Vogue Eyewear's SS25 collection celebrates fearless self-expression and the joy of true connection. Inspired by friendships and freedom, it features bold, unorthodox shapes, vivid colours and standout acetate styles. Model VO5639U, a soft-angled silhouette between square and cateye, brings runway flair to everyday wear with bold adjustable temples and signature branding. Cool transparencies, classic black and rich havana round out the look. The new Youth segment offers smaller-fit, trend-forward frames—because when it comes to style, no rules apply.

For more information contact your EssilorLuxottica sales representative or visit vogue-eyewear.com



MODERN OPTICAL

Modern Optical International expands its B.M.E.C. (Big Men's Eye-wear Club) line with three sleek, wearable styles, all featuring spring hinges for added comfort. Big Canyon offers bold square styling with translucent fronts and tortoise temples. Big Export delivers minimalist appeal in a semi-rimless stainless steel design. Big Heart features confident acetate styling in rich hues. Each includes a two-year warranty, premium clamshell case and merchandising support with qualifying purchases. Sizes range from 55 to 56.

For more information contact your Modern Optical sales representative or visit modernoptical.com



FLEXON

Flexon Eyewear's new Motion collection blends sleek, sporty design with performance and durability. Built for active lifestyles, styles feature Flexon memory metal bridges, rubber temples, and adjustable nose pads for comfort and flexibility. Highlights include the contemporary oval E1157. Available in Satin Black, Gunmetal and Satin Navy.

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

CAROLINA



HERERRA

FRESH LOOKS



AYA

AYA Optical expands its collaboration with Lakota artist Jim Yellowhawk, launching two new styles: Dragonfly and Wakan. These handcrafted frames feature vibrant designs rooted in Lakota culture, including the Four Winds and Sun is Life motifs. Made from high-quality acetate and metal, both styles blend artistry with wearability. As always, partial proceeds support Indigenous communities, continuing AYA's commitment to meaningful design and social impact.

For more information contact your AYA sales representative or visit claudiaalan.com/aya



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



PAUL SMITH

For SS25, the Paul Smith eyewear collection blends bold, classic shapes with refined craftsmanship and British elegance. Crafted in Italy from premium acetate, it features iconic stripe detailing, the signature 'handwriting' logo, and modern colourways across sunglasses and optical styles. Highlighting the season is Meade, a unisex rectangular frame inspired by tailoring, available in five striped colour options—reflecting Paul Smith's vision of timeless design with a distinctly British twist.

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

FLEYE

Independent eyewear is entering a new era — and Eredità Eyewear is helping shape what's next with the addition of Fleye. Crafted in Denmark with precision and purpose, Fleye combines bold vision with quiet elegance, redefining minimalism in eyewear and empowering independents to offer design that feels as good as it looks. Curated for their shared values of authenticity, innovation and thoughtfulness, Fleye and Eredità provide ECPs with distinctive tools to stand out and succeed in a changing marketplace.

For more information contact your Eredità sales representative or visit ereditaeyewear.com

MIGA STUDIO

Miga Studio's Locked collection redefines eyewear with bold, interlocking Japanese titanium elements inspired by brutalist architecture. Crafted as a monoblock front with exposed screws and a flex-effect beta-titanium insert, each frame channels raw materiality and technical precision. Striking geometric volumes and layered angles evoke avant-garde design while remaining lightweight and wearable. Zeiss anti-reflective sun lenses offer sharp clarity, completing a modern fusion of industrial strength and minimalist elegance that's both architectural and effortlessly functional.

For more information contact your Miga Studio sales representative or visit migaeyewear.com

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FRESH LOOKS



HOUSE OF MODO

House of Modo turns up the heat with the bold, expressive Italia Independent collection. The standout styles—CHIC, CHICCA and BABY—deliver playful sophistication in a colour palette so irresistible, it's impossible to pick just one. Each frame pops with personality, perfect for those who love to switch up their look. And then there's BOOM: unapologetically vibrant and only available in PINK—because subtlety just isn't part of the plan. Designed for the fearless, these frames are all about owning your style, turning heads, and embracing the joy of self-expression, one electrifying pair at a time. Dare to be seen.

For more information contact your House of MODO sales representative or visit modo.com

SUNDAY SOMEWHERE

Sunday Somewhere and WestGroupe launch a 15-piece optical collection combining 70s-inspired boldness with modern craftsmanship. The collection features three material stories: lightweight titanium, vibrant Mazzucchelli acetate, and innovative combination frames that fuse both elements. Signature details include gold palm tree temple tips, engraved frame names, and the "SS" monogram on the nose bridge. Notable frames include Paroo, a hexagonal titanium design with matching coloured tips in Black Rose Gold, Grey Gold, and Rose Gold. Gabriella, an oversized acetate frame, offers a bold yet feminine cat-eye shape. Sigrid pairs acetate rims with titanium arms, creating a striking balance of vintage-inspired and contemporary design. Each frame reflects premium quality and distinctive style.

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



TOMS

With Jonas Paul Eyewear now guiding its vision, TOMS enters a new era—uniting two purpose-led brands to expand the reach of stylish, impactful eyewear.

Bold yet effortless, Anna brings confidence and ease to any look. These frames offer a comfortable fit, with a soft, shallow rectangle shape and assertive browline—perfect for wherever the day takes you: city strolls, golden hour by the coast or rooftop drinks with your best friends. Anna is endlessly versatile, with an independent spirit all its own. Chic, edgy and always in rotation, this is a frame you'll reach for again and again.

For more information contact your Jonas Paul sales representative or visit jonaspaul.com



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STYLE EYES

THE OVAL OFFICE

Oval frames take centre stage in this stylish showcase of the latest sunnies and specs — proof that curves always command attention!

BY SUZANNE LACORTE



Style

TIP

For Gen Z clients, oval frames strike the perfect balance between vintage flair and modern minimalism.

Suggest pairing them with playful accessories or bold beauty looks to reflect their individuality — or lean into the “clean girl” aesthetic with sleek hair and subtle makeup to highlight the frame’s soft silhouette.

- WENDY BUCHANAN, *Eyewear Image Expert*



1.



2.



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4.



5.



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8.

1. Felt Cute by Quay 2. MU52YS by Miu Miu
 3. TOTO 032c by Mykita 4. SNA1005 by Snob Milano
 5. Loris PO3378S by Persol 6. Oval Frame sunglasses by Jacquemus 7. OSK6042 by Swarovski 8. Sienna by Woody's



**Capturing Gen Z:
A New Frame of Mind
for Sales Success**

BY WENDY BUCHANAN,
Eyewear Image Expert

As ECPs, and as humans — it's natural to stick with what's familiar. We rely on our established processes, default to the way we see ourselves, and assume we already know what our clients want. But what if our current frame of mind is the very thing holding us back from reaching a whole new generation of buyers?

Gen Z, born roughly between 1997 and 2012, is already transforming how industries communicate, sell and serve. These are digital natives who grew up with online everything: shopping, learning and even relationships. But while they move fast and expect convenience, they are also craving something the online world can't offer — a human with a pulse. And that's exactly where ECPs have a golden opportunity.

Don't Sell on Labels Alone. Lead with Relevance.

The Gen Z consumer is not as driven by brand names or labels as previous generations. And for the person who is looking for a label, some of the popular ones now advertise online for low prices, so if you are selling on brand alone, you may have to play the price game.

What matters more is whether a product or experience fits seamlessly into their life by being, fast, flexible and relevant. Don't assume they're always hunting for a bargain; while many are price-conscious, Gen Z is willing to spend on value. Especially when that value comes wrapped in an experience that feels tailored, inclusive and on their wavelength.

In fact, I've seen Gen Z clients happily invest upwards of \$800–\$1,000 on eyewear and travel for an hour when the styling experience is personalized, the vibe is right, and they feel seen and heard. This is your edge when you branch out from the way you've always done it: you can create an atmosphere that blends clinical expertise with fashion-forward service, in real time and in real life.

Your Team = Your Superpower

The difference-maker isn't only the product you stock and the price point. It's your team. When your staff shows up with energy, empathy and a sense of style, they humanize the buying experience in a way online retailers never can.

When you co-create the experience with your Gen Z client and make their eyewear journey unforgettable, they won't just remember you — they'll broadcast it. Tag you. Share it. Post it. That moment becomes content, and that content becomes "word-of-swipe" magic, which is your new-age referral powerhouse.

Confidence is Contagious

How your team is perceived can influence the sale with your Gen Z clients. If your team looks dated, so does your brand. And if your optical space feels tired or generic, they'll scroll right past. But when your team wears frames that reflect their personal style and carry themselves with confidence, they elevate the entire vibe. That energy, paired with a fresh, fashion-forward environment, is magnetic. It's what makes Gen Z stay and buy.

A New Narrative

The most exciting part? You and your team get to shape the narrative. You get to redefine what it means to buy eyewear from you. You're not just the eye doctor or the optician; you're a stylist, a coach and a trusted resource for self-expression.

When you shift your "frame of mind" from simply selling eyewear to curating personal image and identity, you move beyond transactions and into transformation. When you invest your time with your Gen Z patients, that builds loyalty that lasts beyond one sale.

Make it Easy: One Appointment Does it All

If there's one thing Gen Z values above all else, it's convenience. This generation has grown up in a world where anything can be ordered, streamed or scheduled with a few taps — so if the optical experience feels complicated or slow, you've likely lost them before the styling even begins.

That's why offering a "one-and-done appointment" is a powerful way to capture their attention and their purchase.

Let Them Stay, Not Stray

If their visit feels like a hassle, they're more likely to bounce. Reduce friction by giving them the full experience in one seamless visit. The eye exam, the personalized styling consultation, and the proper frame fitting should all be wrapped up in a way that feels curated, not clinical. Bonus points if your team makes them feel a little like a VIP.

And don't assume they're only looking for a bargain. They may be price-aware, but they'll spend when the experience is on point and the product feels like them. When you show them frames that speak to their style and values, you open the door to premium purchases, and even multiple pairs.

Want to understand Gen Z's impact on the eyewear market? These stats tell the story:

68%

of Gen Z say a brand's social and environmental values influence their purchasing decisions.

73%

prefer brands that allow them to co-create or offer input—think custom frames or interactive campaigns.

54%

are more likely to buy from brands that feature people who look like them in their marketing.

Ditch the Script

Show up with energy and genuine interest. Gen Z clients can spot a script a mile away so ditch the "Can I help you?", "What are you looking for today?" or small talk about the weather. You'll only be greeted with an eye roll. Instead, try something real. Compliment their outfit, their vibe or their frame style if they're already wearing glasses. A little authenticity goes a long way. Being present, upbeat and curious makes people feel like you are interested.

Offer Delivery Options

Even when eyeglasses require lens processing time, don't make them come back if they don't want to. Offer to have the eyewear delivered right to their home with text updates. Make it their choice and keep it on their schedule.

Gen Z will shop online for almost everything, but they'll show up in person for an experience that feels fresh, real and human. When you meet them there, with a bold mindset, a sharp team and a personalized touch, they won't just browse and snap photos — they'll buy. **OP**

Tomorrow's Talent

Envisioning the future with
Gen Z optometrists

BY DAVID GOLDBERG

Generation Z optometrists (born between 1997 and 2012) are at a critical juncture of challenges and opportunities in the field. Canada's eye care landscape is experiencing unprecedented demand due to an aging population, the growing epidemic of myopia among younger generations and increasing vision concerns stemming from digital device usage.

"Gen Z optometrists are uniquely equipped to make a difference," says Dr. Martin Spiro, president of the Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO). "They are socially conscious, collaborative and digitally fluent. Their values align closely with the broader evolution of healthcare: toward inclusivity, innovation and patient-centered design."

In recent years, the CAO has repositioned itself to support Gen Z students as they adjust to life after post-secondary education. It offers free student memberships and maintains a strong presence at Canadian schools, attending graduation ceremonies, presenting white coats and awarding the CAO Leadership Prize scholarship. The organization includes a student representative on the CAO Council to ensure that early-career voices are directly involved in shaping national direction.

For new graduates transitioning into practice, the CAO provides practical training in business management, maintains a national job board and offers discounted registration to CAO Congress, where they can network with colleagues and industry leaders.

Tech Fluency: The Gen Z Advantage

Gen Z optometrists, raised in an era of smartphones and social media, bring unprecedented understanding of technology to a profession increasingly shaped by digital innovation.

This familiarity positions them to leverage emerging tools in ways that could revolutionize patient care.

"I think the biggest challenge, like in every industry right now, is AI," says Stan Woo, director and professor at the University of Waterloo's School of Optometry & Vision Science. "We know it's going to transform the way we practice and will help us to improve patient outcomes and reduce provider burnout."

Woo envisions practical applications that could immediately enhance clinical workflows, such as AI scribes that automatically document patient encounters.

"You can carry on a regular conversation with a patient naturally, and the tool populates the pertinent information into your electronic health record. Clinicians can move away from the disconnect created by talking and then typing to having a more seamless experience," says Woo.

Advanced technologies will also transform diagnostic capabilities and preventive care approaches through data analysis at scale.

"The opportunity for Gen Z grads will be the idea that we can harness eye data to ultimately look at things like

oculomics, where we can identify biomarkers," says Woo. "This will help us predict who might be at risk for eye diseases, systemic disease, or even neurological disease. The earlier we can intervene, the longer we can delay any adverse effects and consequences that impact patients."

Professional organizations recognize this technological shift and are preparing practitioners to navigate it effectively. For example, the CAO bolsters emerging technology education through targeted programming, having released strategic frameworks for AI and teleoptometry while offering specialized workshops at its

“

Gen Z optometrists are uniquely equipped to make a difference. They are socially conscious, collaborative and digitally fluent. Their values align closely with the broader evolution of healthcare: toward inclusivity, innovation and patient-centered design.

— DR. MARTIN SPIRO

President of the Canadian Association of Optometrists

annual CAO Congress. Technology-focused continuing education sessions cover AI-assisted diagnostics and advanced imaging systems, with dedicated working groups developing integration guidelines that balance innovation with patient-centered care principles.

"We're committed to ensuring that optometrists are not just prepared for these changes — but actively helping to lead them," says Spiro.

While embracing these technological advances, educators and industry leaders emphasize the importance of maintaining core clinical skills. William Ngo, assistant professor and admissions officer at the University of Waterloo's School of Optometry & Vision Science, cautions that amid the hype around AI-powered technologies, basic patient care principles must remain central.

"Technology is great because it provides us with a way to bridge gaps in services, allowing us to become more capable providers," says Ngo. "But we have to remem-



The Next Generation: A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Kristen Walker is about to start her third year at the University of Waterloo's School of Optometry & Vision Science. She's part of Generation Z and hardly remembers a time when she didn't want to be an optometrist.

"I got my first pair of glasses as a young teenager and I was absolutely astonished. I remember being so amazed at the detail and clarity of the tiny blades of grass at my feet and the leaves on the trees," says Walker.

"I became curious about vision correction and the science behind it all."

This transformative personal experience led Walker to pursue a career in optometry. After gaining work and shadowing ECPs in clinical settings, she was drawn to the notion of the doctor-patient relationship, the dynamic work environment and the balanced lifestyle.

Walker has developed a particular interest in sports vision training, and after graduation, she'll explore working in other regions of Canada before ultimately starting her own practice, which, like other Gen Z practitioners, will likely integrate the latest digital tools to treat patients and manage the practice.

"A lot of us grew up using digital tools, so integrating things like updated imaging software, AI, new digital administrative systems, or even telehealth into our learning and future practice feels very natural," says Walker.

Social media presence represents another significant generational shift. Many of Walker's fellow optometry students are using digital platforms to share eye care information and connect with both patients and fellow professionals.

"I think that finding new ways to reach patients and promote education can really enhance the patient experience," she says.

As Walker looks toward her future practice, she envisions increased implementation of digital technologies, including remote monitoring devices,

“A lot of us grew up using digital tools, so integrating things like updated imaging software, AI, new digital administrative systems, or even telehealth into our learning and future practice feels very natural.”

— KRISTEN WALKER, Third Year Student, University of Waterloo's School of Optometry & Vision Science.

binocular vision training apps, and advanced digital dispensing systems for eyewear.

"I also think there will be an increase in the use of digital dispensing for glasses at optometry practices. Instead of taking measurements of glasses manually with markers and a ruler, a computer program does it all for you with scans and pictures of the patient wearing their glasses," says Walker.

Gen Z is primed to thrive and lead optometry in the decades ahead.

ber our key skills. We cannot give up what we've learned and just entrust blindly to machines and computers. We must do no harm to our patients, and that involves understanding what tools we are using to care for them."

The Burden of Debt

While technological proficiency positions this new generation for success, student debt represents a significant hurdle.

"For Gen Z practitioners, the road ahead includes real challenges, primarily the heavy burden of student debt, especially for those who study outside of Canada," says Spiro.

This financial pressure can impact early career decisions and potentially limit options for new graduates. The concern extends beyond simple economics to affect overall wellbeing — a core value for this generation.

"One main concern for Gen Zs these days is paying off student debt, which is made harder by rising costs," says Ngo. "They might have to accommodate heavier patient schedules, work longer hours, skip lunches, and doing so actually goes against the mental health aspect that they value so much."

Professional organizations like the CAO recognize this challenge and are working to address it through targeted support programs.

"We have been actively advocating for student loan forgiveness programs targeted at optometrists who choose to practice in rural and underserved areas," says Spiro. "This is a key part of our broader strategy to improve access to care while supporting young professionals in building sustainable careers."

Despite these financial hurdles, industry leaders remain optimistic about the profession's future with this new generation at the helm. Their combination of technological aptitude, social consciousness and fresh perspectives offers significant potential for innovation in eye care delivery — even as they navigate the practical realities of establishing themselves.

"Generation Z is not just entering the profession, they are helping redefine it," says Spiro. **OP**

A profession at a CROSSROADS

Canada's optical industry is facing a turning point

BY NICK SAMSON

On May 8, I attended the 2025 Optical Industry Round Table in Toronto, where regulators, educators, business owners and association leaders gathered to confront a shared concern: the growing shortage of opticians and the sustainability of the profession.

At first glance, the numbers don't seem alarming. Canada's practising opticians rose from 8,642 in 2022 to 9,199 in 2024. But dig a little deeper, and a different picture emerges. Nearly 40 per cent of opticians are now over 50, signalling a wave of retirements in the years ahead. At the same time, recent immigration policy changes are expected to shrink the pool of new talent entering the country.

In late 2024, the federal government announced a 20 per cent cut to permanent resident admissions, reducing the target from 500,000 to 395,000 in 2025, and eventually to 365,000 by 2027. A new two-year cap on international student permits,

down 10 per cent from the year before, adds further strain. The sector's long-standing reliance on internationally educated professionals is on uncertain ground.

FEWER STUDENTS, FEWER GRADUATES

The talent pipeline is narrowing. Opticianry programs across Canada are seeing lower enrolment, fewer graduates, and limited resources to support students. Of the 5 out of 9 opticianry programs that reported their enrollment numbers, in 2024 they graduated 174 student opticians and expect this number to drop to 118 in 2027. Some programs anticipate declines of more than 50 per cent.

Yet, patients still report good access to care. A 2025 scan by the College of Opticians of Ontario (COO) found that 97 per cent of Ontarians said it was "somewhat" or "very easy" to access opticianry services, up from 82 per cent in 2023. In rural areas, over 60 per cent of patients said services were within a reasonable distance.

Affordability, however, remains a serious concern. Many Canadians are delaying eye exams and stretching prescriptions. Those without group benefits are especially vulnerable, with cost remaining a major barrier to consistent care.

SHIFTING PATIENT EXPECTATIONS

Consumer behaviour is also evolving. While most Canadians still purchase eyewear in person, 17 per cent accessed services online in 2025, up from 12 per cent in 2023. Patients increasingly expect convenience: virtual appointments, home delivery, and mobile ordering. They're also more informed, and demand is growing for advanced products like myopia control and therapeutic lenses.

From the practitioner's side, the pressures are real. One in five Ontario opticians plan to leave the profession or retire within the next five years. Many cite stagnant wages, limited benefits and the rising cost of maintaining independent practices in a competitive market.

PROMOTING PLAR

One potential solution discussed at the round table was the broader promotion of the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process. Managed by the National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR), PLAR offers a streamlined pathway for Canadians with informal training, or internationally educated professionals, to become licensed without repeating their education.

By evaluating existing skills against national competencies, PLAR allows skilled professionals to enter the workforce more quickly. Raising awareness of PLAR, both at home and abroad, could play a key role in bridging the workforce gap and bringing new energy and experience into the field.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

To support this, COO and NACOR have partnered with MDR Strategy Group and L'effet Futé to launch a national and international recruitment campaign. Backed by a \$1-million fundraising goal, the campaign seeks support from across the industry to attract qualified candidates and promote opticianry as a rewarding, accessible career.

The optical sector is at a critical point. But with strategic collaboration, leadership, and renewed investment in talent and training, the future can still be bright. **OP**

Facing the Future Together

At a time when businesses are feeling the weight of economic uncertainty, it's more important than ever to lead with purpose. That's exactly what

John Perkins, CEO of Specsavers, delivers in his latest message to partners and colleagues.

As businesses continue to navigate a rapidly evolving global landscape with rising inflation, supply chain disruptions, and shifting consumer expectations—John reaffirms Specsavers' commitment to the people and communities at the heart of its business. In a message both grounded and forward-looking, he openly shares about the challenges Specsavers face as a business supporting optometrists, opticians, and retail business owners; and the path ahead.

His words come at a time when many eyecare professionals are asking: **How can I make the greatest impact on patient care? Who is truly investing in the future of eyecare? How can I build a resilient business for myself?**

"Many things have changed over the last 40 years," John shares. "But our cause to change lives through better sight has



Specsavers retail and optometry partners in Ontario connect at the semi-annual meeting.

"We're a private partnership business fueled by the energy of people who believe in something bigger and better."

- JOHN PERKINS, CEO of Specsavers

remained constant... It's our compass in case we ever get lost. It inspires us to create a place where everyone, regardless of background or status, can access the very highest level of care."

At the core of Specsavers' purpose is to always put people first, to create a place where their people can make a difference and make things better across all communities they serve. That means customers and patients, of course — but it also means the independent optometrists, opticians, retail teams, partners, and support office colleagues. Whether you're just starting out in your career or looking to build a more sustainable and

supported practice, Specsavers is building the infrastructure, support system, and culture to help eyecare professionals, like you, thrive.

John outlines how Specsavers is responding to today's economic challenges with deliberate investment in its people, its supply chain, and its clinical technology. By doing so, the company is not only weathering uncertainty but creating opportunities to grow, innovate, and make an even greater impact.

What sets Specsavers apart is how deeply it values partnership. Their model isn't just about business — it's about creating a community of professionals who believe in quality eyecare for all, so no one gets left behind. That common belief runs through everything, from how Specsavers supports its retail and optometry partners, to how it nurtures professional development, and it listens and adapts based on feedback from the field.

At a time when others may cut back in tough times to protect shareholder value, Specsavers is doubling down on its commitment to clinical excellence, patient outcomes, and responsible business practices. By working to make sure everyone has access to the care they need, Specsavers is demonstrating what it means to lead with purpose.

For current and future partners, John's message is clear: **You're not alone. You're supported, valued, and part of something bigger. And that makes all the difference—for you and for your customers and patients. OP**



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for a glimpse into the heart of a company that's here for the long haul.



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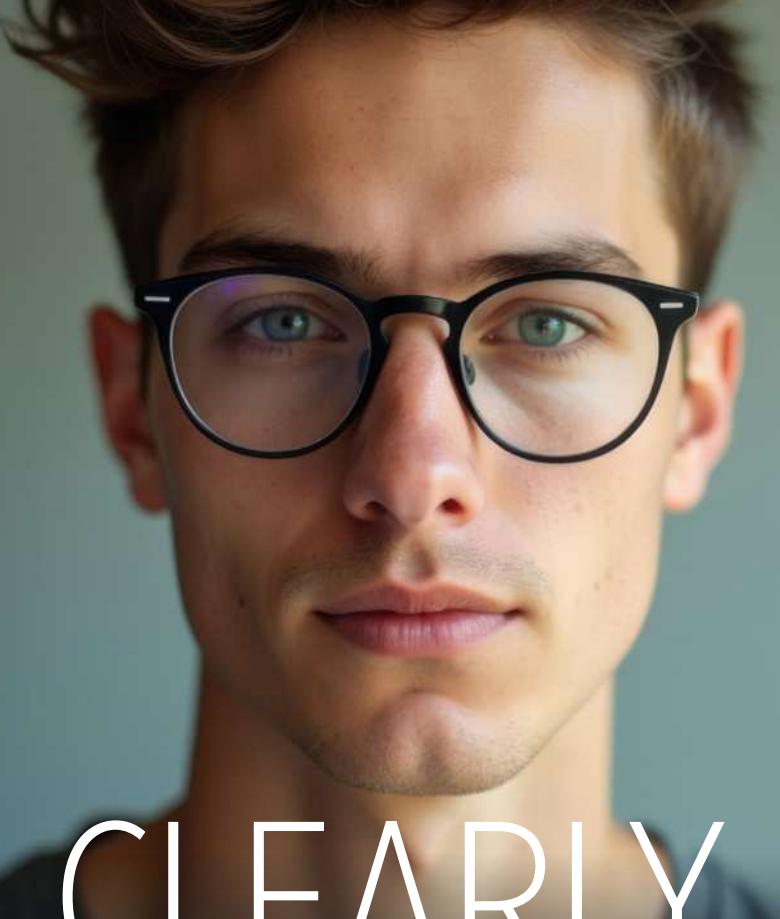
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CLEARLY CONFIDENT

A new generation is discovering the confidence-boosting power of clear, comfortable vision.

BY DAVID GOLDBERG

The relationship between clear vision and personal confidence extends far beyond the ability to read an eye chart. As research increasingly shows, particularly among younger demographics — in particular Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) — the impact of optimal vision on self-perception and social interaction runs deeper than many eye care professionals might realize.

A recent study by Johnson & Johnson's ACUVUE brand finds that 90% of Gen Z respondents aged 18–28 reported significant

confidence boosts from being able to see themselves and others more clearly.

"We know Gen Z embraces comfort, not just in the physical sense, but emotionally as well — the comfort of expression and living authentically," said Chris Yarashas, vice-president at Johnson & Johnson.

For today's eye care professionals, understanding this psychological dimension of vision correction presents both challenges and opportunities in clinical practice.

Dr. Adriana Cotovio is an optometrist at Eyes on Sheppard in Toronto. She emphasizes that contemporary vision care has

evolved significantly beyond traditional approaches.

"There's been a significant shift in how we approach prescribing glasses," says Cotovio. "In the past, the goal was simply to get patients to 20/20 vision. Now, the focus has expanded. We're not just aiming for perfect vision on the eye chart, but also enhancing overall visual functionality in daily life."

This approach considers the whole person, acknowledging that visual efficiency impacts productivity, comfort and confidence. With innovations like blue light filters, neuro lenses with prismatic elements and

“We know Gen Z embraces comfort, not just in the physical sense, but emotionally as well — the comfort of expression and living authentically.”

- CHRIS YARASHAS, Vice-president of Johnson & Johnson

anti-fatigue lenses, practitioners now have expanded tools to address visual comfort, especially for patients spending extended time on digital devices.

“When you optimize vision for both comfort and functionality, you naturally boost efficiency at work and in school,” says Cotovio. “And with greater efficiency comes better performance, which in turn builds confidence.”

THE VISION THERAPY COMPONENT

When traditional corrective lenses aren't enough, vision therapy offers additional pathways to improve visual function. Cotovio identifies three crucial visual skills that vision therapy can enhance: oculomotor, accommodative and binocular skills.

“When any of these visual skills are inefficient, they can lead to fatigue, chronic headaches, and eye strain,” she says. “If left undiagnosed for a long time, these issues can significantly impact a child’s performance in school or an adult’s performance at work.”

The consequences of undiagnosed visual inefficiencies can be far-reaching, potentially contributing to misdiagnoses of learning disabilities when the root cause may be visual.

“Kids may be diagnosed with ADHD or dyslexia, but if they have a significant vision issue — like constantly seeing double — it’s no surprise they’re struggling,” she says. “If they can’t see clearly, of course it’s going to affect how they learn and behave.”

By addressing these visual inefficiencies through vision therapy, practitioners can help create transformative improvements in patients’ daily lives, especially for younger individuals still developing academically and socially.

NEUROLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Unlike traditional strength-based exercises, vision therapy works at the neurological level, creating lasting changes in how the brain processes visual information.

“Vision therapy works at the level of the brain to improve the efficiency of visual skills,” says Cotovio. “It’s not about strengthening eye muscles; it’s not like going to the gym, where you need ongoing workouts to maintain strength. Instead, vision therapy trains the brain to process visual information more effectively.”

This neuroplastic approach means that successful vision therapy typically results in retained skills that deliver long-term benefits, including enhanced confidence.

A CALL TO COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

For eye care professionals, the message is clear: thorough assessment that goes beyond basic visual acuity testing is essential for delivering care that truly enhances patients’ quality of life.

“Don’t overlook patient symptoms,” says Cotovio. “If a child is struggling with reading but tests at 20/20 vision, that doesn’t rule out inefficiencies in their visual system. The same goes for patients with chronic headaches, or those who have suffered traumatic brain injuries and continue to experience visual symptoms. There may still be areas we can improve through glasses or vision therapy.”

These comprehensive examinations, which can take an hour or more, evaluate binocularity, accommodation and tracking alongside traditional visual acuity.

“The perspective within the eye care community has evolved, vision is no longer

just about achieving 20/20,” says Cotovio. “Comprehensive assessments are essential for all patients, especially those presenting with symptoms like eye strain, headaches, reading difficulties, or challenges in school. We need to take these signs more seriously and use all of the new optical technology, not just to correct vision, but to enhance it.”

As practitioners embrace this evolved understanding of vision care, they position themselves to better address the full spectrum of patients’ needs — enhancing not just visual clarity, but also the confidence and quality of life that comes with truly effective vision. **OP**

83%

of Gen Z say they more easily connect to people when they see them clearly.

82%

of those who wear contact lenses say doing so makes them feel more confident.

60%

of Gen Z requires vision correction, but only 15% have been fitted with contact lenses.

Source: Johnson & Johnson Vision

SPEND Shift

**Gen Z purchasing power
packs a punch**

BY EVRA TAYLOR

As society becomes increasingly segmented by demographic, Gen Z is identifying itself through bold purchasing power to match their bold choices in eyewear. While the demographic figures vary slightly depending on the information source, Gen Z was born roughly between 1996 and 2012 and is growing in power and influence. And while this group's age has a broad span – between 13 and 29 years old – those in their teens and twenties share certain traits and buying habits.

Statistics Canada states there are 6.8 million Canadians born between 1996 and 2012. Nielsen IQ's report, Spend Z: Gen Z Changes Everything, states that Gen Z spending power in the U.S. is expected to grow to \$12T by 2030. By standard extrapolation, the Canadian figure would be 10% of this. Gen Z spends more per capita than any other generation at the same age. When they reach age 25, their mean and median spending per capita in the U.S. will outpace prior generations. What's more, by 2030, Gen Z will contribute more wealthy people to every region in the world.

Think Gen Z says that with each passing year, approximately 400,000 Canadian Gen Z's will be joining the workforce, with spending power whose influence across all industries, including eyewear, will exert significant influence on manufacturers' and retailers' products.



55%

**of Gen Z consider influencer
recommendations one of
the most important factors
in what they buy.**

Source: Hubspot

Redesigning marketing strategies to Gen Z

Gen Z's value-driven consumption is changing the way goods are marketed and sold. Consumer behaviour has shifted from being purely product-driven to encompassing the totality of what a given brand stands for. More than at any time in history, consumers in general are seeking brands that reflect their own social and environmental consciousness, as well as diversity and fair labour practices, and younger consumers are particularly sensitized to these factors. Gen Z seeks to align itself with companies and products that demonstrate honesty and social responsibility through tangible business practices and community involvement.

Gen Z uses social media as its primary source for product information, recommendations and reviews, and turns to online platforms for a sense of community belonging.

According to [Emarketer.com](https://www.emarketer.com), in 2025 Gen Z is expected to outnumber millennials on Instagram, with a 72.5% penetration rate. Their platform preferences reveal distinct patterns:

- TikTok dominates for short-form video consumption
- Instagram remains essential for direct messaging and stories
- YouTube leads in long-form content and livestreaming
- Snapchat offers them authentic person-to-person sharing

Furthermore, they note that Gen Z approaches shopping with caution. They research extensively before purchasing and value authenticity above all. Their shopping habits reveal important shifts:

- They discover products primarily through social media (especially TikTok and Instagram)
- They're less prone to impulse buying than previous generations
- They prioritize sustainability, with many checking secondhand options first
- They expect seamless omnichannel experiences that blend digital and physical

These days, successful brands are not only marketing their products, they're also extending this to the creation of niched communities in which purchasers share information and tips around the issue or problem at hand. In the realm of parenting, for example, new moms want to know how other mothers handle potty-training, driven by their purchase of diapers. Gen Z is attracted to user-generated content for its trustworthiness, versus promotional messages generated by manufacturers and retailers.

Focus on eco-friendly materials and manufacturing processes, as well as recycled and recyclable packaging.

Capturing the Gen Z look

In a nutshell, Gen Z likes to look different. Read this as quirky, trendy and outside the norm — anything but a homogeneous aesthetic. Gen Z makes conscious choices based on well-informed research and comparative, budget-conscious shopping. This cohort is more interested

Gen Z is identifying itself through bold purchasing power to match their bold choices in eyewear.

HubSpot reports that 55% of Gen Z consider influencer recommendations one of the most important factors in what they buy. In light of this, eyewear brands with a strong online presence, where influencers' activity is based, stand a greater chance of attracting Gen Z dollars than those that rely on in-store traffic alone. Video content is key, but it must be short and snappy to accommodate an uber-short attention span.

Gen Z is drawn to interactive content that invites engagement. Augmented reality try-on filters can give eyewear shoppers a heightened sense of creative control. Inviting them to participate in surveys about fashion, eyeglass trends and causes that matter to them fosters a sense of sharing in the development of a brand's voice and identity. The more Gen Z can identify with a product on a very personal level, the more likely they are to purchase it and become loyal to it over the long term.

Consider collaborating with influencers who are front and center with messaging that authentically promotes the brand's commitment to sustainability, for example. As digital natives practically glued to their smartphones, Gen Z can quickly and easily sniff out a lack of sincerity. Securing long-term partnerships ensures continuity of message and influencer loyalty.

Showcase your glasses in real-life work and leisure scenarios, enabling potential purchasers to imagine themselves sporting the frames.

in wearing clothing and eyewear that speaks to them, rather than being a brand ambassador through labels and logos.

Exclusivity is a watchword here, so this generation is apt to appreciate limited-edition eyewear and exclusive releases. Gen Z combines tech-savviness with unique style and material preferences such as recycled bamboo and plastic.

In eyewear, Gen Z appreciates a distinctive look. Try to match that product uniqueness with your store's aesthetics. Why is your practice different from others? How does your staff distinguish itself regarding in-store and after-sale service? According to Forbes, it's important to make product benefits the hero. Vision improvement and pricing matter, and should be promoted upfront.

Eyewear trends for Gen Z include oversized frames that cover almost the entire face, and coloured lenses in bold tones such as such as blue and yellow. Part of Gen Z's quirkiness is the love of vintage-inspired frames such as the classic John Lennon round shape, and cat eye forms.

Appealing to Gen Z means tapping into what makes them unique and distinct from other demographics such as millennials, for example. Understanding what makes Gen Z tick — and why — will help brands thrive in an increasingly complex marketplace. **OP**

Virtual Visibility

Why Your Online Presence Matters More Than Ever

BY ROBERT DALTON

In today's visually driven world, your online presence as an optician is no longer a luxury — it is a fundamental necessity for business growth and sustainability. While your expertise in eye care and the quality of your eyewear remain paramount, neglecting the digital landscape means missing out on a significant portion of your potential clientele. Here's why cultivating a strong online presence is crucial for your practice.

First, the internet is often the first point of contact for individuals seeking health-care professionals, including opticians. Potential clients are searching online for local providers, comparing services and reading reviews before ever stepping foot in your clinic. Without a professional and informative website, a regularly updated social media presence, and positive online reviews, you risk being invisible to these potential customers. Think of your online platforms as your digital storefront — an inviting and informative space that draws people in.

Second, a robust online presence allows you to educate and engage with your community. You can share valuable

information about eye health, common vision problems, the latest advancements in lens technology, and the different styles of frames you offer. Blog posts, informative social media content and short videos can position you as a knowledgeable and trusted expert. This not only attracts new clients but also fosters stronger relationships with existing ones, encouraging loyalty and repeat business.

Furthermore, your online presence provides a powerful platform to showcase your unique offerings and the personality of your practice. High-quality images and videos of your eyewear collections, virtual try-on tools (if available), and testimonials from satisfied clients can create a compelling visual narrative. You can highlight what sets your practice apart — whether it's specialized services, a commitment to personalized care, or a curated selection of designer frames. This allows you to connect with potential clients on a deeper level and attract those who align with your values.

Moreover, a strong online presence facilitates convenient communication and appointment scheduling. Integrat-

ing online booking systems on your website or social media platforms streamlines the process for clients and reduces the administrative burden for your staff. Responding promptly to online inquiries and engaging in conversations demonstrates your commitment to customer service and builds trust.

Ignoring the digital realm can lead to missed opportunities and a stagnant business. Competitors who are actively cultivating their online presence are likely attracting clients who might otherwise have chosen your practice. In an increasingly competitive market, a strong online presence provides a vital edge, allowing you to reach a wider audience, build brand awareness and drive growth.

Think of your online platforms as your digital storefront — an inviting and informative space that draws people in.

In conclusion, for opticians in today's digital age, building and nurturing an online presence is not just about having a website or a social media account. It is about creating a valuable resource for your community, showcasing your expertise, fostering connections and providing convenient access to your services. By embracing the power of the internet, you can enhance your visibility, attract new clients, strengthen existing relationships and ensure the continued success of your practice.

Take a closer look at your online strategy — the opportunity to grow is clearly in sight. **OP**

Robert Dalton is the executive director of the Opticians Association of Canada, whose mission is to promote licensed opticians and the profession, maintain professional standards, and educate and inform consumers about eye health. For more information, visit opticians.ca.



Protecting Clarity

Offering clarity when it comes to cataracts

DR. MARTIN SPIRO, CAO president

It is estimated that 3.7 million Canadians are living with cataracts, and that number will undoubtedly rise as Canada's population ages. Although age is a big factor, injury, systemic disease, lifestyle factors and genetics can all play a role. While cataracts are part of the aging process and something many who live a long life will experience, this doesn't mean sitting back and waiting for the inevitable. Cataract Awareness Month is an ideal time to correct misconceptions about cataracts and offer clear, accessible information on this prevalent condition.

The early stages of cataracts can be subtle and often go unnoticed, but eventually their impact is felt. Once vision impairments like dullness in colour perception, blurred vision, glare and halos around lights, and light sensitivity increase, patients are likely to go for an eye exam and discover the culprit is cataracts.

As with many health issues, genetic and environmental factors play a role in cataract development. While cataracts are most commonly associated with aging, it's not the only factor. Cataracts can develop as the result of trauma to the eye from an injury, sur-

Empower patients by ensuring they understand the risks and symptoms of cataracts. Let them know the options for protecting their vision.

gery or radiation treatment. Long-term use of steroid medication and prolonged UV exposure have been shown to increase the risk of developing cataracts, often earlier than normal.

Knowing your patients' health history is important, as conditions like hypertension, diabetes, obesity, chronic kidney disease and autoimmune diseases can impact eye health, including the development of cataracts. Others with increased risk include those with family members who have cataracts. Some are even born with congenital cataracts, further reinforcing the need for eye exams at all ages and stages of life.

Because cataracts develop slowly, the condition can often be managed with glasses, contact lenses or magnifiers for reading in the earlier stages. When these interventions lose their efficacy, and cataracts start to impair the ability to read, drive and carry out work and leisure activities, patients are referred

to an ophthalmologist for assessment, and in many cases, surgery to remove the clouded lenses and replace them with new intraocular lenses. Cataract surgery is a very effective and low-risk procedure. It's one of the most common surgical procedures in Canada, and both the procedure and lens technology continue to advance.

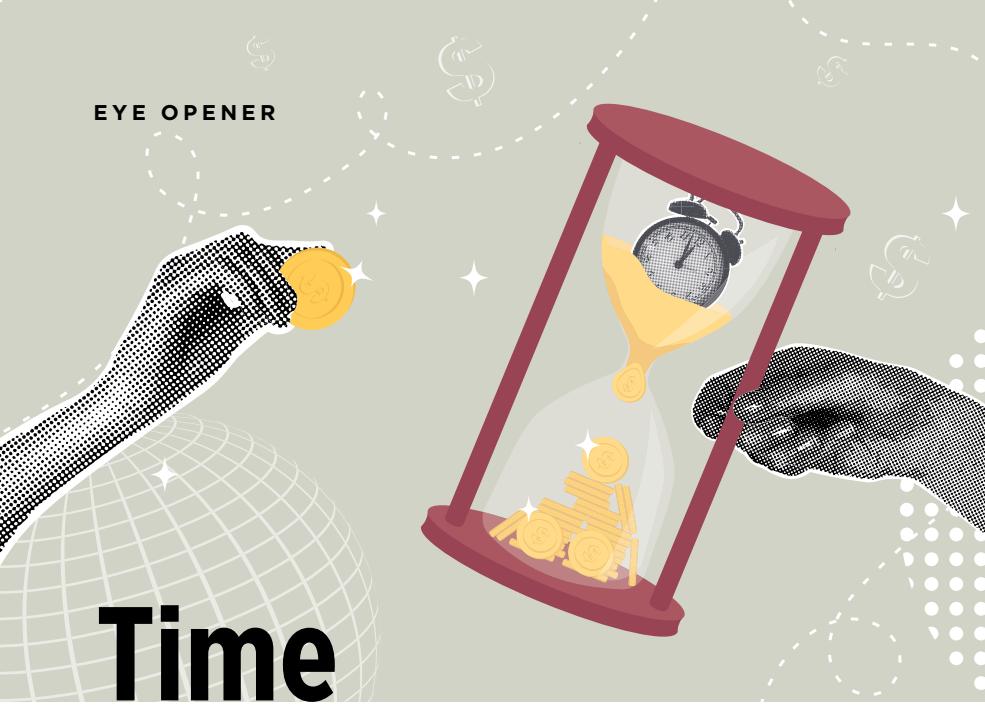
Prevention is something we regularly emphasize with patients. Recommendations to reduce cataract risk and slow the progression align with health advice for other conditions and general health: smoking cessation, reduction of alcohol intake, consistent UV protection, a healthy diet with lots of antioxidants, and proper eye protection for activities where eye injuries are a risk.

Some people avoid health-care providers because of anxiety about receiving

bad news. Empower patients by ensuring they understand the risks and symptoms of cataracts. Let them know the options for protecting their vision, managing the early stages of cataracts, and the process for co-management with their ophthalmologist. Assure them that you'll be there to assist with any vision correction needs they have following surgery.

This June, spread the word about risks, prevention and treatment options so patients have a clear picture of cataracts. Remind patients that maintaining overall health and making eye exams part of a regular health regimen is always timely. A clear understanding of cataract prevention and treatment options helps protect vision before it becomes clouded. **OP**

Dr. Martin Spiro is President of the Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO). The CAO is the national voice of optometry, providing leadership and support to more than 8,400 members (optometrists, students and optometric assistants) to enhance the delivery of healthy eyes and clear vision for all Canadians.



Time Well Spent:

Practical Time Management for Optical Managers

BY NANCY DEWALD

In today's fast-paced world, effective time management is crucial for success, especially for optical managers and owners who juggle multiple responsibilities. Today, let's discuss insights and strategies to help leaders optimize their time and boost productivity.

"Time is what we want the most, but what we use the worst." — WILLIAM PENN

Time is a precious resource that is often misused, so what is the cost of poor time management?

Productivity can be affected by up to 40 per cent, with common time wasters: context switching, jumping from task to task overplanning, spending excessive time on planning vs. executing unrealistic goals, plans that are too ambitious distractions, failing to manage interruptions

To combat these time-wasters, consider several principles for managing time like a pro:

Prioritizing tasks, known as the Eisenhower Matrix – separating urgent ones from those that can wait

Time blocking – schedule admin time and days, versus trying to get them done in between patients

The Two-Minute Rule – if a task can be done in two minutes or less, tackle it immediately instead of adding it to your to-do list

Eliminate distractions – create a workspace free from interruptions, set boundaries, and try tools like "focus mode" to stay in the zone

Learn to say no – protect your schedule by avoiding commitments that aren't aligned with your goals

Take breaks – incorporate short breaks to recharge; productive energy comes from a well-rested mind

Leverage technology – use apps like Microsoft To-Do, Notion, or your device's calendar to keep your plans organized

Delegate – I know you are all very capable. So are the people you surround yourself with – delegate

Reduce email volume – follow the rule of three email threads, copy fewer people, use shared tools such as WhatsApp, set up filters and folders. Unsubscribe from junk emails. Creating a team email charter can further streamline communication and ensure that emails are used effectively.

Meetings can also be a significant time-waster if not managed properly. I suggest a meeting makeover to transform meetings from time sinks to time savers. Improved communication reduces time on followup and execution.

Categorize meetings into three types:

1 **The Daily Check-in** is a schedule-oriented, administrative meeting that should last no more than five or 10 minutes. The purpose is simply to keep team members aligned and to provide a daily forum for activity updates and scheduling.

2 **The Tactical Staff** is what most people have come to know as staff meetings. These should be approximately an hour in length, give or take 20 minutes, and should focus on the discussion and resolution of issues that affect near-term objectives. Ironically, these work best if there is no pre-set agenda. Instead, the team should quickly review one another's priorities and the team's overall scorecard, then decide on what to discuss during the remainder of the meeting. This will help them avoid wasting time on trivial issues and focus only on those that are truly relevant and critical. The key to making these tactical meetings work is having the discipline to identify and postpone the discussion of more strategic topics, which brings us to the third kind of meeting.

3 **The Ad hoc Topical** is the most interesting kind of meeting for leaders and a key indicator of a company's strategic aptitude. It is the appropriate place for big topics — those with long-term impact on the business. These issues require more time and a different setting where participants can brainstorm, debate, present ideas, and wrestle in pursuit of the optimal long-term solution. Each strategic meeting should include no more than one or two topics and allow roughly two hours for each. It should be rare but focused and impactful.

As you can see, each type of meeting has a specific purpose and duration, ensuring that time is used efficiently.

By understanding time-wasters, implementing strategies, and making small changes, optical managers and owners can optimize time, boost productivity, and achieve goals. **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

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- DR. HEATHER COWIE,
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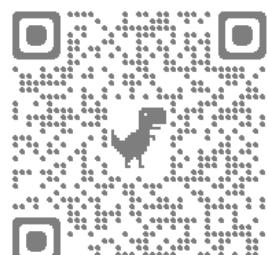
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Smart Insurance Choices

Insurance should be a risk management tool, not an investment.

BY TIM PAZIUK

On a cool November morning in 1979, I walked into the Canada Life Assurance office in Edmonton to start my career in the life insurance industry.

Today, after more than 45 years in the business, I've seen how things do end. What I advise professionals today is nothing like what I was taught to advise so long ago.

The most important lesson I've learned is that the only thing that matters in any insurance contract is what's guaranteed.

I'm only going to touch on two insurance products, but they are both ones you should have: life insurance and disability insurance. First, let's look at life insurance.

For the first 20 years of my career, I was taught that the best solution for almost any situation was whole life insurance (often called permanent insurance). It was a risk management tool, a savings vehicle, and, even better, a tax shelter. It was a way for business owners to accumulate money tax-sheltered in their companies. It could be used for retirement or, on death, as a way to move money out of your company tax-free.

In the 1980s, the insurance industry also introduced universal life insurance. This product had a life insurance component and an investment component, making it another way to sell insurance as both a risk management tool and an investment product.

As time passed, my clients started to die or need the cash in their policies. Suddenly, all the promises made didn't pan out the way they were presented. Dividend scales didn't perform the way they were projected. In some policies, the insurance cost increased (even though it had never happened before). There were taxes on withdrawals, or after death, that weren't expected when trying to get the insurance proceeds out of the company. In every case where a whole life or universal life policy was involved, we had no way to know what would happen until after the fact. That's not planning; in my opinion, today, that's craziness.

For example, if you buy a term insurance policy, you know the coverage amount and the cost. It's all guaranteed — no surprises. If you purchase a whole life or universal life policy, only part of the contract is guaranteed. In most cases, most of the policy is not. I now

know not to risk my client's future on hollow promises made by insurance companies.

If you want to save yourself and your family potentially a lot of grief, remember this: Insurance should be used as a risk management tool — full stop. Nothing more. Don't let some insurance person sell you on the investment benefits of an insurance policy.

If you're a professional and a business owner, I'll show you how to invest money in your corporation that is way more tax-efficient than using a life insurance policy. I'll be covering that in later issues when I explain investing.

In the meantime, did you know that the main reason life insurance agents continue to sell whole life insurance today? Commissions. If you buy a whole-life policy with a premium of \$100,000 per year, the agent will be paid a commission of up to \$160,000! That's not a misprint.

Bottom line: Buy term insurance. If you need or want permanent insurance, buy term to 100 (without a cash value).

Disability insurance is a must. Where you get it from depends.

When you're younger and starting out, we advise leaning heavily on Association coverage. Personal disability insurance is initially much more expensive than Association coverage, and the cost of Association coverage increases as you age.

Depending on your needs and cash flow, you may start with Association coverage and a small personal disability insurance policy. Over time, you can replace your Association coverage with individual coverage.

How much you carry depends on your income. My advice while you're working is to get the maximum amount you're allowed.

Remember, the only thing that matters when it comes to any insurance is what's guaranteed. **OP**

Tim Paziuk has been in the financial services industry for over 45 years. He is the author of two books on the incorporation of professionals and has been featured in the *Financial Post*, *Huffington Post*, *MoneySense magazine*, and numerous other publications. He is currently the Chairman of TPC Financial Group Limited, a fee-for-service financial planning firm specializing in professionals.

STAND OUT



Creating a Strong Brand for Your Eye Care Practice

BY KERI MOMBOURQUETTE

What sets your eye care practice apart? Do you want to be known as the go-to place for chic frames? The compassionate team that makes every patient feel like family? Or maybe the tech-forward clinic with all the latest gadgets. If you've never thought this through, you're not alone — but you're also not doing your practice any favours. A strong brand identity isn't just about a snazzy logo; it's what makes people choose you over the practice down the street. The good news? You can create a unique brand without feeling like you need a business degree from Harvard.

Why Your Practice Needs a Personality (Yes, for Real!)

Your "brand" is the whole experience patients associate with your practice. It's how they feel when they see your logo, book an appointment online, or pop in for a pair of frames. A successful brand...

Knows its audience. Families?

Millennials? Retirees? Get specific.

Clarifies expectations. Are you the fastest, the most stylish, or the most advanced?

Stays consistent. Keep the same vibe across your space, social media, and materials.

Has a distinct look. Think beyond "blue is clean." What's your colour palette, fonts, and mood?

Delivers clear value. Why should someone choose you?

Branding Without Losing Your Mind (5 Easy, Time-Saving Tips)

Time is tight for independent eye care professionals. Between patient appointments, ordering stock, and wrangling tests, building a brand can be the last thing on your to-do list.

Use these five steps to create a rock-solid brand identity faster than your fastest lens-cutting machine.

1 Start with Your Story

Why did you open your practice in the first place? What gets you out of bed in the morning? (Coffee doesn't count.) Patients love a personal touch, so share your passion on your website, social media, and marketing materials.

PRO TIP: Your story IS your brand. Don't bury it six pages deep on your website.

2 Find Your USP (Unique Selling Point)

Here's a hard truth: Most eye care practices sound exactly the same. You need to go deeper. What makes you different? Why do patients rave about you? Highlight what sets you apart and make it known.

3 Create a Scroll-Stopping Look

Pick two to three brand colours, a font, and a logo that reflect your practice. Use clean, consistent imagery that showcases your team, space, and happy patients.

PRO TIP: Free tools like Canva can help you make visuals faster than it takes to say "astigmatism."

4 Inject Personality Everywhere

Your brand voice should match across all touchpoints. If your emails say "Hey there!" but your website is stiff, that's a disconnect.

5 Leverage Social Media & Community

Want a shortcut to building a memorable brand? Showcase how you serve your community. Sponsor events, post behind-the-scenes content, answer FAQs, or highlight happy patients (with permission). Social media is your best branding sidekick.

Solving the 'All Eye Care Practices Are the Same' Problem

Patients need to feel something when they think of your practice. Do you want them to think of cutting-edge technology? Warm, personal care? Stylish eyewear for every budget? Zero in on your differentiators. When patients can see a clear story and reason to choose you, they'll stop shopping around.

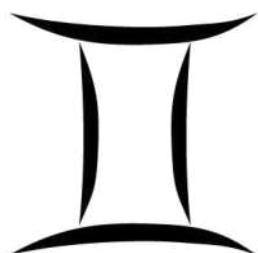
You've Got This! Here's What to Do Next...

Building a brand for your eye care practice doesn't have to feel overwhelming. Start small. Get clear on your voice, personality, and the feeling you want to invoke. Then, bring that consistency to every patient interaction. Know what makes you different, stick with your story, and show off the unique charm only YOUR practice can offer. Not sure where to begin? Need help polishing your brand identity? Companies like ours help brands turn patients into raving fans.

Your practice is worth investing in. It's time the world sees that, too. **OP**

Keri Mombourquette is the manager of editing and content strategy at Marketing4ECPs. As a content and communications specialist, Keri has been writing and editing academic and professional articles for newspapers and magazines across North America for more than 15 years. Read more about Keri and Marketing4ECPs at marketing4ecps.com.

gemini



MAY 21 – JUNE 20

Astrological signs say a lot about someone's personality – which in turn is reflected in their sense of style. Here's the "eyewear horoscope" for this month's zodiac sign.

Geminis are known for their adaptability, wit, and curiosity. You thrive in dynamic environments and love to mix things up. Your versatile nature calls for eyewear that's equally flexible, frames that shift between bold and classic, depending on your mood. Try statement pieces like geometric, two-tone frames that reflect your ever-evolving style. For a more refined look, opt for sleek, metal frames with a hint of modern flair. Bold patterns and bright colours also align with your lively personality, so experiment with tortoiseshell or vibrant hues.

Famous Geminis like Naomi Campbell, Johnny Depp and Angelina Jolie know how to make a statement, your eyewear should do the same. A distinctive pair of frames will not only elevate your look but also keep up with your fast-paced, multifaceted lifestyle. Keep it fresh and fearless, Gemini! **OP**



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