

Doc Stars

In-Practice Management



VM and Review of Optometric Business Salute ODs

Optometrists face business challenges every day. As CEOs of their practice, they must provide a vision for where their practice is headed.

That issue is behind The Optometric Business Innovators report, a special first-time collaborative project between *Vision Monday* and *Review of Optometric Business*.

Whether it's incorporating new technologies into existing practice structures, managing managed care, training staff teams or learning to embrace new digital media—even as they provide first-rate vision care delivery to patients—

the why's and how's of processes and procedures need attention...and inspiration!

With the help of a Professional Advisory panel composed of a mix of ODs from both the private and corporate arenas and professional OD business consultants, *VM* and *ROB* solicited input and suggestions to identify Optometric Business Innovators from across the U.S. They were asked to nominate individuals who excel at using creative and results-oriented approaches in a range of business areas.

From these suggestions, we also identified a group of Influencers who have taken lessons and

ideas from their own practices and translated their business-savvy ideas into larger groups, organizations and projects which influence many optometrists about the ways in which consistent business knowledge and innovation can work hand-in-hand and even enhance the delivery of the ultimate in patient care.

The result is our 2011 Optometric Business Innovators; a diverse group of men and women who are redefining and moving the practice of optometry forward. ■

—The Editors of *VM* and *Review of Optometric Business*

Identifying the 2011 Innovators

Vision Monday and *Review of Optometric Business* worked with a Professional Advisory Panel, composed of various experts in the arenas of practice management and optometric consulting. The Professional Advisory Panel submitted nominations of practitioners they felt were noteworthy innovators in the following areas: Business Management, Optical Dispensing, Contact Lens Dispensing, Digital Media, Marketing, and The Patient Experience.

Among those on the 2011 Optometric Business Innovator Professional Advisory Panel:

- **Gary Gerber, OD**, optometric business consultant, The Power Practice
- **Ann M. Hoscheit, OD, FAAO, FAARM:** Summit Eye Associates-Founding Partner, Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry; COPE Reviewer, Women of Vision; Executive Board Member, W.O. Magazine; Advisory Board Member
- **Rupe Hansra, OD**, LensCrafters, Sr. Director Eye Care Central Group
- **Priti Patel, OD**, VP Operations and Professional Affairs, FirstSight Vision Services, Inc.
- **Jeff Smith, OD, MBA**, Chief Medical Officer, HVHC, Inc. (Highmark Vision Group)
- **Walt West, OD**, founder of Dr. Walt West's Practice Management Academy; author of *When Your Success Is On The Line*, and chief optometry editor at Optometric Management.
- **Mark Wright, OD**, founder of Pathways to Success; Professional Editor, *Review of Optometric Business*; and faculty member of the Management & Business Academy (MBA).

We also solicited, separately, input from their readers via *VMail* and direct email, for innovative ODs in the same categories. Those submissions, along with the recommendations of the Professional Advisory Panel, were considered by the editorial teams of *VM* and *ROB* to determine the final 2011 selections. ■



“We hold fast to our practice culture, which is that first and foremost we are taking care of patients—not customers.”

STEPHEN F. BOLICK, OD

FOUNDER & CEO

EYE CARE ASSOCIATES

WWW.EYECAREASSOCIATESNC.COM

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

Stephen Bolick, OD, founded Eye Care Associates (ECA) in 1978 and today it employs 26 associate doctors in 19 offices throughout central and eastern North Carolina and offers “World class care. Personal service. Just around the corner.” As CEO he provides the strategic vision for the practice’s patient-centered growth, as well as their ever improving quality of care, personal service and community engagement.

Some may argue that a practice as large as ECA isn’t as adaptable as a smaller office during unforeseen challenges, like the recent economic downturn. Not so, stated Bolick. “Our patient retention programs and consumer messages were tailored to include more value-oriented concepts, while our doctors and staff redoubled their efforts to maintain communications with existing patients, as well as become more engaged in community outreach efforts.”

But a large successful practice also requires more support. “Our marketing strategy is a collaborative process between myself, our president Bob Brodney and our director of marketing Brian Hoyle.” Though Hoyle ultimately takes the lead on plan implementation, ECA’s approach is so collaborative that people at all levels within the organization are eager to share an opinion, comment or feedback.



“Maintaining focus on creating top of mind awareness of our brand requires a significant and coordinated message and program.”

JOHN TODD CORNETT, OD

PARTNER

PREMIER VISION

WWW.PVAMARILLO.COM

AMARILLO, TEXAS

The sum being greater than the parts is a major underlying theme of Premier Vision. “We have worked diligently to create a recognizable brand,” said John Todd Cornett, OD. “As with any brand, the practice is no longer dependent on one or two principal players and has greater value in the long term.”

The Premier Vision brand is a five-doctor, full scope optometrist practice all tied together by a professional logo and a history of external marketing. “Doing so has allowed us to become a destination optical,” added Cornett. “We have experienced growth through the downturn as we continue to focus on the things that separate us in the marketplace.”

Things like creating The Center for Dry Eye Relief at Premier Vision in 2008. “As a part of that marketing, we created a Dry Eye Index that’s part of a local weather segment and airs about five times a day,” said Cornett. It creates an enormous number of daily media impressions. Premier Vision has also created a brochure about Omega 3s. “We realized that our philanthropic donations totaled the profit we generated from the sale of Omega 3s, so this year we created a patient education card explaining how we give the profits to feed hungry school children and fund gifts for needy children at Christmas.”



“Educate, Inspire and Entertain.”

LARRY GOLSON, OD

OWNER, CEO

ENVISION EYECARE

WWW.MYENVISIONEYECARE.COM

ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

Philanthropy is an important part of Envision Eyecare’s identity. It also happens to be a great marketing tool. “In our area, there are many nonprofits that operate to fulfill various needs,” said Larry Golson, OD. “We frequently donate time and resources to these organizations not only to market our practice, but to help a good cause as well.”

Charitable associations aside, Envision also uses other forms of marketing. “We also invest our efforts in social media via our blog, Facebook page and Twitter account,” added Golson. “We track each of our efforts as diligently as possible and shifted our approach over time from print advertising to internet and charitable donation-based exposure.”

Though, as a five-year old practice which started shortly before the economy turned, kicking off a social media campaign was a challenge. “We started by having a drawing for an iPod Touch,” stated Golson. “We emailed our patients to let them know if they joined us on Facebook and Twitter and subscribed to our blog, than they would be entered into the drawing. It helped jump start our social media efforts by having a substantial amount of our patient community following us.”

Envision also engages staff involvement. “We appreciate the fact that this type of marketing takes time and consistency to develop and at the onset, the entire staff discussed the importance of social media in terms of current and future marketing trends.”

Marketing



“I believe our office is one of the finest around. Our slogan is ‘Eagle Vision Eye Care, taking vision care to new heights.’”

MICHAEL JOHNSON, OD

PRESIDENT, OWNER

EAGLE VISION EYE CARE OPTOMETRIC GROUP

WWW.MICHAELJOHNSONOD.COM

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

According to Michael Johnson, OD, the biggest challenge is keeping the whole staff, including himself, educated “on the latest and greatest.” “But we

strive hard to be on the cutting edge,” he said.

Continuing that self-imposed level of excellence, Johnson recently hired a staff member fluent in Russian. An unusual move for most businesses, Johnson wanted to better serve the large Russian and Ukrainian population surrounding his practice. During the recession, Johnson developed in-office promotions to increase his capture rate on glasses and contacts. In 2008, he brought in optical displays from EyeDesigns to give his frames the boutique treatment. And most recently, Eagle Vision Eye Care finalized a promotion through Groupon where consumers spend \$100 for \$200 worth of eyewear at his practice.

Johnson and staff also go out of their way to interact with patients daily on Facebook, keep up on VSP’s Business Essentials, the Management and Business Academy and other trade publications and even added an in-house edging program to allow for one day turnaround on glasses.



DESCRIPTION

Consumers who want to have their eyes examined or buy a new pair of glasses or contact lenses have more options than ever before. Independent eye care practices, local, regional and national retail chains, mass merchants and, most recently, virtual on-line dispensaries are all vying for consumers’ attention. In this hotly competitive marketplace, optometrists who have mastered the marketing techniques used by other service-oriented business have a clear advantage. The optometric innovators profiled in this section show how these true optical marketing mavens have put their own spins on these techniques.



“Become better everyday.
Be friendly first.
Think: How else can I help
this person?”

JUSTIN BAZAN, OD

OWNER

PARK SLOPE EYE
WWW.PARKSLOPEEYE.COM
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK



“The main point of using online
tools is to create offline relation-
ships. There are lots of ways for us
to tell our story, these tools help.”

NATHAN BONILLA-WARFORD, OD

PRESIDENT

BRIGHT EYES FAMILY VISION CARE
WWW.BRIGHTEYESTAMPA.COM
TAMPA, FLORIDA



“It was a challenge to help my
staff understand our patients are
not just patients...they are con-
sumers who have a choice.”

EMIL FADEL, OD

OWNER

ARBORETUM EYE PROFESSIONALS
WWW.ARBORETUMEYEPRO.COM
AUSTIN, TEXAS

It seems that Justin Bazan, OD, is everywhere these days. When he isn't appearing on "The Early Show" or at the *Vision Monday* Leadership Summit, he's winning new fans on Facebook and gaining stellar reviews on Yelp.

“From day one, we knew that we were a word-of-mouth practice and that social media was going to help us get the word out,” he said of the forward-thinking Park Slope Eye, which has gone paperless. “Google Docs is our filing cabinet and we are fully in the cloud. All of our scripts, protocols, manuals and other documents are stored there.”

The practice also cut phone lines, relying on Google Voice and the Book Now feature on Facebook to schedule appointments, so front desk staff can focus on in-office guests. “To date, we are the only office I know of that does not answer a phone,” Bazan said, adding that e-mail and text is the primary means of communication with patients, along with frequent events and trunk shows.

Ultimately, Bazan loves the fact that people today are researching their online options first in post-recession times. “By getting the word out about what experiences our practice provides through social media, we have seen the best patients coming to us,” he said.

“Digital communication is no different than any other element of the practice,” said Nathan Bonilla-Warford, OD, or “Dr. Nate” as he is more commonly called. “Patient care and customer service are paramount and it starts at the top. When the staff sees how the doctors and managers are respectful of the patients, in-person, online and in private, it sets the tone.”

Dr. Nate has helped set that tone by marketing his practice via its website, blog, Twitter, Facebook and Foursquare (he actually started Foursquare Day), as well as co-founding the Peripheral Vision Facebook page to help other ODs share social media tactics.

Digital media has presented challenges for Dr. Nate, most of which he has been able to overcome. “Getting the staff on-board can be a huge challenge. To them, this just feels like more work. I've dealt with this by educating them about the benefits, role-modeling use of the tools, discussing social media campaigns during meetings and matching a staff member's skill and interest when delegating tasks.”

Other challenges include gauging ROI. “Many of these tools are very new and it's hard predicting what will be successful,” stated Dr. Nate. “Sometimes I will spend an excessive amount of time on a project without certainty it will succeed. For Foursquare Day though, the event received significant attention.”

Emil Fadel's, OD, passion for his practice is clear, as is the amount of time he's spent studying consumer habits in order to best engage them.

“We needed to understand that although we are in the practice of providing quality eyecare, we are also a business and businesses that aren't leading their respective industry get left behind,” said Fadel. “We found through market research, that patients are making cost/benefit analyses and expecting the most ‘bang’ for their proverbial ‘buck.’ So, we changed our business model to ensure we offer the latest technology and deliver the best experience in quality eyecare.”

The practice has since invested heavily in equipment like their Optomap, Spectral Microscope and Corneal Topographer, as well as building a media-rich website able to connect with patients through various media formats. The Arbo-retum website integrates social media and online review services, as well as allowing patients to get the feel and look of the office and its staff, technology and services. Patients can request appointments and order contact lenses online, view videos and access blog postings and articles. Soon, patients will even be able to view their personal records online.

More →



“Digital Media enhances your reputation as a thought leader in your market and enables people to find you easier.”

ALAN GLAZIER, OD

FOUNDER/OWNER/PRESIDENT

SHADY GROVE EYE AND VISION CARE
WWW.YOUREYESITE.COM
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

Alan Glazier, OD, is a published author, patented inventor, business owner, blogger and lecturer in high-demand, but he still manages to see patients in his private practice, along with three other ODs and a staff of 13.

Much of this success can be traced to January 2007 when Glazier decided to eliminate all traditional marketing in his practice in favor of social media and search engine optimization.

A decision like that doesn't come without its own set of challenges. It required a great deal of delegating, motivating and training his staff. “Explaining the importance of digital marketing was a challenge,” said Glazier. “We have a digital media policy which we distributed to the staff and each member is required to submit two blog ideas per week.”

Their new digital media duties don't mean his staff can cut corners on customer service though. “I explain to the staff in this new world of online reviews, businesses are held to new standards; that their actions reflect on the business and are likely to have repercussions through our online reviews. It actually helps promote good customer service habits,” added Glazier.

Clearly it's working. “We were fortunate during the downturn to have experienced an ‘up’ year, and that says a lot about our business and marketing.”



“The upside is interaction with patients online. They know I answer every single question that is asked.”

DERRON LEE, OD

CEO

MANTECA OPTOMETRY
WWW.MANTECAOPTOMETRY.COM
MANTECA, CALIFORNIA
MIDTOWN OPTOMETRY
WWW.MIDTOWNOPTOMETRY.COM
STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA

For Derron Lee, OD, business is a family affair. Not only does Lee work with his wife Leanne Lee, OD, in their two practices in Northern California, but their business philosophy is “Your Family Is Our Family.” It's this dedication that has earned the Lees the back-to-back honor of being named Young Optometrist of the Year by the California Optometric Association (COA) in 2008 and 2009.

Lee is also the president of the San Joaquin Optometric Society and the communications chair for COA. It is a role well suited to him, as despite his busy schedule he handles all the communication and marketing for his practices. “I personally update our Facebook pages,” said Lee. “We update several times during the week with pictures and video to keep content fresh and capture patients' attention. We also utilize Yelp reviews, blogs, QR 2D codes and pictures to engage the patients.”

It is a marketing philosophy that starts in the office. “We actively ask patients to Like us on Facebook and refer them to Yelp.com and Facebook for reviews. We've stopped traditional marketing like YellowPages altogether and now focus our efforts on other means of advertising.”

DESCRIPTION

The rapidly developing realm of digital media is creating exciting new ways for optometrists and patients to interact and exchange information. Blogs, online review services, websites, virtual dispensaries, social media and Twitter all play a role in the ongoing dialogue not only on a doctor-to-patient or patient-to-doctor level, but on a patient-to-patient level and on a doctor-to-doctor level as well.

A growing number of optometrists are venturing into this new arena, and many are simply learning by trial and error. But a few practitioners have already developed considerable skills. These “digital docs” have devoted a considerable amount of time and energy to mastering the new media, and have a lot to say about what works and what doesn't. They are sharing their experiences in their own blogs and Tweets, and are gaining reputations as the “go to” experts in the optical online community. The Optical Business Innovators in this section offer valuable insights to anyone who is interested in learning more about how use digital media effectively and integrate it into their practice's marketing plan.



“I strongly believe in bringing the highest quality vision care to our community.”

MARCUS APPY, OD

OWNER

A TO Z EYE CARE
WWW.ATOZEYECARE.COM
ARCATA, CALIFORNIA

Marcus Appy, OD, has only been an optometrist for two years and a practice owner for 18 months. But his passion for eyecare and the community in general came through in his nomination from Loren Azevedo, OD, who works with his wife Linda alongside Appy. “Marcus jumped into 50 degree water, dressed as an eyeball, to raise money for a children’s museum, hired Wildfire to build a cutting-edge Facebook presence, created ‘Team A to Z’ cycling and running jerseys and will run Avenue of the Giant marathon,” Azevedo wrote.

Opening in his hometown, Appy expanded the practice’s medical eyecare by specializing in difficult-to-fit contact lenses, becoming glaucoma certified and offering advanced technology. “Our mission of offering all options to all patients has helped us get through these lean times,” he said.

Emphasis on people is also a big part of the A to Z plan. Appy prides himself on treating all patients as “guests in our home,” recently implementing a team approach to patient care.

“We try to provide a stimulating work environment and realize we are lucky to have staff with a wide array of talents,” Appy said. “By involving the staff in the processes, they are much more willing to go along with and help with changes we make,” he added.



“We want our patients to have a truly exceptional experience while in our office.”

SUSAN KEENE, OD

OWNER

SMYTH COUNTY EYE ASSOCIATES
WWW.SMYTHCOEYE.COM
MARION, VIRGINIA

In light of the economic downturn, Susan Keene, a 20-year OD and 13-year business owner, began to emphasize value packages and focus on specialized medical services. Noted Keene, “Patients are willing to spend on higher-end product once they perceive the value for their vision and eye health.”

To help sales, her practice developed a Dry Eye Center and uses digital as well as virtual imaging tools to better educate patients. “We’ve also started to look at the managed care plans we accept and have selectively dropped the ones that do not represent the quality that we feel represents our practice,” Keene said, adding, “Interestingly, we have seen patients willing to stay in the practice even though we are no longer providers for their insurance.”

According to Keene, most practices know the areas in which they need to change. “But, putting those changes into effect did not happen for us until we took two hours per week out of production and focus on staff training and growth.” Customer service training has even taken her staff to the Ritz Carlton for a weekend seminar on giving patients an exceptional experience. “That time dramatically helped us in implementing necessary changes,” Keene said.



“I have always loved the Robert Frost quote: ‘Our vision in life is to unite, as two eyes make one in sight.’”

JEFF KEGARISE, OD

OD AND PRESIDENT

COOL SPRINGS EYECARE
WWW.COOLSPRINGSEYECARE.COM
FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE

“We keep a constant drumbeat on improvement,” said Jeff Kegarise, OD, “and a focus on practice goals, mixing innovation and risk with the fundamentals of running a medical/optometric business.” That philosophy has paid off, with the practice expanding to a larger office in 2009.

Kegarise transformed the mentality of his practice, which he purchased, from “the doctor makes all the decisions to a more participative management style where growing our people and managers has been [and continues to be] a focus.”

The doctor also experienced a personal transformation. “I had led and managed a large referral center, but all of my care since completing my residency had been in secondary care or disease management,” he said. “I had to become reacquainted with the more basic primary care clinical practices, like contact lens care and the selection and management of an optical staff.”

This year, the practice formed an educational institute to train its staff, their families, the general public and other eye and healthcare practitioners. “We feel this educational institute will be a good way to share what has worked, and what has not, while allowing our staff to benefit from more rich learning opportunities.”

More →



“Provide the highest quality of eyecare at an affordable price. My mission is to exceed the patient’s expectations for both quality of care and affordability.”

FRANK LARUSSA, OD

OWNER

WALMART VISION CENTER
WWW.WALMART.COM
HOMEWOOD, ALABAMA

Frank LaRussa, OD, has spent much of his career trying to make health care, in particular eyecare, more affordable and convenient. After several years practicing in a Birmingham ophthalmology group and a two-year tenure at VisionAmerica Laser Centers, LaRussa left the corporate world in 1998 and opened a private practice in a Walmart Vision Center in Homewood, Ala. Since then he was named Walmart Regional Optometrist of the Year several times and Walmart National Optometrist of the Year in 2006.

Recent dips in the economy have not detoured him from his goals. “During difficult economic times there are more people who seek quality affordable health care options and thus my business is really thriving.” One of the keys to his success is that he keeps things simple “by looking to my patients, the customers, to see what their true needs and wants are.”

The key to changes in your practice is to ensure changes are not ‘Your’ decisions but ‘Our’ decisions. “We spent almost a year talking about the long-term benefit of converting to EMR. We then tested numerous systems in the office before, and as a team, made a selection. In the end everyone was on board and we made a very seamless transition to EMR.”



“At LasikPlus, we are earning the trust of our patients every moment to build relationships for a lifetime.”

JASON SCHMIT, OD

VP OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES/
OPTOMETRIC AFFAIRS

LASIK PLUS/LCA-VISION, INC.
WWW.LASIKPLUS.COM
MAPLE GROVE, MINNESOTA

Having owned and operated his own practice prior to joining LCA-Vision, Jason Schmit, OD, is familiar with the business challenges facing today’s optometrists. As a key executive and advocate for optometrists at Lasik Plus for the past 12 years, he has been instrumental in combining expert business guidance and innovative management for 60 vision centers throughout the U.S.

Despite the economic downturn, LCA-Vision has been poised for growth by improving its core Lasik business. This includes creating the Lasik Plus Partner Network, a management service organization model to help eyecare practitioners with practice management and patient acquisition solutions, surgical co-management, CE and buying group access. “One of our many goals under this initiative included elevating the role of the optometrist within our organization,” Schmit said. To that end, he has developed innovative educational initiatives for ODs, including externships, lecturing, recruiting and training programs.

“Among the factors that I believe sets us apart is our understanding of the key role of optometrists within our business and future success,” concluded Schmit.

DESCRIPTION

Managing an optometric practice profitably requires an entirely different set of skills than being a capable clinician. Yet to develop and maintain a successful practice, a practitioner must be handy with both a flow chart and a Snellen chart.

Our Optical Business Innovators know what a tricky balancing act that can be. The challenges they face daily are the same as those faced by other optometrists. However, each of these optometrists has taken a discerning look at the market in which they compete and has taken steps to differentiate and grow their practice. By learning best practice management techniques and leveraging the power of professional associations and buying groups, they have become adept at managing relationships with vendors, hiring and training staff, negotiating managed care contracts, building a patient base and developing areas of specialization. In most cases, these ODs have used cutting edge technology to achieve their success.

As our Innovators attest, profit is not the only factor influencing their business decision. Often, the choice of whether to implement a certain program or offer a particular product is determined by whether it will help them deliver better care for their patients. Putting their patients’ interests first is what separates the business-savvy practitioners profiled in this section from the pack.

More →



“We want to be the best by ‘wow-ing’ our patient. Yes is an individual decision; no is a group decision. Today is better than tomorrow. Our culture promotes compassion, teamwork, respect and a positive attitude.”

Laurie Sorrenson, OD

PRESIDENT

LAKELINE VISION SOURCE
WWW.LAKELINEVISION.COM
AUSTIN, TEXAS

Laurie Sorrenson, OD, doesn't shy away from a challenge. During the economic turndown, the practice expanded and remodeled its office space. “We focus on the numbers and have an open book philosophy that keeps staff in the know,” said Sorrenson. “They are aware of the percentages for cost of goods sold, staff costs and overhead expenses. We also benchmark over a dozen metrics in our practice on a weekly and monthly basis.” Thanks to growth that sped up in summer 2010, the practice plans to expand office space yet again.

“I finally figured out if your staff is happy, then it is a lot easier for them to take good care of the

patients. Typically, nobody likes change so I let staff know we will try something new for a limited period of time, and at the end of that time, we will re-evaluate. Knowing it isn't necessarily a permanent change helps keep staff flexible,” Sorrenson explained.

All staffers have AOA Paraoptometric certification and every optician is ABO-certified. The office is closed at least four days annually for education and service training. “We also close every week for an office meeting, which I think is imperative to keeping communications open,” Sorrenson said.



“We create a fun, relaxed atmosphere and provide our patients with a personalized experience that is second to none.”

JENNIFER BRADY COOK, OD

OWNER

VISIONARY EYE CARE

WWW.VISIONARYEYECARETAMPA.COM

LUTZ, FLORIDA

Jennifer Brady Cook, OD, knew exactly what she had in mind when she opened her practice in September 2008. “I created a vision of where I wanted to work and how I wanted it to feel,” she said. For inspiration, Brady Cook showed her architects and designers photos of Soho House in Manhattan and the Delano Hotel in South Beach, Miami.

“I only hire fun and genuinely nice people who automatically know to make eye contact and openly communicate with patients. I hire for culture first and foremost because you can’t train attitude,” she said.

The office environment also focuses on fun. “We have no forms to fill out, we have no warning signs about our policies posted,” Brady Cook explained. Fun also is boosted by the doctor’s bulldogs, Joseph and Herbert. She jokes that she has conducted many an eye exam with a dog’s head between her and the patient—especially if that patient is a child. The dogs create a friendly office that children look forward to visiting.

Employees are empowered problem-solvers. “I empower my employees by allowing them \$300 per situation to fix any patient problem,” said Brady Cook. “They understand that our culture is to do whatever we can to make the patient happy.”



“Take action. Create passion.”

AMIR KHOSHNEVIS, OD

OWNER

CAROLINA FAMILY EYE CARE, OD, PLLC

WWW.VISIONSOURCE-

CAROLINAFAMILYEYECARE.COM

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

“Being in Charlotte, home of Wachovia and Bank of America, we were in the heart of the financial meltdown. New patient numbers were down, recall rates were reduced and our overall production was well below expectations,” said Amir Khoshnevis, OD. “We selectively increased participation on insurance panels, employed lean management initiatives to improve efficiency, and focused on improving the patient experience.”

NuVue, the practice’s branded optical, exemplifies Khoshnevis’s philosophy of offering patients something they won’t find anywhere else. Jennifer DaQuano, NuVue manager, argued that “instead of allowing a mass-produced designer to sell itself (only to compete with everyone around us and online optical) we should sell the experience of uniqueness.” That means selling brands from around the world, rather than just sticking to the big box frames brands.

The innovation behind the practice’s optical philosophy results from engaging staff in the practice vision. Khoshnevis recommends “selling your vision [not just sharing] by preparing, presenting, telling a story that’s personalized and has emotional appeal, framing the discussion, and establishing the end goal; while always keeping the interests of your patients as the motivation, versus financial gains.”



“Always strive to work smarter, not just harder. Change and improve to remain pertinent and relevant.”

OLIVER LOU, OD

CEO

SIGNATURE EYE CARE

WWW.SIGNATUREEYECARE.COM

CEDAR PARK, TEXAS

Oliver Lou, OD, seems predisposed to high growth. “I started my practice from zero in August 2002. Within six years, we accomplished \$1 million in gross revenue as a one-doctor practice. By the end of seven years, we were able to move out of our leased space, purchase land and construct a permanent building for the practice with a 4,800 square foot ground-up construction.”

Accommodating patients is a top priority. “We go to great lengths to provide exceptional service from the way we answer phones to greeting our patients as they walk in the door,” said Lou. “Anything we can do to make our patients feel comfortable is considered.” The practice even has a Keurig machine so patients can fix themselves hot drinks in the reception area.

There is also a play area for children with a toy train. In case patients still aren’t entertained, they get iPads for fun while waiting in the exam room.

“We always send a survey to each patient the next day to ensure we can gather valuable feedback and respond to their suggestions and needs in a prompt manner,” said Lou. “We have a fully technology-integrated practice so that we can see a high-volume of patients comprehensively and effectively.”

More →



**“The patient is always right.
Custom service is the core of how
and why we do business.”**

AHMED SAID, OD

FOUNDER

OASIS EYE CARE
WWW.OASISEYECARE.COM
NORTH CAROLINA

Ahmed Said, OD, has a bustling practice and offers everything from emergency eyecare to Lasik consultations, but his patients love his practice for the customized attention they get. That individualized

attention is best highlighted in the practice’s optical, which recently started offering iZon lenses, high-resolution, customized eyeglasses.

Along with cutting-edge offerings, Said, who has a second office in Garner, N.C., counts as achievements the optical’s success selling multiple pairs of eyeglasses and prescription sunwear, and educating patients about the benefits of lens treatments like anti-glare. Said explained that his staff is trained to find customized solutions for patients. “We ask patients a lot of questions and take detailed histories of hobbies and interests, customizing their prescription to match their lifestyle,” he said. “We believe in a holistic and unique approach to each patient.”

Said is also a believer in the importance of the hand-off from doctor to optician. That means the patient’s education of their eyecare needs begins in the exam chair and is reinforced when the doctor hands the patient off to the optician to choose eyewear in the dispensary.

DESCRIPTION

Dispensing eyewear is becoming a more dynamic, immersive and even fun experience for patients. New technologies such as digital dispensing systems that take personalized patient measurements and allow patients to capture images of themselves modeling various frames have introduced a greater level of interactivity into the dispensary. Even something simple like letting patients play with an iPad or offering them a fresh cup of coffee while they’re waiting to see the doctor can make a big difference. The Optical Dispensing Innovators profiled here share some of the secrets to their success.



Contact Lens Dispensing



“What is good for the patient,
is good for the practice.”

STEVEN LOOMIS, OD
MARK KRUCHEN, OD
KENT YOUNT, OD
TARA PETERSON, OD
MOUNTAIN VISTA EYECARE AND
DRY EYE CENTER
WWW.VISIONSOURCE-MOUNTAINVISTA.EYECARE.COM
LITTLETON, COLORADO

Strong leadership and staying connected within the profession through organized optometry have been the hallmark strengths of this practice which was started by Steven Loomis, OD, in 1981. A former Optometrist of the Year in 1993 and a member of the American Optometric Association, Loomis has surrounded himself with equally high-powered colleagues, including Mark Kruchen, OD, and partners Kent Yount, OD, and Tara Peterson, OD.

Today, the single location practice with 16 employees has set itself apart by focusing on training staff and embracing new technologies. Peterson said careful electronic tracking of contact lens inventory keeps tabs on new products, rebates and discounts with CLs account for nearly 25 percent of the practice's business. “We've seen growth due to the use of daily disposables and the pediatric patient and young professionals are our main markets,” Peterson said.

In addition, Mountain Vista EyeCare is part of a study group with nine other practices that share ideas on staff, products and managed vision care—all part of an effort “to learn from others' successes.” Peterson said.



“We are committed to providing state-of-the-art, patient focused eyecare. Our promise to our patients is to ensure a positive environment consisting of honesty and ethics.”

RAJEEV RAGHU, OD
SOLO PRIVATE PRACTICE
THE EYE CENTER AT JACKSON
WWW.THEEYECENTERATJACKSON.COM
JACKSON, NEW JERSEY

Rajeev Raghu, OD, has remained at the forefront of contact lens practitioners for 12 years by knowing that the “science in the box” is not the only thing that matters to patients. “We are completely, unconditionally focused on the individual needs of our patients from the moment they see our website, to meeting us in person, through their entire exam and selection,” Raghu said.

For Raghu, named New Jersey's Young Optometrist of the Year in 2006, up-to-date technology and a sophisticated office atmosphere set the practice apart. “In addition to being completely paperless, we have the new VisiOffice from Essilor, a computer-based system that measures the patients' pupillary distance, segment height and equates facial contouring into the digital lens. We spent extra time on staff training and had patients waiting in line to get their eyes measured.”

Raghu, along with his eight-person support staff, takes pride in being “patient-focused.” He cites the economic downturn as an opportunity to offer premium products. “We implemented a financing program for our patients, whereby they can pay for glasses or CLs over a 3- or 6-month period. Patients love that they can still buy the best and pay over time,” Raghu said.



“Customer service, attention to detail and hard work result in success.”

STEVEN WILSON, OD
OWNER
WILSON EYE CENTER
WWW.WILSONEYECENTER.COM
VALDOSTA, GEORGIA

In 1981, when Steven Wilson, OD, hung out his shingle he had one employee and was facing an economy that boasted 11 percent unemployment rate and 21 percent interest rates. Some 30 years later, the shifting economy is still presenting challenges but Wilson's story has taken a more positive trajectory. Now in its 30th year of practice, Wilson Eye Center has grown to become a 5-OD group practice with 35 employees spanning 12 exam rooms, a Lasik suite, state-of-the-art optical lab and a dispensary featuring over 5,000 designer frames.

“All inventory is bar-coded so we can track what's selling and gain better control of frame, spectacle lens and contact lens inventory with specific target goals in each category, all monitored on a monthly basis,” Wilson said.

Wilson has strived to increase office efficiencies which today include integrated insurance, exam, and material codes via automated spreadsheet allowing for more efficient coding and billing.

The most recent practice booster is Wilson's “branding” baby, the “EyePod” (Personal Optical Delivery) program featuring free home delivery of contact lenses and eyeglasses. “We purchased a car and custom wrapped it with our name and logo. It's proven to be a big hit offering great customer service and brand recognition that allows us to effectively compete with mail order CLs,” he said.

More →



“Patients don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care. My patients return to my practice because we demonstrate the best care anywhere.”

NANCY WOJCİK, OD
SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR
 LENS CRAFTERS
 WWW.LENSCRAFTERS.COM
 ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, ILLINOIS

Senior managing director Nancy Wojcik, OD, has been a mainstay at the LensCrafters in Arlington Heights for some 25 years and credits a loyal patient following for much of her success. Being in a corporate optometric setting, the practice is open seven days a week with plenty of evening appointments. “I know being there when the patients need us helps to drive customers in our doors,” she said.

In 1985, Wojcik was one of the first optometrists to make daily disposable contact lenses her lens of choice. “I have always wanted to use the newest, best products for my patients so when dailies came out, while it was a huge change from conventional contacts, it just made sense—a fresh clean lens every day and it was so easy for the patient. From my perspective there was nothing healthier, and there still isn’t.”

Today, this suburban-based LensCrafters is a high volume contact lens practice specializing in dailies, torics, multi-focals and gas permeable CLs. As a participant in one of LensCrafters’s trial study committees, Wojcik is able to try out new CL products to see how she and her patients like them.

“I see contact lenses as a lifestyle choice offering me an opportunity to try and meet patients’ other needs, such as sunwear and eyeglasses,” she said. But it’s the personal touch with her patients that has enabled Wojcik to survive the recent ups and downs of the economy. “My practice has grown by the personal attention we provide to our patients and our focus on making a personal connection with everyone who comes into our office.”



DESCRIPTION

Dispensing contact lenses has long been an integral part of a thriving optometric practice. In the age of disposable lenses and online optical retailing, however, many eyecare professionals have turned away from trying to compete with low-cost vendors. Not so for this selection of innovators. They have found ways to distinguish their practices by specializing in contact lens dispensing. They often are the problem solvers, where others have failed, and they change lives positively. They have succeeded by offering their patients specialized, optometric services, and their practices are distinguished for providing both excellence and value.



“Our mission is to have our patients see well and be well. We work tirelessly to help them understand their vision, ocular health and treatment plan to achieve this.”

KATHLEEN ANDERSEN, OD

OWNER

KATHLEEN M. ANDERSEN, OD, INC.
WWW.RMSVISION.COM
RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, CALIFORNIA

Kathleen Andersen, OD, provides an innovative and progressive approach to enhancing patient wellbeing and welfare by providing cutting edge medical services. She was the first OD in the nation to offer carotid artery ultrasound to patients with raised indicators for heart disease. Her goal is to help prevent her patients from suffering heart attacks or strokes by educating them about their individual risk factors and helping them to make lifestyle changes such as eating more nutritious foods, dieting, quitting smoking and maintaining a consistent exercise routine.

Andersen has consistently used leading edge technology to grow her practice. In 2007, she brought in an OCT and other equipment to develop a medical practice. The following year she relocated her practice and completely redesigned the facilities in preparation for converting to electronic medical records.

“These changes have made my office appear more professional and give the patients reassurance that we can handle any problem they present,” explained Andersen. “They let our patients know that we are up to date and leaders in the treatment and management of ocular disorders.”

Andersen’s message is clear: “We recommend only the best technology has to offer.”



“We are responsible to our customers, to the environment, and to the community. In accomplishing our responsibilities, we will not take professional or ethical shortcuts.”

THOMAS GOSLING, OD

OWNER

OPTICAL MATTERS
WWW.OPTICALMATTERS.COM
LITTLETON, COLORADO

At Optical Matters, Thomas Gosling, OD, manages every touchpoint a patient experiences, from greeting them when they walk in the door to explaining every aspect of the eye exam. “I believe customer service begins by how the owner shows it within the office,” Gosling said. This approach is also evident in the way Gosling uses technology. For example, Optical Matters is one of the first eyecare clinics in the country to utilize Hoya’s visuReal video centering system, which personalizes lenses for patients.

Gosling has developed a successful family eyecare practice and is an expert in fitting patients into bifocal contact lenses and in helping hard to fit contact lens patients.

“My goal has always been to create a bond with every one of my patients,” said Gosling. “By understanding not only their daily visual demands, but their family and work life atmosphere, I create a ‘feeling’ for the patient and their world. The secret is never to forget that feeling.”

Gosling said that because he and his staff treat patients “as family,” they tend to refer other family members and friends. “We quit advertising after our first year and our practice has more than quadrupled in the last four years,” he noted.



“For private practice to survive in the 21st century, they must bring together three key elements; clinical excellence, cutting edge technology and innovative products.”

DAVID KAPLAN, OD

OWNER

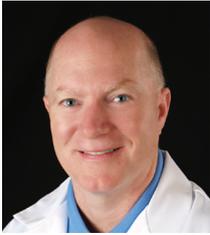
FAMILY EYECARE OF GLENDALE
WWW.VISIONSOURCE-EYEDOCSAZ.COM
GLENDALE, ARIZONA

At Family Eyecare of Glendale, one of the largest optometric practices in Arizona, David Kaplan, OD, has partnered with Carl Zeiss Vision to create a patient experience designed to educate patients about their eye exam and their eyewear options. When checking in, the patient receives a “passport” folder with sections devoted to each aspect of the eye appointment. This folder accompanies the patient throughout the appointment, and provides a springboard for a brief discussion about the purpose and value of each part of the exam process.

As a result, patients develop a deeper appreciation of the high standard of care provided by the practice, increasing patient loyalty. By providing a thorough explanation of lens options, the process increases lens capture and premium eyewear sales.

“The primary factor that differentiates our practice from most of our contemporaries is the educational platforms utilized throughout our office,” he said. “Patients are continuously educated about the equipment being utilized, the procedures being performed, and the products being recommended. When they leave our office they are well educated about their particular ocular condition and have a firm understanding that all optical products and all eye exams are not the same.”

More →



“We continually strive to differentiate your patient experience. We want to avoid bland similarity.”

JACK MCINTYRE, OD

PARTNER

DRS. MCINTYRE, GARZA, AVILA, & JURICA

WWW.CCONTACTS.COM

CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS

“We promise to see you at your convenience, not ours,” advertises Jack McIntyre, OD. He backs this up by having seven-day-a-week availability, the latest technology and what colleagues describe as a “genetically happy” staff. His LensCrafters-affiliated practice, Drs. McIntyre, Garza, Avila, & Jurica, has operated for 25 years in Corpus Christi, Texas. The practice draws patients from as far as 70 miles away based partly on word of mouth referrals. On a Saturday, the staff might conduct up to 125 examinations.

Known for his expertise in contact lens fitting, McIntyre advocates what he called a “differentiate or die” business philosophy. “I choose to fit contact lenses that set us apart from the mass merchandisers,” he explained. “If a contact lens is considered a commodity, I

look for high-quality alternatives.”

A member of both the American Optometric Association and the Texas Optometric Association, McIntyre has served as a board member for the Association of LensCrafters Leaseholding Doctors. And although LensCrafters has honored his practice with its “Office of the Year” award, McIntyre is not content to rest on his laurels and continues to look for ways to improve the patient experience.

“We’ve used the recent economic downturn to re-evaluate all policies, as well as our equipment, the contact lenses we fit and staff training protocols. We are finishing up a major remodel in anticipation of increased patient flow as the recession continues to recede. We have already begun to see an increase in patient numbers,” he said.



DESCRIPTION

At one time, it was acceptable for patients to be greeted by a faceless voice behind a sliding glass door: “Have a seat and fill out these forms!” No longer. Optometrists operate in a highly competitive world, where patients—being smart consumers—have a host of reasons to go elsewhere to save a dollar or enjoy the convenience of purchasing what and when they prefer. This group of optometric innovators has leveraged their experience (and learned from other areas of retailing, commerce and medicine) that outstanding customer service is the key to success. Further, these innovators have imparted to their entire staff the importance of delivering a consistently high level of customer service, so that the patients are more than satisfied—indeed they are delighted—with their experience and will recommend others.



“My management style is that I like to have my fingerprints on everything, but my picture on nothing.”

TOMMY CROOKS, OD

PRESIDENT AND CEO

EYECARE ASSOCIATES, INC. (ECA)
WWW.WEBECA.COM
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

Over the past 30 years, Tommy Crooks, OD, has taken an active role in the leadership of optometric professional organizations on the local, regional and national level. He is a past president of the Birmingham Area Optometric Society, the Alabama Optometric Association, the Southern Council of Optometrists and the American Optometric Association.

Since 1996, Crooks has served as president and CEO of EyeCare Associates, Inc. (ECA), which consists of 19 locations, 33 doctors and 165 staff members spread throughout Alabama. Unlike some other groups of private practice optometrists that provide services to their members, ECA is based on a business model in which doctor-owners hold an equity stake in the company.

“The overall business model is unique in that the entity that is the ‘corporate office’ was never intended to make the money,” noted Crooks, who has headed ECA since 1996. “The corporate office exists to help make the doctor owners more successful. The overall goal, from the beginning, was to perpetuate private independent practice. Moreover, we wanted to create the full circle. Existing doctor owners have a clearly defined and funded exit strategy and new aspiring doctors have a clearly defined way to become an equity partner.”



“I’m passionate about providing the best care for my patients, and providing them with the patient experience and practices in private practice optometry.”

GLENN ELLISOR, OD

PRESIDENT AND CEO

VISION SOURCE
WWW.VISIONSOURCE.COM
KINGWOOD, TEXAS

As a high school freshman, Glenn Ellisor, OD, decided on a career path. “I wanted to become an optometrist because I wanted to deal with people in a healthcare context,” he said.

Ellisor not only accomplished his goal, but went on to found Vision Source, the largest network of private practicing optometrists in the world, both in revenue, size and total affiliated practices. Starting in 1991 in Houston, Texas, Ellisor grew Vision Source from its first location to over 2,300 current locations in all 50 states and Canada, composed of the leading optometrists in the profession. Collectively, Vision Source practices produce in excess of \$1.3 billion in gross revenue.

Praised by colleagues as “innovative, entrepreneurial and forward thinking,” Ellisor said Vision Source remains centered on its mission of networking independent, private optometry practices to collectively share best practice strategies and provide cooperative marketing resources and cooperative buying power. He believes Vision Source has had a positive influence not just on its members’ practices, but on independent optometry in general.

“I’m afraid if our organization hadn’t been formed, private practice optometry might have gone the way of the pharmacy industry.”



“As I lead the IDOC organization, I live by the following: ‘A winner never quits and a quitter never wins.’”

MARK FEDER, OD

PRESIDENT AND CEO

IDOC (INDEPENDENT DOCTORS
OF OPTOMETRIC CARE)
WWW.IDOC.NET
NORWALK, CONNECTICUT

Mark Feder, OD, founded IDOC to provide business management ideas for private practicing optometrists in 1999. As president and CEO, he is responsible for directing all facets of business for the organization, which currently has over 900 members in more than 40 states. He has established partnerships with over 65 companies serving the optometric industry. These companies offer IDOC members unique programs on products and services they purchase, resulting in increased revenues and profits. Still a practicing OD, Feder is also the founder of Norwalk Eye Care in Norwalk, Conn.

Feder said he established IDOC 12 years ago because at the time, independent ODs in Connecticut were faced with the “overwhelming issue” of managed care. Independent practitioners still face considerable challenges as a result of vertical integration and increasing competition from online and big box retailers.

Consequently, Feder believes it is more important than ever for independent ODs to run their practices like a business. “They need to make decisions based on their understanding of business intelligence and be able to identify new profit centers and untapped revenue streams in order to grow their practices.”

More →



“Optometry is a people profession. At the end of the day we are people helping people see better. I can’t think of a more rewarding career.”

MARK JACQUOT, OD

VICE PRESIDENT

PEARLE VISION EYE CARE

WWW.PEARLEVISION.COM

OFFICES IN CINCINNATI AND CHICAGO

Having worked in optometry for the past 24 years, Mark Jacquot, OD, has the experience necessary to be considered an Influencer. Since joining Luxottica as a practicing optometrist in '91, he's been associate VP of optometric relations for Luxottica and regional VP of operations for Lens-Crafters. He currently leads the eyecare team for Pearle Vision in the U.S. and Puerto Rico and also serves on the board of directors for OneSight.

Jacquot's passion lies with helping patients understand the importance of regular exams. “I think that we as a profession can do a better job in sending a broad message for an annual eye exam,” he said, citing that the AOA recommendation is double the number performed in the U.S. last year.

He pointed out, “We have really listened to our patients about what they like and dislike about their current eyecare and eyewear experience. Sometimes the focus is on prophesies or product, but the most important ‘p’ is the people,” Jacquot said. “They are the ones who give you results: they come in, they buy the product. It's really important to listen to our patients and adapt. We can't keep doing things the same way and expect success in a down economy.”



“I want to help optometrists work smarter and not harder and help them accelerate their growth and profitability.”

JERRY LIEBLEIN, OD

CO-FOUNDER/CEO

OD EXCELLENCE

WWW.ODEXCELLENCE.COM

HEALDSBURG, CALIFORNIA

As a leader within the optometric community, Jerry Lieblein, OD, is passionate about moving the profession forward. In practice since 1958, he started OD Excellence (ODX) with partner Jerry Sude, OD, in 2007. “Having been very much involved in the profession until that point, my goal was to be able to take the average optometrist and help them be more successful,” Lieblein said.

Starting ODX enabled Lieblein to work with optometry schools, helping senior classes set up practices, apply for loans and put in place business models at no cost. ODX also works with existing practices to advance management ideas. “The idea is to help optometrists grow while helping optometry grow as a profession,” he said.

Published more than 100 times and having lectured around the world, Lieblein considers apathy his, and optometry's, biggest challenge. “Many doctors feel that they cannot grow in this market and are not ready to make the move forward.”

Lieblein insists that the ODX model, which combines education, buying, marketing and retooling of the practice to allow for medical eyecare expansion, “delivers a winning strategy.”



“If you don't have anything to say, don't say anything.”

MICHAEL ROTHSCHILD, OD

FOUNDER

LEADERSHIPOD

WWW.VISIONSOURCE-CARROLLTON.COM

CARROLLTON, GEORGIA

“We had to tweak our business strategy due to the economy, but not our overall vision of offering the highest quality products,” said Mike Rothschild, OD. The staff monitors trends more than numbers. “I cannot tell you how many frames we sold last month, but I do know that for the last five months, the numbers are increasing. We also track how many people are leaving without making a glasses purchase,” he said.

In addition to accomplishments in his own practice, Rothschild is founder of LeadershipOD, a company dedicated to excellence in optometric practice. He is an international practice management speaker and presenter, most well-known for his innovative “Leadership Team” approach towards practice management. He is also a member of the faculty of First Practice Academy, a practice building program for those new to practice ownership, sponsored by CIBA Vision and Essilor.

Rothschild believes two things—processes and systems—add up to legendary service and topnotch leadership. “We implement proven systems and methods to build and maintain relationships with our patients, our community and our staff,” he said.

The doctor shared that his leadership team is trained on dealing with differing personalities and conflict: “They explore their own strengths and challenges.”

Influencers



“Eyecare is changing at a rapid rate—technology, materials, vision products...keeping up is going to be harder than ever...and those that do will be those who succeed.”

KIRK SMICK, OD

PRESIDENT

CLAYTON EYE CENTER
WWW.CLAYTONEYECENTER.COM
MORROW, GEORGIA

Kirk Smick, OD, knows how to survive and thrive, founding his stronger-than-ever practice in 1974. That practice now has eight ODs, 34 MDs and averages 225 patients a day in one location. Smick, who retired from the U.S. Air Force at the rank of colonel, started one of the first optometric referral centers known as OMNI. He is also a past president of Georgia Optometric Association and the SECO.

Smick has also made significant contributions to optometric education. He is the past president of the Georgia State Board of Examiners in optometry, and while at SECO, he served as Continuing Education Chairman. He continues, meanwhile, to be a leader in the field, as chairman of the International Vision Expo Conference Advisory Board.

His practice continued to flourish during the recession, Smick said, thanks to an emphasis on customer service and proven business principles that focused on working smarter, not harder. The practice also re-evaluated the managed care plans it uses.

Other success drivers, Smick pointed out, include full adoption of the medical model “with an increased appreciation and interest in our optical dispensary. The concept of ‘doctor directed dispensing’ has really increased our per-patient revenue.”



“The foundation to any successful business is honesty and integrity combined with perseverance. Take care of the patient first and the money will be there.”

BRAD WILLIAMS, OD

CEO AND FOUNDER

THE WILLIAMS GROUP
WWW.THEWILLIAMSWAY.COM
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

For many years, Brad Williams, OD, had one foot planted firmly in the business sector and another in the profession of independent optometry. In 1986, he started a practice management consulting business which grew into The Williams Group. He sold his practice several years ago to concentrate solely on The Williams Group.

Throughout his 25 years of consulting, Williams has worked with hundreds of practitioners and staff in an effort to make private practitioners more business savvy. “The term Practice Management could be replaced with the term Business Care Management. Just like seeking financial management advice, good business care training can provide an excellent ROI,” Williams said.

At the start of the managed care era, Williams recognized the complexity of running an optometric practice increased dramatically “and I surrounded myself with people with degrees in marketing, finance and human resources. We then hired senior consultants and tethered them to our clients and their staff to help with implementation support. As a result, our success with getting clients and staff to make practice improvements has provided the reputation we enjoy today.”



DESCRIPTION

A “teacher’s teacher” is perhaps the highest accolade that an educator can receive. And in a sense, we all are educators, serving as mentors to those younger and less experienced, as we once learned vital life lessons from mentors or our own.

The following innovators have distinguished themselves either as mentors or as creative problem solvers and business builders. They have gone further, in most cases, than they foresaw at the conclusion of optometry school. They have faced the serious challenges to the survival of their profession. They have read trends, examined other professions, attempted innovative solutions, and they have failed in some cases just as surely and they ultimately have succeeded.

The success of these innovators in building top notch practices and businesses serves as a template and inspiration for those who follow, in the increasingly challenging marketplace in which they strive to thrive.