

OPTICAL PRISM

OCTOBER 2025 • VOL. 43 • NO. 10

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HEX APPEAL

Witchy, wicked,
and wearing it well.
Bayonetta frames
are back!

WORK LESS, EARN MORE

Build a thriving
practice without
burning out

WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS

One last hurrah
before Expo
goes annual

Passing the Torch

Building the next
generation of
Canadian Opticians

RAW & REAL

GIGI Studios and
Erin Wasson unveil
a bold new vision

GOODBYE DRY EYE

New guidelines bring
clarity to diagnosis
and treatment

NOT JUST FOR GROWN-UPS

Smart, safe, and kid-
approved contact
lens options

The CONTACT Connection

How digital behaviour, kid-friendly tech, and new clinical insights
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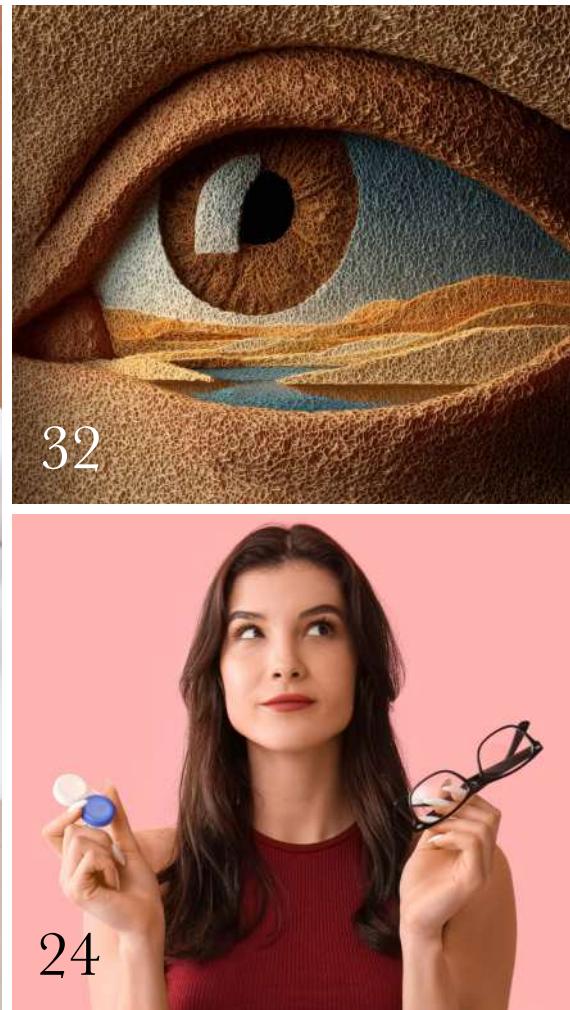
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OPTICAL PRISM

OCTOBER 2025 • VOL. 43 • NO. 10

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Optical Prism (ISSN 0824-3441) is published
10 times a year by Quince Communications

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Send address changes to Optical Prism,
564 Rosedale Cres, Suite 100, Burlington,
Ontario, Canada L7N 2T1 or email
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GST Registration Number:

88541 6529 RT001

Printed in Canada by acorn | print production
Canada Post Publications Mail Sales Product
Agreement No. 40040464



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PHOTOGRAPHY BY JESSICA WAUGH

“Our priority should be shifting the mindset from getting defensive and trying to defend our position and our price point, to showing value and how we can provide a certain service beyond simply the cost of the (contact) lenses.”

- DR. HARBIR SIAN

Clicks & Contacts

If there's one thing we know about contact lenses, it's that they're having a moment. According to the latest report from the Contact Lens Institute, nearly half of all lens-related searches are about one thing: where and how to get them. Forget dry clinical talk, today's contact lens conversation is digital, on-demand, and totally consumer-driven. In this issue, our feature writer David Goldberg dives into the data and what it means for every ECP trying to keep up with patients who shop with their thumbs and expect next-day delivery.

And while we're busting assumptions, writer Evra Taylor sets her sights on a big one: that contact lenses are just for grown-ups. Not so. Today's lenses are kid-safe, parent-approved, and backed by science. Your young patients are more ready than you think, and they're not about to let their glasses slow them down at soccer practice, dance class, or dodgeball.

We also take a deep dive into a not-so-fun reality for many: dry eye. Millions suffer from it, but diagnosis and treatment are often all over the map. New clinical guidelines aim to fix that, and our feature explores whether a more standardized approach could finally bring some much-needed clarity and comfort.

Of course, we couldn't ignore one of the biggest industry moments of the year — Vision Expo West. Our coverage captures the buzz from Las Vegas, where attendance was strong, conversations were meaningful, and optimism about the future of eye care was unmistakable.

On the style front, we're leaning into spooky season with our “Style Eyes” pick of the month: Bayonetta frames. Inspired by the video game's most fashionable witch, these frames are a fierce mix of femme fatale attitude and bold design that casts a spell with every glance.

Speaking of bold, don't miss our spotlight on GIGI Studios' newest campaign, *In The Raw*, starring the one and only Erin Wasson. It's stripped back, stunning, and seriously cool, a visual moodboard of raw elegance and quiet power.

However you support your patients, through lenses, learning, or style, this issue was made with you in mind.

SUZANNE LACORTE

Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

NEW

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Varilux®

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worldwide*

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in any light*



essilor

*Euromonitor, Eyewear 2024, edition: worldwide retail value sales at RSP.

**Varilux® Physio® extensee™ - in-real life consumer study - Eurosyn - 2024 - France (n=79 progressive lens wearers)

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FRESH LOOKS



Fresh LOOKS

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

HAPTER

HAPTER debuted its rebrand and new BONE collection at SILMO Paris. Crafted in stainless steel, the 12 minimalist styles spotlight precision, lightness, and the brand's patented screwless hinge. Launching alongside the "Feel the Silence" campaign, the frames reflect HAPTER's artisanal-industrial roots. The brand will also showcase its steel-and-rubber CORE collection, reaffirming its reputation for cutting-edge Italian eyewear design.

For more information contact your Hapter sales representative or visit hapter.it

**QUAY**

QUAY turned heads this fall with the expansion of its optical line, debuting its Fall 2025 collection after a successful relaunch earlier this year. The independent eyewear brand delivered a lineup of vintage-inspired and trend-forward silhouettes — from bold squares and sleek ovals to bayonetta shapes made for Instagram moments. Each frame features QUAY's signature rivet, hinge and temple construction, with prices staying

wallet-friendly at \$125 to \$175 USD. Fresh off showcases at Vision Expo West and SILMO Paris, the collection builds on QUAY's growing wholesale presence and commitment to keeping prescription eyewear as fun, fashionable and accessible as ever.

For more information contact your QUAY sales representative or visit 8-agency.com

**STUART WEITZMAN**

Stuart Weitzman New York turns up the glamour with its Fall 2025 Eyewear Collection, starring supermodel and global ambassador Ashley Graham. Designed with Safilo Group and crafted in Italy, the collection delivers sleek sunglasses and optical frames that channel the brand's signature shoe-inspired sophistication. Highlights include cat-eye shapes with metallic keyhole details.

borrowed from the iconic NUDIST sandal, crystal-studded geometrics, and snake-etched brows for a touch of drama. Shot by photographer Ned Rogers, the campaign is a love letter to New York City — and to the women who own its streets with confidence, strength and unstoppable style.

For more information contact your Safilo sales representative or visit mysafilo.com/CA



Electric



Lady Soul



Birth

PRESS EYEWEAR

Founded in Spring 2024 by optician and designer Jeff Press, PRESS Eyewear has swiftly emerged as a standout in contemporary luxury eyewear. Known for limited-production frames made from sustainable materials like buffalo horn and wood, the brand combines artisanal craftsmanship with modern design and exceptional fit. Press' experience with Morgenthal Frederics and Robert Marc NYC informs his

visionary approach, attracting industry attention across North America. Now, with international trade PR support from The Hive Studio, PRESS is set to expand further into Europe and the UK—bringing its distinctive blend of elegance, innovation and eco-consciousness to global markets.

For more information contact your Press Eyewear sales representative or visit presseyewear.com



WIND WARRIOR SERIES

AYA Optical launched the Jim Yellowhawk Motorcycle Collection at Vision Expo West, spotlighting the Wind Warriors series. Inspired by the power and symbolism of Indian Motorcycles, celebrated Lakota artist Jim Yellowhawk reimagines traditional Plains ledger art through a modern Indigenous lens. The collaboration marks a bold new chapter for AYA, blending artistry and innovation in buffalo-horn-

inspired acetates. Each of the five frames embodies freedom, movement and cultural resilience. AYA, founded in 2009, is known for showcasing Indigenous artists and reinvesting in their communities—donating over \$300,000 to education, wellness and eyewear initiatives across North America.

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



Motorcycle artwork



Wind Warrior



BLACKFIN

Blackfin's Autumn/Winter 2025 collection showcases the Italian brand's mastery of titanium and its bold exploration of colour. Each frame is handcrafted at the Black Shelter Sustainable Factory, where technical precision meets contemporary design. New two-tone gradients, iridescent finishes and brushed textures highlight the brand's attention to detail and commitment to innovation. The collection features distinct chromatic identities across

product families, with colour used as an integral design element—not just decoration. Advanced treatments like anodization and soft-touch finishes elevate both durability and aesthetic appeal. The result is a refined, expressive collection that blends art, science and sophisticated eyewear engineering.

For more information contact your Mood Eyewear sales representative or visit moodeyewear.com



ANDY WOLF

Andy Wolf's latest collection blends soft boldness with French flair, introducing expressive acetates, avant-garde metals, and bold sunglasses. A standout design feature is the stepped milling technique, which layers materials to create a three-dimensional effect and striking plays of colour—seen on models 4641, 5156, 5157, and the Vanda and Salix sunglasses. Shot at Vienna's historic Bridge Club, the campaign pairs timeless architecture with modern design, featuring top model Helena Severin. Founded in 2006, the independent Austrian label has become a global name in innovative eyewear, worn by stars like Rihanna, Lady Gaga and Dua Lipa.

For more information contact your Andy Wolf sales representative or visit andy-wolf.com

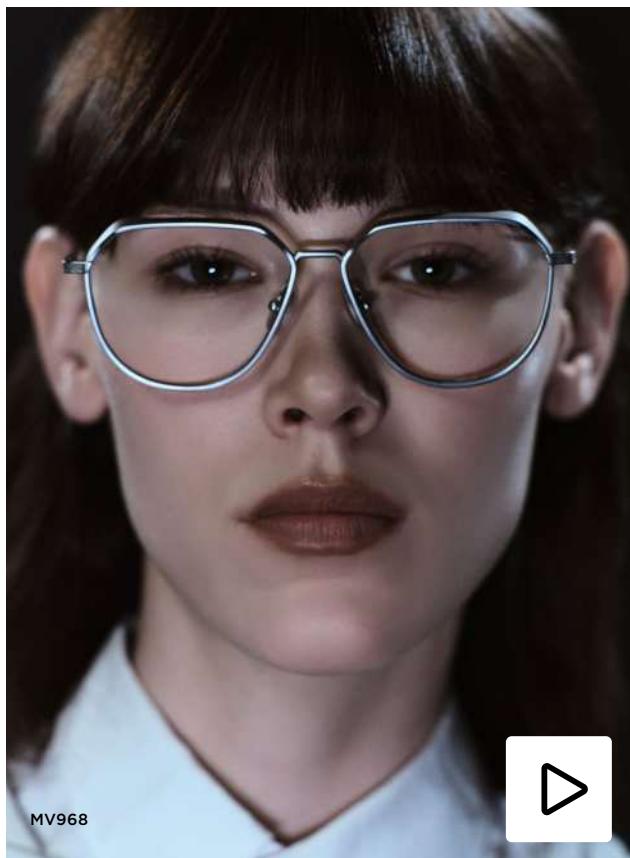




OAKLEY

Minnesota Vikings star Justin Jefferson debuts his first signature eyewear with Oakley: the Justin Jefferson Signature Series De Soto™. The lightweight O Matter™ frame features a bold purple gradient with platinum accents, paired with Prizm™ Lens Technology for enhanced colour and contrast. Delivered in custom packaging with Jefferson's signature jet motif, this release captures his dynamic style and athletic spirit — making it a must-have for fans and eyewear enthusiasts alike.

For more information contact your Oakley sales representative or visit Oakley.com



MIGA STUDIO

For FW25, MIGA STUDIO returned to SILMO Paris with a collection that dives into the brand's minimalist core. Rather than reinventing, the brand refines — deepening its signature families with sculptural clarity and architectural intent. The result is bold, balanced, and unmistakably MIGA.

Highlights include KEIRO and KIWAMI in premium Takiron acetate, and TENSU and SEKI in solid titanium — each model blending strength, lightness,

and dimensional form. Wide fronts, pure materials, and visual restraint define the collection.

Anchored in a harmony of aesthetic experimentation and functional precision, FW25 poses a simple question: Are you deep enough? It's "more than a seasonal drop — it's a continuation of MIGA's design language, where every line has depth and every detail has purpose.

For more information contact your Miga Studio sales representative or visit 8-agency.com

TREE SPECTACLES

Italian independent brand TREE Spectacles introduces the Ayra Collection—a refined expression of minimalist eyewear design. Crafted in fine titanium and transparent materials, each style balances gentle geometry with desaturated tones and subtle form. Guided by intuition and subtraction, the collection complements TREE's existing lines while deepening its design

narrative. A special pop-up presentation and curated sensory experience further embody Ayra's poetic spirit, celebrating the brand's commitment to quality, innovation and authentic Italian craftsmanship.

For more information contact your Tree Spectacles sales representative or visit treespectacles.com



SILHOUETTE

Silhouette unveils The Visionary, its most daring rimless design to date. Crafted in Austria from lightweight titanium, the frame draws inspiration from Bauhaus architecture with a sculptural nose bridge, reimagined temples and a refined hinge. An ultra-flat lens surface enhances its futuristic, floating effect—balancing jewellery-like brilliance

with minimalist clarity. Every detail is purposeful, merging aesthetics and function in a seamless whole. The result is a frame that redefines modern luxury with unmistakable Silhouette DNA.

For more information contact your Canadian Optical Supply sales representative or visit canadianoptical.com



IN FACE



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Olivia

TOMS

TOMS introduces Olivia, a fresh addition to its Fall lineup that blends vintage flair with modern ease. This cat-eye-inspired frame strikes a beautiful balance with upswept lines, soft teardrop lens openings, and slender rims that flatter a wide range of faces. Elevated end-pieces add a refined edge, while the lightweight construction keeps things comfortable and versatile.

Available in rich fall tones, Olivia is made for those who want their eyewear to feel as effortless as it looks stylish, expressive, and ready for wherever the day leads. With TOMS, fashion meets purpose, every step, and every frame of the way.

For more information contact your Luminous Optical sales representative or visit luminousoptical.com



J.F. REY

J.F. Rey celebrates 40 years of bold, independent design with a new high-end collection that blends artistic heritage with technical mastery. Iconic shapes are reimagined with exclusive technologies, vibrant colours, and avant-garde detail. The standout SLEDGE series showcases radical elegance for men, while gradient innovations define the women's

line. From screwless hinges to coloured wood veneers, the collection reaffirms the brand's pioneering spirit—where fearless design and uncompromising craftsmanship remain at the heart of its identity.

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



2BB

The Jennie, is a new release from Two Blind Brothers collection for Fall. The flattering geometric shape is available in three trendy Fall colours. For every frame sold, a donation is made to Fighting Blindness Canada.

For more information contact your Centennial Optical sales representative or visit centennialoptical.com



GÖTTI

Götti Switzerland introduces WENKE and WAID, two bold new frames that pay homage to classic '70s eyewear while feeling unmistakably fresh. These designs are all about contrasts: feminine curves meet a clean, masculine aviator with a double bridge, hand-polished acetate balances structure with lightness, and retro inspiration gets a modern twist. Transparent olive and mocha, turquoise over soft pink, and layered gradients create shifting colours that change with the light. With gently rounded edges and a striking rim, WENKE and WAID are more than frames — they're powerful, poetic style statements for those who want their eyewear to start conversations.



For more information contact your Götti sales representative or visit gotti.ch/en



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IN THE RAW

GIGI STUDIOS Strips Back the Noise with Erin Wasson

In a world where filters and performance reign supreme, GIGI STUDIOS is taking a different route this season, one lined with honesty, elegance, and elemental power. The Barcelona-based brand unveils IN THE RAW, a daring new campaign fronted by none other than Erin Wasson, the fashion icon known for her laid-back Texan cool and unshakable authenticity.

Shot through the lens of celebrated photographer Gorka Postigo, the campaign captures Wasson at her most unguarded: no theatrics, no filter, just raw presence. Her piercing stare and grounded posture speak volumes, this is freedom, not just of style, but of self. "Freedom is something that you work towards," says Wasson. "I believe your job is to design a world around you where you feel free as much as possible."

That ethos bleeds directly into the eyewear. IN THE RAW is more than a campaign, it's a design philosophy. GIGI STUDIOS deconstructs eyewear as we know it, focusing instead on the soul of the frame: structure, volume, and integrity. This isn't about loud statements or trendy gimmicks. It's about form that feels essential. Through lamination techniques and refined acetate-metal combinations, each silhouette is sculpted with chromatic restraint and architectural clarity.



"Freedom is something that you work towards, I believe your job is to design a world around you where you feel free as much as possible."

— ERIN WASSON



From softened angular forms to low-key contrasts and deeply considered detailing, every frame whispers confidence. The visual depth is subtle, the design language clean. It's eyewear that says just enough, and nothing more.

The campaign also marks a shift in GIGI STUDIOS' broader design direction: more curated, more conscious, more intentional. Every frame tells its own story while echoing the brand's evolving universe, a universe grounded in craftsmanship and expressive integrity since its founding in 2016.

From its artisanal roots in Barcelona to a global community of discerning wearers, GIGI STUDIOS continues to honour tradition while boldly redefining sophistication. With IN THE RAW, the message is clear: strip back the noise, amplify the essence, and wear your truth.

Because sometimes, the most powerful look is the one that doesn't try too hard. **OP**

A black and white photograph of a woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing dark-rimmed glasses and a tan trench coat with a belt. She is looking over her shoulder towards the camera. The background is plain and light-colored.

GIGI STUDIOS



HEX Appeal

Named after the video game's most stylish sorceress, Bayonetta frames blend femme fatale energy with fashion-forward attitude. Glamour, power, and precision—on point.

BY SUZANNE LACORTE



1. A03531 by Alain Mikli
2. Mascara by L.G.R.
3. Flapper by Vint & York
4. Miriam Optics by Ray Ban
5. Sunday Somewhere SS1072 by WestGroupe
6. Ve3356 by Versace
7. Thought So by Quay
8. A03530 Alain Mikli
9. Stitch by Frost
10. VPR A21 by Prada Swing Re-edition



5.



6.



7.



8.



9.



10.



CONTACT

Confidential

How digital behaviour is reshaping the contact lens conversation

BY DAVID GOLDBERG



When patients walk into your practice today, they've likely already done their homework online. New research from the Contact Lens Institute (CLI) reveals that more than half of all contact lens-related searches focus on one thing: where and how to buy lenses. For Canadian eye care professionals (ECPs), this digital-first behaviour represents both a challenge and a significant opportunity.

The comprehensive study analyzed millions of search queries and social media posts across multiple platforms throughout 2024 and early 2025. Detailed analysis of consumer patterns across Canada and the U.S. uncovers what patients are really thinking about between appointments — and it's not always what they're willing to discuss face-to-face. From price comparisons to

removal techniques, the data reveals patient concerns that savvy ECPs can turn into competitive advantages.

“Between online search tools and being inundated with advertisements, many patients come in pretty conscious of online pricing,” explains Dr. Harbir Sian, co-owner of Highstreet Eyecare in Abbotsford and Clarity Eyecare in Surrey, British

Columbia. “If anything, it's a positive thing. The conversation often helps patients be more open-minded to contact lenses.”

THE PURCHASE-FIRST MINDSET

The numbers tell a clear story: 65% of the top 20 contact lens searches are purchase-oriented, with 53.5% specifically targeting retailers and 9.75% focused on price. This trend reflects a shift in how consumers approach eye care — they're seeking clinical advice while comparison shopping for contacts.

“Our priority should be shifting the mindset from getting defensive and trying to defend our position and our price point, to showing value and how we can provide a certain service beyond simply the cost of the lenses,” says Sian. “Taking it from being

just transactional as it would be online to a much more healthcare type of conversation."

This approach requires practices to showcase their pricing strategies proactively rather than reactively. The data suggests patients arrive with predetermined price anchors from online research, making transparent pricing discussions essential from the first contact lens conversation.

"I don't shy away from asking patients where they usually purchase their contact lenses," says Dr. Wes McCann, founder of Doctors Vision Group in Ontario. "Understanding your patients' thought process is half the battle. If you don't ask, you can't understand the perceived issue."

WHAT PATIENTS SEARCH FOR

Perhaps most revealing is what consumers search for when it comes to contact lens care at home. The CLI data analyzed a two-month span of Google searches and found that queries about removal outpaced searches about insertion by 250% to 400%. The data has prompted some ECPs like Dr. Roxanne Achong-Coan of Coan Eye Care and Optical Boutique in Florida to rethink training protocols.

"I was speechless when I saw this data," reveals Achong-Coan in the report. "Instead of me removing a patient's lenses when they come in for a one-week follow-up, I'm going to ask them to remove them on their own. That way I can see what trouble they may be having."

The search patterns also reveal concerns about health and safety, cost considerations and wear-and-care questions that patients may hesitate to raise during appointments.

McCann sees this as an educational opportunity: "When you build an honest and trusting rapport with patients, they are much more comfortable raising questions about any preconceptions they had coming in."



84%
of consumers
view contact lenses and glasses
as an "either-or" choice rather than
complementary options.

In some cases social media compounds these concerns, but it hasn't been all bad. "Overall, it's fairly positive that there is such a presence for this type of content on social media," says Sian. "A lot of patients are coming in just more knowledgeable overall. Perhaps it might show up as concerns, but it just opens the door for us to have the conversation, to properly educate patients around the product."

BREAKING THE EITHER-OR MENTALITY

One of the most striking findings is that 84% of consumers view contact lenses and glasses as an "either-or" choice rather than complementary options. This represents a missed opportunity for practices focused on optimizing patient outcomes and revenue.

"Sometimes patients can't give you a straight answer; in some cases they've just made up their mind that contacts aren't for them," says Sian. His approach involves offering contact lenses to virtually every patient.

"I will offer an in-office trial where I'll ask the patient, whenever you have some time, give me 30 minutes, I'll put the lens in for you. You walk around the optical or go across the parking lot and grab a coffee and come back," he says. "That goes a long way to help patients open their minds to experiencing contact lenses or adopting contact lenses for part-time wear."

THE DIGITAL COMPETITION

Major retailers dominate search results, but the data reveals strategic opportunities for independent practices. Voice searches, which represent about 20% of total queries, often direct consumers to local eye care offices. This reinforces the importance of optimizing local search presence and ensuring practice information is easily discoverable on all platforms.

Artificial intelligence is increasingly influencing search results, though the CLI research shows AI platforms provide inconsistent contact lens recommendations. McCann emphasizes the importance of positioning professional expertise above AI-generated content: "I focus on educat-

REVENUE GROWTH THROUGH STRATEGIC RESPONSE

Smart practices are turning these consumer insights into revenue opportunities. Key strategies include:

Proactive Pricing Conversations: Discussing cost, rebates, and insurance benefits early in the fitting process rather than waiting until the optical visit. At Roswell Eye Clinic in Roswell, Georgia, Dr. Scott Moscow reports a 10% increase in day-of contact lens sales after implementing transparent digital pricing tools.

Subscription Services: Annual supply promotions that compete directly with online convenience while maintaining professional oversight.

Solution Bundling: Pairing lens purchases with care products and dry eye treatments, leveraging the practice's clinical expertise.

ing patients about what I believe is best for them, sharing the clinical indications and benefits of the lenses I recommend."

While large retailers may dominate search results, McCann says that they cannot replicate the personalized care of an independent practice. "A family doctor would never provide two different hypertension medications and ask the patient which one they liked better. Instead, they prescribe with confidence what is clinically best."

The key lies in proactive communication. Rather than waiting for patients to raise concerns discovered through online searches, successful practices initiate conversations about pricing, product options and lifestyle benefits throughout the patient journey.

BUILDING ON CONSUMER INSIGHTS

"At the end of the day, our patients tend to leave more open-minded to contact lens

wear," says Sian. "If it's a first-time patient, they'll be more open to trying new technologies. If they initially come in with price concerns, once we talk to them about the value of the product, the design, and the technology, they're actually much more open to it than you might initially think."

"Patients inherently want to shop local," adds McCann. "They just need to know we're competitive and that we can offer the same level of convenience."

Consumer search behaviour will continue evolving, but the opportunity is always there: patients want expert guidance combined with competitive value. Practices that embrace transparent pricing discussions, proactive patient education and technology-driven solutions will find themselves well-positioned to capture both new fits and increased loyalty from existing wearers. **OP**

TOP CONTACT LENS QUESTIONS

- Are contact lenses bad for your eyes?
- Can contact lenses expire?
- How much do contact lenses cost?
- What contact lenses are best?
- When were contact lenses invented?
- Where do you buy contact lenses?
- Which contact lenses are best?
- Why contact lenses are blurry?
- Will contact lenses freeze?

Google Contact Lens autocomplete results for U.S. and Canada sourced via AnswerThePublic.com. 10-week ranking: January 3-March 14, 2025.

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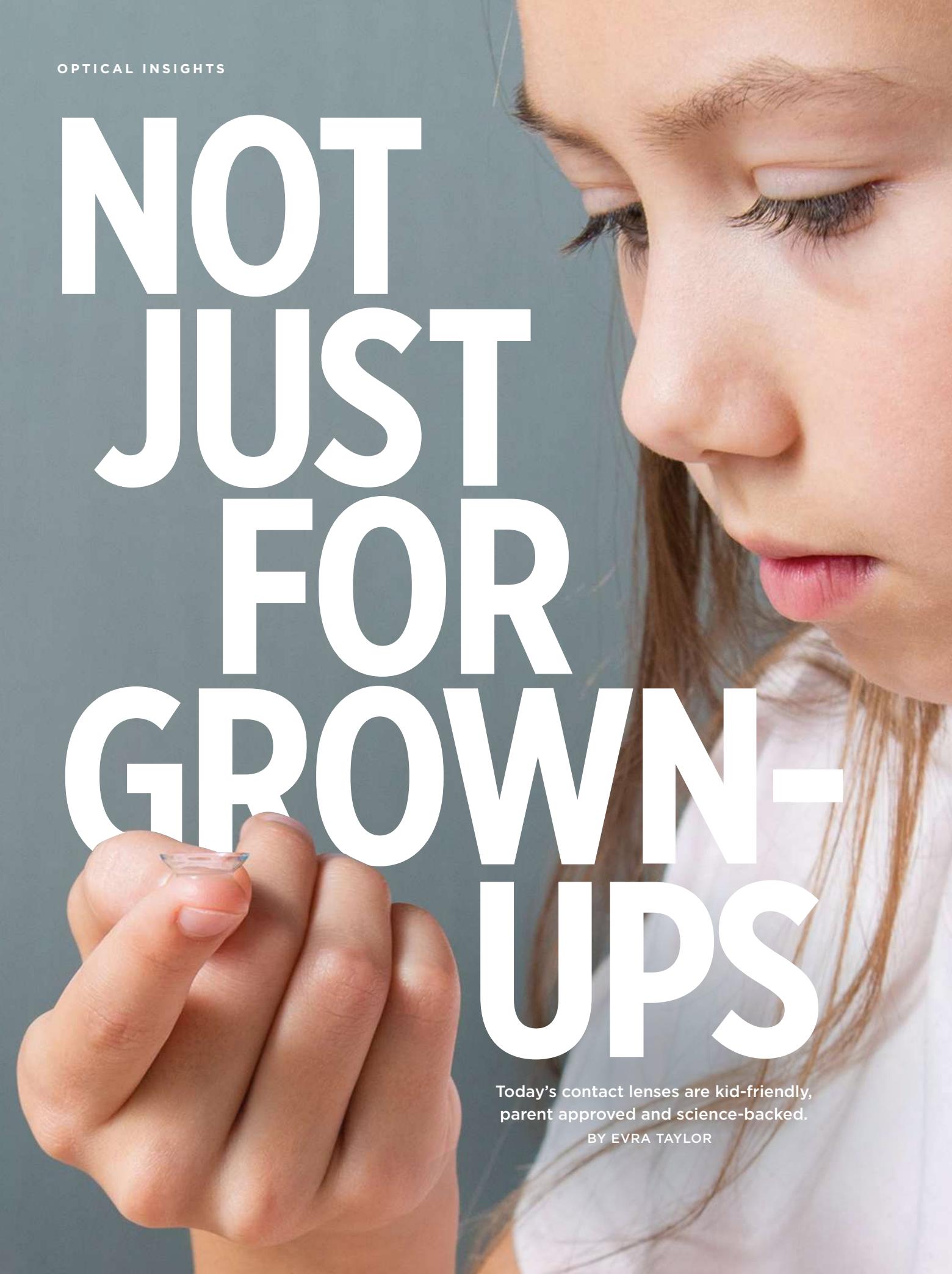
1. Bausch + Lomb ULTRA® Multifocal for Astigmatism stabilization study. 2. Bausch + Lomb ULTRA® for Astigmatism Design Description. December 2016. 3. Early Clinical Experience with Bausch + Lomb ULTRA® Multifocal for Astigmatism Contact Lenses, Schaefer, Steffen, REVIEW OF OPTOMETRY JUNE 15, 2019.

4. Bausch + Lomb ULTRA® Multifocal for Astigmatism Patient Evaluation. Rochester 2020. 5. Results of an online survey with Eye Care Professionals who completed an evaluation programme for Bausch + Lomb ULTRA® Multifocal for Astigmatism contact lenses and reported fitting 6 or more subjects (n=219).

Contact lenses are available by prescription only. This product may not be right for you, please consult your Eye Care Professional for more information. Always read and follow the labeling, which is available at www.bausch.com/lu. © 2025 Bausch + Lomb TP22608

OPTICAL INSIGHTS

NOT JUST FOR GROWN- UPS

A close-up photograph of a woman's face in profile, looking down. Her eyes are closed. In the lower-left foreground, a woman's hand is shown holding a single contact lens between her thumb and forefinger, looking directly at it. The background is a solid dark grey.

Today's contact lenses are kid-friendly,
parent approved and science-backed.

BY EVRA TAYLOR

Many people find that kids wearing glasses look “cute” and historically, there has been an assumption that they’re better off wearing glasses than contact lenses. It turns out, that’s not necessarily the case.

While glasses are considered the gold standard in vision correction for young people, they come with their own set of problems. Functionally, they can be uncomfortable to wear during sports and active play time, and they can easily fall off the child’s face or break. Contact lenses remain stable on the child’s eyes when they’re running or playing contact sports, resulting in more accurate and stable vision.

Glasses become dirty, crooked or loose, requiring adjustment, and steam up when kids come into the house from cold weather. From a social point of view, children who wear glasses are subject to cruel teasing and bullying, and don’t have the skills to deal with this type of harassment. Many children don’t like wearing glasses because of the stigma attached, in the same way that adults resist them, opting for contacts and Lasik surgery instead.

Early Evidence for Contact Lenses in Children

As far back as 2006, researchers found that children experienced improved quality of life with contact lenses versus glasses. Jeffrey J. Walline, O.D., Ph.D., Ohio State University College of Optometry led the Adolescent and Child Health Initiative to Encourage Vision Empowerment (ACHIEVE) Study, the largest randomized trial of its kind. Dr. Walline’s findings appeared in *Optometry & Vision Science*, the peer-reviewed journal of the American Academy of Optometry.

“Although contact lenses may require more adept handling, daily disposable contact lenses decrease this burden, and the fact that contact lenses may be lost or broken less often than glasses outweighs the slight increase in time spent inserting and removing contact lenses,” said Dr. Walline.

The growing body of research in children’s vision correction continues to demonstrate that contact lenses provide significant benefits to children

“The growing body of research in children’s vision correction continues to demonstrate that contact lenses provide significant benefits to children beyond simply correcting their vision.”

— Dr. Jeffrey J. Walline, O.D., Ph.D., Ohio State University College of Optometry

beyond simply correcting their vision. This study showed considerable improvement for contact lens wearing children 10 years or older in areas of appearance, participation in activities and satisfaction with vision correction, and it remained or improved over three years,” Dr. Walline explained.

Studies have shown that children (8-12 years) derive as much quality of life benefit from contact lens wear as teens (13-17 years). Both groups have reported similar improvements in vision-related quality of life, specifically, improved satisfaction with their vision correction, ability to participate in activities and their appearance.

Physically, a child’s eyes can tolerate contact lenses from a very young age. Even some infants are fitted with contact lenses due to eye conditions present at birth. Parents considering contact lenses for their children can consider how they handle their other responsibilities, like personal hygiene or tidying their room. If they need frequent reminders, they might not be ready for the responsibility of wearing and caring for contact lenses.

Myth-Busting

Entrenched myths asserting that children aren’t able to handle contact lens wear for a variety of reasons are being challenged by eye health professionals and associations. The Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) states that children younger than 12 years of age report better vision-related quality of life when wearing contact lenses compared to glasses.

MYTH #1: The prescription should be stable before a child can be fit with contact lenses

FACT: The prescription doesn’t need to be stable prior to fitting children with

contact lenses. In most cases, the prescription continues to change as a child grows. Most children are fit with disposable (or planned replacement) soft lenses, which are replaced every day. When the prescription changes, the next order of contact lenses can be adjusted to reflect the new prescription.

MYTH #2: Children can’t handle contact lenses

FACT: It’s been shown that children as young as eight can successfully handle contact lenses. With appropriate instruction, most children can insert contact lenses in their eyes and remove them easily. A recent study indicated that the average time to instruct a child on how to handle contact lenses is

about 30 minutes, which is similar to the time it takes to instruct an adult.

MYTH #3: Contact lenses are expensive

FACT: Contact lenses may be no more expensive than glasses in the long term. Changes in the prescription can easily be made with contact lens wear. In the hands of children, glasses may become damaged in a very short period of time and require regular repairs or replacement. Scratched lenses may need to be replaced regularly, resulting in significant costs each time.

MYTH #4: Children aren't able to take care of their contacts

FACT: Many optometrists feel that lenses are quite easy to take care of, and children are just as capable of caring for them as adults are. If children are having difficulty following the hygiene protocols required for contacts, such as storing and washing them properly, parents can consider daily disposables which require less stringent care.

It's been shown that children as young as eight can successfully handle contact lenses. With appropriate instruction, most children can insert contact lenses... and remove them easily.



Safety in Children

MYTH #5: Children are more prone to complications related to contact lens wear than adults

FACT: If parents and children adhere to the instructions they've been given regarding wearing time, replacing the lenses regularly and using cleaning solution regimens appropriately, the risks associated with contact lens wear are significantly reduced.

Parental and practitioner concerns about safety are often raised regarding contact lens wear in children, but the research tells a different story. Dr. Mark Bullimore's 2017 meta-analysis of pediatric soft contact

lens studies published in Optometry Vision Science reported that children (aged 8-12) and teens (aged 13-17) didn't in fact have higher rates of microbial keratitis or inflammatory complications. The evidence actually indicated a lower rate of infection in children than teens and adults, which he attributed to better compliance and closer parental supervision.

For children reluctant to wear glasses for functional or aesthetic reasons, contact lenses have been proven an effective, safe alternative when accompanied by parental guidance and monitoring. **OP**

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GOODBYE DRY EYE

Can new guidelines standardize diagnosis and treatment of ocular surface disease?

BY DAVID GOLDBERG

When Dr. Andrew de Roeth popularized the term "dry eye" 75 years ago, he likely didn't imagine how complex this condition would prove to be. For many decades, dry eye disease was thought to be simply a lack of tears, until researchers in the 1990s and 2000s revealed it as a complex, multifaceted condition involving multiple factors.

"It frustrates me when patients are told they have 'just dry eye' as it downplays the complexities of this multifactorial disease," says Dr. Etty Bitton, optometry professor and head of the Dry Eye Clinic at the University of Montreal and TFOS ambassador for Canada. "It's also one of the most exciting times for eye care practitioners, as they have more management options than ever before to offer dry eye patients."

Bitton was a co-author on the third edition of the Tear Film & Ocular Surface Society Dry Eye Workshop (TFOS DEWS III) report. Released in 2025, the report offers eye care practitioners (ECPs) an evidence-based approach to both diagnosis and management options for dry eye disease (DED). It advocates for a standardized diagnosis that can be adopted across practices to assist with a consistent testing approach while the management highlights the latest evidence for each recommendation.

"Many ECPs still view dry eye as a symptom-focused issue rather than a chronic, multifactorial disease, which can lead to underdiagnosis," says Dr. Nadine Furtado, associate clinical professor of optometry at the University of Waterloo.

Dry eye has always been a part of primary care for ECPs, however with novel technologies, ECPs can develop niche practices to focus more on this condition. "If you don't address dry eye, the patients will go somewhere else," says Bitton. "The slit lamp is standard equipment for ocular surface assessment, hence adding a validated DED questionnaire requires minimal additional investment. Advanced DED instrumentation may be added as the dry eye practice grows."

Diagnosis and Lifestyle Factors

Part of the aim of the TFOS DEWS III report is to standardize dry eye diagnosis. Symptoms play a pivotal role in the diagnosis of dry eye and the report provides ECPs with an evidence-based six-point questionnaire along with clinical tests. "If we don't all use a validated questionnaire, then we lose that diagnostic power," says Bitton.

The questionnaire focuses on the frequency of symptoms, how dry eye affects daily tasks, such as driving and watching television, and how environmental factors, such as wind, impacts these symptoms.

Beyond questionnaires and traditional slit lamp tests, Furtado says that ECPs can integrate more advanced tests like tear osmolarity and meibography to better identify dry eye subtypes earlier. "What appears to be treatment failure is often due to under-treatment, poor adherence or a misidentified etiology," she explains. "You also want to screen for concurrent issues like demodex blepharitis or allergic conjunctivitis, which may be interfering with progress."

Many eye care practitioners (ECPs) still view dry eye as a symptom-focused issue rather than a chronic, multi-factorial disease...

Consider patients' lifestyle factors, particularly digital device usage. Extended screen time reduces our natural blink rate, leaving eyes under-lubricated. ECPs should help patients understand how unchecked screen time affects their ocular health. Between work, school, social media, gaming and television, many people easily accumulate 12 hours of daily screen exposure.

Some dry eye cases can be linked to a patient's skincare routine or cosmetics, including makeup, anti-wrinkle creams, eyelash adhesives and retinol-based acne medications. "All of these can have a negative impact due to chemical additives," says Bitton. "Many patients don't realize that going for elective procedures, such as BOTOX or refractive surgeries can impact the ocular surface."

Management Options

Dr. Clara Chan, associate professor of ophthalmology at the University of Toronto, highlights the dramatic expansion of dry eye management options, offering patients multiple pathways beyond traditional artificial tears. "For patients with dry eye disease, there are now a multitude of varieties and commercial concentrations of topical cyclosporine, as well as a steroid sparing anti-inflammatory called lifitegrast that is indicated for both symptoms and signs of dry eye disease," says Chan.

Patients now have access to topical nutritional supportive therapies including serum tears, platelet-rich plasma and amniotic fluid extract, while device options have grown to include dehydrated amniotic membranes and therapeutic scleral contact lenses.

However, Chan emphasizes that treatment requires individualized care. "There's no set recipe to treat dry eye," she says. Her systematic approach starts with artificial tears, anti-inflammatory treatments, environmental modifications and home care strategies; and then advances to specialized lid therapies when needed.

Patient Education

Beyond management options, experts stress the importance of proper patient counseling, with Chan noting there's currently an education gap in this regard. "Setting appropriate expectations for patients is important, otherwise patients will not be satisfied until they feel perfectly back to normal," she says.

She emphasizes that practitioners need to help patients understand the reality of their condition, that there is no quick and easy cure for dry eye disease. "Dry eye is a nuisance like having dry cracked skin, stiff joints or developing wrinkles with old age," says Chan, noting that patients must understand other risk factors including age, postmenopausal hormone changes, medications and systemic diseases.

With deeper research, stronger diagnostic tools and advanced medications, Bitton is optimistic about the future of dry eye care in Canada and abroad. She truly values the profound impact proper diagnosis and tailored management can have on patients' lives. **OP**

The full TFOS DEWS III report is available at tearfilm.org

DRY EYE TREATMENT ADVANCEMENTS

JOHNSON & JOHNSON:

J&J Vision introduced the next-generation TearScience Activator Clear in 2022, featuring improved single-piece eye cup design for more efficient LipiFlow thermal pulsation treatments of meibomian gland dysfunction.

ALCON:

Alcon received FDA approval in May 2025 for TRYPTYR (acoltremone ophthalmic solution), a first-in-class TRPM8 receptor agonist that stimulates corneal nerves to rapidly increase natural tear production, with plans for U.S. launch this year.

BAUSCH & LOMB:

Bausch + Lomb launched MIEBO (perfluorohexyloctane ophthalmic solution) in 2023, the first and only FDA-approved prescription eye drop that directly targets tear evaporation.

I-MED: I-Med Pharma continues to expand its I-DROP product portfolio with preservative-free artificial tears including I-DROP PUR GEL and I-DROP MGD specifically formulated for meibomian gland dysfunction.

THEA: Laboratoires Théa secured European Commission approval in 2024 for Vevizye (cyclosporine ophthalmic solution) and continues developing their Thealoz Duo formulation combining trehalose and sodium hyaluronate for enhanced dry eye symptom relief.

Optical Connections

A weekend of learning, laughter, and optical connection.

BY NICK SAMSON

There's something about in-person events that Zoom calls and email chains just can't replicate, and The Optical Group Con 2025 reminded me exactly why. Held September 13–14 at The Westin Toronto Airport, this dynamic weekend brought together independent opticians, optometrists, suppliers, and industry leaders from across the country for two days of connection, collaboration, and learning.

Saturday kicked off with a buzzing cocktail reception and Vendor Hub, where I caught up with longtime colleagues and new faces. The atmosphere was one of mutual respect and shared momentum. Everyone, from brand reps to clinic owners, seemed energized and open to finding new ways to support each other's success.

The evening reception reminded me why our industry is so special. Great food, lively entertainment, and heartfelt sponsor remarks, including Alcon, CooperVision, EssilorLuxottica, HOYA and Transitions, set the tone for a weekend built on community. A standout moment came from Bruce Miles of EssilorLuxottica, who spoke on how technology, style, and patient experience are merging to shape the future of eye care.

Sunday's OAC Connect sessions kept the energy high. From ocular nutrition to neurodivergence in eye exams, every session felt tailored to real-world challenges ECPs face today.

Hats off to The Optical Group and the Opticians Association of Canada for pulling together a weekend that was equal parts professional development and appreciation. Special thanks to Ruth Priebe of The

Optical Group, whose leadership and attention to detail were felt throughout.

I left TOG Con with a renewed sense of purpose, fresh ideas, and a lot of gratitude. When we come together like this, we don't just share information — we strengthen the profession. **OP**



Sales with SOUL

Cody Hodgson's Commitment to Excellence in Independent Optical

BY MAYA WATSON

Standing out in the optical industry today takes more than great frames, it takes great partners. The most successful practices have someone in their corner who brings passion, insight, and a people-first mindset. For many across Ontario, that someone is Cody Hodgson. He's redefined what it means to be a sales rep by becoming a true collaborative partner who's shared goal is to elevate and empower a team. For Cody, this shared goal goes beyond hitting sales targets – it's about showing up with enthusiasm, empathy, and developing a deep understanding of what businesses truly need, while setting a standard that raises the bar for everyone involved. This standard has earned him deep trust amongst Ontario's Independent Optical Community. Cody believes great leaders "walk the walk" by living the same principles they cultivate in others. When he steps into an optometry clinic, Cody brings more than just industry-leading brands, he brings a mindset of growth, integrity, and opportunity – an approach championed by his WestGroupe mentors, Nicholas DeBono, Darin Gooda, and Mike DeBono.

Clinic owners and staff describe Cody as more than just a sales representative, he's a trusted part of their team; someone who listens, understands, and then delivers solutions that align with their long-term goals. Testimonials highlight not only his professionalism and reliability, but his ability to energize and inspire confidence in others.

"True long-term success for practices isn't built on the latest technology, trends, and



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ENZO ROKERO

tactics. It is rooted in embodying the right culture, and mindfully selecting the right business partnerships that assist you in developing a winning team. Patients won't always remember what was said, but they will remember how you made them feel. This is where you lay the foundation for both lasting patient loyalty, and a brand impossible to replicate", explains Cody.

Cody's commitment to excellence stems from his own upbringing in a family of sales leaders. His mother, an award-winning professional across multiple industries, and his late father, a respected executive of a global company, demonstrated the importance of treating each individual with dignity and leading with authenticity and honesty. Cody has carried this legacy forward, viewing leadership not as a title, but as a conscious choice and responsibility to empower others. In his day-to-day work, Cody has a reputation for creating moments of connection that make every person who crosses his path feel special; whether it be surprising a clinic with a thoughtful gesture, recognizing staff achievements in ways that boost morale, or sparking a meaningful, personal conversation. These small actions are the

Cody has a reputation for creating moments of connection that make every person who crosses his path feel special;

thoughtful marks of someone who understands that excellence is not a one-time effort, but a daily habit.

At a time when independent optometry businesses are under pressure to stand out, Cody Hodgson offers more than frames – he offers vision. For practices seeking a partner who will strengthen their business, uplift their team, and actively set themselves apart from the competition, Cody represents a rare combination: a sales professional with the mindset of a leader and the heart of a true partner. **OP**

Cody Hodgson is a trusted sales professional with WestGroupe, known for his collaborative, people-first approach and deep commitment to supporting independent optical practices. To connect with Cody, email chodgson@westgroupe.com.

EXPO ENERGY

From tech breakthroughs to big-picture conversations, this year's Vision Expo West proved well worth the miles.

BY NICK SAMSON

There's nothing quite like stepping into The Venetian Expo during Vision Expo West. This year, as soon as I hit the show floor, I felt the energy, that unique mix of anticipation, caffeine, and attendees all determined to change the optical industry, one innovation at a time. With 346 exhibitors filling the floor, the show felt expansive, alive, and full of opportunities.

For me, Vision Expo West is never just about seeing what's new. It's about people. As *Optical Prism*'s co-owner and associate publisher, my job is to develop relationships and keep our brand top of mind with associations, industry leaders, and innovators, and Las Vegas is the perfect backdrop for those conversations.

And here's what stood out this year: the show felt busy. After a softer turnout in Orlando this past March, there was a sense of cautious optimism heading into Vegas. Whether expectations were just lower or the West Coast location simply drew a bigger crowd, the result was the same: everyone I spoke to seemed genuinely pleased with the level of traffic, the quality of meetings, and the business being written.

The redesigned floor layout made those meetings easier. With Eyewear, Eyecare, Independent Design, and Tech & Innovation organized into clear zones, I could actually plan my day without criss-crossing the building like I was training for a marathon. I spent time in the Tech & Innovation zone, where the LaunchPad and VSP Vision Innovation Challenge winners were showing



off AI-driven diagnostic tools and VR-based therapy solutions. These aren't just shiny gadgets, they're early glimpses of where our industry is heading.

Education also delivered, with over 270 hours of accredited and non-accredited sessions. I made time for cross-disciplinary panels where optometrists, technologists, and designers shared perspectives. These sessions spark story ideas for future issues.

But my biggest takeaway was the people. I had meaningful meetings with association heads, brand partners, and exhibitors eager to share what's next. The lounges, networking events, and even casual hallway run-ins turned into opportunities for collaboration.

With Vision Expo shifting to a single annual show in Orlando starting March 2026, this year felt like a strong send-off for Vegas. I left tired, yes — but inspired and encouraged by how much business got done. If Vegas taught us anything, it's that the industry still loves to come together, and when it does, the energy is contagious. **OP**



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March 30-April 1, 2028, New York, NY

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From Associate to Partner

Dr. Lisjen Puka tells us what it's like from his perspective as a clinic owner and optometry partner at Specsavers Dorval Crossing.

What led you to a partnership with Specsavers?

I've always wanted to have and run my own business. After working as an associate for many years, I quickly realized how limiting that was, so I was always looking for the right opportunity to build and grow something for myself. A Specsavers partnership was a great fit for what I was looking for.

What does your day-to-day involve as an optometry partner?

Being a partner involves being an optometrist that sees patients on a daily basis while also being a business owner. It's very rewarding (and sometimes challenging) to be able to run your clinic exactly the way you want it – from scheduling and exam times to staffing and scope of practice.

A typical day starts with a brief meeting with my retail partner and team to go over specific goals for the day. This is followed by clinical hours and a debrief at the end of the day to go over our performance. During peak seasons or busier days, I spend more time seeing patients and when I have down time, I spend more time analyzing the business performance and coming up with strategies for growth.

How does the Specsavers partnership work for you?

The partnership with Specsavers is unique and streamlined as you have a retail partner that helps with the operational side of the business, planning, and strategy. In addition, Specsavers provides us with professional business guidance, development tools, and seminars through their support office.



Welcome to Specsavers

Sumaya Yaseen, LO
Retail Partner
Specsavers
Dorval Crossing



“It's very rewarding (and sometimes challenging) to be able to run your clinic exactly the way you want it.”

DR. LISJEN PUKA

The support office team helps to fill the gaps in the business knowledge and overall strategy that I lack as a healthcare provider. They're very helpful at the start of the year in helping us draft a business plan, forecast, and metrics needed in order to succeed.

What would you say to people thinking about becoming an optometry partner?

The best thing to do is to work for a period of time as an associate in a clinic within a Specsavers location in order to

get the full picture and see how partners spend their days. This way a prospective leader can observe the partners in all the different aspects of their role. I would ask them to be ready for a challenge, especially at the beginning, that is ultimately going to be rewarding.

Make sure you're ready to lead your own clinic and know that you will be responsible for your success. The better you are with patients and the more creativity you have in order to grow your clinic, the better you'll do! **OP**

**Ready to take on your next rewarding challenge?
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Grace Under Pressure

Smart Strategies for Handling Difficult Conversations

BY NANCY DEWALD

With all the challenges in the world right now, people are more on edge than ever. Whether you're navigating a tense moment with a colleague, a skeptical client or a supplier partner, how you respond can either escalate the situation, or defuse it entirely.

Here are some powerful, practical strategies to help you handle tough interactions with confidence and calm.

When Someone Insults or Lectures You

It's tempting to defend yourself or fire back, but that usually fuels the fire. Instead, try this:

RESPOND WITH: "Maybe so."

This simple phrase is disarming and helps diffuse the situation. It acknowledges the other person without agreeing or escalating. It subtly signals that you're not taking the bait.

EXAMPLE: "You shouldn't be charging for all the extras."

RESPONSE: "Maybe so."

It's neutral, non-defensive and surprisingly effective.

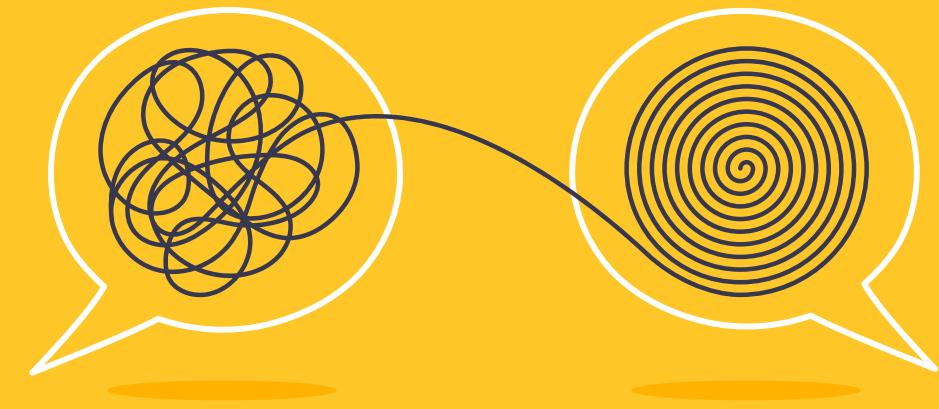
When Someone Says Something Rude

Rudeness thrives on shock value. Interrupt that pattern by calmly asking:

RESPOND WITH: "Can you repeat that?" This forces the speaker to hear their own words again, often prompting them to soften or backtrack. It also gives you time to collect yourself without reacting emotionally.

EXAMPLE: "That's a stupid idea."

RESPONSE: "Can you repeat that?"



"The only way to win is to deny the battle."

— STARGATE SG-1

It's not confrontational—it's clarifying. And most people will check themselves.

When Someone Won't Stop Talking

If someone's dominating the conversation and you need a graceful exit or redirection:

Ask about future plans.

This shifts the focus and gives them a new topic to latch onto, one that's forward-looking and less emotionally charged.

EXAMPLES:

"What's coming up for you next week?" or "Any big plans on the horizon?" It's a polite pivot that helps you regain control of the dialogue.

When Someone Isn't Sharing but Seems Frustrated

You can feel the tension, but they're not saying much. This is where mirroring works wonders.

Mirror their words.

Repeat the last few words they said, framed as a question. This invites them to expand without pressure.

EXAMPLE:

"I don't know about this marketing stuff."

MIRROR: "This marketing stuff?"

They'll almost always elaborate. It's subtle, respectful and incredibly effective.

When Someone Doesn't Like You

Treat them like they like you.

Don't give someone more reason to dislike you. Be cordial and kind, not fake, just yourself.

If this feels too difficult, use neutral responses.

RESPONSES: "Got it." or "Appreciate it."

Don't let someone else's attitude lower your character or integrity.

Why These Strategies Work

- They depersonalize conflict, keeping you calm and centred.
- They invite reflection rather than reaction.
- They create space for the other person to shift gears or clarify.
- They respect boundaries without shutting down the conversation.

Summary

This advice, partially inspired by Jefferson Fisher, emphasizes the importance of staying calm, kind and confident. Being generous in tense interactions can foster constructive dialogue and personal growth.

"I've never regretted saying the kind thing—even when it's the last thing I wanted to do."

— JEFFERSON FISHER

LEARN MORE AT: jeffersonfisher.com

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. In addition to her work at Lead Up, Nancy also serves as a consultant with Kleinman Performance Partners. To find out more, visit leaduptrainingandconsulting.ca



Little Eyes, Big Needs

**October is Children's Vision Month:
Caring for young eyes today for a
brighter tomorrow**

BY DR. ALLISON SCOTT, CAO President

Now that the school year is underway and children have settled into their routines, October, Children's Vision Month, serves as an important reminder for parents and caregivers about the vital role eye health plays in a child's development, learning and overall well-being.

In a world where screens are everywhere and outdoor play is often sidelined, prioritizing children's vision has never been more critical.

One of the most significant and growing concerns in children's eye health is myopia. While mild myopia might seem like a minor inconvenience, it can progress over time and increase the risk of serious conditions in adulthood, including retinal

detachment, glaucoma and myopic maculopathy.

The incidence of myopia in children is rising at an alarming rate globally. This trend has been linked to a variety of factors, including genetics and lifestyle habits, especially increased time spent on near tasks and decreased outdoor activity. Research shows that children who spend at least one to two hours outdoors daily may have a lower risk of developing myopia, or may experience slower progression if they are already myopic.

We know good vision is about more than just seeing clearly — and myopia isn't the only risk. Many eye conditions can progress without noticeable symptoms as children's visual systems develop. That's why routine, comprehensive eye exams are essential, even when no problems are apparent.

An eye exam can detect early signs of myopia, amblyopia (lazy eye), strabismus (eye misalignment) and other conditions that, if left untreated, can lead to permanent vision loss. The Canadian Association of Optometrists recommends children receive their first eye exam between six and nine months of age, another between ages two and five, and annual exams from age six to 19. Including eye exams as part of a child's regular health checkup—alongside visits to the

family doctor and dentist, helps ensure their development is monitored holistically.

Early detection enables timely treatment. Whether through corrective lenses, myopia management, vision therapy or simple lifestyle adjustments, prompt intervention can prevent vision issues from affecting a child's learning, confidence and quality of life. Giving children the visual tools they need can make a meaningful difference, not just in academics, but in their overall well-being.

Research shows that children who spend at least one to two hours outdoors daily may have a lower risk of developing myopia

While we encourage children to be active, particularly outdoors, we must also be mindful of the risk of eye injuries. Sports-related eye trauma remains a leading cause of paediatric eye injuries, and most are entirely preventable with the right protective eyewear.

If your child plays sports, ensure they wear sport-specific protective eyewear. Children are also especially vulnerable to sun damage. Because their lenses are more transparent, more ultraviolet (UV) rays reach the retina. Encourage your child to wear sunglasses with 100 per cent UVA/UVB protection and wide-brimmed hat, even on cloudy days. Building these habits early promotes lifelong eye health.

Children's Vision Month is a call to action. By scheduling regular eye exams, promoting outdoor activity and reinforcing eye safety and sun protection, you are giving your child the best chance at a lifetime of healthy vision. **OP**

Dr Allison Scott is the 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.

Pause to Prosper

Why Breaks Fuel Creativity, Focus and Sales

BY WENDY BUCHANAN

How unplugging from the scroll gave me fresh creativity, deeper client connections and my best summer sales in 28 years.

As eye care professionals, we're constantly on the go — patients to see, sales to close, teams to lead and the ever-present pressure to stay active on social media. Between posting, scrolling and responding, the digital noise can feel endless. We tell ourselves we need to stay visible, stay relevant and stay "on," but here's the truth: sometimes the most productive thing you can do for your business is step away.

This summer, I did exactly that. I gave myself permission to unplug — to trade Instagram feeds for ocean views and replace inbox notifications with sunsets over the lake. I spent time golfing, travelling to the East Coast, relaxing at the cottage and soaking up summer in ways that filled me with joy. What surprised me was how much this time away actually helped my business. I came back refreshed, recharged and more focused than ever — ready to create eyewear styling experiences for my clients that came with more energy, more personal connection and more impact.

And the result? My best summer sales ever.

Creativity Needs Breathing Room

When you're tethered to your phone or caught in the cycle of constant posting, your brain rarely has the space to think big. Stepping away clears the mental clutter. I found myself noticing colour combinations in nature, shapes in architecture and personalities in the people I met while travelling. All of it became inspiration I brought back into my styling sessions.

Sometimes the most productive thing you can do for your business is step away.

The same is true for your team. When they're given the time and permission to pause — even just a weekend off from the pressure of being "always on" — they return sharper, more creative and better at connecting with patients. This is truly your competitive advantage.

Beware the 'Scroll Fatigue'

Here's something we don't often think about: when clients or potential eyewear consumers see you all the time in their feed, they can start to tune you out. I call it scroll



fatigue — that moment when your posts blur into the background because they've simply seen too much of you, too often.

It's not that they don't value your expertise or love your eyewear. It's that the constant stream of content can start to feel repetitive. When you step back and create a little mystery, your return to social media has greater impact. Instead of scrolling past, your clients stop, notice and re-engage. Your content feels fresh again, and that freshness translates into renewed excitement to book an appointment, shop your frames or share your posts with friends.

Revenue Loves a Reframe

Here's the twist I didn't see coming: stepping back didn't slow down my business, it supercharged it. By giving myself space, I came back sharper, with a fresh perspective and renewed energy. I found myself listening more deeply, asking better questions and leaning into my styling expertise with new curiosity and intention.

And clients felt it. They walked away not just with new frames, but with eyewear that lit them up — pieces they were excited to wear. Many invested in multiple pairs, smiling as they left feeling seen, styled and spectacular. The result? My best summer sales in 28 years of running my mobile eyewear boutique. Proof that sometimes, the smartest business move is pressing pause, so you can come back reframed, recharged and ready to rise.

The Takeaway for ECPs

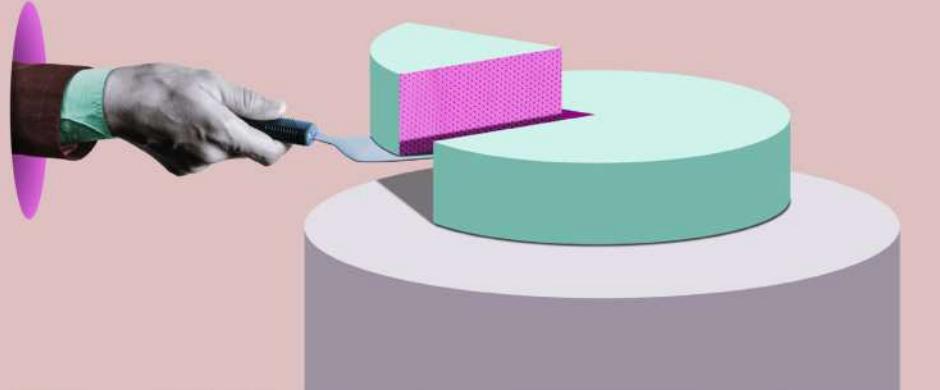
If you've been grinding nonstop, here's your permission slip: step away. Take a break from the scroll and the endless hustle. Encourage your team to do the same. Use the time to recharge, reconnect with what inspires you and then bring that energy back into your practice. Because when you return with fresh eyes and renewed energy, your creativity flows, your focus sharpens, and your revenue grows.

Sometimes the best strategy for your optical business isn't doing more — it's knowing when to pause. **OP**

Slice It Right

Build a smarter portfolio with income-generating shares and strategic real estate.

BY TIM PAZIUK



When it comes to growing your wealth, the first and most important investment is always yourself. But once you've taken that as far as it can go, through education, business development, or career advancement, it's time to look outward. That's where real estate and common shares come in. Both can offer long-term returns, but only if you approach them with a clear-eyed strategy, not blind risk. Let's walk through what that looks like.

My preference is real estate, but not at any price. When we're looking to invest in real estate, we want to look at the CAP rate first to see what our anticipated return is going to be. CAP rate stands for capitalization rate. Ideally, we want the CAP rate to be at least 6%.

If you're buying a condo in Toronto for \$1 million and the anticipated rent is \$3,500 per month, after deducting taxes, insurance, and condo fees (say) \$9000, the net rent would be \$33,000. That would put the CAP Rate at 3.3%. Not a good investment.

When we don't have immediate access to quality real estate, we look to common dividend-paying common shares.

Let's look at risk.

Say you're just about to retire as you approach age 65. You could invest in a five-

year term deposit paying 4% interest, or you can invest in common shares of Royal Bank. Which is riskier? Most people would claim the common shares. Now, if you've read this far, you know I'm going to disagree with that, and you'd be right. But let me demonstrate why.

What I tell our clients is that I can't guarantee their success, but what I can do is stack the odds in their favour.

If you're age 65 and of average health, you could be around for 20 or 30 years.

Real estate meets our investment criteria because it produces both income in the form of rent and the opportunity for capital appreciation.

Bonds and term deposits provide income in the form of interest, but neither gives you the opportunity for capital appreciation. Also, if you've paid attention, you know that when you factor in inflation, both investments will decrease in value over time. In other words, using these investment guarantees, you're going to lose money in the form of lost purchasing power.

Now let's look at common shares.

Let's say you buy 100 shares of Royal Bank. What are the odds that they'll be worth more five years in the future? Let's say 25%. Not great, but not zero! How about 10 years in the future? Let's say 50%. What about

15 or 20 years in the future? Remember, we're talking about your future. If you plan on being around for the next 15 or 20 years, you're going to be way better off financially if you invest in Royal Bank common shares than in a Royal Bank term deposit. With term deposits, you're guaranteed to lose. With common shares, you stand a great chance of coming out ahead.

When we invest in common shares, we look for companies that pay a good dividend and have sustainable businesses. These are businesses that people need their products, regardless of what's happening in the world. Over time, these companies should increase their dividends and see increases in their market value.

What we don't do is invest in anything where success can only be achieved by selling it in the future at a higher price, which, by my definition, is gambling. I never gamble when I'm investing. Our clients were not negatively affected in 2000, 2008, or 2020 because they were not relying on the value of assets at any given time. Dividends paid by the companies we invest in were not reduced during these turbulent times. Stock prices did come down but remember that stock prices have nothing to do with dividend payments. While you're still working, when the stock prices drop, it allows us to buy more stocks, which generates more dividends.

Most of our retirees are 100% invested in real estate and common shares. They live off the income, and occasionally, if we need to sell something, we trim off a little profit. We keep a little cash on hand as a buffer in case markets are down and we need to sell to make a payment.

If you find this interesting, you should really enjoy the final installment where we'll examine why dividends are so important to financial success. **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.



Passing the Torch

Building the Next Generation of Canadian Opticians

BY ROBERT DALTON

As opticians, we often focus on the immediate: the precision of a lens, the perfect frame fit, the satisfaction of a patient seeing clearly for the first time. These daily triumphs are the heart of our profession. But what about the bigger picture? What about the future of opticianry in Canada? This is where the profound power of mentorship and the concept of building a lasting legacy come into play, reinforcing the very foundation of our unity as an association and as individual professionals.

The journey to becoming a skilled optician is rigorous, combining intricate technical knowledge with the invaluable art of patient care. While formal education provides a strong foundation, it's often the guidance,

wisdom and practical insights shared by experienced peers that truly shape a new graduate into a confident, competent professional. This isn't just about sharing dispensing tips — it's about navigating challenging patient scenarios, understanding practice management nuances, and even offering emotional support when the learning curve feels steep.

Think back to your own early days. Was there an optician who took you under their wing, answered your endless questions or simply offered a reassuring word? That person was a mentor, perhaps without even realizing the full impact they had. These informal connections, forged in clinics and shared through association events, are the lifeblood of our professional development. They are acts of generosity that strengthen our entire community, ensuring that knowledge and best practices are passed down through generations.

But mentorship isn't a one-way street. For the experienced optician, guiding a new professional is an incredibly rewarding experience. It offers a chance to reflect on your own journey, solidify your knowledge by explaining it to others and contribute directly to the calibre of future practitioners. It's a tangible way to give back to the profession that has given so much to you.

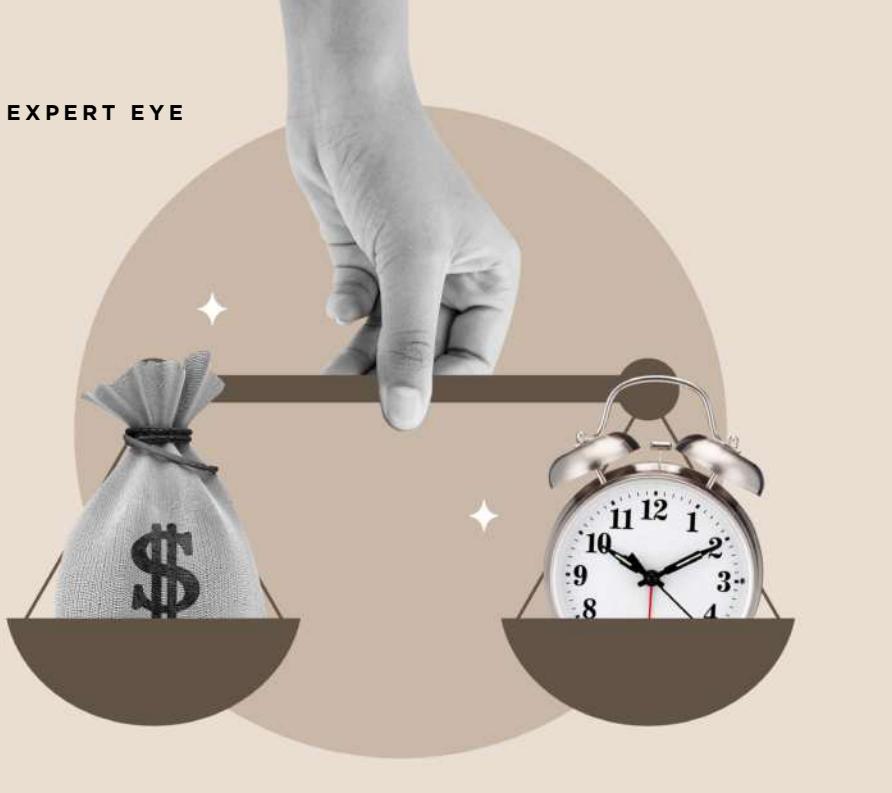
It's about securing your professional legacy, knowing that your dedication and expertise will continue to influence eye care long after you've hung up your dispensing tools.

The Opticians Association of Canada (OAC) stands as a natural facilitator for these vital connections. While formal mentorship programs can be incredibly valuable, the OAC serves as a hub for the kind of peer-to-peer networking that organically leads to mentorship. Our conferences, webinars and online communities are more than just sources of continuing education — they are opportunities to meet, share and learn from one another. They are places where experienced professionals can offer insights, and where newer opticians can find the guidance they need.

While formal education provides a strong foundation, it's often the guidance, wisdom and practical insights shared by experienced peers that truly shape a new graduate into a confident, competent professional.

Let's actively embrace this culture of mentorship. If you're an experienced optician, consider reaching out to a recent graduate, offering your perspective or even just being available for a friendly chat. If you're newer to the field, don't hesitate to seek out those who inspire you. Lean on your association, yes, but also lean on each other. By fostering a strong, supportive network of mentors and mentees, we not only uplift individual careers but collectively elevate the entire profession of opticianry in Canada — ensuring a bright and unified future for us all. Our shared commitment to this legacy is what truly keeps us together. **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.



Work Less, Earn More

You don't need to hustle harder to hit seven figures. You just need a better plan.

BY DR. FALLON PATEL, OD
Owner, PulseIQSolutions

Your clinic is busy, the phones are ringing, and patients are happy, so why isn't your bottom line budging?

You're not alone. Many clinic owners hit a frustrating plateau where effort no longer equals profit. The problem isn't your work ethic, your team, or the economy. It's strategy, or rather, the lack of one. Building a seven-figure optical isn't about hustle; it's about having a smart, sustainable plan that runs smoothly even when you're not in the office.

Here's how to get there.

1. Put Numbers Behind Your Vision

What does success actually look like for you, besides "more sales"? Maybe it's a 20% net profit, more five-star Google reviews, or three-day weekends without

email guilt. Be specific. Then, back it up with weekly metrics: capture rate, contact lens renewals, multi-pair sales, and warranties. Track them. Talk about them. Celebrate progress. Because what gets measured gets multiplied.

Make your numbers visible, on a whiteboard in the staff room, on digital dashboards, or during weekly team huddles. When your whole team is aligned on the targets, they become shared goals, not just your burden as the owner.

2. Think Beyond the Transaction

One-time sales might keep the lights on, but loyal patients build empires. Shift your focus from selling to patients to building with them. Consider packages like "Good, Better, Best" lens bundles, or memberships that include annual check-ins, updated prescriptions, and special discounts on new eyewear.

These aren't just revenue drivers—they're trust builders. When patients feel taken care of, not sold to, they stay. They rebook. They refer. And they rave about your clinic in places that matter—Google reviews, social media, and face-to-face conversations.

3. Make Each Month Matter

Seven figures isn't one big win—it's 12 smart months stacked together. Break your annual goals into monthly missions: How many recall appointments do you need to rebook? How many new contact lens fits will move the needle? What training will improve team performance this month?

Use short weekly huddles to review KPIs, share mini-wins, and pivot if needed. Get your team involved in the numbers, not just the tasks. And don't forget to celebrate, because recognition fuels retention and momentum.

4. Systematize the Magic

You can't scale success if it only lives in your head. Document everything, from how to answer the phone to how to hand off a frame. Create scripts, checklists, onboarding guides and workflows. Then empower your team to own them.

When staff understand the "why" behind a process, not just the "how", they lead with confidence and consistency. Your clinic grows because everyone's rowing in the same direction, not because you're paddling harder than anyone else.

Purpose-Driven Profit

Hitting the million-dollar mark isn't about working more hours—it's about working with more intention. A clear growth plan gives your team direction, boosts patient loyalty, and brings joy back into the day-to-day. When you align your numbers with your vision, your systems with your staff, and your offers with your patients' needs, your practice doesn't just grow, it thrives.

Because building a seven-figure business isn't about chasing success. It's about designing it, on purpose, and on your terms. **OP**

Dr. Fallon Patel, OD, is the founder of Fallon Vision Group and PulseIQSolutions, an AI-powered training and KPI platform for health care teams. With a proven track record in business strategy and myopia management, she helps modern clinics drive growth, efficiency, and innovation with purpose.

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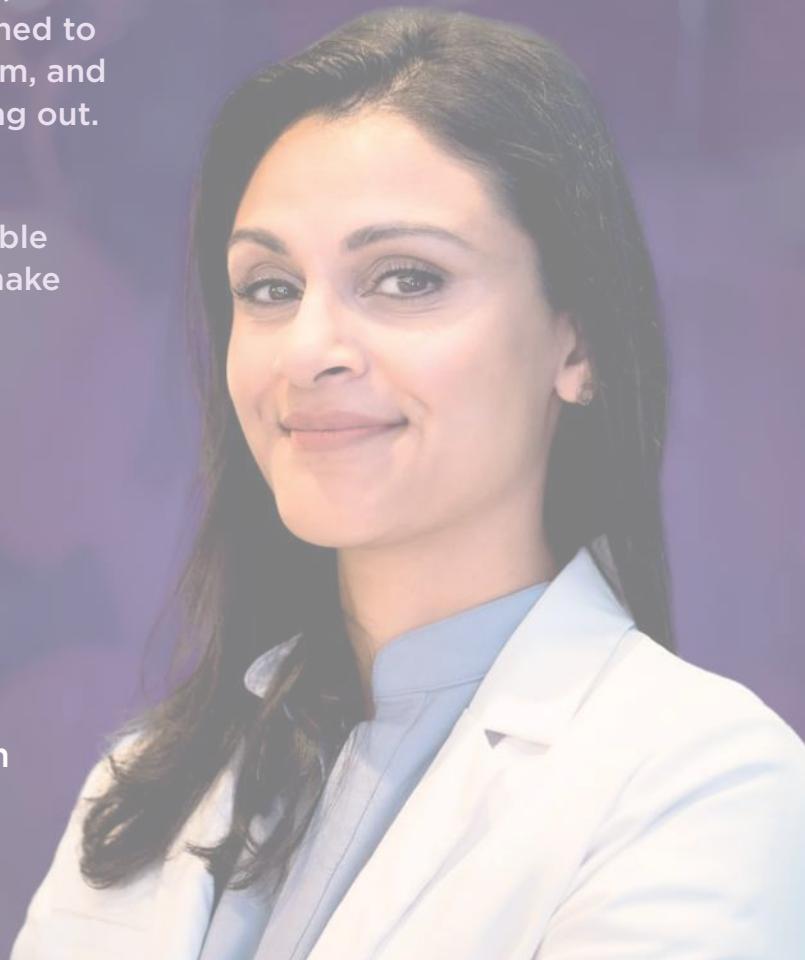
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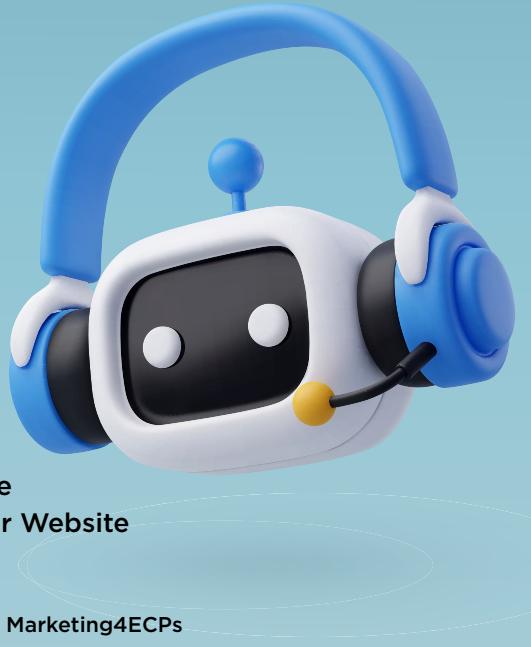


PulseIQ Solutions

Tech That Talks

Using Chatbots to Improve Patient Interaction on Your Website

BY SAMANTHA PURCHASE,
Content strategist and editor for Marketing4ECPs



Your patients expect quick, easy access to information and services, including from their healthcare providers. As a busy eye care professional, meeting these demands can be a real challenge. That's where chatbots come in! These clever bots can be a game-changer for your practice's website, enhancing how you connect with patients and making your day-to-day operations more efficient.

What Exactly Is a Chatbot?

Think of a chatbot as a helpful virtual assistant that lives on your website. Instead of a human answering every question, a chatbot can understand and respond to what people type or even say.

There are different kinds of chatbots, the most sophisticated of which are similar to virtual assistants that use AI to learn from conversations and provide more personalized answers, while the most basic ones follow a set script of answers (think answering questions about symptoms, providing information about different types of eye exams, providing pricing and insurance options).

Why Your Eye Care Practice Needs a Chatbot

If your patients expect reliable information quickly—and we know that they do—chatbots can serve as a bridge for navigating your website and delivering those answers.

Instead of being inundated by questions about appointment times, insurance, or gen-

eral eye health, a chatbot can handle many of those basic questions instantly, freeing up your valuable staff to focus on more complex tasks and provide hands-on patient care.

As we see it, there are some no-brainer ways that a chatbot can boost your practice:

Always open for business: Your website is always on, and with a chatbot, your front desk is too. Patients can get answers to common questions about your hours, location, or services at any time, day or night, even when your office is closed. This convenience can be a significant draw for new patients and a valuable benefit for existing ones.

Instant answers, happy patients: No one likes waiting on hold or for an email reply.

Chatbots offer instant responses to frequently asked questions. The quick service makes patients feel valued and can lead to a much happier experience with your practice.

Saving time for everyone: For your staff, a chatbot acts like an extra team member, handling routine tasks. This means less time spent on the phone answering the same questions repeatedly and more time for essential duties, such as assisting with patient exams, managing records, or helping patients choose the perfect eyewear. This increased efficiency can lead to a more organized and less stressed team.

Making appointments a breeze:

Scheduling appointments can sometimes be a tedious and time-consuming process. A chatbot can guide patients through

available time slots, let them select a time that works for them, and even send reminders.

A proactive booking assistant can help reduce no-shows and make your scheduling much more efficient.

Educating patients: Chatbots can be programmed to share helpful information about common eye conditions, explain different types of lenses, or even provide pre-and post-operative instructions. This can empower patients with knowledge and reduce the need for your staff to repeatedly explain the same things.

Getting Started with a Chatbot

Adding a chatbot to your website might seem like a big step, but many tools are available that make it easy, and you don't have to be a tech expert to use them. You can often choose from pre-made templates or customize a chatbot to fit your practice's specific needs.

Need an easy starting point for building your chatbot? Consider leveraging your chatbot to answer educational queries, like:

- What are the symptoms of glaucoma?
- What is the difference between eyeglasses and contact lenses?
- How should I care for my new contact lenses?
- What should I do before my cataract surgery?

Chatbots are especially useful for those annoying practice-specific FAQs that can take up so much time, like:

- What are your office hours?
- Do you accept my insurance?
- How do I book an appointment?
- Where are you located?
- Where can I park?
- Do you offer contact lens fittings?

The most important thing is to make sure your chatbot is friendly, easy to understand, and provides accurate information.

Embrace the Future of Your Practice with Chatbots

Chatbots aren't just a fancy new trend; they are practical tools that can genuinely improve how your eye care practice interacts with patients. By offering instant support, freeing up staff time, and making information easily accessible, chatbots can help you deliver better care and ensure that your patients have a clear and positive experience with your practice. **OP**



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Beyond the Frame

A selection of stylish, unique, and innovative eyewear products that have caught our eye this month.

1. KIMONO

Because even optometrists need a little “eye-conic” style! This Evil Eye kimono is light, breezy, and festival-ready—perfect for off-duty clinic days, beach escapes, or simply keeping the good vibes flowing.

[etsy.com/ca/listing / 1461877563/turkish-cotton-green-evil-eye-kimono](https://www.etsy.com/ca/listing/1461877563/turkish-cotton-green-evil-eye-kimono)

5. GLASSES CASE WITH CARABINER

Elevate your eyewear care with this premium leather glasses case. Crafted for style and function, it features a plush microfiber lining, secure snap closure, and sleek carabiner. Choose from rich leather colours and personalize with a monogram—because protecting your frames should look as good as it feels. [lucrin.ca](https://www.lucrin.ca)

3. WE LOVE OUR GLASSES

Turn eye exams into storytime! We Love Our Glasses teaches kids why glasses are cool, not scary. From myopia to UV protection, this cheerful, dyslexia-friendly read helps young patients feel proud of their specs—and makes your job of explaining eye health a whole lot easier. [amazon.ca/We-Love-Our-Glasses-children](https://www.amazon.ca/We-Love-Our-Glasses-children)



4. WE LOVE EYES EYELID MARGIN SCRUB BRUSH

Say goodbye to eyelid bumps and pesky Demodex collarettes with this ultra-handy lid brush. Designed for gentle scrubbing, it cleans your lash line in seconds. Pair it with your go-to oil or spray for the ultimate eyelid refresh. [eyedropshop.ca](https://www.eyedropshop.ca).

5. LAINES SLIPPERS

Your feet deserve a little eye care too! Laines London's cross-strap slippers feature luxe faux fur, flexible EVA soles, and removable Evil Eye and Hamsa brooches—making them as protective as they are playful. Ideal for optometry-themed gift-giving or stylish staff lounge footwear.

[wolfandbadger.com/ca/classic-laines-slipper](https://www.wolfandbadger.com/ca/classic-laines-slipper)



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LIBRA



SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 22

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.

Stylish, charming, and a touch indecisive, Libras are ruled by Venus, the planet of beauty, aesthetics and deluxe taste. You're not just picking glasses; you're curating a vibe. And let's be honest, you'll try on every frame in the store just to make sure you've found "the one." You gravitate toward symmetry, elegance and subtle drama, frames that whisper sophistication but still turn heads. Think delicate gold wire frames, pastel tortoise, translucent blush acetates, and gradient lenses that play nice with every outfit in your closet.

You want harmony in your life and on your face. Enter soft cat-eyes, featherlight round silhouettes, or sculptural butterfly shapes with just enough flair to say, "Yes, I care about balance, but I also look incredible."

Take inspiration from fellow Libras like Gwen Stefani and Kim Kardashian, who master the art of being effortlessly polished and paparazzi-ready. Whether you're headed to a client consult or a candlelit dinner, your eyewear needs to reflect your essence: graceful, romantic, curated, and cool, with a touch of "main character energy." **OP**



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