

OPTICAL PRISM

MARCH 2024 • VOL. 42 • NO. 3

WOMEN *with* VISION

How the OWA brings
women together

LEADING UP

Building your business
with Nancy Dewald

What Women Want

Understanding
women patients

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HIRING 2.0
Changing up
the interview
process

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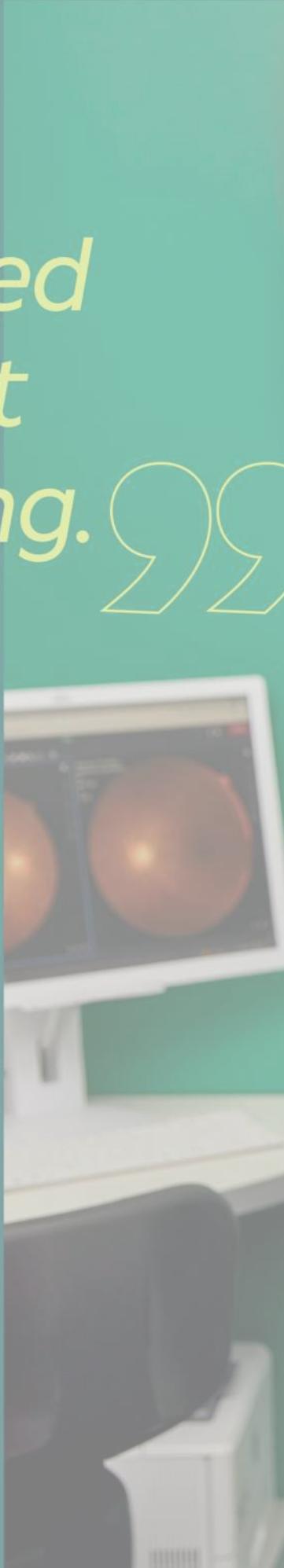
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Dr Stephanie Kwan, OD
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Specsavers

March 8 is International Women's Day – a global celebration of the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women, and a call to action for accelerating women's equality. This issue of *Optical Prism* shines a spotlight on some of the amazing women who are shaping the optical industry in Canada.

Studies show that in Canada, roughly 64% of optometrists are women, while some 74% of optician jobs are held by women. Add to that all of the women in key positions at major eyewear companies, women leaders of independent eyewear houses, and women employed in the optical industry generally, and it's clear that women play an increasingly crucial role in the provision of eyewear and eye care to Canadians.

As the Canadian Association of Optometrists' Dr. Allison Scott and Dr. Surjinder Sahota point out in our Outlook column in this issue, women now represent more than 61% of the optometry workforce in Canada. And women patients have particular needs that require understanding.

Our feature in this issue looks at the Optical Women's Association, its impact and benefits, and the influential Canadian women who are spearheading the movement to nurture female leadership in the eye care profession.

We also feature two powerful women who have carved out their own niches in the optical industry – Nancy Dewald of Lead Up Training and Consulting and styling expert Wendy Buchanan of Be Spectacular. And our Success Story column profiles Dr. Shaina Nensi, a prominent voice in the optometry community who advocates for eye care advancements and accessibility.

I'm thrilled to welcome writer Evra Taylor to the *Optical Prism* team. Evra is an award-winning medical writer and reporter with 25 years'

Studies show that in Canada, roughly 64% of optometrists are women, while some 74% of optician jobs are held by women.

experience in the optometry and ophthalmology sectors. She wrote features and news for *Envision: Seeing Beyond* (originally *Envision*) magazine for 14 years until it ceased production in December 2023, and she serves as managing editor of four medical journals. She also has extensive experience developing COPE-accredited CME courses for Canadian optometrists.

We're excited to add Evra's voice, experience and insights to our pages, with a regular column entitled "Biz Med" focusing on the business and eye health aspects of the optical profession. Her inaugural Biz Med column in this issue looks at business trends in optometry and forecasts what's to come in 2024 and beyond. Welcome aboard, Evra!

That's just a taste of the eye-opening content between our covers. And of course, our women's issue wouldn't be complete without showcasing stunningly feminine eyewear, ranging from boldly brash to softly sophisticated.

To all women who are blazing a trail towards equality, whether in your profession, at home, in your community or in the wider world, we salute you! **OP**



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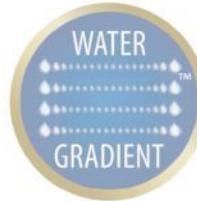
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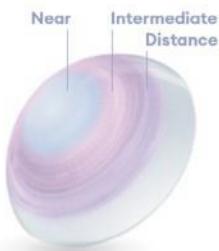
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Keep your eyewear options fresh with the latest models from these leading companies

ORGREEN OPTICS

Orgeen Optics' new "Danish Delight" campaign showcases contemporary frames that blend sophistication and intellectualism.

The deliberate play of light enhances the depth of colours and defines the silhouettes of these titanium and acetate collections.

For more information, contact your Orgeen sales representative or visit: orgreenoptics.com



Orgreen Danish Delight



Lido



Spargi



Pellestrina

MYKITA

High-volume, low-weight designs from the MYKITA Mylon collection include Leto and Souda. These bold and bulky styles in matte, monochrome colourways are made using 3D printing technology.

For more information, contact your MYKITA sales representative or visit: mykita.com

**FITSON**

New from Fitson Eyewear, the F1566 is a cat eye style with a colourful top rim that highlights the face, and a bottom rim that gives the frame lightness and movement.

The F5047 model has a graphic shape in more classic colours, such as a bronze frame with burgundy temple tips.

For more information, contact your COS sales representative or visit: canadianoptical.com

ULTRA LIMITED

This Italian brand's all-new sunglasses feature unique multi-coloured designs on the front accentuated by an additional layer of acetate for a three-dimensional effect.

These frames also boast a completely new temple design with printed striped engravings.

For more information, contact your Ultra Limited sales representative or visit: ultralimited.it



FRESH LOOKS



Denab



Meissa



Altair

LOOK

Inspired by art deco minimalism, the ultralight Deco Series uses a special process to coat the frame material with a thin film of pure metal. Next, they're individually hand-painted with decorative lacquers to achieve unique luxury finishes.



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



Eris



Juno Two



Copernico

AKONI

This Japanese-made Swiss eyewear brand has partnered with Winnie New York, headed by designer Idris Balogun. Born in Nigeria and raised in London, Balogun brings his Savile Row-style tailoring and Nigerian style to eyewear.

For more information, contact your AKONI sales representative or visit: akoni.com

Deco Series

PVD luxury finishes
Hand painted details

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Culture



CAROLINA HERRERA

New from Safilo, HER 0224 is a modern cat-eye optical frame in acetate, showcasing pairs of rounded metal studs on the front and distinctive two-toned temples.

Style HER 0227 is a subtle squared optical frame in bi-layer acetate, crafted with a milling technique that reveals unexpected colour combinations.

For more information, contact your Safilo sales representative or visit: mysafilo.com/ca

SCOJO NEW YORK

New handmade readers from this luxury brand include the rectangular Benson Street – a retro style with a modern twist. The Simon's hefty frame incorporates artful ombre colour palettes and rivet detailing. And The Gershwin's gentle oval shape and warm tortoise colouring set the stage for a wearable, everyday reader.

For more information, contact your OGI sales representative or visit: ogeyewear.com





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VE3354 is a squared optical model with double-layered

construction in contrasting colours. Available in light Havana with black top or Havana blue with black top.

Style VE4465 boasts a narrow rectangular shape with streamlined contours and a flat-top profile. Available in Havana with black top and white with black top, both with dark-grey lenses.

**For more information,
contact your Versace sales
representative or visit:
versace.com**



The Korda

PAUL SMITH

This British designer's "classic with a twist" philosophy is reflected in these two new styles. The Korda women's optical model has a timeless cat-eye shape, while the Kimpton is a rectangular men's optical frame.

The Black and Havana versions of both styles feature a multi-layered design

that displays the brand's iconic Artist Stripe around the edges. The Korda is also available in Khaki and Azure, and Kimpton is also available in Blue and Striped Brown.

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



The Kimpton





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Empowering Vision

Banding together through the Optical Women's Association

BY DAVID GOLDBERG





As a month celebrating the achievements of women, March offers the perfect backdrop to highlight an organization that has been a beacon of empowerment and progress in the optical industry for more than a quarter-century – the Optical Women's Association (OWA). This feature explores the organization's impact through the voices of its influential members and showcases its significant role in nurturing female leadership within the eye care profession.

Founded in 1997, the OWA is dedicated to promoting and supporting the professional development, leadership and recognition of women in the optical industry. It also provides a platform for networking, education and peer support through various events and initiatives, including leadership training, mentorship programs and networking opportunities.

The organization's mission is to empower women in the optical field, explains OWA President Dr. Lorie Lippiatt. As its guiding force, she sheds light on the OWA's strategic growth and expanding horizon of influence.

“Membership is open to any woman, regardless of her role in the industry,” says Lippiatt. “OWA members, including board members, represent a broad spectrum of the industry, ensuring that the OWA is aware of current trends and issues, recognizes where there is a need for guidance and mentoring, and helps develop programs to fill those needs.”

Under her leadership, the OWA has reached a record number of memberships – nearly 1,100 – as it continues to provide a platform for women to excel in optical.

Recognizing Outstanding Women in Optical

Each year, the OWA presents awards to several of its members at Vision Expo East (VEE) in New York City. Two Canadians who are among the 2024 honourees spoke to *Optical Prism* about the benefits of OWA membership.

Trudi Charest, president of Total Focus Consulting, co-founder of Marketing4ECPs and a trusted *Optical Prism* contributor, receives the 2024 PYXIS Award for her many years of commitment to the OWA and to the optical industry as a whole.

Charest was instrumental in bringing the OWA to Canada, inspired by what she saw during one of the group's events at Vision Expo West in 2015. An OWA member since 2018, she now sits on its board of directors and chairs the digital marketing committee.

"When I joined the OWA, there were only a handful of Canadian members, including Beverly Suliteanu, WestGroupe's vice president of product development. I signed onto the membership committee and started reaching out to my network of women, and hosting live events in Calgary and Toronto to gain exposure."

Charest says the OWA is important for women in optical and for the industry as a whole. "It's a community of like-minded women in optical," she says. "The premise of the Optical Women's Association is women supporting women, and also helping women grow into leadership roles."

Joining Charest on the awards podium will be Canadian member Reagan Colpitts, senior business development manager with Safilo Group in Western Canada, who will receive the OWA's Emerging Leader Award. In part, she's being recognized for her work on the group's digital marketing committee, which helps to keep members updated on the latest trends and resources for ECPs.

It's a community of like-minded women in optical. The premise of the Optical Women's Association is women supporting women, and also helping women grow into leadership roles.

- TRUDI CHAREST, Total Focus Consulting

"The committee has always been such a creative outlet for me, and I can exercise different skills in the marketing world," says Colpitts, adding that the team is bursting with ideas to connect with and educate members, including social media content and guest speakers.



Reagan Colpitts,
Safilo Group



Trudi Charest,
Total Focus
Consulting

Colpitts and Charest will be celebrated at the VEE Champagne Breakfast this March, along with two U.S.-based award winners – Modo CEO Rebecca Giefer, who will receive the Plaides Award; and Marge Axelrad of Jobson Optical Group, the second-ever winner of an OWA Lifetime Achievement Award.

The guest list includes top leaders from optical's most prominent organizations, says Charest. "The Champagne Breakfast has always been about celebrating the women who won these awards, and I've been at this event now for 10 years," she notes. "I'm so excited that I get to be honoured in front of more than 450 of my colleagues and peers."

A Network of Powerful Women

Besides providing professional development and recognizing the industry's best, the OWA serves as a network of powerful women who work together to support each other, whether that's through mentorship or possibly a job interview.

Strength in Numbers

The OWA is now growing faster than at any point since its founding 27 years ago. And it's enabling the success of more women than ever before, thanks to a robust roster of corporate sponsors. Here are some recent highlights.

1,000

Membership Milestone

In 2023, the OWA's membership surpassed 1,000 members, reflecting its increasing appeal and influence within the optical community.

47

Leadership Scholarships

The organization awarded 47 Leadership Scholarship Awards between 2019 and 2023, each valued at \$2,000. This initiative highlights the OWA's dedication to fostering leadership skills and professional growth.

70+

Robust Corporate Support

Last year marked a significant achievement in corporate backing, with more than 70 corporate sponsors and individual contributors rallying behind the OWA's mission.

100%

Event Popularity

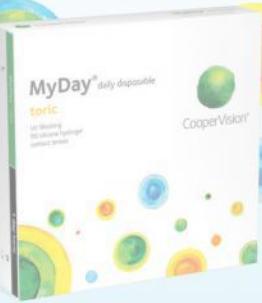
Signature events, particularly at Vision Expo East and West, achieved full capacity, underscoring the high regard and interest in OWA initiatives among industry professionals.

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FEATURE

“Joining the OWA has allowed me to develop my professional network,” says Carla D’Angelo, founder of AYA Optical in British Columbia. She points to the practical impact of the OWA’s network in empowering female-led entrepreneurial ventures. “Everyone I have reached out to in the organization has been incredibly helpful and generous with their knowledge.”

D’Angelo joined the OWA a few years ago and started to engage during the pandemic. “Trade shows and international travel had been on hold for some time, and I thought the OWA’s virtual events would be an interesting way to stay engaged with professionals,” she recalls.

“I participated in a variety of events that ranged from professional networking discussions to book clubs and even cooking classes. Clearly, a lot of effort and coordination was being put into bringing this group of women together. I decided that I should prioritize my involvement with this group, as the benefits were there for me professionally and personally.”

Continuing to grow the membership is a crucial part of the OWA’s mandate. With more than a thousand members and counting, the association has its finger on the pulse of what’s important to ECPs, and even offers learning opportunities for non-members. These include access to fireside chats, one-minute long inspiration videos, podcasts and more.

Shelley Logan, Southwestern Ontario Sales Representative with WestGroupe and a member of the OWA’s membership committee, is always working to attract more women to the organization. “The OWA really has so much to offer to women in any facet of the optical industry, at a reasonable cost,” she says. Examples of member benefits include opportunities for scholarships and access to exclusive content, including guest speakers.

“Usually, the speakers would be industry leaders or motivational speakers, and topics on work-life balance and career tips,” says

Joining the OWA has allowed me to develop my professional network. Everyone I have reached out to in the organization has been incredibly helpful and generous with their knowledge.

- CARLA D’ANGELO, AYA Optical



Logan, an award-winning optical veteran with more than 25 years’ experience. “They’ll also speak a little bit more to the group about the OWA, and hopefully get some more recruits.”

She adds that the OWA has broadened her horizons, encouraging her to try new and different things and connecting her with women from a broad range of backgrounds. “The connections I have made with women across North America are really invaluable.” Now she wants to pay it forward by supporting the next wave of women joining the organization.

With its expanding influence, innovative approaches and unwavering commitment to empowerment, the OWA is well positioned to shape the landscape of the optical industry, with women at its core. **OP**

Visit opticalwomen.com to learn more and get involved.

A Banner Year

From professional development to networking events and more, 2023 was one of the most exciting years yet for the Optical Women’s Association.

The Annual Champagne Breakfast, sponsored by EssilorLuxottica, was held at Gotham Hall during Vision Expo East 2023. This event celebrated women in leadership and honoured three extraordinary women for their impact on the optical industry.



The OWA hosted a memorable Connection Series Luncheon, featuring guest speaker Shannon McKain. Her presentation on overcoming limitations was insightful and empowering.



The first-ever OWA Town Hall meeting provided a platform for networking and education about OWA initiatives and activities, further engaging the community.

October 2023 saw the inaugural OWA Unplugged retreat – a unique event for members to unwind, connect and engage in various activities, including a Fireside Chat and book discussions.



At Vision Expo West, OWA held a networking reception featuring a raffle and silent auction, supporting the Professional Development fund.



What Women Want

A journey beyond empowerment

BY DR. ALLISON SCOTT & DR. SURJINDER SAHOTA,
Canadian Association of Optometrists

The number of female optometrists continues to rise, and more are taking on leadership roles in provincial or national organizations. They now represent more than 61% of the optometry workforce across Canada, according to the latest poll by the Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO). The CAO Council itself is composed of seven female representatives out of 13 members.

Reflecting on our personal journeys, we both developed an interest in optometry from an early age after exploring various aspects of the medical profession, joining high-school camps or clubs like the pre-optometry club to learn from experts and speakers. We both find it rewarding and fulfilling to make an impact on our patients' daily lives and enable them to see the important events around them.

Being involved at a young age, and having mentors at the onset of our careers who encouraged us to join professional associations, allowed us to help shape the future of our profession and educate the public on the importance of good vision and eye health.

Sharing our insights, giving back to the profession we love, and helping others grow have made this a wonderful experience.

As we witness the growth of networking groups and mentoring initiatives for new graduates, we recognize that it's about more than just bouncing ideas off someone, providing a little extra help, or tools for equal opportunity. It goes beyond overcoming

Women now represent more than 61% of the optometry workforce across Canada.

— Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO)

“imposter syndrome” or empowering women, ultimately opening doors to future optometric leaders and fostering an environment for innovative thinking. This approach also develops and inspires a vibrant and inclusive eye care community. The call for a transformative shift

in our profession is a commitment to creating a future where women aren't merely equal participants, but architects of progress and excellence, ushering in an era of unparalleled strength and innovation.

However, the call needs to go beyond ourselves – we need to also direct it towards our female patients.

Many of the women we care for in our practices are juggling a lot of different aspects of their lives – family, work, etc. – and they often book appointments for others first while neglecting their own. It is important to remind them that many vision problems have no external signs or obvious symptoms, but neglecting eye care can have long-term consequences.

For some women, the only way to find time for their own care means getting their exam at the same time as their children. For others, the health appointment may be the only time out of their week for themselves. Unfortunately, some female patients seem to feel unheard. They may be diagnosed and treated accurately, but may need a different mode of explanation. Many suffer from chronic conditions that might be ignored or not given enough attention, such as dry eyes, so active listening and effective communication are vitally important.

Communication is key to addressing concerns within the limited time many women may have. Making the correct recommendations to fit their different lifestyles and activities is crucial, whether it is dry eye treatment, glasses or contact lenses. If your recommendations do not work within their busy lifestyle, they may find alternative therapies or solutions.

Allowing ourselves to listen and better understand our women patients will improve the level of care and result in a higher level of trust in patient care. **OP**

Dr. Allison Scott is vice president and Nova Scotia representative of the Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO), and Dr. Surjinder Sahota is treasurer and British Columbia representative. The CAO is the national voice of optometry, providing leadership and support to more than 5,400 members to enhance the delivery of healthy eyes and clear vision for all Canadians. For more information, visit opto.ca.

STYLE EYES



Underwater by Etnia Barcelona, Spring-Summer 2024 campaign



1.

“She is strong, fierce, brave and full of fire, and her favourite colours are wild and free.”

— UNKNOWN



2.



3.

Style TIP

Angles and patterns and colour, oh my!

Push your style boundaries by infusing one or more of these bold elements in every frame to instantly transform a basic outfit into a fierce fashion statement that commands attention.

- WENDY BUCHANAN
Eyewear Image Expert



4.



5.



6.



7.

From bold geometric shapes to sultry cat eyes and statement colours, today's women are embracing their feminine mystique with a myriad of styles.

BY SUZANNE LACORTE

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5 Reasons to Join FYidoctors

Why partnering with FYidoctors is the next best move for your practice and career in 2024

BY AMANPREET DHAMI

There are many opportunities within the eye care industry, whether it's owning and running an independent eye care practice or working as a doctor or eye care employee within an independent practice, larger company or group of practices. But what if you could find the best of both worlds? What if you could enter a partnership practice where you receive optimal support for work-life balance and empowerment to run your clinical practice as you desire, without the pressure of going it alone?

FYidoctors, one of Canada's largest eye care providers with more than 300 practices across the country, offers exactly that.

Doctor-led, professionally managed and patient focused, it concentrates on delivering outstanding eye care along with patient-centric products and services.

FYidoctors prides itself on its values of flexibility, growth in both mindset and practice, and passionate dedication to providing the best eye care to all Canadians. This makes it a valuable place to either kickstart a career in optometry, or integrate an established practice within a model that provides wins for all.

But don't just take our word for it; discover for yourself the five reasons you would want to join FYidoctors, whether you are looking to merge your established practice, or you are newer to the industry and want to build a career.

1 A Dedicated Vision to Doctor-Driven Eye Care

FYidoctors started its journey in 2008 with a small group of like-minded optometrists in Alberta, who saw a divergence between fulfilling patient needs and growing profits among their large chain competitors. As independent practices, it was difficult to prioritize patient care while competing with large chains that advertised lower prices and greater selection, and also provided more scale to manage ever-changing business requirements.

Since its inception, the FYidoctors model has given optometrists the ability to vertically integrate, build purchasing power and disrupt the industry, all while delivering cutting-edge eye care.

Inspired by the change they wanted to see, this group created FYidoctors with the mandate to preserve eye care across Canada, while ensuring that local optometrists could shape what an eye exam looked like for decades to come, instead of giving up control to external entities.

Since its inception, the FYidoctors model has given optometrists the ability to vertically integrate, build purchasing power and disrupt the industry, all while delivering cutting-edge eye care. The company places focused energy, capital and resources on developing optometric specialities such as dry eye disease, myopia management and vision therapy.

2 Proudly Canadian with True Vertical Integration

FYidoctors is proudly Canadian, from ownership to manufacturing, and demonstrates true vertical integration that gives back to the Canadian economy and community.

"FYidoctors is truly an optometrist majority-owned and led Canadian business," explains Dr. Michael Naugle, Vice President of Optometric Partnerships, Mergers and Acquisitions.

"We have a broad base of optometrist owners with more than 60% owning shares in FYidoctors, and well over 300 optometry owners. This cements and anchors our continual focus, strategy, and commitment to delivering exceptional eye care to a wide geographical area in Canada."

In contrast, most companies of comparable size in the industry have the majority of their ownership outside of Canada, either in the U.S. or offshore.

FYidoctors also provides eyewear and vision solutions that are Canadian based. "We have our lens manufacturing and distribution centre in Delta, BC, allowing us to

produce 90% of our lenses here in Canada, with more than 175 employees at our laboratory," says Dr. Naugle.

This vertical integration continues with FYidoctors' eyeglass frame distribution, which enables control over the quality and styles offered to patients and customers across all price points.

3 Gain True Business & Practice Support

Whether you are a doctor looking to sell your optometric practice, or a younger associate wanting to build your career, FYidoctors supplies you with the resources, leading-edge equipment and best practices to support you in delivering advanced clinical care.

All clinics receive practice management support. From human resources and

marketing to IT and accounting, the Home Office network of professionals have a proven track record of supporting all clinics across the country.

"Doctors own all of the clinics after merging with FYidoctors, with a say on all aspects of the practice, including a say in eye exams, eye care and eyewear product choices, as well as in HR, IT and finances. However, the degree of involvement is ultimately up to the doctor," says Dr. Naugle.

"Before joining FYidoctors, most optometrists struggle with being the Chief People Officer and Chief Marketing Officer, while also trying to keep up with their clinical acumen and maintain a quality personal life."

Optometrists can look to FYidoctors to support them in key management and operations at a high level, while enabling a strong focus on patient care.

High Praise



"I'm mid-career, so I wasn't looking for partners. But FYidoctors offered such strong value for my work, I was able to invest the funds and reap the rewards. It was just an opportunity I couldn't pass up."

- DR. KIM TSANG,
Surrey, BC



"It's exciting to maintain control over my clinic while offloading administrative burdens. The FYidoctors brand brings in so much value ... and I get flexibility and freedom to enjoy some personal time."

- DR. BUNNY VIRK,
Calgary, AB



"Before FYidoctors, I was despairing on where I was going to find a younger practitioner willing to purchase my share of the practice at fair value. After joining FYidoctors, I now feel comfortable knowing that my retirement will be cared for and that my patients will continue to be served in a professional manner."

- DR. KERBY KELLY, Regina, SK



"What drew me to FYidoctors is that they put doctors first. I needed my clinics to have a strong position against big chains. Now we can focus on our patients instead of reacting to competitors."

- DR. TRACY MCMURTER,
Hamilton, ON



ECPs from coast to coast share their experience with FYidoctors

FYidoctors checks all the boxes when it comes to being the kind of company you would want to merge your eye care practice with, but don't take it from us! Optometrists who have merged their practices under the FYidoctors umbrella candidly share their experiences.

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Join the Community

“As a doctor-owned and doctor-led company, new optometrists enter a community of practices that is unparalleled,” explains Meriya Dyble, Vice President of People & Culture: “From our optometrist advisory committee to our welcome program, mentorship opportunities, professional development and more, it is like walking into a network of friends or coaches who want you to succeed.”

This level of community is echoed in the camaraderie and shared passion for purpose valued by current members of FYidoctors, as evidenced by the company’s recent Great Places to Work™ certification, an authority in workplace culture in Canada and the U.S. This award is contingent on employees providing detailed feedback and ratings to a questionnaire about workplace culture.

“Our team told us that this is an inclusive and welcoming community for all to be their best,” says Dyble. “What more could an organization that has coaching at its core want to hear?” Need we say more?

5

Enjoy Flexibility & Remain in Control of Your Practice

Flexibility is the name of the game at FYidoctors, with the most significant being how optometrists set up their professional life as their careers and needs evolve.

Doctors experience a significant reduction in time spent on administrative tasks. They choose their level of involvement, their style of ownership, and how many days they want to work. Essentially, doctors are in control of building and living a healthier lifestyle.

For younger optometrists, FYidoctors allows them to “stay abreast of best practices, use cutting-edge technology and make a difference in eye care for Canadians,” says Dyble.

“Growth opportunities at FYidoctors are endless, depending on one’s focus and preference,” explains Adam Bullen, Manager of Talent Acquisition for Eye Care Professionals.

“Depending on what one would like to do, we offer college and campus engagement opportunities, as well as leadership within clinics and within the company. This includes advisory committees and overseeing the clinical direction of the company.”

Other growth areas include options of ownership, clinical specialization and training other doctors. The opportunities to expand and shape your career are shaped only by your individual goals.

FYidoctors is a growth-oriented company with a purpose-driven mandate to deliver optimal eye health care to all Canadians across the country. Its unique business model grants optometrists in all stages of their careers the opportunity to achieve their professional goals while maintaining a level of work-life balance in line with personal values.

All in all, joining the FYidoctors team is a win-win solution for everyone involved. **OP**

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1. CVI data on file, 2020. Prospective, double-masked, bilateral, 1-week dispensing study with MyDay® daily disposable multifocal; n=104 habitual multifocal contact lens wearers.

2. CVI data on file, 2020. Prospective, double-masked, bilateral, one-week dispensing study UK with MyDay® daily disposable multifocal; n=104 habitual multifocal contact lens wearers; CVI data on file, 2021. Prospective, subject-masked, randomized, bilateral, two-week dispensing study at 5 US sites with MyDay® daily disposable multifocal; n=58 habitual multifocal contact lens wearers

3. CVI data on file, 2020. Kubic Online Survey with spherical soft contact lens wearers with presbyopia/symptoms. N=372 (198 1 Day, 174 FRP wearers).

US, UK, JP; weighted equally.

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Risky Business

**Embracing eyewear style risks:
a journey from fear to confidence**

BY WENDY BUCHANAN, Eyewear Image Expert

Are you a risk taker when it comes to your personal style, or do you prefer to play it safe? Our brains are wired to avoid uncertainty, making it challenging to step out of our comfort zones in a society that often pressures us to conform. The fear of failure can even outweigh the discomfort of trying something new, especially when it comes to bold fashion choices, making us hesitant to take that leap.

However, taking risks in your wardrobe and eyewear not only elevates your personal style, but can also significantly impact your career life as an eye care professional. When you challenge yourself to explore unique and daring looks, you not only boost your confidence, but also unlock a creative reservoir that can positively influence your inventory choices for your frame board and your client interactions as you lead the sales and styling client journey.

The reluctance to take style risks often stems from the fear of judgment – or worse, the fear of making a mistake. Yet, it is precisely in these moments that you can break free from fear and elevate your style expertise to the next level. Instead of fixating on potential discomfort, focus on what you can gain. Embracing style risks stimulates your mind, leading to more confident thinking and innovative ideas that can expand the eyewear selection you present to each individual client.

The author shows off her choice of fashion-forward eyewear to set off a funky, retro outfit.





Embracing style risks stimulates your mind, leading to more confident thinking and innovative ideas that can expand the eyewear selection you present to each client.

As someone who occasionally goes over the top with wardrobe and eyewear choices, I've found a simple yet effective ritual to boost confidence. Before stepping out, a quick glance in the mirror at my front door accompanied by a confident affirmation – "you've got this!" – sets the tone for the day. Shifting my mindset from self-doubt to positive self-image empowers me to take my eyes off myself and put all my energy and focus on discovering eyewear that authentically represents my clients.

The discomfort that accompanies taking a style risk is an essential part of personal and professional growth. Take the time to recognize the fear, acknowledge it and move through it. Experiencing the adrenaline rush and proving to yourself that you can overcome fear builds a profound belief in your abilities. This newfound confidence is what transforms you into a remarkable eyewear stylist, capable of guiding your clients through their own style transformations.

Embracing an extensive wardrobe of your own eyewear isn't just about accumulating

an impressive collection; it's a strategic investment that empowers you to curate the perfect accessory for your clients and demonstrates your expertise as an eyewear stylist.

Recently, I indulged in a fashion adventure, adding a casual burnt orange corduroy jacket and wide-legged bell-bottom jeans to my wardrobe. As I stood in the mirror with the ensemble fully assembled, I faced a styling dilemma – In spite of possessing 45 pairs of eyewear, none seemed to perfectly align with my vibrant creation. I had no choice (wink, wink) but to invest in a new black and gold oversized frame that gave me that eccentric vintage vibe I was going for.

This personal experience resonates with clients, as it exemplifies the idea that eyewear isn't just functional but very much an integral aspect of personal expression. By sharing your fashion stories, you can inspire women to view eyewear as a dynamic accessory.

To make the styling process comfortable for your clients, it's crucial to be intentional, credible, and curious about everyone. Creating an experiential styling consultation for women involves a thoughtful and personalized approach. It is imperative to offer a judgment-free zone that makes them feel seen and understood and then they will be open to trying new styles. **OP**

Wendy Buchanan is a renowned styling expert and the visionary and founder of the Be Spectacular sales training program. An award-winning optician and business entrepreneur, Wendy partners with optometrists to transform practices into destinations with her innovative approach to styling eyewear and the powerful combination of personal branding and team empowerment. bespectacular.com/optical

5 Steps to Style Success

To help your clients discover their individual Spec Style, it's essential to implement a series of guided steps to make each eyewear styling consultation a memorable and empowering experience.

STEP 1: Visual Assessment

Observe their clothing style, accessories, body language and tone of voice.

STEP 2: Curious Questions

Engage your clients with conscious and specific questions aimed to give you more detailed information on their personal style.

STEP 3: Active Engagement

Be genuine and show enthusiasm for who they are. Let them tell you so you do not impose your style on them.

STEP 4: Undivided Attention

Avoid distractions and interruptions to stay in the moment with them. When you focus solely on their needs, you create a sense of importance, making the styling experience tailored and personal.

STEP 5: Credible Advice

Be specific on why each frame works perfectly for them as an individual. Share anecdotes about how taking style risks with eyewear has positively impacted your fashion journey.

By integrating these steps, you'll transform the buying experience into a journey of self-discovery, empowerment and style evolution for your clients. Your personal style risks become your superpower, leading you to take more risks and gain more confidence and success in your style career.

PISCESES



FEB 19 – MARCH 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.

Pisces individuals are naturally inclined towards dreamy and ethereal fashion styles. They are drawn to soft and flowing fabrics, feminine silhouettes, and romantic details like lace and ruffles.

Their colour palette often consists of shades that reflect their watery and sensitive nature, such as seafoam green, soft pastels, and shades of blue.

Pisces also have a penchant for metallic accents and shimmer, adding a touch of fantasy and magic to their fashion choices. Ultimately, they gravitate towards outfits that evoke a sense of enchantment and whimsy.

Pisces style is reflected in celebrities Drew Barrymore, Rihanna, Will.i.am and Canadian comedy legend Catherine O'Hara. **OP**



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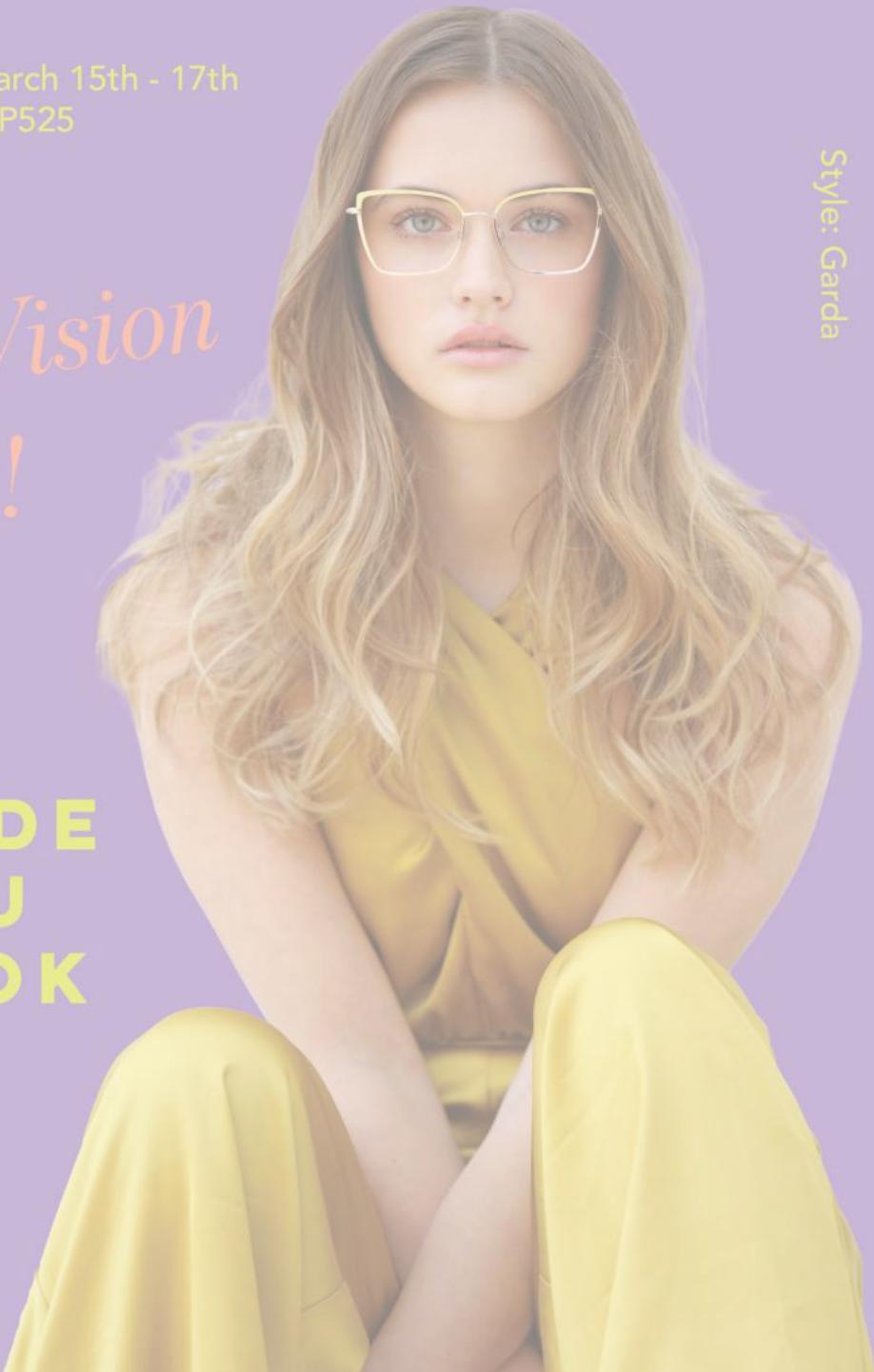
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Busting Multifocal Myths

A new vision for contact lens technology

BY DAVID GOLDBERG

Multifocal contact lenses are designed to address the needs of presbyopic patients. So why aren't more people aren't wearing them?

There's hesitation among both patients and ECPs regarding their adoption. In this edition of *Lens Tech*, *Optical Prism* explores the reasons behind this hesitation and how recent advancements in lens technology are addressing these concerns.

The reluctance among ECPs to embrace multifocals appears to stem from misconceptions about the fitting process, according to CooperVision Country Manager Enrique Contreras, who is based in Toronto. He points to a recent CooperVision survey of approximately 500 ECPs globally that revealed a significant gap in multifocal lens prescriptions, indicating that many ECPs are not frequently recommending them.

"We started asking how often ECPs are recommending multifocal contact lenses to their patients, and it wasn't very encouraging," says Contreras. "It was roughly one in four, and we thought to ourselves, 'Can you imagine the untapped opportunity?'"



A prevalent myth in the eye care community is that fitting multifocal lenses is more time consuming than single-vision lenses, and this belief contributes to the hesitancy of ECPs to recommend multifocals.

Amy Chow, senior manager at CooperVision Canada, explains some of the barriers at play: "We did some experience events across Canada ... and what we realized from those events is that a lot of ECPs are not confident with their fitting skills when it comes to multifocals."

One ECP who has a high success rate when it comes to fitting these lenses is Glenna Locke, a certified contact lens practitioner and sight testing optician in Sydney, Nova Scotia. She's also vice president of the Opticians' Association of Canada.

Locke prefers Alcon lenses for her patients, in part because of their refined fitting system. "The myth that multifocal fittings take time can be put to rest with statistics on Alcon's multifocal design," she says. "The simple two-step guide renders an extremely high success rate. According to Alcon, in 80% of cases the fit is successful with the first pair of trial lenses, and in 96% of cases, the fit is successful after a single adjustment of power in one or both eyes."

A prevalent myth in the eye care community is that fitting multifocal lenses is more time consuming than single-vision lenses.

Locke points out that many of her daily multifocal contact lens patients are doctors and nurses in the local ER, which she sees as proof that today's multifocal lens fitting methods and comfort technologies are vastly superior to preconceived notions of the past.

"Significant advances in the contact lens surface technology, specifically Alcon's Permanent Water Surface Technology, can dramatically increase comfort for this group by retaining lens surface moisture even for prolonged wear times or extensive digital

device use,” says Locke. “All of my patients in these lenses have had excellent results.”

At the patient level, the hesitation towards multifocal lenses is often rooted in a lack of awareness and prevailing myths, says CooperVision’s Chow. “Recently diagnosed presbyopes don’t actually think they can wear a contact lens, so it really is up to the ECP to tell them that they can. But most of the time, these patients end up in spectacle lenses that kind of mash both distance and near vision into each lens, and that creates areas of distortion.”

Chow also stresses the importance of ECPs effectively communicating the benefits

of multifocals to patients in terms that resonate. She uses the example of an electrician who might find themselves needing to switch between pairs of glasses when transitioning between distance viewing and close-up work.

This lack of awareness isn’t just about the existence of these lenses, but also extends to their benefits and suitability for various life stages of presbyopia – an aspect that multifocals are uniquely designed to address.

Dr. Kurt Moody, director of North American professional education for Johnson & Johnson Vision, points out the advancements in lens design that cater to different

stages of presbyopia and ensure optimal vision at all distances.

“Multifocal contact lenses are a great opportunity for ECPs, as it provides them with a wonderful way to provide another option to the presbyopic to optimize their vision,” says Moody. “Similar to why we have more than one pair of shoes, we should make sure that we as doctors offer our patients various optical options to improve their quality of life.”

Multifocal contact lenses can seriously improve the lives of patients. With concerted efforts in education and awareness, both patients and ECPs can be encouraged to embrace these innovations. **OP**

Focusing on Multifocal

With multifocal contact lenses, ECPs can provide presbyopic patients with unparalleled comfort, vision stability and overall satisfaction, enhancing customer retention and positioning their practice at the forefront of eye care innovation.



Acuvue Oasys Max 1-Day Multifocal Johnson & Johnson

These lenses integrate three key technologies, offering ECPs a comprehensive solution for presbyopic patients. The Pupil Optimized Design caters to vision clarity across all distances, adapting to age and refraction-induced pupil size variations. Its effectiveness is reflected in the high success rate of initial fittings.

The TearStable Technology enhances lens comfort, ensuring stable vision by effectively managing tear film and reducing evaporation.

And the OptiBlue Light Filter significantly filters blue-violet light and contributes to clearer vision under diverse lighting, mitigating issues like light scatter and visual disturbances.



MyDay Daily Disposable Multifocal Lenses CooperVision

MyDay lenses are designed to empower presbyopic patients with clear vision at all distances. They utilize the CooperVision Binocular Progressive System, an innovative 3-add multifocal system with different lens designs optimized for all levels of presbyopia.

The lenses offer 98% fit success and feature Aquaform Technology for exceptional comfort and moisture retention. They provide vision clarity during digital device use as well as overall comfort, ensuring patient confidence in daily activities, according to the company.



INFUSE One-Day Multifocal Bausch + Lomb

INFUSE lenses incorporate a unique design optimized for seven biometrics, including pupil size and subjective refraction. This approach ensures clear near and intermediate vision across nine critical distances, while maintaining excellent distance vision.

Tailored for presbyopic patients, these lenses offer a state-of-the-art solution for varied vision requirements, making them a suitable option for ECPs looking to provide comprehensive visual solutions.



DAILIES TOTAL1 Multifocal Alcon

These contacts by Alcon are innovative, daily disposable lenses designed for individuals experiencing presbyopia. They feature a unique water gradient design and Precision Profile Design, providing seamless vision at all distances.

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1. Results from a 20-site, 3-week study of Bausch + Lomb (kaiSilcon A) Daily Disposable Multifocal contact lenses on 294 habitual multifocal soft contact lens wearers. 2. Product Performance Evaluation of a Novel Silicone Hydrogel Contact Lens: kaiSilcon A Daily Disposable Contact Lenses - Summary of kaiSilcon A Patient Comfort and Vision Outcomes for Patients Who Wore Lenses for 16 or More Hours Per Day. Bausch + Lomb Incorporated, Rochester, NY, 2021. 3. KaiSilcon A Multifocal and KaiSilcon A Single Vision Mechanical Design Comparison. 4. Rah M. Ocular surface homeostasis and contact lens design. February 2021.

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Everything is figure-out-able.” That’s Nancy Dewald’s mantra. A renowned optical industry strategist and operations maven, she helps ECPs level up their business and personal skill sets so they’ll continue to thrive for years to come.

As CEO and founder of Lead Up Training and Consulting, Dewald provides clients with a customized action plan to boost frame sales and client retention. She has a special talent for turning good leaders into great leaders, and impressive businesses into exceptional ones.

“We need to get out of our own way and stop doubting ourselves. When we know we are capable, we need to pull our seats right up to the table and let our voices be heard.”

“The owners I work with are great clinicians, but that doesn’t mean they know everything about retail, so it’s important to get support in the areas that you don’t know about,” says Dewald. “That’s not weakness – that’s just smart business.”

Leading UP

Nancy Dewald helps ECPs build their business smarts

BY DAVID GOLDBERG

Before she entered the world of optical, Dewald worked in fashion retail, but the exceptional service at her local LensCrafters inspired her to try something new.

“I was so impressed with the service I got ... I thought, you know what? I think I need a change,” she recalls.

She applied for an entry-level position, but her credentials inspired the hiring team to offer her a manager role instead. Thus began a decades-long career in optical, working with some of the biggest brands on the planet before making the shift to consulting.

In 2021, Dewald founded Lead Up Training and Consulting, which has become a trusted support for those navigating the complexities of retail in the optical industry. Her approach is deeply rooted in creating sustainable change – reflecting her commitment to not just solving problems, but ensuring that the solutions are enduring.

“One of the things I’ve always strived for in everything I do, and I’ve always told my team, is that we want to make our work

for visual merchandising and consumer behaviour, she has been instrumental in introducing a fresh perspective to an industry traditionally centred around clinical expertise.

As she looks to the future, Dewald envisions an industry poised for significant transformation, driven by technological advancements and a shift towards a more consumer-centric approach.

“We’re going to see more expanded scope in our industry, which is really exciting because our clinicians or doctors can treat more issues and take on more specialized roles ... I think it will elevate our industry.”

From her first executive leadership role with a big corporation, Dewald says she found specific challenges as a woman in the industry.

“Things have changed a bit, but we still have a long way to go. We need to get out of our own way and stop doubting ourselves. When we know we are capable, we



outlast us,” says Dewald. “I named my company Lead Up because I always want to elevate others and help them to be more successful. It’s what jazzes me.”

Dewald’s profound understanding of the industry sets her apart. With a keen eye

need to pull our seats right up to the table and let our voices be heard," says Dewald. Her advice for women: "You can have it all, but you can't do it all; outsource what you can and let people help you when they offer."

"It's really important that women support women and lift each other up."

One of my best days was the day I hired someone to clean my home, versus doing it myself in between work trips.

"As women, let's build each other up."

Her insights into the optical industry, coupled with her transformative approach to leadership and business strategy, have not only sculpted a successful career, but have also positioned her as a guiding force in the industry's evolution. **OP**

TOP TIPS for ECP Entrepreneurs

Nancy Dewald shares the following tried-and-true tips to help ECPs build their businesses

1 FOCUS ON TRAINING

"We need to train our people to set them up for success," Dewald emphasizes, highlighting the pivotal role of training in ensuring exceptional service and customer satisfaction.

2 EMBRACE CHANGE & INNOVATION

Stay ahead of industry trends and technological advancements. "It's important for everybody to practice to the best of their ability," Dewald suggests, advocating for adaptability and continuous learning.

3 UNDERSTAND RETAIL

Recognize the importance of visual merchandising. "It's not about decorating, it's about making the product appealing and easy for the consumer to purchase," she explains.

4 CULTIVATE INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Foster a workplace environment where every member feels valued. Dewald stresses the importance of supportive leadership, noting, "It's really important that women support women and lift each other up."



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Specifically, N3 measures eye misalignment at distance and near using a dissociative test where the eyes are shown independent non-fusible targets, and direction of gaze is measured. This measurement is combined with an associative test where peripheral fusion is attained, and central alignment is measured. Effectively, this measurement of eye alignment is an objective measurement of the angle of strabismus and/or an evaluation of binocular vision.

“N3 is such a great patient experience. I walked into the exam room to patients that were actually excited to talk about vision solutions—Neurolenses and beyond! ”

Amanda Nanasy, O.D.
Florida Institute of Sports Vision

N3 consists of a stereoscopic display and a sophisticated eye-tracking mechanism for an objective measurement that does not rely on subjective assessments from either the practitioner or the patient. The patient simply needs to be able to maintain a gaze at a target throughout the duration of the test, and the system does the rest.

The test consists of a distance measurement at 1.7m which is based on typical TV viewing distance, a key indicator of patient visual behavior, and a near measurement at 50cm which is based on typical reading distance, also a key indicator of patient visual behavior. Each measurement consists of a base alignment and fine alignment.

The base alignment is a dissociative test where the system presents each eye with non-fusible images, and the patient is instructed to look at a fixation target that is geometrically placed at the measurement distance. While looking at the target, the system measures the complementary eye for latent strabismus. This test is done while presenting the fixation target for one eye while the complementary eye is shown unrelated graphics.

Once the patient's natural phoric posture is determined, the system presents a moving peripheral fusible image binocularly at the patient's phoric posture while instructing them to look at a fixation target which is presented to one eye at a time. This fixation target will iteratively move to neutralize eye movement and determine the optimal binocular alignment of the patient at the testing distance. This test is most similar to a fixation disparity test.

In short, N3 is a fast and accurate way for any eyecare provider to measure eye misalignment down to a fraction of a prism diopter, regardless of binocular vision experience. In addition, N3 is also easy to use and staff-friendly, supported by a thorough implementation process and best-in-class ongoing customer support.

“Patient flow is a top priority in my practices, but N3 fit seamlessly within our existing processes. And having N3 in every exam lane created an environment where every OD was walking directly into a conversation with an engaged patient, every time! ”

Brenda Montecalvo, O.D.
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Benefits of Membership

The advantages of employers covering OAC membership dues for opticians

BY ROBERT DALTON, OAC President

We are delighted with the new trend/focus in Human Resources of expanding the resources for employees. In the rapidly evolving field of opticianry, professional development and staying up to date with industry advancements are crucial for opticians to provide the best possible care for their patients.

One way that ECP employers can support their opticians' growth and professional advancement is by covering association membership dues. Traditionally, some companies have covered the licensing fees for their opticians, but there are some very progressive leaders in the employer world that see a direct advantage to further supporting opticians by covering their association dues to the Opticians Association of Canada (OAC).

Let's consider the return on that investment from both the employee's and employer's perspective.

OAC memberships provide opticians with invaluable access to educational resources, industry-specific publications, conferences and workshops. By covering these membership dues, employers enable opticians to stay abreast of the latest trends, research and technological advancements in their field.

The knowledge gained from these resources can be directly applied to improve patient care, enhance productivity, and increase overall job performance.

Optician association memberships facilitate networking and collaboration among professionals within the industry. Attending OAC events, conferences and seminars allows opticians to meet and connect with peers, industry leaders and suppliers. These interactions not only foster professional relationships, but also provide a platform for exchanging ideas, best practices and innovative solutions.

Employers benefit from this networking by gaining access to a broader network of professionals, opening doors to potential partnerships and business opportunities.

Membership in the OAC signifies that opticians are committed to their profession and actively engaged in furthering their knowledge and skills. By encouraging employees to join and covering membership dues, employers demonstrate their support for their opticians' professional growth, which can have a positive impact on employee morale and loyalty.

The OAC can play a pivotal role in liaising with regulatory bodies, advocating for policies that benefit the profession, and ensuring adherence to ethical and professional standards. Employers who cover association membership dues enable opticians to stay informed about regulatory changes, licensing requirements, and industry guidelines. This knowledge ensures that those opticians are compliant with the latest regulations, reducing legal and compliance risks for the employer.

While covering association membership dues may be seen as an additional expense for employers, it can result in long-term cost savings. By investing in their opticians' professional development, employers can cultivate a highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce. This, in turn, can lead to improved patient satisfaction, increased productivity and enhanced profitability. Furthermore, association memberships often offer exclusive discounts and access to resources, allowing employees to stay up to date in a cost-effective manner.

By covering the association membership dues for opticians in Canada, employers gain a multitude of advantages. Enhanced professional development, cost savings, networking opportunities, increased recognition and credibility, and access to regulatory updates are just a few of the benefits. By investing in their opticians, employers ultimately contribute to the success of their practice, ensuring top-quality patient care and positioning themselves as leaders within the industry. **OP**

The Opticians Association of Canada's 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.

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Specsavers On Track to Care for 1 Million Canadians by 2025

The company is making OCT technology more accessible for optometrists and their patients to support the early detection of eye conditions.

Specsavers was founded on the vision that eye care and eyewear should be accessible to everyone. The optometrist-owned and -led company, which entered the Canadian market in late 2021, recently celebrated a significant milestone as it surpassed the opening of 100 Canadian locations. And it's on track to care for a million Canadians a year by 2025.

"Our goal is for every Canadian who walks through our doors to have quality eye care, which is why every Specsavers location is equipped with OCT, a 3D eye scan that allows an optometrist to look at the back of the eye to get a deeper understanding of a patient's eye health," said Bill Moir, Managing Director, Specsavers Canada. "Early detection is critical, as 75% of vision loss is preventable and treatable, which is why optometrists in the Specsavers network include this powerful OCT technology as part of every standard eye exam."

Specsavers is currently operating in British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario, with plans to open locations in Manitoba by summer 2024. As the fastest-growing network of



eye care professionals in Canada, the Specsavers network includes more than 200 optometrists, 250 licensed opticians and more than 1,000 eyecare consultants who are committed to prioritizing patient care and the Specsavers purpose of "changing lives through better sight."*

"As Specsavers surpasses the opening of our 100th store in the country, we intend to continue to show Canadians our unwavering commitment to their eye health."

Specsavers recognizes that cost and access are barriers Canadians face when trying to maintain their eye health or improve their vision. To put purpose into action, Specsavers removes these barriers by offering high-quality glasses at affordable prices and supporting clinics to include OCT as part of their standard eye exam.

With every additional store opening, clinics within Specsavers are caring for the eye care and eyewear needs of more than 100 Canadians per week using OCT. This technology aids in the early detection of sight-threatening conditions such as glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy and more.

"Through the consistent use of OCT, we're focused on efficient and effective referral

pathways between optometrists and ophthalmologists to manage and co-manage their patients. This means ophthalmologists can focus their time on patients who need their care the most," said Naomi Barber, Clinical Services Director at Specsavers. "We understand the critical role of technology, so optometrists in our network are supported to practice to their full scope and make timely care more accessible, wherever possible."

Optometrist-led steering groups in each province where Specsavers operates, plus access to advanced clinical equipment such as OCT, are just some examples of the areas the company focuses on to give eyecare professionals the tools and support they need to deliver outstanding patient care, added Barber.

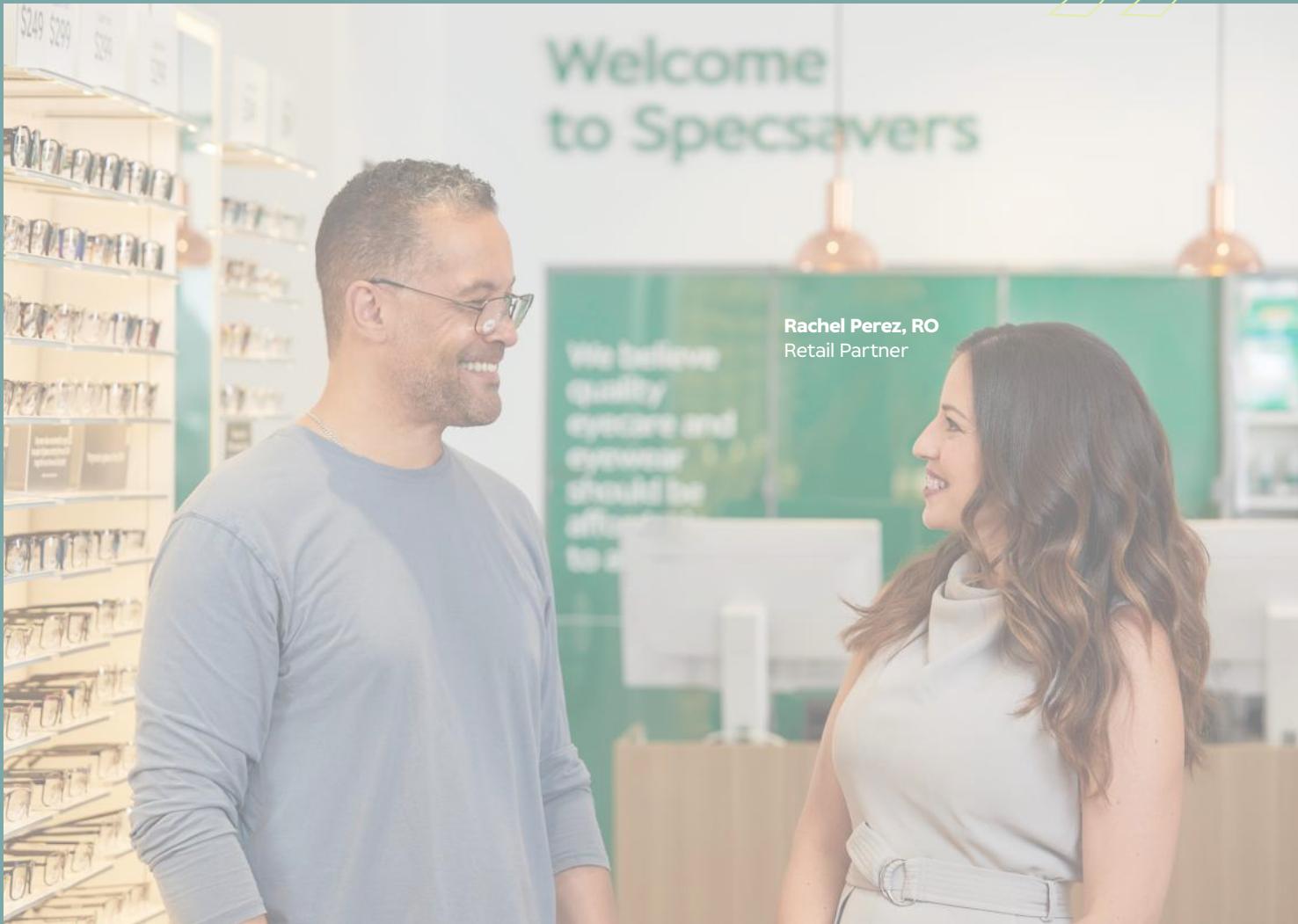
"As Specsavers surpasses the opening of our 100th store in the country, we intend to continue to show Canadians our unwavering commitment to their eye health," said Moir. **OP**



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* Based on LinkedIn company reports on new profile position between August 1, 2022 – July 31, 2023.

66 Our team is dedicated to meeting a very high standard, and our customers are recognizing it. 99



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Specsavers

*Based on LinkedIn company reports on new profile position between August 1, 2022 – July 31, 2023.

A Faster Transition

Transitions Academy unveils ultra-responsive photochromic lens technology



Chrystel Barranger, president EMEA Wholesale and global president, Transitions Optical.



Transitions Optical launched a revolutionary new lens technology at its recent Transitions Academy event. The company bills its new GEN S as the fastest dark lens in the clear-to-dark photochromic category, going from fully clear indoors to darkening in seconds outdoors.

The new lenses are ultra-responsive to light, reaching category three levels of darkness in 25 seconds and fading back in less than two minutes. Thanks to this responsiveness, Transitions GEN S also provides 39% faster vision recovery from intense bright lights versus clear lenses. During fade back,

tests have shown a 39.5% improvement in contrast sensitivity and 40% faster vision recovery versus the previous generation. And Transitions GEN S blocks 100% UVA & UVB rays, filtering up to 32% of blue-violet light in the clear state and up to 85% when activated.

Five years in the making, the GEN S lens technology was unveiled at Transitions Academy, which ran from February 11 to 14 in Orlando, Florida and drew 1,350 attendees from more than 52 countries. *Optical Prism* publishers Suzanne Lacorte and Nick Samson, along with contributor Nancy Dewald, attended the prestigious, invitation-only event to get a first-hand look at the new technology.

“The group took the launch one step further, sharing best practices and insights into tools and resources to help with the patient experience,” notes Dewald. “These include visually appealing displays and windows, in-office demo units, and a try-on app to show off your own custom eyewear that could include a QR code. Transitions is also planning marketing that will result in eight billion impressions, so ECPs who retail this new technology will no doubt benefit from this spend.”

On the style front, GEN S is available in eight exclusive colours, including a brand-new Ruby addition. All colours have been optimized to be true to tone at all stages, offering vibrant tints in any light. “While being fully clear indoors and beautifully coloured outdoors, Transitions GEN S provides endless possibilities of pairing to complement any look,” said the company.

Transitions Academy also provided attendees with a preview of the new photochromic Ray-Ban eyewear, and an opportunity to learn about the uses of colour to help with visual stress and disorders.

“Of course, the event also allowed time for in-person networking, and we met so many great people in this industry,” says Dewald. “Thanks to Transitions for inviting us to be part of this exciting time as technology moves our industry forward, allowing us to love the way we look and have better vision in everything we do.” **OP**

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Forecast 2024

A new reality for eye care in Canada

BY EVRA TAYLOR

Canadian eye care professionals are facing – and embracing – new challenges and opportunities as they confront the evolving optical landscape. As we emerged from the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, our thoughts turned from “How are we going to get through this?” to “What does the post-pandemic world look like and how are we going to cope with its aftermath?”

According to industry experts, the Canadian economy is on the up tick after nearly four years of a pandemic-related downturn. Canadians were forced to tighten their purse strings in an atmosphere of uncertainty, with business closures, job losses, a drastically reduced supply chain and reduced personal spending.

As families shifted their priorities to the basic necessities of life, such as paying their housing costs and putting food on the table, optical care – including examinations and eyewear – was relegated to the back burner.

Now, with discretionary spending picking up, there may be some light on the financial horizon.

What may soften the blow of a softened economy is Canadians’ growing confidence that while we may not return to pre-pandemic “normal,” eyewear consumers can resume their purchase of higher-priced designer frames, aided by brick-and-mortar retail stores re-opening their doors.

Canada’s demographics are changing. Eye examinations and certain treatments (such as those for dry eye disease) are becoming increasingly important in light of Canada’s aging population. Seniors may have special needs when it comes to eyewear fitting, and adopting a patient-centric approach can go a long way in building or expanding an eye care practice.

This demographic may require additional consultation time, as well as excellent listening skills and an extra measure of compassion. These considerations provide the opportunity for eye care professionals to hone their sales and after-sales service skills.

It’s well worth the effort, as seniors will have increasing eye care needs as they age.

On the opposite end of the age spectrum, rising rates of pediatric myopia are extremely concerning for the eye care sector. According to the Canadian Association of Optometrists, myopia prevalence increased from 6% at ages six to eight, to 29% at ages 11 to 13.¹ Additionally, myopia in children aged six to seven years old is progressing faster than it has in previous generations.²

This is largely attributed to the increased use of digital devices that cause eye strain and the need for corrective eyewear. Here again, practitioners who service the eye care sector can highlight their ability to meet the needs of their pediatric clients – and their parents – with an emphasis on counselling and an empathetic care approach.

In August 2023, Jobson Optical Research conducted a survey on optometric subspecialization involving 506 practicing optometrists and 95 optometry students. The survey found that subspecialization is gaining enthusiasm among eye care professionals,





particularly the younger set. As Figure 1 shows, primary eye care is the domain of virtually all respondents. However, 26.1% reported they also have additional expertise beyond that level – in ocular disease, glaucoma or neuro-optometry, for example – and 2.2% consider themselves specialists.

What Type of Optometrist are You?

Respondents: ODs only

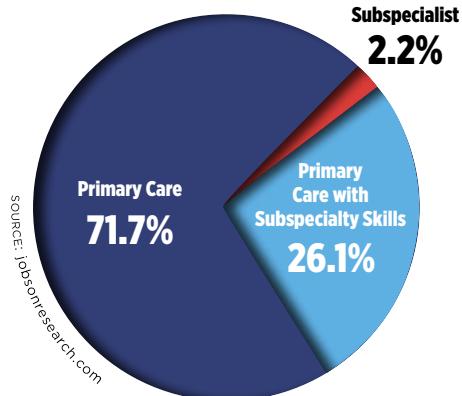


FIGURE 1. The vast majority of optometrists are focused on primary eye care. However, one-quarter claim to have additional skills in one or more disciplines.

Eye care should be considered an essential service for Canadians with limited or no access. The Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FORAC) defines teleoptometry as: “The provision of vision and eye health services that are delivered within the scope of practice of optometry using electronic health information, medical and communication technologies, and in the absence of physical contact between the provider and patient.”

For those who live in remote areas, or for the elderly and others unable to travel to a practitioner due to disability, teleoptometry provides much-needed support in the form of telephone calls, video consultations and remote examinations, and is gaining traction as an alternative to in-person care.

Optometrists will continue to face the challenge of online retailers, and will need to innovate in terms of their marketing programs to attract new customers and retain their current customer base. Online eyewear purchasing was bolstered during the COVID-19 pandemic, and now that the

apex of the pandemic has passed, optical providers will need to focus their efforts on recapturing that share of their business.

Like other industries, the optical sector is in a constant state of contraction and expansion. Eye care professionals’ ability to adapt to changing market conditions and demographics will be crucial to their success in navigating the changing eye care and eyewear landscape. This will mean re-configuring their practices to a more patient-centric model and a willingness to embrace new technologies designed to help fuel their growth. **OP**

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Beyond Sight

Shaina Nensi's empathetic approach to eye care

BY DAVID GOLDBERG

In bustling midtown Toronto, Dr. Shaina Nensi's Avenue Optometry & Vision Therapy clinic is more than just a healthcare facility; it's a realization of a dream – a place where cutting-edge eye care meets a patient-first philosophy. With her innovative approach and genuine passion, Nensi has redefined what it means to run an optometry practice.

After graduating from the University of Waterloo, her vision was clear: to establish a practice that echoed her ethos.

"The best way to be happy in my work is to have complete control over every aspect of my job," says Nensi, reflecting her desire for autonomy and a balanced life.

Her path to entrepreneurship was deliberate and thoughtful. Before opening her clinic, Nensi honed her skills and knowledge, working for another clinic before launching her own vision therapy practice. Her strategic planning was momentarily disrupted by the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic, but her resolve remained unshaken.

"I saw this unit for lease ... it was larger than what I initially wanted, but it had everything I dreamed of," she says.

The clinic is a testament to Nensi's innovative spirit. From the children's playhouse and vision therapy area to the patio designed to foster community engagement, every corner reflects her dedication to creating a welcoming and healing environment.

"Our goal is to make everyone feel at ease, like they're in a lounge or living room, not a clinical setting."

Vision therapy, a cornerstone of her practice, reflects her expertise and commitment to evidence-based care. "Incorporating vision therapy was crucial," she notes.

"It's a testament to my special interest in pediatrics and vision rehabilitation."

Nensi's influence extends far beyond her clinic. Her global humanitarian efforts, particularly in Ghana with Unite for Sight,

"Our goal is to make everyone feel at ease, like they're in a lounge or living room, not a clinical setting."



showcase her commitment to accessible eye care. In Ghana, she worked tirelessly, improving ocular health education and screening practices. In Canada, her ongoing work serving indigenous families in Kasabonika Lake First Nation highlights her dedication to serving underrepresented communities.

As vice president of the Ontario Association of Optometrists and a member of the Canadian Association of Optometrists council, Nensi is a prominent voice in the optometry community, advocating for advancements in eye care and accessibility.

Her journey is not just about establishing a successful practice; it's about creating a space where advanced eye care is infused with empathy and accessibility. Nensi's story is an inspiring blueprint for eye care professionals, demonstrating how vision, dedication and a patient-centric approach can lead to unparalleled success in the field of optometry. **OP**

5 TIPS for Optical Entrepreneurs

1. Envision & Plan:

"A clear vision for your practice is essential," says Nensi. She advises documenting your vision, mission and goals. "This is your guiding star, your roadmap to success."

2. Build the Right Team:

Nensi highlights the importance of collaboration. "Surround yourself with experts in different fields. You don't have to do everything yourself," she says, underscoring the value of a strong support network.

3. Focus on Special Interests:

"Your unique services define your practice," says Nensi. She recommends making these specializations a key part of your branding to stand out in the field.

4. Patient-centric Design:

"The patient experience is paramount," says Nensi. Creating a welcoming environment is key. "It should feel like a space where patients can relax and be themselves."

5. Adapt to Challenges:

Nensi emphasizes the importance of adaptability. "Be prepared for the unexpected, whether it's market changes or location challenges," she advises, highlighting the need for flexibility in business.



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Hiring 2.0

Changing up the interview process

BY NANCY DEWALD, LEAD UP TRAINING AND CONSULTING



As staffing continues to be a challenge in 2024, we need to ensure that we continue to look at how we can do things better and differently.

Recently, I have observed a trend in which potential employees really impress during an interview and get hired, only for the employer to find out after the fact that they had oversold their qualifications.

In this case, one of three things happens:

- 1 They are overwhelmed and do not return after the first couple of shifts.
- 2 They are not capable of doing the job, and we must terminate employment and start over.
- 3 They are not capable of doing the job, we feel desperate and do not terminate. This causes all sorts of problems.

It occurred to me that perhaps, given how often people are changing jobs these days, they have gotten good at interviewing. I went looking to discover if my hunch was accurate.

According to a 2024 Gallup report, *How Millennials Want to Work and Live*, 21% of millennials reported changing jobs within the past year – more than three times the rate of other generations.

I am not saying this is wrong or right; it is just a fact, and based on what we know, what can we do better?

Here are some ideas:

1 Behaviours/Scenario-based Questions

The best predictor of future performance is past performance, so it's important to gauge time-management or multi-tasking skills.

Sample question: "Tell me about a time you were expected to handle multiple tasks. What sort of time-management system did you use?"

If you would like a list of more of these types of questions, feel free to reach out.

2 Clear Job Expectations
At a minimum, expectations should be outlined in the interview. Unbelievably, I meet employees all the time who are unclear about their job description. Review the job description and expectations during the interview process.

3 Job Shadow
This provides a valuable opportunity for the candidate to gain firsthand understanding of the role and expectations, and allows the employer to get a better idea of whether the candidate would be a good fit.

Job shadowing is generally used for candidates without industry experience.

Steps to a successful job shadow:

- Plan ahead and coordinate with the candidate and current employees.
- Ensure that everyone knows the objectives and expectations (consider providing an agenda or checklist).
- Debrief after the interview to allow them to ask questions and share observations.
- Remind everyone to respect the confidentiality of sensitive company/patient information.
- Respect the candidates' time and let them know next steps.

4 Working Interview

The goal here is to assess the candidates' capabilities in a real work setting to see if they are a good fit.

This is a good option if they have experience in the role you are hiring for.

21%
of millennials reported changing jobs within the past year – more than three times the rate of other generations.

Steps to a successful working interview:

- Clearly communicate the objective, expectations and duration to team and candidate.
- Select relevant tasks and provide required resources for the actual job they will be doing.
- Respect their time; avoid asking them to do excessive work.

- Ensure that you comply with labour laws.
- Let them know next steps.

5 Check References

You may think, "Why would someone include a reference who wouldn't recommend them?"

You'd be surprised (I have been listed as a reference for people I wouldn't recommend, and it's awkward as heck). It is worth the couple of minutes it takes. If an organization says they don't provide references, I always ask one quick question: "Would you rehire this person?"

Hopefully, these tips will help ease the frustrations of turnover. Remember, everything is figure-out-able. **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.com.



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- DR. LYNDSEY KAY, Waterdown Optometric

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A Clear Opportunity

Marketing plano lenses and frames for your 20/20 patients

BY STEPHANIE ROSS,
MARKETING4@CPS



Gone are the days of “dorky” spectacles. Now we have designer frames that are high end and high fashion. The word “frame” is big here, because even people with 20/20 vision can fall in love with how glasses frame their best features.

Why Are Glasses Attracting 20/20 Patients?

Strange as it may seem at a time when myopes, hyperopes and presbyopes are battling to decrease prescription needs, there is a demand for glasses. But it's not just about vision – it's about the look. Eyewear is an accessory that always catches attention.

Optometrists and opticians who have been in the business since the early Harry Potter craze can tell you all about kids eager to copy their favourite wizard. But these days, it isn't just adolescents who are ready to pair up with glasses.

Eyewear is an accessory that *always* catches attention.

Who can deny the authority of Meryl Streep looking down her frames as she sizes up Anne Hathaway in *The Devil Wears Prada*? Or the effortless suave of Colin Firth and Taron Egerton with tech-enhanced spyglasses in *Kingsman: The Secret Service*? Eyewear is a powerful statement piece.

All Eyes on Your Frame Selection

There's an undeniable market for plano lenses and frames. Yet many non-prescription wearers prefer to search online for cheap and convenient options because they feel intimidated by the formality of visiting an optometry

practice. They don't need a prescription, so why see an eye doctor?

Of course, they *should* still see an eye doctor. But how can you make your selection more appealing to those who only want frames?

Market the Benefits of Plano Lenses

Many glasses-curious people might feel embarrassed to go to an optometrist or optician “just for the look.” But even plano lenses can provide some visual benefits. And you can highlight those benefits, tailored to your practice's offerings.

If you're proud of your optical dispensary and your opticians are style experts, play up

the aesthetic appeal – a frame for every season or every mood. Share why some shapes, textures or materials look amazing with specific face shapes, skin tones or style preferences. Flaunt your fashion expertise.

If you're proud of your lens technology, focus on how glasses can do so much more than sharpen blurred vision. Digital eye strain isn't a passing trend, so make this common problem your marketing solution. And don't forget to show off your sports or driving glasses, with each tinted colour offering a different performance benefit.

Market Your Brands

If you don't let people know what you're selling – either directly or through search engines – they'll never find out. So start spreading the word. Share your frame selection on social media, showcase top brands on your website, and offer giveaways to flaunt your in-stock styles.

People can be remarkably loyal to the brands they love. That kind of steadfast loyalty can rub off on you if you align your practice with a sought-after brand. And it's not just big-name brands that matter. It's all about what the patient values most.

Independent designers attract people who want to express their uniqueness. Eco-conscious Gen Z is into sustainable brands. And let's not forget the appeal of well-known designers – people trust the quality and love that name recognition.

Make Try-Ons Accessible

You want the fashion-forward and frame-curious to try on a pair and fall in love. So let them model their style in your showroom, even if it's a show corner.

Adding a virtual try-on to your website is a fun tool, but encouraging a tactile try-on can evoke an emotional attachment. Don't underestimate the power of virtual

or in-person, as both give your potential customers a chance to experience your selection. And it's a lot harder to walk away from an item you see yourself in.

Why Diversifying Your Optical Base Matters

The global eyewear market is experiencing steady growth. In 2022, the market was valued at \$169.9 billion USD, with an average annual growth rate of 8.5% projected between 2023 and 2030. Much of this demand is attributed to anti-glare or anti-fatigue glasses, but frames with clear lenses also enjoy a fair share of eyewear's growing popularity.

So don't let all that demand go elsewhere. Celebrate the patients and customers who love eyewear – you'll see some of that growing market share in your practice. **OP**

Stephanie Ross is a content strategist at Marketing4ECPs. Find out more about Stephanie and Marketing4ECPs at marketing4ecps.com.

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Alongside presentations featuring independent eyewear collections, brands will introduce innovative new technologies, telemedicine platforms, lens products and services, dry eye solutions, myopia management tools and more.

“As you step into this one-of-a-kind experience, attendees will find themselves immersed in an artistic wonderland, where every brand’s story is allowed to shine,” says Trevor Williams, CMO and co-founder of Eyewear Artwalk. “It’s not just another conference; it’s a pop-up immersive masterpiece that transports you to a realm where creativity knows no bounds.”

WHAT TO EXPECT

Eye care professionals can connect during insightful keynote sessions and hands-on workshops that delve into the fascinating intersection of consumerism and art. The star-studded team of presenters has a successful history of innovation from top brands including Shamir Insights, Inc., Samsung, ic! berlin, Visa, Google, Netflix, Kenmark Eyewear and more.



The expo side of Eyewear Artwalk will forge powerful connections and facilitate activations across eyewear brands, equipment providers, technology platforms, pharmaceuticals and medical devices. Completely segmented from the consumer-facing festival, the expo provides an area for the “behind the scenes” to unfold.

“Our DTC festival side immerses attendees in whimsical installations and immersive technologies that transport you into your own imaginations, showing the divine collections of premium brands,” says Williams. “The Level Up Pavilion caters to the gamer in everyone, showcasing the latest frames and lens technology. And this is just a taste of what attendees will experience.”

Ancillary events and activations held across the three days will keep the party flowing. Ever been in a human-sized claw machine? How about improving gaming visibility with new technologies designed for performance enhancement?

Highlighting the legacy of hip-hop culture, the event’s Visionaries Tour will feature headliners, influencers and celebrities as music champions for better eyewear and eye care. Young Dirty Bastard (YDB) from Wu-Tang Clan has been announced as the

first performer in all seven locations, and Snoop Dogg protégé Yung Gitty will be joining YDB in Los Angeles on April 20.

CANADA: GET READY FOR 2025!

The Eyewear Artwalk team has already begun planning for 2025, and the first international market to see an EAWA production will be Canada!

“The Canadian market is starving for fresh, new experiences that deliver the ultimate impact to both B2B and B2C audiences alike. Nothing like this has ever been done before for the optical industry, but optical is full of artistic expression,” says Williams.

“This art needs to be celebrated. Originality needs to be exemplified. Personalization needs to be the focus. Eyewear Artwalk is forging a powerful nexus between brands and consumers, changing mindsets on how we engage with the end user.”

Optical Prism is proud to be Eyewear Artwalk’s 2024 livestream partner, bringing this new immersive education approach to all of Canada. **OP**

To sign up for the 2024 livestream or in-person events, visit eyewearartwalk.com.

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STYLE OF THE MONTH

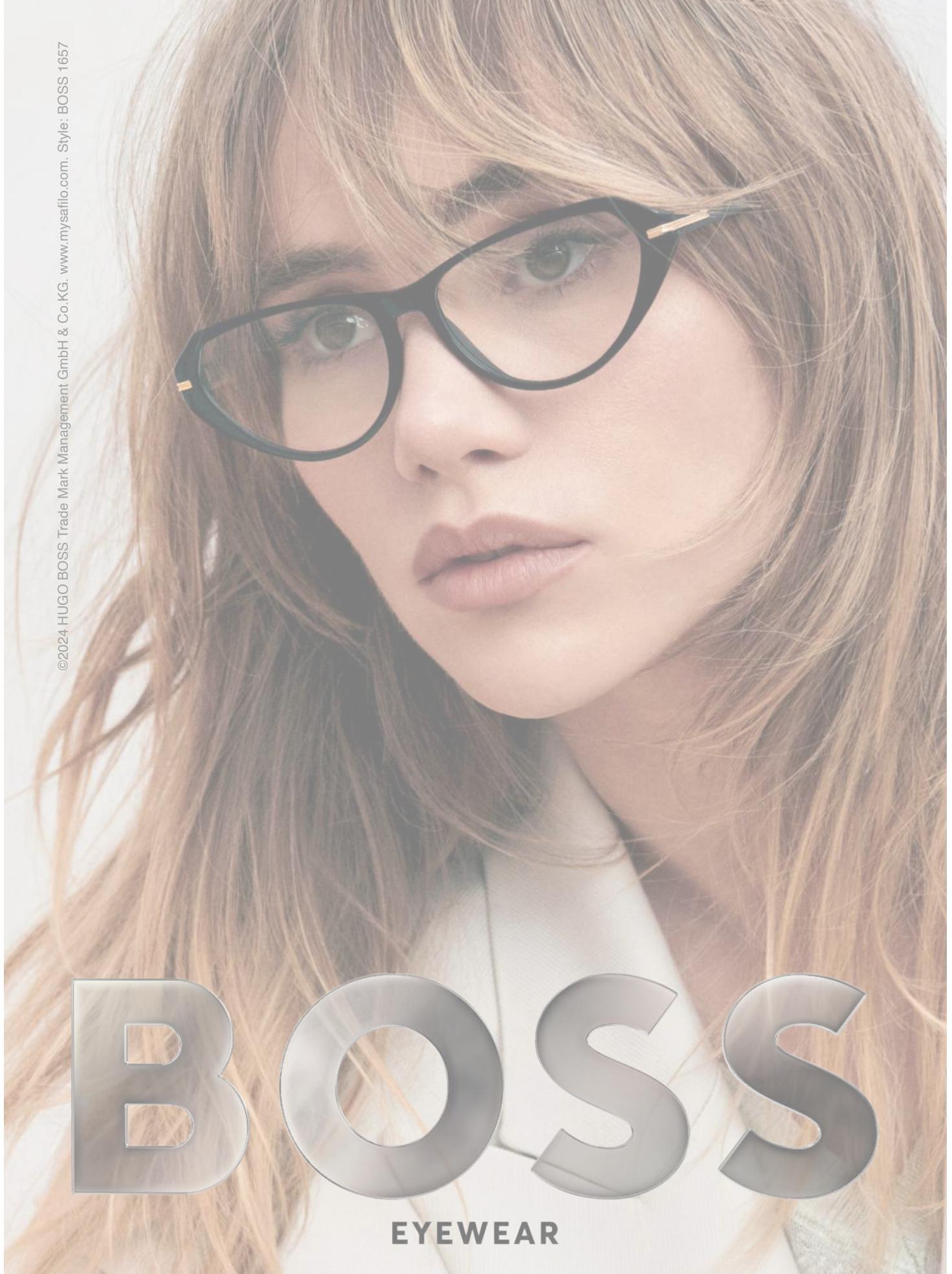
Sustainably Sophisticated

The BOSS eyewear collection for women presents the new BOSS 1655/S sunglasses from Safilo.

The style's bold and distinctive drop-shaped flat-top frame, featuring signature metal detailing, is crafted from premium materials and designed with the planet in mind.

These prescription-friendly sunglasses are offered in Acetate Renew, composed of bio-based and recycled materials, with lenses in either bio-based nylon or Tritan Renew, a premium plastic made from recycled materials. Available in two colours: pearlized camel/ivory with brown shaded lenses and black with grey lenses.





BOSS

EYEWEAR

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Essilor[®] Stellest[®] lenses
slow down myopia progression by 67%
on average**,
compared to single vision lenses, when
worn 12 hours a day.



* Essilor, #1 in spectacles lenses worldwide - Essilor International, EyeWear 2022 Edition. Essilor International company, worldwide retail value sales at RSP. **Compared to single vision lenses, when worn by children at least 12 hours per day every day. Bach, J., Huang, Y., Li, X., Yang, A., Zhou, F., Wu, J., Wang, C., Li, Y., Liu, B.W., Spiegel, C.P., Dieule, B., Chien, H., 2022. Spectacle Lenses: A Randomized Clinical Trial in China. *JAMA Ophthalmology*, 140(5), 472-478. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamaophthalmol.2022.0401>