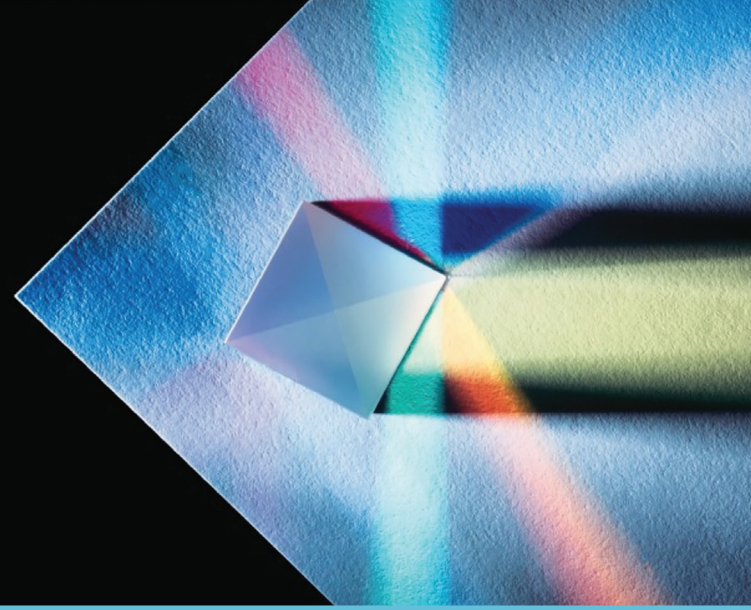


insight unseen

How Leaders Uncover,
Design and Scale Innovations



VM Summit Offers Up ‘Insights’ for Navigating Trends Impacting Optical

NEW YORK—Prominent voices and thought leaders in communications, business consulting, retailing and health care, along with “vision voices” offered valuable insights into how leaders of companies and organizations can uncover, design and scale innovations at the 2023 Vision Monday Leadership Summit. Their ideas informed “Insight, Unseen,” a daylong program that took place at The Times Center here on March 16 just ahead of Vision Expo East.

For the 2023 VM Summit, Platinum Sponsors are EssilorLuxottica, VSP Premier Program and Percept. Gold Sponsors are The Vision Council and Luna. The Silver Sponsor is Ocuco.

The day’s program, “Insight, Unseen: How Leaders Uncover, Design and Scale Innovations,” brought together senior industry executives, optical retailers, leading eyecare professionals, suppliers and key opinion leaders from the worldwide optical industry. They listened as diverse voices from outside and within the business offered fresh perspectives on major business and health care trends.

The Summit program got underway when Marc Ferrara, executive consultant, Jobson Optical Group, welcomed attendees and commented on the Summit’s purpose: “to bring industry leaders together and present them with new ideas and tools to help them manage constant change.”

Then Marge Axelrad, SVP, editorial director, *Vision Monday*, asked attendees “to think about what they, as leaders, need to know to make good business decisions.”

As the day unfolded, Summit attendees learned about non-obvious thinking, cultivating trust, the role of human capital, improving eyecare access and doing good in the vision care space. ■

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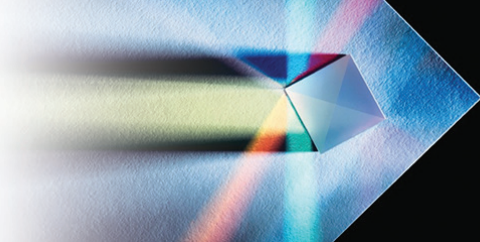
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Keynote Speaker Rohit Bhargava Reveals the Power of ‘Non-Obvious Thinking’

NEW YORK—Author Rohit Bhargava kicked off the morning session as the VM Leadership Summit’s opening keynote speaker. Bhargava is the three-time *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today* bestselling author of eight books which focus on his concept of “non-obvious thinking,” or, as he told the audience at the Summit, “somebody who sees the details that other people don’t see.”

For Bhargava, the power of non-obvious thinking grew out of an engineering camp experience at just 17. Although he didn’t enjoy the engineering side of camp, he did enjoy the friends he made at camp. He organized weekend and evening activities with his fellow campers, and at the end of the summer he won the “good citizen award.”

He explained to the Summit audience, “what was fantastic about that experience was that it taught me something really valuable about me, which is that I wasn’t so good at the science or the math, but I was really good at people. And time after time, I saw this happen in my career: that the people who understand people always win.”

Bhargava went on to work in advertising, where he applied the power of non-obvious thinking to his work. One technique Bhargava uses to think outside the box is what he calls “the haystack method.” He explained to the Summit audience: “The haystack method is the idea that if you spend enough time gathering everything together, you can start to identify the patterns that happen.”

Once he has identified patterns, Bhargava will attempt to identify themes within these patterns, and then curate these themes into trends. He explained, “what I’m trying to do is pull all these things together and figure out what it means. So when I do get to that point, I start to realize that we’re shaping what’s coming next. And the challenge of doing that is not predicting the future. It’s anticipating the normal.”

Once we anticipate the normal, we can think bigger and innovate outside that future normal, Bhargava said. He cited innovative ideas from a



Rohit Bhargava is the bestselling author of eight books which focus on his concept of “non-obvious thinking,” or, as he told the Summit audience, “somebody who sees the details that other people don’t see.”

variety of industries that disrupt the normal: a British supermarket’s “slow” checkout lane for those who want to have a conversation, Fender’s groundbreaking platform to help users learn guitar faster than ever before, a robotic lawnmower, Herbal Essences’ shampoo and conditioner bottles designed for those with visual impairment, Crayola’s expansion into makeup and much more.

Bhargava explained, “What all of these things point to is this idea that we can make things with empathy. We can make things with human understanding. And if we can do that, we can make these products more valuable for more people.”

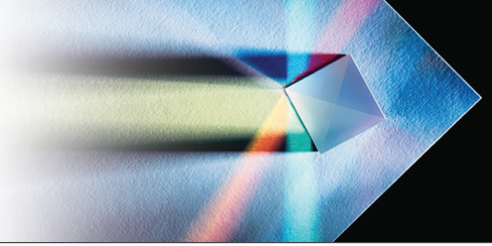
Another way Bhargava uses non-obvious thinking is when writing his own book. After seeing the boom of AI and ChatGBT, Bhargava and his co-author decided to “feed” a chapter of their book

to the chat bot and ask the bot to write a one star review for the chapter it read. He explained, “What it wrote gave us some ideas of some arguments that we might need to flesh out, some things that maybe weren’t clear, some things that a real reader might have read that chapter and thought, ‘oh, they didn’t talk about this at all.’”

Throughout his career, Bhargava has seen the ways non-obvious thinking opens up new avenues, creates more value and forges new ways for people to connect. He closed by saying, “What it tells us is that we have to be focused on what’s happening around us. We have to build that habit to not just send that last message and almost run into something. We have to be able to understand what’s going on in the world. We have to be more observant. That’s the power of non-obvious thinking.” ■

— Gwendolyn Plummer, Senior Associate Editor





Edelman Barometer Reveals Trust and Credibility Are Suffering

NEW YORK—Jennifer Hauser, managing director, Edelman Health and founder/director, Wellness 360, presented highlights from the Edelman Trust Barometer, the well-respected annual trust and credibility survey. In a session titled Cultivating Trust: The New Urgency in Business and Healthcare, she explained how our attitudes about trust are being shaped, and what businesses and brands can do to strengthen our trust in them.

Hauser believes, “Trust forms the very basis of our relationships whether they are personal, business or health care relationships. It’s especially true in health care for companies, for brands, for providers, for physicians and for all health care professionals.”

Hauser outlined the methodology of the survey which was a global study fielded in November of 2022 in 20 countries with 32,000 respondents, averaging out to about 1,100 to 1,200 respondents per country. The survey measured people’s trust levels across four institutions—the most trusted sector was business, followed by NGOs, the government and media.

Hauser said, “The headline here for this year, is that trust is suffering.” At the beginning of the pandemic, people trusted health care very deeply but since then, “we’ve seen a real decline in trust, and that is especially true of right now in 2023. And there are really four forces that are leading to polarization.

“The first is economic optimism is collapsing around the world. The second is there is an institutional imbalance. Business is seen as the most trusted, competent and capable. While government is not. It is seen as the least trusted the least competent and the least capable of putting pressure on business to solve big societal challenges.

“Third, there’s a math class divide. People in the top quartile of income are much more likely to trust than those in the bottom quartile of income who are much less likely to trust it. There’s a big chasm in between.”



Edelman Health’s Jennifer Hauser said, “Businesses are expected to not just sell, they are expected to solve.”

And finally, there’s a big battle for truth because media is not trusted today. Hauser said, “There is an echo chamber that is happening in social media that is making it very difficult for people to really understand what’s true. Am I receiving the right information? Is it true information? And it’s making it very difficult for people to understand how challenges can be solved.”

Here are some other highlights of the Edelman Barometer from Hauser:

- Business, and I think this is really relevant for today, is seen as the only trusted institution by far. Today’s businesses are expected to not just sell, they are expected to solve. We ask the question, “Which institution do you trust to do what’s right,” and business rose to the occasion.
- This is a trend that we have increasingly seen since the pandemic—people want to hear from scientists and from health care professionals, they want to hear about data. They would love for scientists and health care professionals to give them

what we call consumerized data to help them understand the data.

- People consistently have felt that they are relying on their employer to give them the right information to help assuage any fears or concerns that they might have about economic challenges or societal issues. People are asking their CEOs and other leaders within companies to help guide them in some of their own personal decision making. Employers are increasingly the most trusted among those who are feeling polarized.
- People are increasingly making purchase decisions for products or brands based on their own beliefs and value systems. They want to purchase brands that stand for sustainability, that stand for racial justice, that are taking a stand on diversity and inclusion. Not only are they making these purchasing decisions, they’re willing to boycott brands, based on brands not standing for these really important societal issues today. ■

— Mary Kane, Executive Editor

VM SUMMIT 2023

Deloitte's Kraig Eaton Reports on the State of the Workplace Focusing on 'Human Capital'

NEW YORK—Businesses strive to stay ahead of trends to maximize sales. But what is being done to maximize human capital? That was the question posed at the Vision Monday Leadership Summit featuring guest speaker Kraig Eaton, principal at Deloitte Consulting LLP, who examined Deloitte's 2023 Global Human Capital Trends report.

The report analyzes the current state of the workplace with a focus on “new fundamentals for a boundaryless world.” Since the pandemic, workplaces have been more dynamic, with many employees working from home or taking on added responsibility to fill in gaps. Eaton said this is the new normal and that workplaces are going to have to understand how their employees play a role as human capital, tapping into their talents beyond what their job description may be.

“Experiment, get just in time feedback and insights from your workforce on what’s working well and what’s not working well and then quickly refine and incorporate that feedback into a secondary strategy or a revision to the program.

“I call it the iPhone effect,” he told those in attendance at the Summit. “We don’t ask for updates. We just get them three or four times a year. Same thing as it relates to your workforce strategies in your program. You need to experiment, you need to roll out quickly. You need to gather insights from non-traditional sources, incorporate that insight into a revision of your strategy or your program or your solution, and then continue to do that.”

Eaton believes reimagining the workplace will be a major focus for businesses as they navigate a hybrid workforce. “Reimagination means it’s not about doing the same thing and just finding ways in which to do it more efficiently. It’s basically breaking the work down and rebuilding it from the ground up and being unconstructed, outside of compliance and regulatory constraints,” he said.

Charting a new path begins with companies creating a relationship with the workforce beyond traditional focus groups, and instead engaging with their employees to create human capital strategies.



Deloitte Consulting's Kraig Eaton believes reimagining the workplace will be a major focus for businesses as they navigate a hybrid workforce.

This means bringing your team into the conversation in the early development stages, including those who work for companies on a freelance basis.

“Our data shows that organizations that create that symbiotic relationship with a workforce are almost two times more likely to have a higher level of engagement within our workforce and obviously engagement yields to productivity and is two times more likely to be innovative,” he said.

The study found that positive change can only happen when the role of leader is changed from a position or place in the hierarchy to anyone who mobilizes workers.

“Our workers are motivated to share information around their skills and capabilities on LinkedIn because it benefits them,” he said. “So what organizations are starting to do is create things like internal talent marketplaces, where they’re sharing opportunities with their workers, and letting workers match their skills to those opportunities, and in essence, vie for that opportunity. You’re actually

gigifying your own workforce.”

Eaton believes that businesses can use this talent and skill to help not only improve their operations, but contribute to their employees’ success, shareholders and society as a whole.

“This focuses on the implications and risks to the human worker and to the humans in the societies you operate. This has to be within that framework and then, last but not least, it is the leading advantage of this world,” he said, adding that businesses need to look at incentives differently and consider how providing a more human capital focused workplace will have a broader impact on society as a whole.

“We have to start to think differently around our incentives, our performance management processes, and start to think about how doing right for the worker and doing right for society find their way into a measure of success for our leaders,” he concluded. ■

— Sarah McGoldrick, Contributing Editor



Scenes at the VM Summit



1. (L to R) EssilorLuxottica's Fabrizio Uguzzoni, Rick Gadd, Sherianne James and Ludo Ladreyt.

2. Michael Guyette of VSP Vision (l) with Vision Monday's Marge Axelrad.

3. (L to R) MyEyeDr.'s Scott Allison, Sue Downes and Artis Beatty, OD.

4. (L to R) Optical Management Associates' Fredric Grethel, Kaiser Permanent's Ovais Vaid and Mark Karmona.

5. Gregg Ossip, OD, (l) and Shamir Insight's Mark Becker.

6. (L to R) ClearVision's David Friedfeld, Kepler's Jay Binkowitz and GPN's Ed Buffington.

7. (L to R) Vision Source's Amanda Lee, with Essilor-Luxottica's Erminia Monzo and Alessandra Senici.

8. (L to R) Tura's Scott Sennett, Shopko's Kirk Lauterback, Digital Optometrics' Howard Fried OD, and Iris The Visual Group/New Look's David Schwartz, OD.

9. Sampalis Eye Care's Maria Sampalis, OD, (l) with Jobson's Samantha Armstrong.

10. Thomas Wong, OD, (l) SUNY Optometry and Mark Colip, OD, Illinois College of Optometry.

‘Humanizing Human Capital’ Authors Outline How Workers’ Talents Fuel Business Growth

NEW YORK—Picking up on the thread of human capital, the next two speakers examined how businesses can better utilize the skills and talents of their employees to improve profitability and the overall workplace ecosystem. Stela Lupushor, chief-reframer at Reframe.Work Inc., and Solange Charas, founder and CEO at HCMoneyball took to the stage to discuss the need for transparency in human capital. The pair co-authored the book *Humanizing Human Capital: Invest in Your People for Optimal Business Returns*, which looks at how businesses can create human capital strategies for business growth.

Lupushor noted that the pandemic saw a shift in the workplace that changed the dynamic, in many cases, at the expense of workers.

“We started moving from a great resignation to quitting to the great breakup for women, all the way into wide firing, where the companies are battling against those trends to quiet quitting,” she said. “All of these new terms entered our vocabulary. I don’t think individuals are going to change habits significantly as they realized the importance of life and balancing.”

Lupushor noted personal fulfillment is part of the equation for employees when they choose their next career move. Employees today want places that are not only going to allow them to maintain this balance. This includes companies that can help expand their education and credentials that may help them grow professionally within the company or at a future job.

“They prefer to work independently, and they will still prefer to work in person and have physical interaction because this is how they learn,” she said. “They want to observe, they want to absorb that tactile knowledge by watching and being part of it. They will learn differently in bite size, and they go on all sorts of channels, and they learn the flow of work.”

Lupushor believes leaders have to reexamine how they view their employees, adding that they



Co-authors Stela Lupushor (l) and Solange Charas examined how businesses can create human capital strategies for business growth and profitability.

are just as important as the customers in building a business’s profitability. Businesses will have to become more transparent with both their employees and their consumers about what they pay and what makes them a contributor to society positively.

“What we are seeing is a trend toward transparency, especially in the human capital area, which now most organizations are acknowledging especially since the pandemic, that this is your main driver of economic value creation,” Lupushor said, noting this includes creating workspaces that are diverse, which creates a return on investment as human capital goes up.

She believes that diversity is far more nuanced and granular than it was in the past. This means traditional norms that were established in HR no longer address these needs and companies need to continue to strive to meet these needs to avoid sliding back. Lupushor noted that the face of the workplace is changing and there will be a significant shift as the Boomers exit the workforce.

She said today’s job numbers should be a pause for concern for businesses who need to create a space that employees want to be a part of in the future. With more than 11 million job openings and

5.5 million people looking for work, there is still a significant gap in the workforce. This means employers need to focus on human capital opportunities in order to be attractive to potential employees.

Looking at reframing your business begins with rethinking your business model, according to Charas.

“It’s really a way to reframe the way that you think about the unit of your business model, which is the labor unit, driving economic value creation in the old days.”

Charas noted that investing in employees can have long term benefits. “It’s not just about designing new programs and caring about the employee, it’s about being fiscally responsible about it. What we’re finding is that the better the employees perform, the better the profitability, or if you’re a non-profit, the surplus of the organization, which allows you to invest in employees, which generates business outcomes.”

Charas explained that the more companies “do the right thing,” the better the organization performs. “It’s not just about HR programs, it’s about linking those HR programs back to financial outcomes for your business.” ■

— Sarah McGoldrick, Contributing Editor



How AI and Virtual Reality Are Adding New Dimensions to the Patient Experience

NEW YORK—In a presentation titled “AI, ChatGPT and ‘Metaversal’ Madness,” John Whyte, MD, chief medical officer for WebMD, explained how artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality are adding new dimensions to the patient experience. Dr. Whyte believes that health happens when you leave the doctor’s office because today’s patients are using wearables, whether it be smart watches or smart jewelry, to track their health.

Whyte said, some 40 percent of people use wearables to track things like their activity, A1C and heart rates. But there’s a new trend in something called “nearables” which can track and collect biomed data through the use of a special light bulb.

He said, “It collects your biometric data, whether it’s on or off, it detects your heart rate, your blood pressure, your sleep patterns if you have it in your bedroom. It can even detect a fall.” Dr. Whyte believes collecting the biometric data is not the problem and the technology is only going to get more refined as time goes on.

“So we’re doing all these things at home and collecting our own data, and that fundamentally, is changing everything across health care. It’s all about bringing care to the patient. Why should I have to go to the doctor’s office, go to the lab, go to the hospital, if I can do things at home?”

“We have this enormous amount of unstructured data, our smart jewelry and other wearables are collecting all this information. Our lightbulbs are soon going to be collecting information. What are we doing with all this data?”

In Dr. Whyte’s opinion, we don’t need more data. “What we need is to structure the data that we’re already collecting, and no one’s really doing that. And that’s the opportunity that we’re missing.”

Dr. Whyte believes there are a lot of factors that are preventing us from structuring the data. For example, there’s issues of whether health insurance will cover it. “I still see patients and I wish every patient with pre-diabetes could have access to a continuous glucose monitor to collect data on their



Dr. Whyte believes that health happens when you leave the doctor’s office because today’s patients are using wearables to track their health.

blood sugar continuously over time and give them feedback on it.

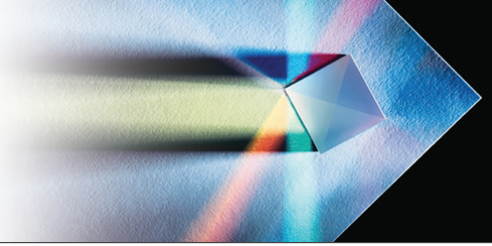
“But guess what, most insurance companies do not cover it for pre-diabetes. Most insurance companies don’t cover it for type 2 diabetes, unless you’re already on insulin. So we’re missing opportunities.”

Dr. Whyte believes we really need to think about how we use AI to meet the standards of care and that’s where we need to shift our discussion, but how do we meet standards of care for different

health conditions?

“That’s where I think the future is going as we think about the role of AI and as we think about value to the health care system. And that’s where I really encourage people to get much more involved as it relates to how this is being managed when it comes to issues of licensure and issues of reimbursement, and issues of regulation. That’s how we’re going to get to the next step,” he concluded. ■

— Mary Kane, Executive Editor



Transporting the Color Blind Into a Whole New Vibrant World

NEW YORK—Artwork can transport the viewer into a whole new world of understanding and inspiration. When you are color blind, artwork can seemingly be out of reach as vibrant colors appear faded and dark. As a result, many people are unable to fully experience exhibits by masters such as Van Gogh or Pollack—that is until organizations like Visit Seattle partnered with adaptability tools to help provide color-blind visitors with an authentic experience.

Ali Daniels is the senior vice president and chief marketing officer at Visit Seattle. She said the organization recently partnered with Enchroma, makers of glasses that allow people with color blindness to experience the vibrancy of reds and oranges, blues and purples or more vibrant greens, in the same way as people unaffected by the condition.

There are more than 350 million people in the world who live with color blindness. Of these, one in 12 are men and 1 in 200 are women. In the U.S. alone, there are 13 million people living with color blindness.



Ali Daniels said the ability to provide visitors of local art installations the technology to fully immerse themselves in the experience removes barriers and creates an atmosphere of inclusion.

The EnChroma Color Accessibility Program partners with schools, libraries, museums, parks, universities and tourism departments to provide color-blind people with glasses to allow them to fully participate in programs and exhibits.

Daniels said the ability to provide visitors of local art installations the technology to fully immerse themselves in the experience removes barriers in the same way that offering other accessibility tools or identifying pronouns creates an atmosphere of inclusion.

The organization recently provided color-blind glasses to a group of individuals and invited them to tour Chihuly Garden and Glass. The results pro-

Eyecare Innovators Expand the Vision Conversation, Improve Access and Growth

This four-part Summit session features vision experts discussing how innovative new technologies and creative marketing are increasing awareness of eye conditions ranging from color blindness to uncorrected refractive error to myopia. Practitioners and consumers are taking advantage of new vision care solutions to improve treatments, expand access to care and promote health and wellness.

Andrew Karp, group editor, lenses & technology for *Vision Monday* and *20/20 Magazine*, interviewed Ali Daniels, chief marketing officer for Visit Seattle. Karp introduced this session by noting that although some people regard color blindness as a minor inconvenience, it's much more than that. "Being unable to accurately see colors impacts your life in ways that people who can see colors can't always understand. Sometimes you feel out of sync with the rest of world," said Karp, who is himself color blind.

"The inability to experience the full range of colors is a handicap when trying to appreciate nature and art," he observed, adding that it also



Andrew Karp introduced this session by noting that although some people regard color blindness as a minor inconvenience, it's much more than that.

limits one's career options.

Karp cited EnChroma lenses, which feature special color correcting filters, as a solution for color blindness. The lenses were developed by EnChroma, a Berkeley, California company that has also launched a "Color Accessibility Program" to partner with cultural and educational institutions as well as with parks and tourism organizations all over the world.

There are now more than 200 organizations that loan EnChroma glasses to color blind visitors or students. One of the partners is Visit Seattle, the official tourist office for Seattle, Washington. Ali Daniels, chief marketing officer and senior VP, explained how the partnership is working. ■

vided them with the affirmation that offering color-blind glasses was a necessary step in creating a more inviting space for visitors.

"What a joy, to a whole population that couldn't have been able to experience it the way that they could at that moment. We worked on a really important moment to launch this knowing that this was essential," she said, adding that the city now offers the technology at 26 venues. Visitors simply need to request a pair of glasses upon arrival and can use them throughout their experience. "So 26 venues is the largest collection of EnChroma glasses in the world, which is wonderful."

Similar programs have been established at museums and art galleries in dozens of cities around

the world including Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, Centre Pompidou, Van Gogh Museum, Gallerie d'Italia, Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, and U.S. Botanic Garden.

Daniels believes this small act of inclusion can have lasting positive effects on people, as it breaks down barriers and creates renewed opportunities to welcome people who would otherwise not be able to enjoy these spaces.

"This is an invitation to make sure when you invite someone in you don't serve burgers to vegetarians, we all know that. We don't invite them to see a colorful, beautiful place without giving them the tools that they can truly appreciate them with," she said. ■

— Sarah McGoldrick, Contributing Editor

VM SUMMIT 2023

Scenes at the VM Summit



1. (L to R) Dr. Dorothy Hitchmoth, Percept's Jim McGrann and Jobson's Marc Ferrara.
2. (L to R) Ashley Mills and David Pierson of The Vision Council, Darren Horndasch, Wisconsin Vision and Kirk Lauterback, Shopko Optical.
3. (L to R) VSP Vision's Sean Cooley, Pat McNeil, Eric Murray, Wendy Hauteman and Ernie Franklin.
4. SUNY Optometry's David Heath, OD, (l) and Jobson's Bill Scott.
5. Vision Source's Ali Khoshnevis, OD, (l) and Delaware Vision Care's Brad Oatney, OD.
6. (L to R) Wisconsin Vision's Darren Horndasch, Bard Optical's Mick Hall, The Vision Council's Dave Pierson and Tura's Gary Podhaizer.
7. Westminster Eyecare Associates' John Ormando, OD, (l) and Scott Colonna, OD.
8. New England College of Optometry's Howard Purcell, OD, (l) and Optos' Leslie Amodeli.
9. (L to R) Alan Glazier, OD, Dorothy Hitchmoth, OD, and Percept's Scott Lewis.
10. (L to R) OGI Eyewear's Cynthia McWilliams, RestoringVision's Kevin Hassey and Luna's Kellan Fowler.



VM SUMMIT 2023

Scenes at the VM Summit



1. John Serri (l), EyeQue, with Luna's Kate Doerksen.

2. Justin Manning, OD, PECAA (l) with Dermot Walsh, Ocuco.



3. Corey Shapiro (l), Vintage Frames Company and Maged Nour, Elnour Optics.

4. New Look's Edward Beiner (l) and Antoine Amiel.



5. (L to R) Mehmet Gundogar, OMG/Contentling with Europa's Scott Shapiro, OMG's Bill Gerber and Black EyeCare Perspective's Dr. Darryl Glover.

6. Restoring Vision's Pelin Munis (l) and Aminah Yoba.



7. Tommasina Sideris, OD, Eyes on Litchfield.

8. Dr. Essence Johnson, Black EyeCare Perspective (l) and Dr. Harber Sian.

9. (L to R) Neda Gioia, OD, Melissa Barnett, OD, Dr. Essence Johnson, OD, and Beverly Biances, OD.

10. Denise and William Jackson, The Eye Contact, Inc.

Expanding Access to Vision Care...Everywhere for Everyone

NEW YORK—Gary Chu, OD, MPH, FAAO, vice president, professional affairs, New England College of Optometry and Susy Yu, OD, MBA, FAAO, director of business strategy and operations support, Vision Essentials by Kaiser Permanente are accomplished optometrists and public health experts. They discussed the need to expand access to vision care, especially for underserved populations, and the vital role that new technologies are playing in that process.

Dr. Chu spoke about why it's important to balance public health and health care delivery. He pointed out that 350 million people live in the U.S., but only half the people who need glasses are receiving them. Additionally, of the 120 million eye exams done in the U.S. each year, only 16 million to 20 million are eye health exams. Yet the American Optometric Association estimates that 200 million people need eye exams.

"We are not meeting this need. Clearly there is a gap," said Dr. Chu. "Uncorrected refractive error is on the rise, and we need to think differently."

Asked how Kaiser Permanente is working to improve access to vision care for its 12 million members, Dr. Yu replied, "We have to manage staff and equipment to optimize the resources that we have in order to deliver that care. It's really about providing the right level of care to the right patient at the right interval."

For example, she said that not every physical annual exam requires an MRI and not every routine eye exam requires a dilation. "What if it's a patient that we just saw the day before? Or what if it's a patient we just saw the month before and had routine findings or six months before?"

"At some point you have to draw a line, and we use clinical evidence and clinic clinical data in order to create those guidelines. We have to maximize the resources that we have, the people and equipment, in order to deliver that care, and



Dr. Gary Chu (l) and Dr. Susy Yu discussed the need to expand access to vision care, especially for underserved populations, and examined the vital role that new technologies are playing in that process.

technology is a big part of that," Dr. Yu said.

She noted that patients today expect to receive care in a way that is convenient for them, something that new technologies such as Pleoptika's QuickSee, a handheld binocular open view wavefront aberrometer, are able to provide.

"You can take it anywhere, such as a pop-up clinic," she said. "You can use it in pretesting if you don't have enough space. You can use it to get baseline refractive prescription information. We want to engage those patients and have more connection points, so we use technology tools in order to do so."

Dr. Chu agreed that technology is essential for expanding eyecare and health care. "We're having a maldistribution of care, so we need to leverage technology and use it wisely," he said. "We need to think about whether some of the care that we provide is transactional.

"Maybe we don't even have to provide care sequentially or maybe it can be aggregated. We can leverage technology at different times to increase the number of touch points with the patient. Then the practitioner can have more thoughtful conversations." ■

— Andrew Karp, Group Editor, Lenses & Technology



ODs Discuss How Consumers Are Driving the Health and Wellness Market

NEW YORK—The emergence of online refractions and low-cost portable devices for measuring and tracking visual performance has ushered in the era of consumer-driven vision care. Steven Lee, OD, MBA, an entrepreneur with a medical and engineering background, and Amel Youssef, OD, from Acuitis in Las Vegas and New Jersey, discussed how innovative products, from the Apple Watch to Fitbit—and in the vision care field, EyeQue—are enabling health-conscious consumers to monitor their wellness. These products and other devices are helping patients to capture and analyze their biometric data which they can then share with health care professionals.

Dr. Youssef, a successful practitioner and experienced researcher, noted that Apple has sold \$195 million worth of its watches. She said she believes eyecare practitioners will miss “a golden opportunity” if they don’t find ways to work with patients



Dr. Amel Youssef (l) and Dr. Steven Lee discussed how innovative products are enabling health-conscious consumers to monitor their wellness.

who wear consumer health trackers and make use of the data these devices produce.

Speaking of EyeQue VisionCheck, a handheld device that lets consumers measure their nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism themselves, she said that it helped her practices

with patient acquisition. “You can give it to a school nurse which can result in extra referrals, and you can have the patient take it home. Once you have refractive patients, they can monitor their own status, especially when you’re speaking about hyperopic monovision patients that have quite a bit of fluctuations, or diabetic patients or macular degeneration patients. For the price per unit, I think it’s an excellent way to keep your patients engaged.”

Dr. Lee said he has done a lot of analysis of different vision care technologies, both hardware-based and software-based solutions. “I think what practitioners really need to do first and foremost is just try the solutions out themselves,” he stated. “I’ve met practitioners who talked about a certain type of device out there and have a certain opinion, but yet they never tried it. That’s really eye opening,” he remarked. ■

— Andrew Karp, Group Editor, Lenses & Technology

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Research About Myopia Is Resulting in New Ways to Educate Parents, Patients and ECPs

NEW YORK—Dwight Akerman, OD, MBA, FAAO, FBCLA, chief medical editor, *Review of Myopia Management* and International Myopia Institute global ambassador and Lisa McAlister, global myopia lead at Johnson & Johnson Vision and recently-elected board chair of the Global Myopia Awareness Coalition (GMAC), spoke about new efforts to expand awareness of myopia management. They described how sharing recent research findings about myopia is resulting in new ways to educate parents, patients and eyecare professionals about the emerging new science of myopia management.

Dr. Akerman and McAlister both reiterated that myopia is the primary eye health threat of the 21st century, “leaving lots of room for advances in therapies, policy and delivery options,” according to Dr. Akerman.

As he began his presentation Dr. Akerman said, “I think every myopia meeting starts with this slide. It’s kind of a fundamental look at the global myopia situation and it’s really a sad slide because it shows the tremendous rise in myopia today. Over 34 percent of the world’s population is myopic. Over 5 percent are highly myopic. And by 2050, it’s estimated that half of the world’s population will be myopic. And worse yet, 10 percent will be highly myopic.

The global prevalence is clearly an issue and it is rising rapidly. “Myopia is oftentimes defined as a visual defect or a visual condition, straight out of the dictionary. Well, I’d like to challenge that, because, in fact, myopia is not a condition,” Dr. Akerman said.

“It’s not a visual defect. Myopia is an axial length disease, and it’s chronic and progressive,” he said.

McAlister went on to describe the GMAC as an industry coalition of leading companies, associations and media, all working together to make sure that awareness is growing around the prevalence of myopia, especially in children, with



Dr. Dwight Akerman (l) and Lisa McAlister both reiterated that myopia is the primary eye health threat of the 21st century, “leaving lots of room for advances in therapies, policy and delivery options,” Dr. Akerman said.

an emphasis on the fact that there are new treatments available for treating this condition.

McAlister said, “We are all about public driving awareness of myopia that it is a public health issue and that we all collectively need to do something about it. We’re mainly focused on parents, but we are working on raising awareness with the industry, eyecare professionals etc. We talk about consideration of new treatment options and we’re very focused on prompting parent conversations with ECPs.

“And so what we’re seeing is that there are people that are starting to learn about myopia, but there is no urgency and treatment, and we need to push toward urgency and treatment. Because as most in this room now, if we don’t treat early, there’s limited work we can do around slowing the progression,” she said.

McAlister described the dangers of ECPs taking a wait and see attitude with young patients. “Oftentimes, practitioners will examine a child, determine the child’s myopic prescribe glasses, and say, ‘You know what, let’s follow you. We’ll see you back in a year to see if you’ve progressed.’

“Well, guess what? Virtually all children progress in myopia. And often, when that child returns a year later, for their annual comprehensive exam, they’re a diopter more and they are more myopic.

In 2022, GMAC launched a new website called myopiawareness.org and this year, “we started using not only parent influencers but eyecare professionals as well as pediatricians, teachers and school nurses to bring this idea that it’s a whole health issue, and everyone should care about myopia.

“I think the point that I want to leave you with is that myopia is the primary eyecare threat of the 21st century. It is the hottest topic unquestionably in eyecare, in optometry and ophthalmology. It’s a big deal. It’s talked about at every meeting. There’s a boatload of education presented at every meeting. So it’s growing, but we’re still in its infancy.

“And so there’s a lot of room for innovation, in terms of therapies, but also in delivery systems, in terms of educational support, in terms of public policy and in terms of reimbursement,” McAlister concluded. ■

— Mary Kane, Executive Editor



Finding New Ways to Elevate the Eyecare Market While Doing Good

NEW YORK—Addressing new ways to elevate the eyecare market while doing good and engaging directly with customers, Reade Fahs, National Vision’s (NVI) president and CEO, and Jacqueline Grove, SVP, talent and development; diversity, equity and inclusion; culture and philanthropy for NVI, shared for the first time some exclusive data and tactics they’ve adopted that illuminate the impact eyewear consumers can make to expand access to good vision.

Fahs said, “1 billion people, which is 15 percent of the world’s population, have a vision problem, but they don’t have access to eyewear and eyecare so their problem goes untreated.

“When the history of solving this global public health issue is eventually written, the chapter we are in now will be remembered as the chapter involving collaboration. In the past, there were lots of individual companies, a lot of individual not for profits, working individually on different aspects of the problem.

“And now we’re in an era where companies and not for profits and what’s called the multilateral of the United Nations, the World Bank and the World Health Organization are all starting to come together and say we can attack this problem in a bigger way and have far more impact if we all start to work together.”

Fahs then turned things over to Grove who explained that National Vision’s customer giving program started with the question, “Why not let our customers help out?”

Grove said, “We took our insights that we learned from one side and we decided to start our own customer giving program in the company. Customer giving is essentially this: You walk into any store you shop at and as soon as you go to pay with your credit card a prompt comes up for you to donate to a charitable cause. So in our case, we’re doing that for mission care so our money goes toward sustain-



National Vision’s Reade Fahs (l) and Jacqueline Grove shared data and tactics on how consumers and companies can expand access to good vision.

able solutions of putting glasses on people’s faces.

“Our customers love it because in giving back to the world they know they are helping those in need.”

The other thing that National Vision did was introduce the consumer to this concept even before they got to the point of sale where they’re actually making a transaction throughout. Gove explained, “In-store signage is displayed all throughout and it conveys compelling visuals but as you see there, the boy with the glasses, it talks about helping us provide glasses to a billion people who are in need. And then it also says in the fine print that we’re donating \$100,000, so we’re giving along with our customers.

“The other thing that we did is we worked with

our associates. We gave our associates some very simple basic scripts about what to say because it’s not just the pin pad prompt that creates the magic. It’s that associate saying, ‘Hey, would you like to donate? Here’s where the money’s going.’”

National Vision launched the customer giving program as a test last year and then went nationwide mid-year. The company’s partial year donations totaled \$1.5 million for 2023.

“Now we’re trying to do \$2.5 million and every single dollar of that goes toward fighting the global vision crisis. Annually, that money is going to allow us to help 1.5 to 2 million people in one year. Over five years, that’s 10 million people,” Grove concluded. ■

— Mary Kane, Executive Editor



VM SUMMIT 2023

Creating Accessible Spaces and Inclusion for People With Low Vision

NEW YORK—Creating accessible spaces and promoting inclusion was one of the main themes at the VM Summit this year. Jennifer Sagalyn, director of strategic partners at Perkins Access, the accessibility consulting division of Perkins School for the Blind, has been helping organizations achieve this her whole career.

Over the years, she has witnessed the challenges people with low vision face every day as they try to navigate a world that was not designed with vision loss in mind. She said the changes businesses can make to improve access for someone with low vision are not great, but the impact they have can be life changing for others.

“The first step to becoming an accessibility champion is to understand the barriers,” she said, adding that a digital world is elevating the barriers for students as tactile experiences disappear. She said that businesses need to focus on creating digital products that offer accessibility now that there is greater access to tools and resources.

Through her experience at Perkins, Sagalyn has seen how businesses are not always in tune with the barriers to information that exist for customers, patients and employees with disabilities. She said Perkins Access evaluates digital accessibility for their clients using both internal and external digital information.

“We help them address unseen barriers not only for people with visual impairment, but for everyone who relies on a digital accessibility solution,” she said, highlighting that everyday platforms like YouTube do not always achieve accessibility despite having services such as closed captioning.

She said the accuracy of captions is only 60 percent to 70 percent, making it insufficient for communicating critical and important information to viewers. She said this applies to websites, mobile apps and software, which are often not adequate for people with low vision.



“The first step to becoming an accessibility champion is to understand the barriers,” Jennifer Sagalyn said, adding that a digital world is elevating the barriers for students as tactile experiences disappear.

“Most people think digital accessibility is only about websites, videos and software. But more and more physical locations have digital touchpoints for customers, patients and employees,” she said, noting that more businesses are recognizing the importance of removing barriers.

Sagalyn said the recent CES event in Las Vegas saw an increase in interest in both businesses and participants in accessibility technology.

“Accessibility was the topic on so many different stages. These companies have a very common theme. They know that their customers are aging and have different needs than they did 10 or 20 years ago, and they’re solving for those differences,” she said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, 40 percent of adults over 65 have some form of disability. Sagalyn reminded Summit attendees that the risk of being sued is high if companies fail to meet the standards outlined in legislation such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, and the Communications and Video Accessibility Act.

Furthermore, businesses are losing out on

money-making opportunities by failing to provide accessible digital platforms. According to the US Department of Commerce, accessible sites are losing \$6.9 billion a year to competitors whose sites are accessible.

“Digital accessibility has come a long way, and attitudes about digital accessibility have changed too. For years, organizations in the accessibility space, including Perkins, have shared a similar argument for accessibility,” Sagalyn said.

She believes that businesses who fail to take this important step are missing out on an opportunity to improve accessibility and increase revenue.

“In the United States, working age people with disabilities control disposable income of nearly \$500 billion. You are at risk of excluding 61 million potential customers and employees with disabilities, including 4.9 percent that have a visual disability,” she said. “So much progress has been made to improve accessibility for people with visual impairments and for everyone who benefits from digital inclusion.” ■

— Sarah McGoldrick, Contributing Editor



Business Expert Bob Safian Helps Attendees Manage ‘Generation Flux’

NEW YORK—Bob Safian took the stage as the Summit’s closing keynote speaker. Host of the podcast “Masters of Scale: Rapid Response,” former editor in chief of *Fast Company* and founder of advisory group The Flux Group, Safian has dedicated his career to understanding our ever-changing world—and figuring out how businesses can thrive inside it.

Safian explained, “Generation Flux is this term I use to describe two things. An era: the era we’re living in now a time of rapid, high velocity change that shows little signs of slowing down. It also refers to a group of people: to the kinds of people who are best positioned to thrive in an environment that’s changing this fast... It’s not defined by chronological age; you can be young or old and be Gen Flux.

“The key attribute is your mindset. It’s a willingness and ability to adapt to the changes going on around us. And what that means is that anybody can be part of generation flux, and we should all be trying to be.”

Over the course of his talk, Safian laid out six important lessons for managing Generation Flux, displayed through the conversations he’s had over the years with executives, leaders and politicians from around the world.

The first lesson Safian laid out: Chaos Will Rule. Illustrated by his conversation with DJ Patil, who is behind groundbreaking research on chaos theory at the University of Maryland, Safian explained, “the key insight in chaos theory is recognizing when things are chaotic and when they’re not, and acting accordingly.”

In Generation Flux, things are constantly changing—and changing quickly. Safian said, “Chaos can seem scary, but it also opens up a lot of opportunity if we’re willing to see it as opportunity. Jeff Bezos uses this phrase at Amazon called ‘day one’... Every day is day one, we want to start fresh.”

Secondly, Safian explained, Speed Matters—especially in an environment of chaos. He displayed this through conversations with Hans Vestberg, CEO of Verizon, and Mary Barra, CEO of GM, as well



Business expert Bob Safian closed out the Summit program with six important lessons for managing Generation Flux.

as others. In discussing Verizon’s pivot to remote work during the early days of the pandemic and GM’s life-saving move to begin making ventilators when they were in short supply, Safian underscored the importance of working quickly in times of flux: “We can all move faster than we think we can if we make it a priority.”

Safian’s third lesson is: Create Your Own Trajectory. Through a conversation with Ellen Kullman, CEO of manufacturing company Carbon, Safian explained, “Don’t play the hand you’ve been dealt, play the hand you want. This is what creating your own trajectory is about. You’re doing this with speed in order to succeed and thrive and scale in an environment of chaotic change.”

He also cited Chewy’s CEO Sumit Singh, who created a new trajectory for the pet supplies company when he led the company’s creation of telehealth visits for pets.

Fourth, Safian underscored how important it is for company leaders to Listen and Learn. He again cited Verizon’s Hans Vestberg, who implemented a daily one-hour open meeting with all Verizon employees during the height of the pandemic. In these meetings, he could communicate clearly with his team in times of crisis, as well as allow

them to ask frank and face to face questions.

About times of crisis, Safian said, “Let’s look at it. Let’s be honest about it. Let’s address it. And let’s release all of us to be the best versions of ourselves. And that’s what we need to be doing: listening and learning from each other.”

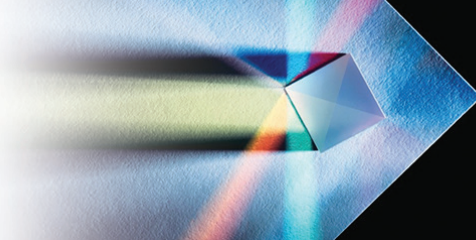
Fifth, Safian discussed the importance of Accepting Moments of Chaos with the right attitude. With Terri Kelly, former CEO of W.L. Gore & Associates, Safian explained that chaos and confusion can help us create better products and workplaces if we lean in. He said, “We’re going to be in over our heads a lot. And that’s good, that’s what we need. That’s what helps us to grow.”

For his sixth and final lesson, Safian explained: Stand for Something. Leaders need to ask themselves why their business exists, and remember to let that roadmap guide them forward. He said, “I sometimes ask business leaders: why does your business exist? Why is it there? And we often forget, because we’re so focused on hitting some numbers or making some metrics or whatever, that we forget why we’re in business.

“The industry that you guys are in, you have a very clear purpose and mission. You are trying to help people live better lives. You are directly impacting their health... and this, this creates a roadmap for you through the difficult choices that come when there’s chaotic change going on.... If you have clarity on your purpose and your principals... it creates a roadmap for how to act and whether to act when things are changing in a chaotic way.”

In closing, Safian reminded Summit attendees, “In a world of chaos that we’re in, we have to accept that there’s instability and ambiguity, and it’s not going to go away. No matter how much data we have, nothing’s going to give us the direct answer. But if we have a vision of the future that we want to create, and we’re moving forward creatively, that can allow us to build a future that we’re proud of. That’s what generation flux is about.” ■

— Gwendolyn Plummer, Senior Associate Editor



Nine Optometry Students Honored With Innovator Scholarships From Rick Bay Foundation

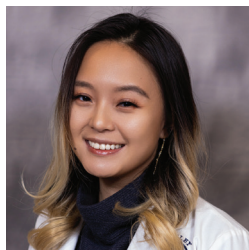
NEW YORK—Nine optometry students, each representing a different school of optometry, were recipients of this year's Student Innovator of the Year Award. Named after Rick Bay, former publisher and president of *Review of Optometry* and *Review of Ophthalmology*, the Foundation's Student Innovator of the Year award aims to support optometry's next generation.

The Rick Bay Foundation Student Innovator Scholarship is awarded to the most outstanding and innovative idea presented by a student at optical colleges and universities throughout the country. The selected student is chosen by their school based on qualities that embody Rick's commitment to the profession including integrity, compassion, partnership and dedication to the optical industry.

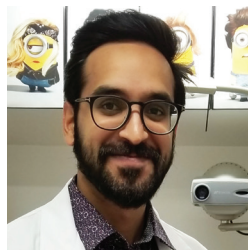
This year's winners were Jessica Wang, representing **UC Berkeley School of Optometry**; Gaganjote Uppal, Twinkle Sehgal and Daniel Laughlin, representing the **New England College of Optometry**; Michelle Veurink, representing **Indiana University School of Optometry**; Emily Benson and Pearson Miller representing **The Ohio State University College of Optometry**; and Rena Shilian and Tzvi Friedman, representing **SUNY College of Optometry**.

UC Berkeley School of Optometry's Jessica Wang, who was sponsored by **VSP Vision Care**, was honored for her invention, Pectin-Chitosan Bioplastics, which visualizes a better way to produce contact lens packaging. Both pectin and chitosan are polysaccharides derived from natural sources, are renewable, inexpensive, degradable, non-toxic, and non-polluting. The effect on the environment is two-fold: reducing the amount of plastic used, and repurposing current waste.

New England College of Optometry's Gaganjote Uppal, Twinkle Sehgal and Daniel Laughlin, who were sponsored by **MyEyeDr.**, were honored for their invention called EyeInstructs, which is a series of digital documents available via Quick Response (QR) codes. Each QR code will be unique



Jessica Wang



Gaganjote Uppal



Twinkle Sehgal



Daniel Laughlin



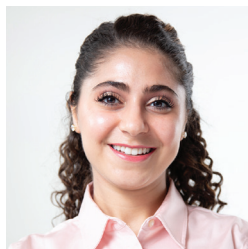
Michelle Veurink



Emily Benson



Pearson Miller



Rena Shilian



Tzvi Friedman

to detail a specific patient problem. Patients can use their phone, open the camera app, and scan the QR code to access varying conditions or common problems optometrists look to solve.

Indiana University School of Optometry's Michelle Veurink, who was sponsored by **MyEyeDr.**, was honored for her invention called EYEpen. The EYEpen's structure is similar to a multicolor pen, except each barrel of the pen contains a unique eyedrop. The colors on the end correlate to the color coding of ophthalmic bottle caps. The versatility of drops allows it to be personalized for your mode of practice including drug name and concentration on the dropper side.

The Ohio State University College of Optometry's Emily Benson and Pearson Miller, who were sponsored by **VSP Vision Care**, were honored for

their invention called Buck-Eye Comfort. Their innovation is designed to allow a more comfortable examination experience.

SUNY College of Optometry's Rena Shilian and Tzvi Friedman, who were sponsored by **Essilor-Luxottica**, were honored for their innovation called DIRECTIFEYE. The product is a removable, spectacle-mounted device for exotropia patients that combines scleral tracking with haptic feedback technology to achieve optimum eye alignment throughout the day as a supplement or replacement of vision therapy.

For more information about sponsoring or participating in the Rick Bay Foundation's Student Innovator Awards, contact Nancy Ness, VP marketing at nness@jobson.com. ■

— Mary Kane, Executive Editor