

VISIONARIES



VM 2018
**Most Influential
 women**
 in optical

NEW YORK—VM's Most Influential Women in Optical report is, first and foremost, our annual celebration of the immeasurable impact that women have on all levels of our industry. Just look around and you'll find women of all ages and backgrounds who use their knowledge and skills to build and lead optical businesses and eyecare practices while enriching the lives of their customers, patients, students and colleagues. These are the types of women, including entrepreneurs, clinicians, executives, managers and mentors, whom we honor each year for their vast and varied contributions. They're smart, creative, hardworking and caring, and they inspire us to be better at what we do. We've profiled more than 600 of them since we began compiling this report in 2003.

The Most Influential Women feature is also a great example of the

democratic process at work. Our readers send us hundreds of nominations each year. Some are the result of lobbying by friends and co-workers, and others are single ballots cast by individual nominators. From this long list of names put into contention, VM editors select the 40 women they feel are most deserving of recognition. We determine which category best fits them—Executive Suite, Rising Stars, Mentors and Innovators—based upon their accomplishments and contributions to the optical industry. So, our system is also a meritocracy.

However you view them, this year's Most Influential Women are an impressive group. We hope you enjoy reading their profiles and getting to know them. ■

—The Editors

EXECUTIVE SUITE

WOMEN WHO HOLD POSITIONS SUCH AS PRESIDENT, VP, CEO, CFO, CIO, OR COO

Dori Abendschein

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Essilor of America
Dallas, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Her ability to grow Essilor’s footprint in the U.S., advance the company’s mission and lead with purpose in the local community is helping shape the direction of Essilor and is creating a lasting impact on the optical industry.”



For Dori Abendschein, being a leader means constantly learning and evolving. She has brought that mindset to her role as CFO of Essilor of America, where her ability to develop innovative

solutions and balance shareholder, employee and customer value have helped drive Essilor’s growth.

Abendschein brings a wealth of experience to her job, having previously worked in the energy, telecom and transportation sectors. She regards this as one of her strengths: “It has been amazing to use the power of my previous network to bring new ideas and network connections to this industry.”

While managing the financial outcomes of a major company is obviously a massive undertaking, Abendschein said, “My most important role is to help enable the Mission of Eradicating Poor Vision in a Generation.” Her passion for this mission led her to spearhead an incentive program called LIFT, which allows employees to contribute their time and abilities to the Essilor Vision Foundation. The LIFT program resulted in a measurable increase in engagement with Essilor’s mission, and it is now being expanded to include all Essilor USA employees.

SHE SAYS... “Reach out to people who are two to three steps ahead of you in their career. Ask for their support and help. It is not necessary that you take all the advice you are given, but it

is imperative that you have multiple viewpoints so you may weigh your decision. Then, make the decision and move on.”

Michele Andrews, OD

SENIOR DIRECTOR, PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

CooperVision
Victor, New York

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “In just three years, Dr. Andrews has completely transformed CooperVision’s approach to connecting with eyecare professionals, associations, optometry schools, and the government, which has brought the company even closer to optometry.”



Michele Andrews, OD, knows the precise moment that launched her career in vision care. “I was a sophomore in college majoring in communications when I could not see the board clearly in biology class. That is when I had my first eye exam, and when I realized I had found my calling.” That calling led her to Illinois College of Optometry, a residency in Advanced Care with the VA, and a career that has encompassed private practice and leadership roles in retail and managed care.

At CooperVision, Dr. Andrews is an advocate for the optical industry and the patients it serves. She was personally involved in the recent launch of the Health Care Alliance for Patient Safety, and she represents the interests of the profession and patients to Congress, the Federal Trade Commission and state governments. She stays grounded in the needs of her colleagues by representing CooperVision at professional events, “which allows me to stay tuned-in to practitioner needs and concerns in our changing industry, and to engage in meaningful conversations with eyecare practitioners from all around the country.”

SHE SAYS... “Explore and engage in topics and projects that interest you, even if you don’t have all the answers or aren’t sure how those projects may fit into your broader career plan. We perform best when we pursue our passions. Invest your time in learning how to ask great questions, and the answers will come.”

Olivia “Dibby” Bartlett

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Todd Rogers USA
Andover, Massachusetts

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Opticians Association of America
Lakeland, Tennessee

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Her passion, drive and heart have helped catapult Todd Rogers Eyewear onto the national stage. As an educator and leader of the Opticians Association of America, she embodies what a strong woman with a passion for her trade and a voice that she’s willing to use, can accomplish.”



Dibby Bartlett graduated Clark University in Worcester, Mass. with a liberal arts degree and her student loans beckoned. She began as a receptionist in an optometry practice, soon realizing as her job there evolved, that an opticianry license was a must. Bartlett worked in various managerial and opticianry roles over the years in the Boston area and later moved into eyewear sales in the region, first with REM Eyewear and subsequently with Safilo USA.

At Todd Rogers, she works with Todd and Leigh Berberian in a collaborative way, but focuses on hiring and managing sales, stock and inventory management and customer relations. “We’re a small independent business, and I take the most pride in building a strong foundation

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on which our future can stand and support the growth that is ahead of us.”

She is a director and past president of Opticians Association of Massachusetts, where she’s received the President’s Award and the Optician of the Year and also the State Leader of the Year from the Opticians Association of America. Today, she is an OAA director and currently first vice president of that national group, on a path to its presidency in the year 2020. “There’s a need for a stronger professional brand, a need to educate the consumer, a louder voice and a more organized profession. My daughter’s an optician, too. I want the profession to be great for her and others.” She is Adjunct Faculty at the Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology’s Opticianry Program

Mentors? “I had the best parents anyone could have. My father believed in raising strong, independent women and my mother was one. My husband, Bud, has always given me wings to fly, and supported me in everything, wholeheartedly and with gusto.” Blair Wong at Opticians Association of Massachusetts and Shirley Earley, of OAA, have paved a path for me.

SHE SAYS... “Don’t let fear get in your way, I did not begin my leadership journey until I was 50, mostly due to fear. I finally learned to do things anyway and it changed my life.”

Beth Bush

VICE PRESIDENT, CORPORATE OPERATIONS
Wisconsin Vision Inc./Eye Boutique Inc.
New Berlin, Wisconsin

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Beth has led the company through numerous integrations [and] she has a very important voice in our company. The vendors she works with as a frame buyer trust and appreciate her opinion on the direction that a collection needs to go to address our patient base.”



Beth Bush began her career in the optical business when she was hired 22 years ago at Wisconsin Vision Inc. (WVI). She believes her prior experience in operations, loss prevention and training (which she gained at an apparel company) led to her selection for the position over others who had optical experience.

“When I started with Wisconsin Vision, there were 16 stores,” said Bush, who is ABO certified and a member of the Optical Women’s Association. “At that time, I was responsible for store operations, but my responsibilities quickly changed to loss prevention, human resources and training/development. There were no procedures in place for basic things like remakes, returns, or the proper way to order frames, and other things. I really had a great opportunity to make changes and show what I could do.”

In 2009, when WVI acquired the six-store Eye Boutique, she was promoted to regional director of operations and assigned responsibility for two regions at WVI, and two district managers. “While running Eye Boutique, I was able to make some simple changes that gave us better margins with insurance reimbursements, along with other changes that helped grow the bottom line,” she said.

As a result of that success, she was promoted to director of store operations in 2011, and also became the frame buyer.

SHE SAYS... “I believe the more knowledgeable people are, the more confident they are. Learn all aspects of the job, not just the area you work in.”

Elizabeth Carlyle

VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF LEGAL COUNSEL
Vision Source
Kingwood, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Elizabeth manages

some 3,300 contracts with Vision Source members and more than 200 contracts with 3rd party vendors. She is an expert in the franchise laws of all 50 states and handles intellectual property, risk management and employment legal matters for the network.”



Elizabeth Carlyle came to Vision Source after 20 years of civil law practice, most recently as the General Counsel of the Second Baptist Church, a 70,000-member megachurch in Houston, Texas. Her transition to the optical industry has offered her a new set of challenges. “Since I was not afraid to learn something new, I was presented with an incredible opportunity at Vision Source. Along the way, there have been late nights and early mornings, continued education after a long day at the office, and seemingly brilliant ideas that did not actually work.”

At Vision Source, Elizabeth is responsible for all legal affairs of a professional network of 4,600 doctors that treat 16 million patients per year. She manages the organization’s complex legal transactions and vendor contracts and leads a team that initiates 1,000 franchise documents every year. She has made staff development a priority, initiating a mentoring program that encourages collaboration and professional growth. Her own professional growth continues—in June she was admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court.

SHE SAYS... “I have found if you value people, give those you lead a little guidance and a lot of autonomy, focus the limelight on others instead of yourself, foster professional growth by helping others reach a little farther, and do all of the above while maintaining a sense of humor, work becomes personally fulfilling and fun.”

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Jennifer Coppel

VICE PRESIDENT OF BRAND MANAGEMENT

Tura Inc.
New York, New York

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She leads by example. There is no feat she believes cannot be accomplished. Jennifer expresses the importance of involvement and curiosity and is understanding of individuals’ strengths, playing to them to maximize her team.”



Jennifer Coppel believes her journey to the optical industry has been “varied and untraditional.” She began her career with her own business, Eden Hardware, where she designed, manufactured and sold decorative door and cabinet hardware. Shortly after Sept. 11, Coppel moved to New York City where she worked for several home and fashion companies before landing a job in 2009 leading the product team at ClearVision Optical.

In 2012, she joined Tura Inc. as vice president of brand management. “At Tura, we do not simply sell pretty eyewear; we build brands through a cohesive story, one that aligns seamlessly through product and marketing. My job is to oversee this alignment from a 360 perspective,” she said.

Coppel has led the company in winning six EyeVote awards as well as successfully launching five new brands with a sixth launching in 2019. Her personal philosophy in leadership was best summed up in an OWA Tuesday Talk that she gave last year which focused on the 12 guiding principles she relies on to lead her team. They included concepts such as developing balanced thinkers, being flexible, staying curious and always expressing gratitude and appreciation.

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SHE SAYS... “It is a dynamic position that is constantly evolving with the changes in business, and I am very grateful that I come to work every day excited, motivated and inspired.”

Angela McCoy

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

MyEyeDr.
Vienna, Virginia

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She works tirelessly to ensure her employees have the very best direction and training. Angela sets the bar high for women in the industry and is admirable in character as well as business.”



Angela McCoy’s start in optical was as a general manager for N.C.’s Eye Care Associates in 2002. As her responsibilities grew, she was recognized as an “Innovator” among VM’s 2014 Most Influential Women. That same year, ECA partnered with MyEyeDr. (MED). She helped lead the integration of the two groups as director of business ops while moving her family to Vienna, Va. McCoy was promoted to MED chief administrative officer this year.

She oversees back-office functions like the MED communication centers, supply chain, business solutions and managed vision care ops, enhancing and innovating the patient experience through connected systems and digital tools.

McCoy is a member of the Optical Women’s Association. She credits many mentors on her path: “Dr. Steve Bolick always pushed me into new roles before I was ready. MED’s Sue Downes, who consistently does the hard thing first, always has my best interest at heart. Janet Pickett, my mom, was the CIO at Manpower; she taught me that I could be anything if I worked hard enough. Dr. Artis Beatty, our chief medical officer; our partnership has lasted more than 16 years in optical. And Mark McCoy—my plus one. I cannot imagine life without him.”

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SHE SAYS... “Know your strengths and use them to your advantage. No one is you and that is your

super power. Have humility. But get out of your comfort zone. Great things never came from comfort zones. When you get tired, work harder. Many people don’t realize how close they are to success when they give up.”

Jenny Terrell Feenstra, OD, FAO

PRESIDENT

Texas Optometric Association

ASSISTANT CLINICAL PROFESSOR

Rosenburg School of Optometry,
University of the Incarnate Word
San Antonio, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She is awesome in her ability to juggle all the roles she has: a wonderful educator, state association president and new mother.”



Dr. Jenny Terrell Feenstra’s inspiration comes from the people closest to her. “The earliest influences leading me here were my family, particularly my mother. She has led by example in

giving back to the things in which you believe. My husband and partner in life, Nathan Feenstra, is unwavering in his support. He and our kids are my biggest cheerleaders and they’re the ones I hope to make proud.”

“Giving back” is the central theme of her career. After graduating from the University of Houston College of Optometry, she worked for a short time in a private practice before moving to an OD/MD referral center, facilitating integrated eyecare. She joined the faculty of the Rosenberg School of Optometry at University of the Incarnate Word in 2013. In her clinical faculty role, she supervises and educates fourth-year optometry students at the Community Eye Clinic in Fort Worth, which serves a

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largely uninsured patient population.

Dr. Terrell Feenstra also gives back to the profession of optometry. She has been associated with the Texas Optometric Association since her first year as a student at UHCO. In her role as president, she presides over meetings, empanels committees and appoints committee chairs, and certifies all official acts. In 2014, she was a joint recipient of UHCO's Volunteer of the Year award.

SHE SAYS... "As women, it's important to be our own advocates. As humans, it's important to be respectful and kind to our fellow humans... and not take ourselves too seriously."

Shannon Waigand

VICE PRESIDENT, LAB OPERATIONS/OWNER
DaVinci Equity Group
Afton, Iowa

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Shannon has built our lab and is responsible for its success in a very short time. She has used her skills to recruit new customers and manage production in the lab, all while maintaining a positive attitude that is [her] trademark."



Shannon Waigand has P/L responsibility for all operational and sales activities in the Caliber Optical Lab, including leading customer service and wholesale sales initiatives and directing production activities. She has been in optical for over 28 years, having started directly out of high school as "an extremely un-trained optician" with an optical retailer. "Within three months, I was managing three of their locations," she said. Next, she took on the role of managing a private practice and, subsequently, relocated to Iowa and began working in a small optical lab.

"This job evolved into a sales job, the first salesperson, and then grew into an entire organization that I led as the vice president of sales and marketing, which included six salespeople and a customer service team of eight," she added. "Within three years, we were listed as a VM Top Lab with \$12 million per year in sales."

Waigand noted that, with the encouragement of her husband, she became one of the original owners and founders of DaVinci Equity Group. Today, DaVinci has seven optical locations and the full-service Caliber lab business. It was ranked at No. 39 in VM's 2017 Top 50 U.S. Optical Retailers report.

SHE SAYS... "It wasn't until 25 years into my career that I believed in myself enough that [I recognized] a woman could do this, too. Learn something from everyone you encounter. Create genuine connections. Our industry is very referral based and it is the relationships that can make or break you."

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CONGRATULATIONS

Matilde Sometti, 20/20 Europe Publisher

Honored as one of Vision Monday's 2018 Most Influential Women in Optical!

Thank you for all your dedication and contribution to 20/20 Europe and the Jobson Optical Group.

We congratulate you on this well-deserved accomplishment!





Carrie D. Alfieri, OD

FOUNDER AND CEO

Pinnacle Eye Associates, P.A.
McKinney, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Dr. Alfieri believes in constant innovation, whether implementing new technology or streamlining the practice’s approach to service and care.”



Carrie Alfieri, OD, is the founder and CEO of Pinnacle Eye Associates, but the title she prefers to use is that of visionary. “In addition to seeing patients, I create the vision for the direction of the

practice and implement strategies for achieving that vision,” Dr. Alfieri explained. She inspires her staff to work toward achieving Pinnacle’s mission: to exceed patients’ expectations, inspire confidence through education and foster excellence in vision care services and products. Key to this mission is keeping her practice strongly positioned at the technological forefront of eyecare.

As Pinnacle’s sole optometrist, Dr. Alfieri provides a range of eye health services for patients of all ages. She has specialized training in neuro optometry, pediatrics, ocular disease and low vision, and she is a certified glaucoma specialist and orthokeratologist. She is recognized statewide as an innovator in contact lenses and practice management, and has won numerous professional honors including CooperVision’s 2018 Best Practices award. Dr. Alfieri was also voted “Best Optometrist of McKinney” 11 times.

Dr. Alfieri’s personal leadership style is to create a culture that inspires people to become the best version of themselves. She encourages her staff to constantly improve their knowledge and empower themselves through education.

SHE SAYS... “My advice to those seeking advancement in the field is to embrace the power of posi-

tivity, even during challenges, and to celebrate small successes. And most importantly, don’t be afraid to ask for help—many people will help if you simply just ask.”

Kara M. Cavuoto, MD

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF CLINICAL OPHTHALMOLOGY DIRECTOR, MEDICAL STUDENT EDUCATION IN OPHTHALMOLOGY

Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine
Miami, Florida

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Dr. Kara Cavuoto’s commitment and dedication to mentoring in medical student education makes her a vital part of the academic institution of the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and Bascom Palmer Eye Institute. Ophthalmology is now one of the most-often requested sub-specialty electives at the University.”



Dr. Kara Cavuoto is an associate professor of clinical ophthalmology and associate professor of clinical pediatrics at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute and the University of Miami Miller School of

Medicine. In this role, she evaluates and treats patients with pediatric eye disorders, including amblyopia and strabismus, as well as adults with strabismus. She also is the director of Medical Student Education in Ophthalmology at the University of Miami and coordinates and oversees all ophthalmology clerkships and pre-clinical graduate coursework in ophthalmology for nearly 500 medical students.

Dr. Cavuoto attended college and medical school at the University of Miami as part of the honors program in medicine, which combined a BS-MD degree program. She completed an internship in internal medicine at Jackson Memorial Hospital, fol-

lowed by an ophthalmology residency and a pediatric ophthalmology and strabismus fellowship at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute. She is board certified in ophthalmology and practices in the Miami and Palm Beach Gardens offices of Bascom Palmer Eye Institute.

Among her recent awards are the 2017 Michael R. Redmond MD Outstanding Young Ophthalmologist Leadership Award, from the Florida Society of Ophthalmology; the Women in Academic Medicine’s Excellence in Mentorship Award (2017) and the American Medical Women’s Association’s Exceptional Mentor Award (2017).

SHE SAYS... “My personal philosophy is inspired by the great sports coach Vince Lombardi, who said, ‘Watch your thoughts, they become your beliefs. Watch your beliefs, they become your words. Watch your words, they become your actions. Watch your actions, they become your habits. Watch your habits, they become your character.’”

Cathy Gosnell

LAB MANAGER

Bard Optical
Peoria, Illinois

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Cathy led the execution of moving from a traditional to free-form lab and the start-up of wholesale operations. She hires and develops a loyal, talented team, holding everyone to the same high standard of quality she delivers daily.”



Cathy Gosnell manages the full surfacing lab for Bard Optical and serves as the key salesperson for the wholesale operation. She said, “Since I took the position, we have gone from completing 700 jobs per week to over 2,500.” She oversees all aspects of the lab operation from hiring, team building, product flow, quality

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RISING STARS

WOMEN WHO ARE 'UP-AND-COMERS' IN THEIR CAREERS AND COMPANIES

assurance and timely delivery of jobs, paying “particular attention to operational efficiencies and cost containment.”

Gosnell started in the optical industry in 1989 as a pre-test technician. After a year she received cross-training in the lab and “has loved being in a lab ever since.” After working in a couple of private labs, she came to Bard Optical in 2002.

“My mentor has been Diana Hall, our president at Bard Optical. Diana is a trailblazer in this industry. She took me under her wing and gave me all of the tools I needed to succeed. As life threw some challenges at me I always had her in my corner as my personal cheerleader. Along the way, she taught me how to get the best out of my staff by supporting them as she supported me. She is my role model.”

SHE SAYS... “I would encourage more women to have careers in the lab. Each day I am able to help

hundreds of our patients see better and that is a really rewarding career. At the end of the day, you feel a real sense of accomplishment.”

Whitney Hauser, OD

DRY EYE COACH

Memphis, Tennessee

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Her work has changed the lives of countless individuals, whether it be patients or interns she shapes during their training.”



Dr. Whitney Hauser is the founder and CEO of Dry Eye Coach. In 2016, she created dryeyecoach.com, an ocular surface disease education hub that offers peer-to-peer education and practice

management direction from experts in the field. Dr. Hauser develops creative content including articles, videos and podcasts in collaboration with key opinion leaders.

A graduate of Southern College of Optometry, where she is an associate professor, she has lectured domestically and internationally on the effective management and treatment of ocular surface patients. Dr. Hauser also leads Signal Ophthalmic Consulting, which provides practices direction in premium eyecare services. She currently works at TearWell Advanced Dry Eye Treatment Center in Memphis.

Asked why she chose to specialize in dry eye treatment, Dr. Hauser explained, “Many dry eye patients don’t have case histories, but they do have stories about how their condition is affecting them, especially if it’s moderate to severe. I take time to listen to their stories, and then give them treatment options. It feels like you’re making an

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Brien Holden
VISION INSTITUTE

congratulates

Professor Padmaja Sankaridurg, PhD

Head of Myopia Program and Intellectual Property
Brien Holden Vision Institute

Conjoint Professor, School of Optometry and Vision Science
University of New South Wales

...on being named one of the

Most Influential Women in Optical for 2018.

Padmaja is a globally recognized authority in understanding myopia. An outstanding researcher, educator and leader, she is revered by her colleagues and many collaborators for the quality, professionalism and humility that defines her work.

**Congratulations to all of the
Most Influential Women in Optical for 2018.**





RISING STARS

WOMEN WHO ARE 'UP-AND-COMERS' IN THEIR CAREERS AND COMPANIES

impact on the individual, which is rewarding.”

Dr. Hauser said her leadership philosophy is best summarized by Steve Jobs: “It doesn’t make sense to hire smart people and tell them what to do; we hire smart people so they can tell us what to do. I enjoy creating a constantly evolving road-map for my business, but collaboration is what moves the needle.”

SHE SAYS... “Find your passion, create a goal and execute. Seek mentorship and open your mind to the advice given, especially if you don’t like it. Honor your commitments. Work hard every day, because we’re all replaceable.”

Cara Kirman

MARKETING DIRECTOR

K Optical
Hummelstown, Pennsylvania

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Cara is well-versed in today’s lens technologies, from manufacturing to market positioning and staff education. She has fantastic presentation skills and is very passionate about the industry. She works with practices to develop their staff in best practices and dispensing solutions to help them grow.”



Cara Kirman’s roots in the optical business run deep: her grandfather was an optometrist, and her father is the owner and president of K Optical. She started her optical career by working in the lab as a summer job while in college. (“Actually, I started by cleaning old cylinder machines and generators in the garage outside of the lab before my dad brought me on as an employee in the lab itself,” she said). What started as a summer job became much more. “I unexpectedly fell in love with the

lab and changed my major at Penn State (to Health Care Policy and Administration) to align with my new goals.”

As marketing director of the lab, she manages the website, creates marketing materials, acquires new accounts, and educates customers about new products and technologies. But she never strays far from her roots, jumping in to surface and edge lenses as needed. She also finds time to work with the Optical Synergies lab group, which she loves because, “I am most passionate about ensuring the future of independent laboratories.”

SHE SAYS... “Every member of the staff at K Optical has been my mentor. Learning from so many amazing and experienced people allows me, as a young woman, to fearlessly navigate the male-dominated lab industry.”

Laura Lewis

DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

MyEyeDr.
Raleigh, North Carolina

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Laura Lewis joined MyEyeDr. through the integration of Eye Care Associates in 2014. She oversees the human resources department and is responsible for all HR items, including recruitment, associate relations and HR systems.”



Laura Lewis had worked with Eye Care Associates as the leader of its human resources department for less than a year when the company became part of MyEyeDr., but she wasn’t fazed by any uncertainty resulting from the transaction. “I saw this as a great opportunity to learn more about the expanding optical industry, and also more about mergers and acquisitions as a discipline,” she said.

Today, Lewis oversees HR functions for talent acquisition and retention, business operations, compliance, contracting and human resources information systems. “My proudest moments with MyEyeDr. have been playing a role in the career growth opportunities and success stories of those employees who joined our family of practices over the years,” she said. “It puts a smile on my face to see careers take flight within our organization.”

Lewis said she finds herself motivated every day to learn more, do more and be more involved in the ever-changing optical landscape. She’s also an active member of the Optical Women’s Association and its mentoring committee. Most recently, she accepted an opportunity to chair the sponsorship ambassador sub-committee.

During her career, Lewis said she has had several mentors who helped her develop as a professional. She noted that the lessons she learned from each of them “have been vastly different, and I try hard to incorporate learnings from each of them into my daily personal and professional life.”

SHE SAYS... “Push yourself to do something outside your comfort zone every day. Learning and growth happen outside your comfort zone.”

Lauren Makofske

BRAND DIRECTOR

Marchon Eyewear
San Clemente, California

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “A year ago, Lauren moved to Southern California to co-lead Dragon Alliance. Within a short amount of time, she has built a world class creative, digital and brand management organization there.”

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For Lauren Makofske, her personal leadership style of “do no harm, but stand up for yourself” is something that she believes strongly in and aims to instill in her team every day. She “fell into optical by chance” shortly after her college graduation and has spent the majority of her career with Marchon.

One of her major accomplishments was developing the award-winning “Do Not Try This At Home” video campaign for Flexon Eyewear. Makofske recently made the move from East Coast to West Coast to co-lead Dragon Alliance, which Marchon acquired in 2012. “This has been my biggest and most rewarding challenge to date—not only moving across the country, but learning the action sports industry.”

While she’s learned so much about optical, her time working in restaurants has taught her some of life’s greatest lessons. “The first being you can’t do it all yourself, and the second is how to make others feel welcome. I have come a long way since then, but I still draw on those values a lot,” she said.

SHE SAYS... “The biggest and most beneficial career moves I have ever made scared me at first, but I learned how to set fear and doubt aside and pursue those opportunities anyway. Change is scary but it’s also the way forward. We’re more resilient than we may give ourselves credit for.”

Roxanna T. Potter, OD, FAAO

OWNER

Personal Eyecare
Sylvania, Ohio

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Under Dr. Potter’s leadership, her practice excels at innovation and individualized attention designed to provide superior vision care to patients of all ages.”



As the owner of Personal Eyecare and its sole practitioner, Roxanna Potter, OD, leads a staff of 10 employees who are committed to providing excellent eye health care to patients of all ages in a family-friendly environment. Her high volume practice, a Vision Source member, provides primary and secondary optometric care utilizing the latest technologies and innovations in the optical field. Dr. Potter is a strong believer in the importance of continuously investing in advanced technology and innovative marketing efforts to keep her practice ahead of the curve.

Among the programs offered at Personal Eyecare are dry eye clinics, a myopia control program and a macular degeneration prevention protocol for older patients. Personal Eyecare also offers specialty contact lens services, earning recognition as one of CooperVision’s 2018 Best Practices.

Dr. Potter is active in numerous professional associations including the American Academy of Optometry, the American Board of Optometry and the American Optometric Association on a national, state and local level. She is a member of the AOA’s Cornea & Contact Lens section and sits on the Gas Permeable Lens Institute Advisory Board.

SHE SAYS... “I have been an early adopter of many forward-thinking programs for my practice.”

Kristen Reynolds

MANAGER, PHILANTHROPIC PROGRAMS

National Vision
Duluth, Georgia

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Kristen has a great ability to solve issues, bring resources together, find ways to improve processes and exceed goals.”



Kristen Reynolds guides and oversees National Vision Inc.’s (NVI) philanthropic effort to create and grow sustainable low-cost eyewear and optical services models, both nationally and internationally. This includes managing the philanthropic program partnerships and identifying new opportunities to expand NVI’s philanthropic outreach.

In addition, Reynolds develops and manages philanthropic and fund-raising programs and data analytics for leadership and shareholder reporting. She manages the national partnership with Boys & Girls Clubs of America and provides program management of the Vision Screening Program. She also runs the annual P3 Conference (Partnership, Progress, Philanthropy), which connects senior management and suppliers in a valuable networking environment in tandem with the largest fundraiser for NVI’s sponsored charitable foundation, 20/20 Quest.

Among her recent accomplishments, Reynolds oversaw the effort to increase sponsorship revenue for the P3 Conference by almost 30 percent. She also created NVI GivesBack, a program that allows NVI’s America’s Best stores to help those in need in their communities. Prior to joining NVI, Reynolds worked for The Vision Council on its show team for Vision Expo, where she managed the marketing strategy and implementation for Expo East and West and special programs, such as the student program and Eye² Zone. Reynolds has been a member of the Optical Women’s Association since 2011 and a member of The Vision Council’s Emerging Optical Leaders committee since 2017.

SHE SAYS... “Find out what motivates someone, and try to lead with that in mind. Have the tough conversations because you have to and always be respectful because you want to. Get business accomplished and have fun while doing so.”

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RISING STARS

WOMEN WHO ARE 'UP-AND-COMERS' IN THEIR CAREERS AND COMPANIES

Angela Tsai, OD

OWNER & CEO

Premier Eyecare, Angela Tsai OD
& Associates, P.C.
Fredericksburg, Virginia

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "She leads by example and helps her staff to stay ahead of the curve in the constantly changing field of optometry."



As the CEO of Premier Eyecare, Angela Tsai, OD, essentially has two jobs, one as a busy optometric doctor and the other as a successful business owner running a large independent optometric practice. With a staff of 25 employees including five doctors, Premier Eyecare provides primary care and specialized vision health services including visual therapy for traumatic brain injury and for special needs patients with autism and Down syndrome. The practice, a Vision Source member, also treats ocular diseases and provides specialty contact lenses.

Since joining Premier Eyecare as a part owner in 2009, Dr. Tsai helped grow the practice by \$2 million annually. In 2014, she became the sole owner. She said, "Unlike most medical professions, to be truly successful in optometry we have to excel at both medical care and the retail business. With such a diverse range of skills required, it's important to build the right team." Collaboration and continuous learning, she said, are key elements of her leadership style designed to help her staff deliver top quality care.

To succeed in optometry, Dr. Tsai's advice is to stay focused on providing patients with the best care possible while educating them on the importance of eye health.

SHE SAYS... "My advice to women seeking advancement in the field is to find something that makes you unique, and develop a specialty that makes you stand out from the crowd. Never give up on your dream. Focus on where you want to be and find a way there."

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JULY 2018



Autianna Wilson

LEAD OPTICIAN AND BUYER

Dr. Leona Landers
San Francisco, California

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She is unapologetically herself and rightfully known as the ‘Optical Goddess.’ She’s breaking boundaries and creating a place where ECPs around the world can communicate ideas.”



Autianna Wilson, dubbed “Optical Goddess” after garnering a reputation for having so many happy patients, is known for pushing the enve-

lope. While she began in optical working in a LensCrafters lab, she found her calling on the sales floor. She’s made it her job to create a positive, personalized experience, bringing happiness and self-esteem one frame and lens selection at a time.

As a lead optician and buyer, Wilson’s role ranges from buying new inventory to keeping the staff current on the latest technology and social media branding. Some of her accomplishments include being featured in various optical publications, speaking at a Vision Expo East Pop-Up, major social media branding growth and the launch of her website, www.opticalgoddesslife.com in 2018.

When it comes to leading people, Wilson’s personal philosophy boils down to the idea that leadership is about action. “For me, it’s

been about seeing an opportunity to make an impact but doing so in a way others will feel inspired to follow. My influence stems from being authentically me,” she said. Two people who have inspired her to be a better leader are her mother, Julie Wilson and friend, Dr. Arian Fartash. “Both of these woman have been by my side to hear my ideas and what I want to accomplish, and their honest opinions mean the world to me.”

SHE SAYS... “I want more people to feel comfortable and confident being themselves and having their own opinions, even if others may not agree.”

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JENNIFER COPPEL

Vice President of Brand Management
Tura Inc.

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One Of Vision Monday’s 2018
Most Influential Women in Optical

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drive, talent, and dedication to
Tura Inc. and the optical industry.



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Arlene Melanie Caputo

TECHNICAL INFORMATION SPECIALIST

Essilor of America
Dallas, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Arlene’s optical knowledge is incredible and she is always willing to coach, educate and lift up those around her.”



Arlene Caputo is the go-to person within Essilor of America when it comes to technical assistance related to the company’s lens products and customer support services. As technical information specialist, she is responsible for creating and distributing lens technical data and processing procedures to the company’s broad network of customers including independent labs and ECPs. But her role extends beyond being gatekeeper of technical data. She also functions as the “voice of the customer” within the company, always seeking the best vision solutions for large and small customers.

Caputo plays an important role in supporting new product development, creating the required technical literature and specification sheets for each introduction. Her expertise helps to identify potential issues regarding technical aspects of products to sidestep customer problems. She also reviews marketing and sales communications for technical accuracy and troubleshoots any technical difficulties.

Her depth of technical knowledge has been acquired over a career spanning 27 years at Essilor, with jobs in data processing, distribution, customer service and telesales. Underlying her success, she said, is the support she has received over the years from her family and from her managers at Essilor.

SHE SAYS... “My advice to women seeking to advance in optical is simple: Treat your job as if it is your own business, and take pride in everything that you do. Never be afraid to reach out to anyone for assistance to support your customers.”

Tamara Franklin, CPOT

DIRECTOR, VISION SOURCE LEARNING & STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Vision Source
Kingwood, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She develops, maintains and delivers education opportunities to the doctors and staff at more than 3,300 Vision Source locations.”



As director of learning and staff development, Tamara Franklin reaches out to Vision Source practices on a daily basis, providing mentorship and direction on staff training programs designed for members located across the country. She is responsible for Vision Source’s comprehensive online learning platform that includes over 100 training modules, and she continues to grow the program with material designed to address the needs of today’s progressive independent practices. She also lectures doctors and their staff on topics ranging from staff development to office procedures.

Franklin was first introduced to the optical business in high school, working part-time for a local optometrist. While in college, she obtained her Optometric Assistant registration and five years later was certified as a Paraoptometric Optometric Technician (CPOT). She worked for independent optometric practices for over 26 years before joining Vision Source full time in 2012, after leading a regional network of Vision Source practices.

Franklin has helped to develop state and national paraoptometric education programs and has worked to provide pathways for career growth in the field. She is past chair of the AOA Commission on Paraoptometric Certification and is currently on the AOA-CPC’s test development committee, helping to develop certification testing guidelines. Her dedication and contributions to her field have been recognized by awards including the AOA Distinguished Service Award.

SHE SAYS... “My advice to women pursuing optical careers is to find mentors early on and to never stop learning.”

Glenna Glenn

DIVISIONAL VICE PRESIDENT, COMMERCIAL MARKETS EAST

VSP Optics Group
Bradenton, Florida

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Glenna is a respected, experienced leader in our industry. Members from across all lines of VSP Global businesses look to Glenna for guidance, support, mentoring and leadership.”



With over 34 years of experience in the optical business, Glenna Glenn has blazed trails in her career as both a business owner and sales professional. In her current role as vice president of VSP

Optics Group’s Commercial Markets East, she collaborates with all VSP lines of business to educate doctors on the value of the VSP Premier Program. She creates strategic agreements and programs to support the company’s Doctor Alliance Groups and key accounts. She leads and supports four regional vice presidents and their teams to achieve their goals, and also recruits, trains and develops sales personnel for her division.

Glenn started her career as an optician and launched with partners a business called Doctors Optical, expanding the successful venture to four more locations in Miami, Florida. She maintains her optician license and is a member of the Professional Opticians of Florida as well as the Optical Women’s Association. Glenn joined VSP nine years ago. She is grateful, she said, to the many mentors who have supported her career, including the senior leadership at VSP Optics Group and leadership at VSP’s other lines of business.

Glenn’s advice to women developing a career in optical is: “Pursue employment with a company with

More →



foresight. Look for a strong mentor and focus, work hard, take risks and go above and beyond. Live your passion and you'll never work a day in your life."

SHE SAYS... "I do my best to inspire my teams with passion and conviction, focusing on helping millions of people to see better and achieve their full potential."

Velvet Richardson Hawkins

SENIOR RETAIL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT REPRESENTATIVE

Carl Zeiss Vision
San Diego, California

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Over her 20+ year career, Velvet has mentored several people, to become the best version of themselves. She is extremely smart, thinks well on her feet and has a beautiful soul, which comes through in her smile and actions daily. Her customers appreciate this attitude when trying to learn about new products. However, she is tough taskmaster, expecting 100% from herself and those around her."



Velvet Hawkins became fascinated with optics at the age of 14 as a result of attending a career fair. She said, "From that moment on, eyes and helping people became both my passion and my career.

Upon completion of my schooling, my first job and the start to my career in optics was as a vision therapist and optical supervisor."

Early on, Hawkins realized that it was easy for her to motivate and inspire others because she enjoyed it. "I also discovered my love of learning and training never knowing that one day my career path would connect all three. It was not until 21 years ago, when I joined Carl Zeiss Vision, that I was able to connect

these three loves into the next phase of my career."

At Carl Zeiss Vision, she is responsible for a diverse range of geographic territories and has held various positions with the company, such as business development representative, key account manager, regional manager and regional business representative. "I enjoy my job because it continues to allow me to have success as I learn, take new challenges, teach others, and help people succeed."

SHE SAYS... "Having goals and passions that leads to success is great but it's amazing when you are motivating, blessing and inspiring others along the way. It makes it all worthwhile, fun, memorable, and most of all, it creates lasting relationships."

Barbara Horn, OD

VICE PRESIDENT, AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION, PRESIDENT-ELECT OF AOA

Diplomate, American Board of Optometry
St. Louis, Missouri

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Dr. Horn's strength in advocacy efforts as well as her passion for student and new graduate involvement has been undoubtedly evident for 19 consecutive years in her AOA volunteer service. In 2015, she was appointed chair of the Student Transition Project Team that gave birth to the incredibly successful and ongoing AOA+ program."



June was a busy, and rewarding, month for Barbara Horn, OD. She was elected as president-elect of the American Optometric Association on June 23 and will ascend to the presidency of the association in June 2019 at Optometry's Meeting in St. Louis. What this means, she said, is that six months later in January "we will 'ring in' the epic year of 2020 with a female OD as the president of AOA."

Horn was elected to AOA's board of trustees in 2011 and served five years as a trustee. She was elected

secretary-treasurer in 2016 and vice president in 2017. Over the past two years, she has served as a member of AOA's executive committee and the 401K committee. She previously served as a member, and chair, of the investment, finance and the constitution and bylaws committees. And over the past seven years, she has served as liaison to 36 state affiliates, and 11 schools of optometry, 10 centers, sections or groups within AOA or other organizations within optometry.

"In my first week of optometry school, our practice management educator asked us to present on a topic, any topic of our choosing," she said. "I chose 'the alphabet soup of optometry: AOA, AOSA, AAO, ASCO, ARBO among many others. I realized that while all within the alphabet soup are critical to the functioning of optometry, one safeguards, advances and continues to represent and protect us all. Because of that realization, in week one of optometry school, I was forever devoted to our AOA."

SHE SAYS... "Find the area of practice or volunteerism that you are most passionate about and give back to the profession. The rewards and knowledge gained in the experience and the relationship developed give you more than you put in."

Janna Neal

VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS

Zyloware Eyewear
Port Chester, New York

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Her unwavering dedication to the success of Zyloware is worn on her sleeve, and her core characteristics of compassion and empathy allow everyone who works with her to feel a part of the prosperity she brings to herself and to the company."



Janna Neal "unexpectedly discovered" the optical industry while looking for a job during college and came across a newspaper ad for a position with Zyloware. She

MENTORS

WOMEN WHO ARE TEAM BUILDERS AND DEVELOPERS OF TALENT

started as a customer service representative, and after receiving her degree, she was offered the opportunity to oversee business operations and human resources.

Nearly 16 years later, Neal is still with the Zyloware family as vice president of operations. “The beauty of my position is the daily connection I have with various departments helping to ensure they are operating smoothly while implementing company policies,” Neal said. “The Shyer family, who are the proprietors of Zyloware, are pioneers in the optical industry. This was the perfect opportunity to take advantage of their wealth of knowledge.”

Neal, who is also a part of the Optical Women’s Association, The Vision Council and its subsidiary, Emerging Optical Leaders, has a leadership philosophy of not thinking of herself as having a staff but as having a team. “You’re only as strong as your team. I want my team members to feel comfortable with learning from the mistakes they make. Some of our best successes have been from failed attempts.”

SHE SAYS... “One of my biggest accomplishments is the ability to recognize a team member’s underlying talent and encourage them to pursue it.”

Becky Patterson

CORPORATE TRAINER – GROWTH AND INTEGRATION GROUP

EyeCare Partners
St. Louis, Missouri

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Becky launched EyeCare Partners Academy, a technology training platform for the organization, allowing a consistent onboarding process, expanded role opportunities and consistent training.”

Becky Patterson began her career at Clarkson Eyecare, now part of the EyeCare Partners family. A formative influence was Clarkson’s founder, Dr. Lawrence Jehling, who she said “taught me how to take care of



our patients. He showed us the meaning of excellence in optical.” After joining EyeCare Partners as a corporate trainer, she moved on to the newly formed Growth and Integration Group, created to facilitate the growth of the organization from 85 locations to over 245 today.

The EyeCare Partners Academy has facilitated this growth by making essential training available online. So far this year, 2,000 employees have used the platform to complete over 25,000 classes. She also maintains a busy schedule of hands-on training, having assisted in over 100 optometric office software integration projects in the past three years.

Her proudest achievement, though, reaches to the core mission of eyecare. “My highest honor during my career has been to lead five teams to third-world countries where we have seen more than 1,000 people in vision clinics and given away thousands of prescription glasses, over-the-counter

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Congratulations to CooperVision’s very own, **Michele Andrews, OD**, Senior Director of Professional and Academic Affairs, North America, for being one of *Vision Monday’s Most Influential Women in Optical*.

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readers and sunglasses.”

SHE SAYS... “Be patient—this is a marathon, not a sprint. It takes a long time to learn and when you figure it out it could change. Be committed to your own personal integrity. Learn to be flexible and you won’t ever break.”

Maryann Santos

VISION CARE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Goodwin College
Hartford, Connecticut

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She created and manages the Licensed Optician Vision Care Technology program at Goodwin College. She is the leader and mentor of our future rising stars.”



Maryann Santos lives, breathes and even blogs optical education. Education has been a focus of her life since she entered the optical field as an apprentice optician out of high school. Over the years, while working as a dispensing optician, she earned associate, bachelor and master degrees in business and education as well as her ABO, ABO Masters and NCLE certifications. Santos was managing her own optical dispensary training business when the opportunity to establish an opticianry program at Goodwin College presented itself in 2013.

“Developing the Vision Care Technology (VCT) program at Goodwin was by far my most challenging professional accomplishment to date,” said Santos, whose 30+ years in the field provided a solid foundation for the job. Today, she teaches at the school and continually updates the curriculum to reflect industry trends. She also writes monthly Pro-to-Pro opticianry articles for *20/20 Magazine* and pens a blog called “WhatsAnOptician.com.”

Looking back on her successes, Santos expressed

gratitude to her many association and industry mentors, including the VCT program’s advisory board and Rebecca Soto, her faculty partner in running Goodwin’s VCT program.

SHE SAYS... “My management philosophy is to encourage people to work within their gifts and talents. I will do what I can to guide and support them to be their best. It is very important that people enjoy their day at work. I encourage balance and laughter.”

Amy Stachler

REGIONAL SALES DIRECTOR, WEST COAST
Luxottica U.S.
New York, New York

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She lends her strategic thinking and love of teamwork to her management approach, ensuring all members of her team have not only the tools they need to succeed, but feel inspired and excited and part of something important.”



Amy Stachler is responsible for wholesale sales for Luxottica’s brand portfolio on the West Coast, leading a team of over 70 people. The breadth of Luxottica’s portfolio and the size of the territory she manages means that her team members are diverse in their roles and in their geographical locations. She sees her own role as more than delivering strong sales numbers—she strives to foster connectivity among her team members, who often work on their own but aspire to a sense of belonging and family.

Stachler began her Luxottica career as an account manager in the department store channel, where she implemented a sell-through program to increase sales through consumer marketing. A watershed moment occurred in 2008, when she received ICF certification in leadership coaching, which she describes as, “A life-changing experience that I bring to work with me

every day.” Her passion for coaching is reflected not just in developing her team, but in providing continuing education to doctor alliances and other groups.”

SHE SAYS... “I believe people need purpose and the recognition that they have choice and bear accountability for those choices. Each person holds the key to this equation, and as a leader it is my purpose to help people unlock their personal door.”

Dawn Ward

DIRECTOR OF SALES
Europa Eyewear
Vernon Hills, Illinois

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Dawn is always looking for a way to help. She is always willing to give advice and stick up for you.”



Throughout her career, Dawn Ward believes she has been fortunate to experience different types of managers who have all helped to shape her leadership style. “My goal is to empower and inspire the people I work with,” she said. The leaders she seeks to emulate the most were the ones who led by instilling their confidence in her. “They were the type of leaders who made you feel like you could take on any challenge that was set before you, and because of that, you didn’t want to let them down,” she said.

Ward, also a member of the Optical Women’s Association, got her start in optical 13 years ago and has worked her way up from a sales representative to director of sales. She is currently responsible for helping to head a sales team of 70 reps and leading a team of five regional managers for Europa Eyewear.

SHE SAYS... “Work hard, take chances and have fun in your journey. Seek out mentors, network, and don’t be afraid to push yourself out of your comfort zone. This is an incredible industry with no limits or glass ceilings.”

INNOVATORS

WOMEN WHO HAVE INITIATED NEW PRODUCTS, PROGRAMS OR IDEAS MARKING SUCCESS

Erin Allen

VICE PRESIDENT, PROVIDER SOLUTIONS

VSP Global
Rancho Cordova, California

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She has led many sales teams to record breaking years and is always looking for ways to move the needle forward.”



Erin Allen’s recent promotion to vice president of provider solutions at VSP Global is the culmination of more than 28 years of sales experience within the optical business world.

Her career path started in 1990 as an Essilor sales representative and continued on an upward trail of sales positions and successes at

various optical companies. In 2012, Allen joined VSP as director of sales, West zone for the Optics Group, earning the coveted Director of the Year award three times. In 2016, she took over the Altair sales team achieving record sales years in 2016 and 2017.

In her current position, Allen leads VSP’s Global business development team, which consults, serves and provides opportunities to VSP network doctors participating in the VSP Global Premier Program. She is responsible for facilitating the company’s cross line of business sales initiatives and activities. Allen also oversees the global sales launches of innovative products like VSP Global’s Level smart eyeglasses, which integrates activity-tracking technology into the eyewear.

Allen’s impressive record of accomplishments in sales reflects her leadership style, which is to provide sales associates with “everything you can to ensure success, including a strategy, clear direc-

tion, training, resources and tools.” She encourages her team members to combine sales and analytics to ensure a consultation approach to finding new customer opportunities and solutions.

SHE SAYS... “Remove the obstacles, roll up your sleeves and work with your teams. And have fun while you work hard.”

Ashley Cyr

MARKETING MANAGER

Independent Doctors of Optometric Care (IDOC)
Norwalk, Connecticut

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Ashley has led IDOC’s efforts to retool our marketing approach, giving us a deeper understanding of what independent optometrists need and want today.”

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Carl Zeiss Vision congratulates Cathy Gosnell, Lab Manager for Bard Optical, for being recognized and honored as a Rising Star as part of the most Influential Women in Optical for 2018.

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For a professional alliance focused on helping practices grow, understanding the concerns of current members and prospective members is essential. In a short time, Ashley Cyr has had a strong influence on Independent Doctors of Optometric Care's (IDOC) ability to achieve that goal.

Cyr's marketing career began in medical devices and led her into event management, where she facilitated personal contact for clients and prospects with C-level executives. Creating and maintaining connections is also at the core of her work at IDOC. She has implemented a customer resource management system that makes marketing more efficient through continuous analysis and optimization. The result, according to IDOC CEO, Dave Brown, is that "We now have an ever-growing funnel of leads and a much-improved understanding of what works and does not work in terms of messaging, open rates and timing for marketing efforts."

Though she has only spent a brief time in optical (an industry not lacking in idiosyncrasies), she has hit the ground running. "I've found that immersing yourself in the various areas as soon as possible will help broaden and deepen your knowledge in this space. Having the opportunity to speak with our members on what their challenges are has really jump-started my career at IDOC."

SHE SAYS... "I've been incredibly fortunate to meet a few key people in my previous and current roles that have been mentors to me throughout my marketing career. They support me, coach me, challenge me, collaborate with me, and have been a major influence on where and who I am today."

Marie E. DiPalma

SENIOR BRAND DIRECTOR, RAY-BAN
Luxottica Wholesale North America
New York, New York

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Marie played an important role in the launch of Ray-Ban prescription lenses to wholesale customers across North America. Given the size of the brand—the most popular eyewear brand in the world—and the unique aspects of the offering, Marie helped to outline the value proposition for customers and develop tools to explain the benefits to their wholesale consumers as well. This was arguably the biggest product launch in the industry last year and Marie's efforts helped to make it a success."



As senior brand director for Ray-Ban within the North American wholesale marketplace, Marie DiPalma is responsible for launching new products as well as driving organic growth for the industry's leading eyewear brand. This includes developing product assortment strategies, distribution plans, trade marketing projects as well as commercial tactics. The launch of Ray-Ban prescription lenses over the past year was one of the most complex product introductions for her brand team, said DiPalma. "We focused on ensuring that our sales representatives, customers and end consumers were equipped to identify and deliver the brand's strong value proposition."

DiPalma's expertise at marketing and new product introductions was honed over the years, working for Estee Lauder and Avon before joining Luxottica four years ago. Hired as brand director for Luxottica's Premium Fashion Portfolio, her first assignment was to launch Michael Kors eyewear. DiPalma's management style in working with her marketing teams is to avoid micromanaging.

SHE SAYS... "If you have the right people in the right roles and you are transparent about what everyone needs to accomplish, you shouldn't need to micromanage."

Arian Fartash, OD

GLAM OPTOMETRIST
Glam Optometry
Placentia, California

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Dr. Fartash is a leader in using social media to educate patients on eye health, market eyewear and ophthalmic solutions. She finds the fun and fashion in eyeglasses."



"Know your self-worth and add tax" is a quote that Dr. Arian Fartash lives by and encourages other women to live by too. "I have always felt that I have been on the same playing field as everyone else in the profession. I set my own wages, negotiate my own hours, and do not sacrifice my integrity and values to please others," she said.

"I encourage all women to be confident, know their self-worth, and never think of themselves as weak." Dr. Fartash, a second-generation optometrist and Southern California College of Optometry (SCCO) graduate has worked in many facets of optometry including retail, private practice and nursing homes. However, after seeing a void in the online space for optometry, education and fashion to converge, she started her social media platform and blog, known as Glam Optometrist.

Through this platform, she's been able to shed light on the profession of optometry in a fun, modern way and connect with the public. She's been featured on ABC 7 news Live spreading awareness about issues including sun protection, children's vision and eye safety. Additionally, in 2017 Dr. Fartash started a social media company to help optical offices utilize their social media. Being experienced in the field, she is able to implement successful tools in social media to help offices increase patient count and revenue.

SHE SAYS... "I have never felt that being a woman

INNOVATORS

WOMEN WHO HAVE INITIATED NEW PRODUCTS, PROGRAMS OR IDEAS MARKING SUCCESS

has made my career goals and path more difficult because I have always set the tone for my own destiny in optometry.”

Holly Gillentine

**VICE PRESIDENT,
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS**

Essilor of America
Dallas, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “of her leadership, creativity, drive, passion and knowledge of the field. Through storytelling, her efforts drive the conversation, the message and the sense of urgency on the overall importance of eye health. She has reinvented both internal and external communications for Essilor and has reset the bar for the industry.”



Holly Gillentine defines her role as one “to connect our organization, people and customers to the Essilor Group mission of improving lives by improving sight through an integrated communications strategy.” Along with driving trade communications and campaigns, she also helps in customer experiences, employee and community engagement programs. To that end, she’s helped create an internal social media and news channel (WIRED).

Gillentine joined Essilor almost three years ago. She’d been an executive director and head of consumer marketing for Golin in Texas for more than 9 years, leading a team in the retail, energy and technology sectors. She’s had roles both on the agency side and with companies like Blockbuster and Match.com.

After receiving a B.S. journalism degree from Ohio University, she completed an MBA, with a

focus on marketing, from Southern Methodist University.

Today, Gillentine is a member of the Optical Women’s Association, Essilor Women’s Network and serves as an executive adviser to Inclusion and Diversity at Essilor of America. In 2016, she was the Sloan Visiting Professional Lecturer at the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University.

“I’m successful because of the team that surrounds me. Specifically at Golin, Ginger Porter, our managing director, was the ultimate combination of sponsor, friend and growth driver. Two people at Essilor have really helped me understand, embrace and love what I do: Dr. Howard Purcell and Sherianne James.”

SHE SAYS... “Embrace change. Go beyond your job. Love what you do.”

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Wisconsin Vision

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Danielle Irvine, OD

CLINICAL DIRECTOR OF LOW VISION SERVICES

Spectrios Institute for Low Vision
Wheaton, Illinois

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Dr. Irvine’s caring nature and selflessness show in the quality and compassion of her patient care. She devotes an incredible amount of time to patient communication, education and advocacy for those whose voices are often lost in the socioeconomic hierarchy. She serves everyone with love, care and the utmost respect. Her desire to serve others is unparalleled.”



Danielle Irvine, OD, graduated from Illinois College of Optometry in 2012, where she received the William Feinbloom Low Vision Award. She continued her work in low vision as a resident at ICO, the Spectrios Institute of Low Vision, and the Chicago Lighthouse, where her research included the use of iPads in low vision treatment.

After a brief sojourn in private practice, Dr. Irvine took over the clinical director position at Spectrios, where she trains residents and treats patients with various low vision issues, regardless of their ability to pay. She also spearheads a low vision clinic in Aurora, Ill., where she provides education in the community about eye disease and general health, and partners with other health agencies to provide nutrition education.

Dr. Irvine considers her major accomplishments to be “seeing a steady increase in people served each year since taking this role three years ago and providing hope to patients who have been told that nothing else can be done for their vision.”

SHE SAYS... “I encourage you to continue innovating and dreaming. We are experiencing an exciting time of advancing technology, while increasing

numbers of people are suffering permanent vision loss from conditions such as macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy. Providing the gift of enhanced vision is priceless.”

Paula Lawson

MANAGER, TECHNOLOGY OPERATIONS

Quantum Innovations, Inc.
Central Point, Oregon

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Her ability to relate with company personnel and Quantum’s customers has been critical in the rapid growth of the company. Her understanding of Quantum’s products and her ability to make the message clear to all has had a major impact on the company’s growth.”



Lawson spent more than a decade working in manufacturing before joining Quantum Innovations during its second year in business as employee number three. During her 14 years with the company, she has been instrumental in building its work force to 43 employees and helping it grow from a 2,000 square foot building to its current 15,000 square foot production facility which makes anti-reflecting coating systems and other products used at labs throughout the world.

After working in accounting and sales administration at Quantum, Lawson became manager of technology operations. In that role, she oversees manufacturing, technical support and sustaining engineering. She is a member of a team that is responsible for building, maintaining and improving Quantum equipment.

“While many corporate environments require, even encourage, self-promotion, Quantum believes in serving others first as the catalyst for a virtuous cycle. My primary—and most critical—role is to support my team and meet their needs

in whatever way necessary. At Quantum, our belief is “Manage things; lead people.”

SHE SAYS... “Just be.

1. Be relentless—Always pursue what is right/best (assertive), but don’t hurt others’ feelings while doing it (aggressive).
2. Be yourself—You’ll have more energy to do great things if you aren’t wasting it trying to be someone or something else.
3. Be fun—If you’re not enjoying yourself, neither are the people on your team.
4. Be a servant—Helping others is its own joy.
5. Be a student—Keep learning; it’s fun!”

Nan Meehan

VICE PRESIDENT OF EYEWEAR

ABB Optical Group
Coral Springs, Florida

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Within the first two years at ABB Nan established a new sales channel specifically for eyewear, incorporating these salespeople throughout the entire sales organization. Her perceptiveness to customer needs has led to her creating a vendor partnership to provide finished sunwear upon providing a prescription. The bottom line is that vendor partners are seeking Nan’s ideas and opinions regarding new processes and deliverables.”



Prior to working in the optical industry, Nan Meehan spent 25+ years in office products with great brands taking on VP leadership roles in sales and marketing where she “enjoyed seeing many innovative products turn into successful launches. I joined ABB Optical four years ago and feel fortunate to be a part of this great industry.”

In her current role as VP of Eyewear, Meehan serve as a critical intermediary for several depart-

INNOVATORS

WOMEN WHO HAVE INITIATED NEW PRODUCTS, PROGRAMS OR IDEAS MARKING SUCCESS

ments, driving collaboration among the Digital Eye Lab (DEL) Network, Primary Eyecare Network and the company's stock lenses division. She led the launch of the DEL Network's EZCONNECT, an online portal that allows ECPs to order eyewear, lenses and fabrication all at once with valuable one-package pricing and free shipping.

"As an executive in a billion dollar company, we operate with a small company charm which truly has an entrepreneurial style. We have respect for each other at all levels and care about our customers. These are important qualities in life and in business."

SHE SAYS... "Personally, my philosophy has always been to lead by example and treat people the way you would want to be treated. In each case, be honest and open but always be driving for results. I focus on accountability. These core values resonate for me as they are the same ones we believe in at ABB Optical."

Padmaja Sankaridurg

MANAGER OF THE MYOPIA PROGRAM AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Brien Holden Vision Institute (BHVI)
Kensington, Australia

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "She is a globally recognized leader in understanding myopia, its near epidemic proportions and its treatment, especially via visual/optical means."



Padmaja Sankaridurg is manager of the Myopia Program and Intellectual Property, and a member of the executive at Brien Holden Vision Institute (BHVI). She is responsible for multiple projects directed at tackling the global myopia "epidemic," including development of optical devices that will slow the progression

of myopia in children and prevent them from reaching high levels of the condition and exposure to increased risk of potentially blinding conditions.

With a background in contact lens studies, experience establishing a clinical trials center and as a research and consultant optometrist, coupled with many years working on myopia research, she brings multiple skills and knowledge to this role. Recently, she added expertise in intellectual property (IP), complementing over a decade of involvement in product development with postgraduate qualifications in this highly specialized area.

"I have been extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with and learn from visionaries in the field," said Sankaridurg. "Notable of these are Dr. Gullapalli Rao, chairman of LV Prasad Eye Institute, who is a humanitarian and exemplar for social equality and justice. In providing a system that delivers vision care of the highest quality with compassion to individuals in need, irrespective of their economic status, he taught me that the 'individual' is the most important. The late Prof. Brien Holden taught me that excellence is an attitude that has to be projected in everything one does."

SHE SAYS... "Work hard, strive for excellence, be compassionate to those around you and if the situation demands it, stand up for yourself and those around you. Our actions, either individual or collective, will support other women in the future."

Matilde Sometti

PUBLISHER

20/20 Europe Magazine
Verona, Italy

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Matilde is a young entrepreneur who is willing to take risks,

while steadfastly keeping calm in the face of an extremely challenging market. She has raised the profile of the magazine with contents and insights that are important to the market and beyond."



Matilde Sometti's love of advertising started when she was only 19 and began working as an assistant at Studio Zanasi, a communications and PR agency in charge of advertising

sales in the optical business, representing Jobson in Europe. "Some years after, I started to deal with my first customers and I finally had the great opportunity to handle the whole advertising area in the agency," she said.

Her career path led her to 20/20 Europe where she assisted in managing all of the magazine's production, operations and attendance to international shows and events. Sometti said, "In 2015, thanks to the experience gained over several years, I took over the full management of the magazine and became its publisher. Currently, I also represent the advertising for Mido worldwide including all the promotional tools associated with the show."

Sometti credits her mentor Cecilia Zanasi "who taught her everything about business and the publishing industry." She also thanks Dennis Murphy, Jobson's VP of sales, "for always giving me valuable advices on sales. I really learned a lot from him about this fascinating profession."

SHE SAYS... "You don't know what you are capable of until you put yourself in a position to do something you have never done before. This is the most important thing I learned in my career, especially after opening my own business. Take courage and go out from your comfort zone—you will discover a world full of amazing opportunities." ■