



VM | LEADERSHIP
SUMMIT 2021

Retail and Healthcare: UPENDED!

Compelling Speaker Roster Probes Critical Issues Facing ECPs

BY VM STAFF

NEW YORK—With a compelling speaker roster in place, The Vision Monday Leadership Summit culminated in October this year in two dynamic sessions which explored how new market forces, unleashed and amplified by the global pandemic, are rewriting the fundamental rules of customer/patient engagement for both retailers and healthcare providers. Part of the series of VM Leadership Summit sessions that started earlier this spring, the Oct. 20 and Oct. 27 virtual programs were themed “Retail and Healthcare: UPENDED! Ripping Up the Rulebook.”

Registration is still open for both of these virtual events. All details for registration are posted at www.visionmonday.com/summit. Registration included attendance to the virtual broadcasts, full access to the VM Summit virtual platform, networking, on-demand viewing, door prizes, and exclusive access to attendees-only content after the event. For those interested in still registering, on-demand access to the virtual events will be available until Dec. 31, 2021.

New registrations are available at no charge for optometrists, opticians, ophthalmologists and students. New registrations are available for \$198 to non-ECPs.

The Platinum Sponsors of the 2021 VM Leadership Summit are **EssilorLuxottica**, **Healthy Eyes Advantage-PECAA** and **VSP Global Premier Program**. The Gold Sponsor is **The Vision Council's Vision Health Alliance** and the Silver Sponsors are **Alcon** and **Ocuco**.

The two-hour virtual program of Part 1 of Retail and Healthcare: UPENDED! on Oct. 20 included the following sessions.

Rebuilding Trust

Shock and aftershocks of the pandemic and the restoration of business and a growing range of new attitudes among patients, providers, health systems and business has laid bare cracks in the system and an awareness of the social safety net. It's up to business, government and healthcare to repair these ruptures. This session included **Dr. John Whyte**, chief medical officer, **WebMD**, who has conducted 300+ video interviews with health and business leaders on this topic.

Jennifer Hauser, who heads **Edelman's Wellness 360** business unit, discussed key findings from the influential Edelman Trust Barometer, an annual, global survey of consumer attitudes. These two leading healthcare voices examined how the pandemic has put patients' trust to the test and what providers can do to counter the challenge of widespread misinformation.

Remote Possibilities

Escalated by the pandemic, consumers and patients are demonstrating their openness to using new technologies to redefine their own sense of wellness and take care of their own health, and to connect with healthcare providers in new ways to build relationships and promote healthier outcomes. This session explored how new remote monitoring systems and wearables are directly involving the patient in managing care with their doctors.

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Compelling Speaker Roster Probes Critical Issues Facing ECPs

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The session provided an overview of key trends in this arena from **Grey Group's Ankit Vahia, PhD**, executive strategy director, health and wellness. Highlights included new remote monitoring technology's potential in the vision care space with **Dr. Mohamed Abou Shousha**, founder, **Heru** and **Kerri-Lynn Morris, Microsoft** and from **John Serri**, co-founder and president, **EyeQue**. Then Grey's Vahia moderated a panel discussion with these speakers, plus **Amir Khoshnevis, OD**, chief medical officer, Vision Source.

What Has Healthcare Learned From Retail?

The pandemic accelerated and raised awareness of what's meant by "access" and "convenience" for patients who need to better manage their health and benefit from new services and technologies in new ways. "Patient-centric" healthcare is taking much inspiration from retail businesses who know how to leverage customer knowledge and preferences to create a more interesting, engaging and dynamic customer-centric experience. **Nerdery's Mukesh Pitroda** discussed what healthcare providers and brands are learning and adopting from successful retailers, as new formats emerge.

The two-hour virtual program of Part 2 of Retail and Healthcare: UPENDED! on Oct. 27 included the following sessions.

What's The Store For?

Leading innovative design and customer relationship expert, **Melissa Gonzalez**, founder/CEO, **Lion'esque Group** is a well-known retail influencer, helping brands and retailers create novel experiences which integrate the digital and the physical. Gonzalez explored how to bring customers into immersive experiences which are now driving excitement in "new" physical store environments.

Welcome To The Metaverse! A New Destination for Shoppers and Brands

This session enabled attendees to enter a new world as the parallel and imaginative realm of the metaverse is challenging ideas of learning, retailing, experience and brand messaging in a range of fields from gaming to fashion to sports to socializing, music, film and culture. This session served up a fast-take intro about this new phenomenon and what everyone needs to know about how AR, VR and new tech is going to change, well, everything!

Attendees saw a special video created for the VM Leadership Summit by consumer technology expert and **VEG Group** founder **Robin Raskin**, plus a conversation with two experts: **Chick Foxgrover**, EVP, Technology & Innovation of **4A's** and noted metaverse retail and branding expert **Cathy Hackl**. They shared their insights with VM's Andrew Karp about the potential of the metaverse and the opportunities it offers brands.



Jennifer Hauser, Edelman's Wellness 360



John Whyte, MD, WebMD



Ankit Vahia, PhD, Grey Group



Mohamed Shousha, MD, Heru



Amir Khoshnevis, OD, Vision Source



John Serri, EyeQue



Kerri-Lynn Morris, Microsoft



Mukesh Pitroda, Nerdery



Melissa Gonzalez, Lion'esque Group



Robin Raskin, Virtual Events Group



Cathy Hackl, Tech Futurist, Metaverse Strategist



Chick Foxgrover, 4A's



Brian Chou, OD, Revision Optometry



Mick Hall, Bard Optical



Michael Bender, Eyemart Express



Aaron Schubach, Standard Optical

How ECPS and Retailers Are Embracing Rapid Change, A Special Panel Discussion

Influential "vision voices" discussed how their companies and practices are prioritizing investment decisions around current challenges in their practice such as staffing, telehealth and implementing new technologies to improve efficiency and enhance the patient experience. *Vision Monday's* Marge Axelrad moderated this discussion with **Mick Hall**, vice president **Bard Optical**, **Brian Chou, OD** of **Revision Optometry**, **Aaron Schubach**, CEO of **Standard Optical** and **Michael Bender**, CEO, **Eyemart Express**. ■

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How to Rebuild Patient Trust in the Wake of the Pandemic

BY MARY KANE / EXECUTIVE EDITOR

NEW YORK—As the virtual VM Leadership Summit kicked off on the afternoon of Oct. 20, two expert speakers talked about how the pandemic has put patients' trust to the test, and more importantly, how providers can tackle the issue of misinformation and help counter the formidable challenge of rebuilding that trust. In a session titled "Rebuilding Trust," Dr. John Whyte, chief medical officer for WebMD and Jennifer Hauser, head of Edelman's Wellness 360 business unit, shared views about how today's eyecare professionals can build trust with their patients.

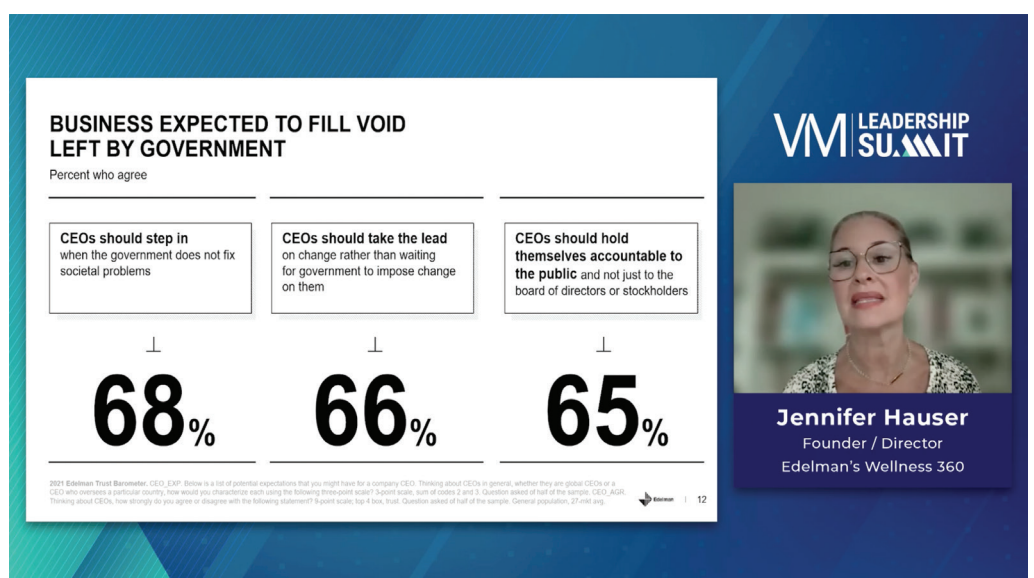
Leading off the Summit, themed "Retail and Healthcare: UPENDED!," was Dr. Whyte who has examined the issue of misinformation and the challenge for health care leaders in his influential and award-winning series Coronavirus in Context. Over the past 18 months, he has conducted video interviews with more than 300 experts, ranging from mental health professional Dr. Phil McGraw to Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID).

Dr. Whyte said, "We're out there trying to give the best possible advice today, based on the information we have in a pandemic. You don't want to withhold anything that can help people. But at the same time, you don't want to promote things that lack evidence. So there's a fine delicate balance. We need to look for trusted sources of information. And sadly, we're in an environment where there's a tremendous amount of misinformation."

One of the things that Dr. Whyte learned in the video series is that the pandemic has fundamentally been about trust. "Who do I believe? What experts do I listen to? What should I be reading? Trust. That's the way that we're going to get past this pandemic," he said.

Next up in the session was a presentation by Edelman's Hauser who shared key findings from the influential Edelman Trust Barometer, an annual, global survey of consumer attitudes.

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Virtual Sessions Extend the 2021 VM Summit Series of Conversations and Presentations

BY VM STAFF

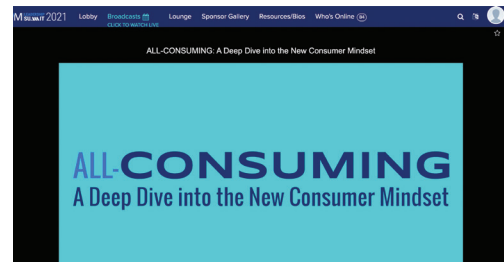
NEW YORK—In addition to the two October virtual VM Summit Sessions, *Vision Monday* broadcast two additional sessions earlier this year. Both virtual sessions extended the 2021 VM Summit series of conversations and presentations under the theme “Creative Disruption,” held during the summer. They were “VirtualEYZE!,” first held in June, which was a focused look at the opportunities for telehealth to expand eyecare’s boundaries, and “ALL CONSUMING,” held in August, which took a deep and fascinating dive into the new consumer mindset in many areas. Each brought great and different speakers plus enlightening conversation from ECP/retailer panels.

The June session titled “VirtualEYZE!,” examined the opportunities for telehealth



to expand eyecare’s boundaries and featured updates sharing the ophthalmic perspective from an ocular telehealth expert at the American Telemedicine Association, two experienced reimbursement executives and a first-of-its-kind discussion with a mix of eyecare practitioners and execs sharing their own experience with remote, comprehensive eye exams before, during and in the current stage of the pandemic.

New priorities among consumers and patients, transformed over the period of the past 18



months and shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic, are raising important questions for both retailers and eyecare professionals about how to address those new mindsets, and how to learn more about what’s necessary to re-engage and recalibrate connections. “ALL CONSUMING,” VM’s second virtual event, delved into those questions with consumer trend experts’ insights on macro trends, the rise of social media as a shopping channel and new technology changing patients’ health care expectations. ■

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How Can Remote Monitoring Tech and Wearables Extend ECP Relationships?

BY MARGE AXELRAD / SENIOR VP, EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

NEW YORK—Escalated by the pandemic, consumers and patients are demonstrating their openness to using new technologies to redefine their own sense of wellness and take care of their own health. This is furthering the advent of new remote monitoring systems and wearables which are directly involving the patient in managing care with their doctors. Experts discussed these “Remote Possibilities” during VM’s virtual Leadership Summit broadcast on Oct. 20. They talked about how these technology developments can actually strengthen provider relationships with patients and provide healthier outcomes, too.

As Andrew Karp, VM’s group editor, lenses & technology, pointed out, “This fast moving area of remote monitoring systems, or RMS, involves new devices with sensors that can monitor everything from a patient’s heartbeat to their glaucoma progression. It also involves the fast growing ‘do-it-yourself’ trend, where consumers are buying affordable devices to check their own blood oxygen level or, perhaps, their eyesight. The home is becoming a true health hub.”

VM Summit attendees heard a top-line view of key trends in the growing remote monitoring/wearables space from Grey Group’s Ankit Vahia, PhD, executive director, health and wellness. “The pandemic has dramatically altered perceptions of self-care and self-health, it’s also changed the way people are making their own healthcare decisions,” he said.

Summit attendees also then learned about new efforts and the approach of Heru, which is a spin-off company from the University of Miami’s Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, the number one eye hospital in the U.S. Heru’s goal is to provide physicians and patients access to state-of-the-art, accurate and portable technology through real-time wearable diagnostics. Starting out now, Heru is bringing out reVIVE by Heru, a modern diagnostic solution to perimetry using a lightweight wearable headset.

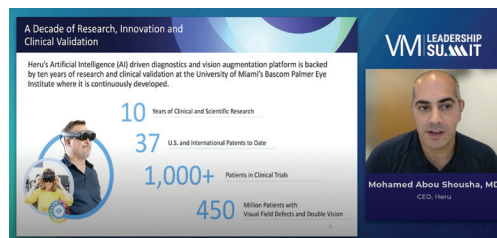
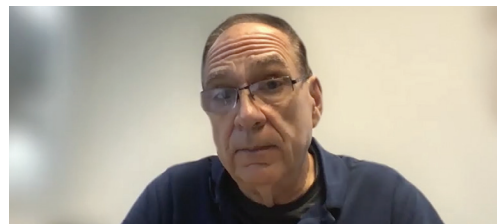
The approach is detailed in a presentation and overview from Dr. Mohamed Abou Shousha, found-



er, along with Heru board member, Microsoft Industry Solutions’ Kerri-Lynn Morris who talked about the rapid development of this approach to diagnostics and the use of AI to work toward personalizing vision enhancements for patients.

They were also joined by John Serri, co-founder and president of EyeQue, which has a goal of getting access to vision tests to people all over the world. “We designed and developed devices that run on smart phones, which have many features and capabilities to build optical devices that sit on top of the phone, handheld, very low priced. We are looking to expand all over the world where there is a tremendous need and is actually the way that more people can bring people to eye doctors.”

All were led by Grey’s Vahia in an informative discussion that also included Dr. Amir Khoshnevis, chief medical officer of Vision Source, who said, “I am so optimistic that the future of technology will bring patients and doctors closer together. Technology will bridge the gap.” ■





Access and Convenience: What Has Healthcare Learned From Retail?

BY MARY KANE / EXECUTIVE EDITOR

NEW YORK—The pandemic accelerated and raised awareness of what's meant by "access" and "convenience" for patients who need to better manage their health and benefit from new services and technologies in new ways. The rise of "patient-centric" healthcare is taking its inspiration from retail businesses who know how to leverage customer knowledge and preferences to create a more interesting, engaging and dynamic customer-centric experience. In a session titled "What Has Healthcare Learned from Retail?" Nerder's senior director of Product Management, Mukesh Pitroda, discussed what healthcare providers and brands are learning and adopting from successful retailers, as new formats emerge.

Pitroda imagines a healthcare experience where a smart speaker tells him it's time to schedule an annual exam. He can then choose to continue with scheduling and is given the appointment option of what's available next. He's also given a list of topics to discuss with the healthcare provider based on his age, demographics and possibly previous medical history. He then gets an email with a summary of all the details and he can also log into the patient portal to review the details.

On the day of his appointment, he's given a barcode that he scan when he enters the parking lot, letting the doctor's office know he's arrived. And by the time he gets to the doctor's office, his paperwork is ready, so it minimizes his wait time.

Pitroda said, "While this scenario doesn't exist in its entirety today, it is built on top of many lessons that retail has learned over the past two decades, going through the major digital transformation that it has. It is also built on the fact that users want businesses to meet them where they are and to provide a seamless experience that is personalized for them."

Three main lessons from retail

01

02

03

Understand your customers

Build loyalty and trust

Continuously Evolve

Mukesh Pitroda
Senior Director, Nerder

Engage Consumers

Create a frictionless omnichannel experience

Mukesh Pitroda
Senior Director, Nerder

Pitroda outlined three major takeaways healthcare can leverage from retail: First understand your customer, know who they are, what they want, and their customer journey; the second is to build loyalty and trust, create experiences that consumers want to engage in and provide them with information

to make good decisions for themselves—that will build trust; and finally, continuously evolve. Once you've established relationship and trust with your consumer, now is the time to grow that relationship by looking at new and innovative ways to engage, so you can understand your customer. ■



Lion'esque's Melissa Gonzalez Details Experiential Retail Trends

BY GWENDOLYN PLUMMER / SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITOR

NEW YORK—Retail strategist and experiential designer Melissa Gonzalez, founder of the Lion'esque Group and principal at MG2, spoke at the final virtual 2021 session of the Vision Monday Global Leadership Summit on Oct. 27 to discuss the ever-evolving and changing relationship between consumers and the brands and stores they shop. Gonzalez and her firm work in many sectors, from fashion to beauty, to create immersive brand experiences for consumers, driving brand loyalty and interest. All have implications for eyecare and eyewear.

In answer to the VM Summit session “What’s A Store For?” Gonzalez said, “it has never been so important for the store to really serve as a point to build human connection and to build customer loyalty.” One of the best ways to do that is to embrace technology, meet customers where they need to be met and, as a result, re-engage shoppers in-store.

Gonzalez pointed out that it’s vital to ensure changes made to stores are consumer-driven, and that newly-formed customer behaviors spurred on by COVID-19 are reshaping in-store expectations. Most notably, customers expect things like curbside and same day pickup, contactless payment and QR codes when they shop.

In-store technology—and how shoppers engage with it—is also rapidly changing. Lion'esque’s research found that two-thirds of consumers surveyed are comfortable with technology in the fitting room, a statistic that points to the growing comfort with—and expectation for—things like virtual try-on in the optical space. “People are open to interacting with technology if it serves a purpose for them,” Gonzalez said, and as consumers become more comfortable with this technology they also begin to expect it.

But it’s not just in store technology that consumers want and expect today—social media, especially live streams on platforms like

HOW DO WE RE-ENGAGE SHOPPERS?
CREATIVE WAYS THAT EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY AND MEET THE CONSUMER WHERE THEY ARE

WHAT'S THE STORE FOR?
REDEFINING THE RELATIONSHIP OF CONSUMERS TO STORES AND BRANDS

Melissa Gonzalez | THE LION'ESQUE GROUP
AN MG2 COMPANY

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Melissa Gonzalez
CEO, The Lion'esque Group
Principal at MG2

Instagram and Facebook, help brands expand their reach “way beyond the four walls,” Gonzalez said, and meet consumers where they are. Creating brand awareness and viral impact is exceedingly important in a saturated market and media. Some large brands partner with celebrities or influencers to drive views to social livestreams, creating an even larger viral impact.

Flexible fulfillment is also on the rise—Gonzalez cited Nordstrom’s Nordstrom Local concept, where consumers can order online and pick up in small,

conveniently located shops. The experience doesn’t end there, however—consumers can try on their purchase then and there, as well as meet with an on-site tailor, have their purchased gift wrapped if necessary and more. This turns a simple transactional interaction into one that builds connection and drives loyalty.

These consumer-centric decisions “create fandom and drive customer loyalty,” Gonzalez concluded. “It’s always about putting the consumer first.” ■



What's The Metaverse? Virtual Experiences Connect Consumers With Brands

BY ANDREW KARP / GROUP EDITOR, LENSES & TECHNOLOGY

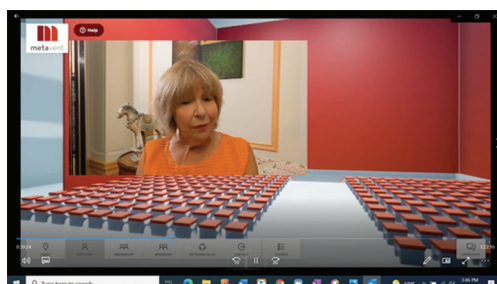
NEW YORK—Attendees of the final Vision Monday 2021 Summit got a glimpse of the metaverse and a quick tutorial about the intriguing possibilities this new digital world offers businesses, brands and healthcare. A previously obscure realm of cyberspace known mostly to video gamers, technonerd and digital content developers, the metaverse has been enjoying a breakout moment lately as high-profile entertainers, fashion and lifestyle brands and other early adopters have begun using it to engage consumers in imaginative new ways.

Consumer interest was amped up further in early November when Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg announced that the ubiquitous social network is changing its name to Meta.

At a timely virtual Summit session on Oct. 27 called “Welcome to the Metaverse!” three top technology and media experts shared their insights about how the fast-developing metaverse might transform virtual and online interactions. Robin Raskin, founder of the Virtual Events Group and a leading observer of consumer tech trends, kicked off the session with a specially produced video that gave Summit attendees a whirlwind tour of the metaverse, including a brand experience, an event experience, a game experience for advertising and a fully immersive open-ended experience.

Then Cathy Hackl, a globally recognized tech futurist who has been dubbed the Godmother of the Metaverse, and Chick Foxgrover, executive vice president, creative technology & innovation at the 4A's, spoke with VM's lens and tech editor Andrew Karp about what's fueling the recent surge in media coverage of the metaverse and how brands can leverage its unique attributes to reach customers.

Although Hackl said consumer awareness of the metaverse is building, she said it's still in the early stages. She noted that the term has not yet appeared in the Merriam-Webster dictionary. “It's been talked about in sci-fi for a long time,” she noted. “But this year, with Roblox (an online game platform and game creation system) going public,



you start to see the word pop up on CNBC, for example. And you have Mark Zuckerberg saying that Facebook is becoming a metaverse company, and then Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella saying they're looking at it for enterprise, it was obviously a big moment. People started asking ‘What is this metaverse thing’ and what does it really mean?”

Foxgrover pointed out that the audience of metaverse users is starting to expand beyond its initial base to include “stat oriented” users such as sports fans and investors. “They've become very excited about how NFTs (non-fungible tokens) have become this important facet of the metaverse,” he said.

“And creators and influencers are also extremely interested in all of this, because of the financial layer through NFTs and the fact that what we're calling synthetic media, there is now the possibility of creating avatars of what is basically a creators' or an influencers' IP and even themselves, they are racing to understand this world and to make sure that they protect themselves in what will be the

metaverse that's coming.”

Explaining NFTs and their function, Hackl described them as “digital collectibles that exist in a digital space.” She said purchasing an NFT denotes ownership of a virtual item because it is recorded on the blockchain, thereby establishing its provenance.

Although both social media and the metaverse rely on the internet to connect users, Hackl said there are pronounced differences between them. “Normally with social media you're putting content out there. But when you're in these gaming platforms, these metaverses, you're engaging in a different way. It's about you showing up authentically and being a part of the community, and then through that, drive them to come to you. It's a little bit of a different dynamic.”

Asked where healthcare fits into the metaverse, Foxgrover replied that the technology might serve as an educational platform that would replace

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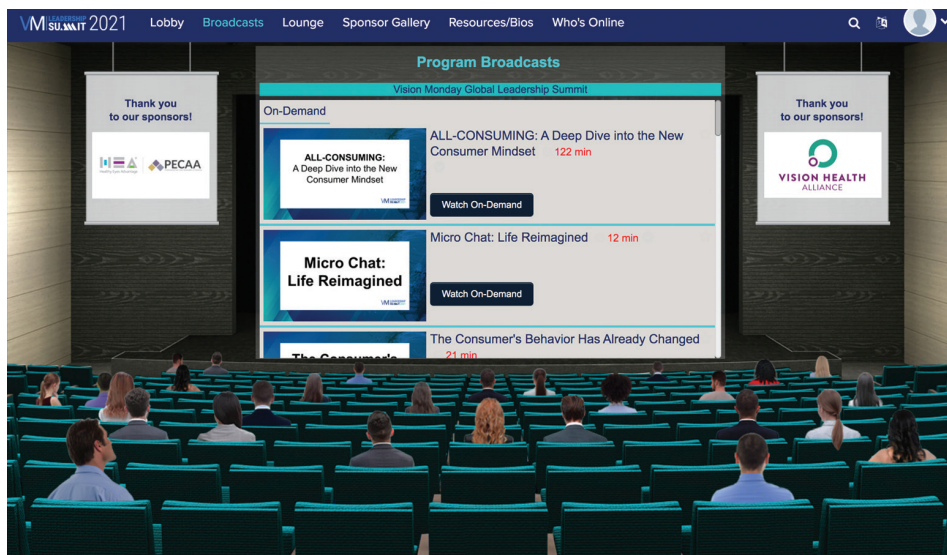


On-Demand Access to All Four VM Summit Virtual Broadcast Sessions Open Until Dec. 31

NEW YORK—Registration is still open for all four virtual events. All details for registration are posted at www.visionmonday.com/summit. Registration includes attendance to the virtual broadcasts, full access to the VM Summit virtual platform, networking, on-demand viewing, door prizes, and exclusive access to attendees-only content after the event.

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On-demand access includes segments from all four VM Summit Virtual Broadcast sessions. All registered users can access these sessions on-demand, in full or in part, through the end of the year. ■





How ECPS and Retailers Are Embracing Rapid Change, a Special Panel Discussion

BY MARK TOSH / SENIOR EDITOR

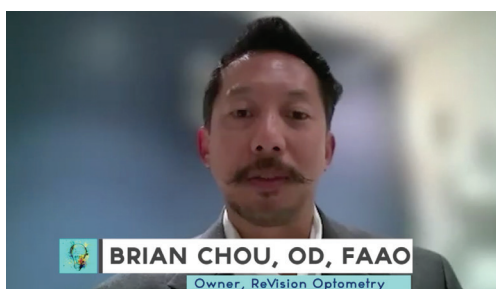
NEW YORK — Technology and innovation have been key focus areas for ECPs and retailers for at least a decade, but when the pandemic hit in March 2020 it forced practices and retail groups to step up the pace on change and the speed at which they adapt to this new operating environment for patients and providers. This adaption to change and new technology were the topics at the final session and special panel discussion of the recent VM Summit, which was titled, “How ECPS and Retailers Are Embracing Rapid Change, A Special Panel Discussion.”

These influential “vision voices”—Mick Hall, vice president Bard Optical; Brian Chou, OD of Revision Optometry; Aaron Schubach, CEO of Standard Optical, and Michael Bender, CEO, Eyemart Express—discuss how their companies and practices are prioritizing investment decisions around current challenges, including staffing at the practice, telehealth adoption and the ways in which new technologies are being implemented to improve efficiency and enhance the patient experience.

Vision Monday's Marge Axelrad moderated the discussion. “The adoption of technology and the ways in which technology has enhanced relationships with patients and customers has come about in many new ways,” Axelrad noted as she kicked off the discussion. “We want to better understand how these opportunities and new technologies vary for different kinds of businesses. They have a lot in common, of course, but they have different distinct challenges. How did you at your practice or company prioritize your investments?” she asked.

In response, Hall noted that Bard Optical expected a backlog of patients waiting to get back into their ECP's office once the worst of the pandemic lifted. “But they were going to be worried, of course, and [curious about] what a trip to the optometrist was going to look like during the pandemic.”

So, Bard moved to make this visit “as seamless as possible with as few bumps in the road as we



could.” To this end, the practice opted to provide free screening fundus photos to every patient. “One of the reasons for that was to lessen the amount of time that they would have to be with the OD,” he explained. “The results of that fundus photo would be available to the OD to look at and to narrow the nature of the exam and therefore shorten their time in our office.”

For Eyemart Express, ensuring patient convenience and safety also was a driver of the company's actions during the height of the pandemic, according to Bender.

“We already had underway an effort to take advantage of one of our strengths, which is that we at Eyemart Express have decided to dedicate [space to] full-service labs in every one of our stores,” he



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How to Rebuild Patient Trust in Healthcare in the Wake of the Pandemic

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Hauser acknowledged that the 2021 Edelman trust barometer and this year's survey comes at an especially turbulent time, worldwide for trust and certainly a turbulent time for trust in health care. "The headline here, and it's not going to be surprising, is that the pandemic has put trust to the test in ways we never have seen before.

"In the 21 years we've been doing this study, you'll see that some institutions did better than others. And it really starts with business. Business has become the only trusted institution across the four institutions that we measure...NGOs, govern-

ment and media made up the other institutions. And business really scored high this year across both being competent as well as ethical. In previous years, business has typically come in at confident, but not always ethical. But this year, we really saw a positive story for business."

When asked by Dr. Whyte what do health care brands need to do to strengthen trust for consumers Hauser said what health care brands really need to be thinking about is a few different things. "The first is that what people care about today is not just themselves, and not just a brand or products, but they care about what's

going on in society. And companies and brands, again, are in a unique position, to not just sell their wares or talk about themselves, but to also make a difference in some of the world's most important societal issues.

"And what people are caring about today really comes down to a few points. People care about the environment. People care about diversity and inclusion. And people care about health inequities—all issues, interestingly, that we've experienced over this past year, and I think public health is also something that people increasingly care about." ■

What's The Metaverse? Virtual Experiences Connect Consumers With Brands

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detailing, which traditionally involves a salesperson from a healthcare company visit a practitioner in-person to demonstrate drugs, procedures and equipment. "This will move directly into the patient space for all kinds of applications," said Foxgrover. "There will be the opportunity to really explore, through metaverse technology, the actions of drugs, the use of an instrument of some kind, and

then linking up of healthcare data through your phone or your watch."

Hackl thought that children might be more receptive to visiting a doctor if the doctor appeared as an avatar, or perhaps their favorite cartoon character, in a metaverse setting.

Both Hackl and Foxgrover pointed out that a wide assortment of brands are starting to connect with customers in the metaverse, ranging from Gu-

cci to Nike to Pringles and Burger King. "It's very interesting to see brands of all kinds experiment with this," remarked Foxgrover. "It's another way in which the digital relationship is being extended through these virtual goods. So people are now doing so much more in e-commerce that the virtual goods extension is creating much more brand stickiness. It's a really interesting phenomenon and experiment for brands." ■

How ECPS and Retailers Are Embracing Rapid Change, a Special Panel Discussion

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noted. "That allows us to turn around a pair of glasses very quickly. And we use that capability to build out what is now a great offering for our customers. It's the ability to [provide them] buy online and pick up in store service."

He added "We really accelerated that effort quite considerably during the pandemic period, in part as a result of the push from customers saying I need to have my glasses."

Another element that has become critical in the wake of changes in patient behavior is the focus on good, strong communication, according to Standard Optical's Schubach.

"We sent videos [to our patients] that were customized from each location, as a way of letting them know that we can't wait to see them soon

and stay home and be safe," he said. "But what it's really taught us to do is to listen and to communicate with them year-round all the time.

"Whether it's getting feedback from them through surveys, or video messaging or text messaging about where their glasses are, that's all part of the experience. The patient experience is not just what happens in your location, but [rather] it's the omni channel, the experience with the brand as a whole. A lot of that now is happening digitally or remotely," Schubach added.

Dr. Chou of Revision Optometry agreed that addressing patient experience and striving to be more efficient for patients is a key to future success, but there are pitfalls that have to be avoided. "We can look at some of the big online retailers and what they are doing with online prescription

renewal and [it seems to indicate] that there's organic demand for these sorts of things. But where we have to be careful as a profession, I feel, is that if the convenience is at the expense of what is good patient care, we do have to draw a line in the sand," he said.

He added, "One of the things that I did want to add to is that the incorporation of technology does not necessarily have to be an expensive proposition. It can be as simple as the patient-doctor handoff [being facilitated] with just a \$20 remote electronic doorbell from Amazon to call the staff into the exam room. This [compares to] my previous two offices, where we had sophisticated visual paging systems that cost over \$10,000 each. So there are many great opportunities and we can all learn from one another." ■