

# RECOVERY & RECALIBRATION

## 2021 Brings Growth and New Investments

VM Top  
**50** U.S. OPTICAL  
RETAILERS  
2022



Image Credit: Getty Images / Maria Stavreva

MARGE AXELRAD / SENIOR VP, EDITORIAL DIRECTOR AND MARKTOSH / SENIOR EDITOR

NEW YORK—After the shock of the 2020 pandemic and the slow build back to some semblance of stability by the end of that year, the leading U.S. optical retailers and companies, both national and regional groups, came back in 2021 with a solid mid-to-high double digit performance overall. While the 2020 year was characterized as working past store and office closures to “craft a comeback,” as *VM* noted in our 2021 Top 50, the 12 months of 2021 were marked by tightening up operations, accelerating new digital technologies to power operations and to demonstrate new ideas to consumers and patients. Companies reconsidered initiatives like more online sales choices or remote eyecare.

The VM Top 50 U.S. Optical Retailers are facing new headwinds in 2022 due to record-high infla-

tion, staffing challenges for eyecare professionals and dispensing and office staff, as well as a general economy (and global economy impacting sourcing and supply chain) that is veering into recession territory as of this writing.

Nevertheless, in 2021 leading optical players on the delivery side, collectively, have experienced organic expansion, the shoring up of operations due to internal focus, and continued private-equity-backed expansion among some of the groups—coming from both the optometric and the ophthalmology sectors. Some have made acquisitions of larger regional groups.

Others have grown throughout the year via practice transitions with independent ECPs, some who are looking to exit in the near term, oth-

ers who are looking to focus on patient care and turn over the challenges of practice management to other organizations. These have changed the composition and ranking positions of several companies in VM’s Top 50, based on supplied information and *VM* estimates for calendar year sales in 2021.

Some companies told *VM* they were bolstered by their professional, executive and managerial/associates teams to persevere through the unique challenges brought on by the pandemic. Others used 2021 to recalibrate, prioritize new investments and reorient their thinking about how to compete in a “new” business environment, adapting to the notion of refining operations as well as coping with constant change. ■

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# Key Optical Players Ranked by U.S. Sales in 2021

2021 Rank	2020 Rank	Retailer	2021 Sales <sup>1</sup> (\$ Millions)	2020 Sales <sup>2</sup> (\$ Millions)	2021 Units <sup>3</sup>	2020 Units <sup>3</sup>	Comments
1	1	Vision Source L.P.	\$2,672.0	\$2,587.8	3,139	3,143	The year 2021 was a significant year for Vision Source in many ways, the group noted. This included a continuation of the history of Vision Source member practices growing faster than the industry, and in 2021 this held true. In 2021, Vision Source also introduced the "Next Fund" to support practice owners with supplemental funding to enable more private practice startups, expansions and transitions. Vision Source is a part of Essilor of America, which is a division of EssilorLuxottica. In accordance with franchise law, Vision Source is a franchisor, and its members are franchisees who own their respective practice(s). The collective revenue of those practices are reported here. Essilor acquired Vision Source in 2015.
2	2	Luxottica Retail	\$2,410.0*	\$2,000.0*	2,043	2,005	Luxottica Retail is a part of the retail network of EssilorLuxottica. Luxottica Retail store brands/DBAs in the U.S. and Puerto Rico include, at the end of December 2021: LensCrafters (923 total locations including 96 LensCrafters inside Macy's); Pearle Vision collectively 517 locations: (Pearle corporate: 59 locations, Pearle Franchise: 458 locations); Target Optical (548 locations), Oliver Peoples (25 locations); Persol (2 locations); Ray-Ban (24 locations); OSA (3 locations), Alain Mikli (1 location).
3	3	National Vision Holdings, Inc	\$2,080.0	\$1,712.0	1,278	1,205	National Vision (NV), a publicly traded company on Nasdaq (EYE) exchange, operated 1,278 stores at the end of 2021. They include America's Best Contacts & Eyeglasses (840 locations); Eyeglass World (125 locations); Vision Centers inside Walmart (230 locations); Vista Opticals in select Fred Meyer Stores (29 locations); Vista Optical in select military exchanges (54 locations). This year-end revenue includes revenues reported for National Vision's Corporate/Other segment in 2021. National Vision's Corporate/Other segment includes the results of the e-commerce platform of 15 dedicated websites managed by AC Lens. National Vision's e-commerce business consists of six proprietary branded websites, including aclens.com, discountglasses.com and discountcontactlenses.com, and nine third-party websites with established retailers, such as Walmart, Sam's Club and Giant Eagle as well as mid-sized vision insurance providers. AC Lens handles site management, customer relationship management and order fulfillment and also sells a wide variety of contact lenses, eyeglasses and eyecare accessories.
4	4	Walmart Inc.	\$1,748.0*	\$1,595.0*	3,422	3,422	Walmart's optical business includes both Sam's Club's optical departments (547 locations at the end of 2021, including six locations in Puerto Rico) and the company-owned Walmart optical departments (2,875 locations).
5	7	EyeCare Partners LLC	\$1,566.0	\$921.5	686	482	EyeCare Partners, a portfolio company of Partners Group, experienced significant growth in 2021, finishing the year with 686 locations (a net gain of more than 200 eyecare offices). The group operates optical departments under the following banners, among others: Clarkson Eyecare, Nationwide Vision, EyeCare Associates, eyecarecenter, The EyeDoctors Optometrists and Grene Vision Group. The group, which easily topped \$1 billion in revenue in 2021 for the first time, said its biggest achievements last year were growing the company by adding new partners – including CEI Vision Partners (CVP) and Eye Institute of West Florida. In 2022, one of the main goals and greatest investments will be elevating the experiences of patients and care teams with the E360+ platform. In support of this, ECP will pilot a new clinically integrated electronic medical record in a handful of practices this year. In April 2021, ECP promoted David A. Clark to chief executive officer. Clark had joined the organization as president in July 2020.

Source: VM's 2022 Top 50 U.S. Optical Retailers. When 2021 sales are the same for more than one company, the retailer with fewer 2021 U.S. stores is ranked first.

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6	5	Costco Optical	\$1,402.7	\$1,106.5	543	532	A part of Costco Wholesale Inc., Costco Optical finished the year 2021 with 543 optical departments. The year was also successful in terms of a sales rebound, with the optical business increasing more than 25 percent to surpass \$1.4 billion.
7	8	Visionworks of America, Inc.	\$1,140.0	\$913.0	716	698	Visionworks of America operates stores under the Visionworks and Empire Visionworks names. Visionworks closed the year with 716 locations, a net gain of 18 new locations. The company noted that one of the key priorities in 2022 is adding a “new technology platform that will allow for simplified customer experience.” VSP Global, rebranded VSP Vision in 2022, acquired Visionworks in October 2019.
8	6	Capital Vision Services dba MyEyeDr.	\$1,108.0	\$975.0	817	659	MyEyeDr. (MED) ended 2021 with 817 locations. The company started the year with 659 locations. Among its key acquisitions in 2021 were Rx Optical, with 54 locations in Michigan and Indiana, and Associates in Eyecare of Virginia (10 locations), a deal that closed on the last day of 2021. The company cited “successfully managing through COVID challenges” as a major achievement in 2021, and noted that its greatest investments this year will be in “talent recruitment, training, and retention.”
9	9	Warby Parker	\$534.0*	\$515.0*	158	123	Warby Parker completed its initial public offering in September 2021, and its shares are now traded on the Nasdaq market under the “WRBY” ticker. In addition to its online sales from WarbyParker.com, Warby Parker operated 158 U.S. stores at the end of last year. The company operated three additional stores in Canada for a N.A. total of 161 and reported total sales of \$540.8 million. The VM estimates for U.S. sales include both online and in-store sales.
10	11	Keplr Vision	\$521.0	\$270.0	286	191	Keplr Vision, amid the challenges of 2021, added 95 net new locations (102 overall) during the year and finished 2021 with 286 eyecare offices. Among the key new partnerships last year were Visionary Eye Partners of Reno, Nev., with 23 locations, and Optom-Eyes Vision Care of San Diego, with five locations. Keplr also added Lake Union, Lakeland, West Seattle, and Optic Gallery of the Seattle area; Simpson Optical of Lexington, Ky., with three locations and Woodlands Eye Associates of Houston (two locations). Keplr Vision was formed in July 2019 when two portfolio companies of Imperial Capital of Canada—Total ECP and Visionary Eye Partners—merged to operate as a combined entity under the Keplr Vision name.
11	10	Eyemart Express	\$365.0	\$280.0	238	228	Eyemart Express operated 218 locations under its Eyemart Express banner, 15 stores under the Vision 4 Less banner, three units as Eyewear Express and one Visionmart Express location. Throughout 2021, the company adapted to the evolving consumer landscape, while trying to leverage various strategic investments. This year, the company said it will make additional investments in new and enhanced systems, processes and associate training initiatives that will further support continued growth. In October 2020, Leonard Green & Partners (LGP) made a strategic investment in Eyemart Express. The Los Angeles-based PE group joined majority stakeholder FFL Partners.
12	12	AEG Vision	\$350.0*	\$258.0	300	201	In 2021, AEG Vision successfully added 85 new partner practices (some with multiple locations) to the AEG Vision network while achieving strong revenue and profit growth. AEG also achieved outstanding patient satisfaction ratings across the network. In 2022, AEG Vision expects to maintain its growth trajectory while investing in training, care protocols, and doctor equipment to create better outcomes.
13	13	Now Optics	\$258.8	\$207.2	251	200	Now Optics’ retail brands include Stanton Optical and My Eyelab. It manages both corporate-owned and franchised locations. At yearend 2021, My Eyelab had 68 company-owned stores (with approximately \$51 million in sales) and 75 franchised stores (with approximately \$54 million in revenue). Stanton Optical operated 108 company-owned locations (with approximately \$153 million in revenue). The corporate name changed to Now Optics (from Vision Precision Holdings) at the beginning of 2019.

<sup>1</sup> Includes retailers’ product sales, professional services, managed vision benefit revenues and e-commerce sales when applicable. U.S. sales include Puerto Rico, not Canada.

<sup>2</sup> The retailers and totals given for 2020 are different from what appeared on the May 2021 VM Top 50 list because the Top 50 companies differ from year to year due to industry consolidation and other factors.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. and Puerto Rico optical locations.

# Key Optical Players Ranked by U.S. Sales in 2021

2021 Rank	2020 Rank	Retailer	2021 Sales <sup>1</sup> (\$ Millions)	2020 Sales <sup>2</sup> (\$ Millions)	2021 Units <sup>3</sup>	2020 Units <sup>3</sup>	Comments
14	14	Cohen's Fashion Optical	\$154.5	\$123.0	125	125	
15	15	Texas State Optical (TSO)	\$120.0	\$110.8	115	113	Texas State Optical is a member-owned cooperative, founded in 1936, providing full-service, medical scope optometry. The group added two new locations in 2021, and reported a 9 percent increase in aggregate sales.
16	17	Shopko Optical	\$120.0	\$77.0	116	91	Shopko Optical expanded with 25 net new locations in 2021—including a few acquisitions of independent ECPs—as it found success with the standalone model. Two existing locations also were expanded and remodeled. The company expects to continue expansion through both de novo sites and acquisitions in 2022. Shopko Optical is the trade name of Shoptikal LLC, an affiliate of Monarch Alternative Capital, a private equity firm that acquired the Shopko Optical business out of bankruptcy court in mid-2019.
17	16	SVS Vision	\$102.7	\$83.5	84	83	
18	26	Total Vision LLC	\$100.0	\$55.0	58	40	Total Vision, based in Southern California, grew to 58 practice locations through new partnerships by the end of 2021, and continued expanding in the spring of 2022. In April, the group announced a new partnership with Golden Vision, a nine-location luxury eyecare and eyewear optometry chain operating throughout Northern and Southern California. Total Vision, which is backed by New York City-based Bregal Partners, said it is the largest network of vision providers in California and employs more than 600 team members, including over 130 doctors. In 2021, the group said its team was dedicated to ramping back up on acquisitions and the practice's offices were committed to filling schedules and getting patients back in for eye exams.
19	19	Emerging Vision, Inc.	\$98.9	\$75.6	115	116	Emerging Vision Inc., which had a total of 115 locations at year's end 2021, had one of its strongest years ever in 2021 with sales across the group increasing almost 31 percent. The company's banners include Sterling Optical with 54 franchised and two company-owned locations. The company also operated Site for Sore Eyes (41 franchised locations), and seven company-owned The Eye Gallery locations.
20	22	Refac Optical Group	\$97.4	\$66.0	362	373	Lincoln Road Advisors Inc., an investment company operated by optical industry veteran Eric Bertrand, acquired the holding company Refac Optical Group, which owns the U.S. Vision optical business, in March 2021 from ACON Investments. U.S. Vision operates 362 optical locations in licensed retail spaces at J.C. Penney (238 locations), Meijer (53 locations), Boscov's (43 locations) and Optical Center/AAFES Exchange (22 locations). The company also acquired Specs for Less, a four-location optical business in Blackwood, N.J., in August 2021. The company said its greatest investment in 2022 will be the continued acquisition of individual doctor practices and creating OD professional corporations in multiple states.
21	29	VSP Ventures	\$90.0*	\$39.0*	70	23	VSP Ventures made 51 acquisitions over the course of 2021, expanding further into California and Nevada, with new partnerships in Oregon, Texas and Ohio.
22	18	BJ's Optical Centers	\$84.0*	\$76.0*	219	210	BJ's Wholesale Club operated opened 9 new BJ's Optical Centers in 2021.
23	23	Vision Associates	\$81.5	\$64.0	227	211	All offices under Vision Associates, management of optical dispensaries in ophthalmology practices. Acquired in 2017 by Essilor of America, which is a division of EssilorLuxottica.
24	21	Henry Ford OptimEyes	\$80.0	\$67.0	21	20	Detroit-based Henry Ford OptimEyes is part of the Henry Ford Health group serving Michigan.
25	24	Eye Doctors Optical Outlets	\$78.2	\$60.5	56	55	Tampa, Fla.-based Eye Doctors Optical Outlets, headed by CEO Robert Lewenson, said it experienced "record growth" in 2021. The company also said its online sales comprised one percent of total revenues, 75 percent of which came from contact lenses, the rest from sunwear and optical eyeglass sales.

Source: VM's 2022 Top 50 U.S. Optical Retailers. When 2021 sales are the same for more than one company, the retailer with fewer 2021 U.S. stores is ranked first.

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26	25	Luxury Optical Holdings	\$76.0	\$60.0	34	29	LOH operates a total of 34 stores which include: Morgenthal Frederics (14 units), Robert Marc (7 units), Georgetown Optician (4 units), Leonard Opticians (2 units) and seven other locations. The group also operates The Visionist e-commerce website. New Look Vision Group announced its agreement to acquire the LOH Group in December 2021.
27	20	GrandVision USA Retail Holding Corporation (DBA For Eyes)	\$70.0*	\$75.0*	108	114	GrandVision, which operates the For Eyes optical locations in the U.S., became a part of EssilorLuxottica in 2021. (For Eyes operated 108 locations at the end of last year, down from 114 at the end of 2020.) In early 2022, EssilorLuxottica announced that it made changes to the GrandVision management team, which included Stephan Borchert stepping down as chief executive officer. Massimiliano Mutinelli was named as the new president of optical retail EMEA at EssilorLuxottica and also head of Amsterdam corporate offices at GrandVision. Because they operated as a separate group for much of 2021, For Eyes' 2021 estimated sales are reported separately here from the overall Luxottica Retail listing above.
28	N	Marion Eye Centers and Optical	\$47.7	N	35	N	Marion Eye Centers and Optical offers ophthalmology and optometric services and dispensaries to patients in southern Illinois and southeast Missouri. The group first opened their doors in 1974 and have grown into a multi-specialty group. The group recently opened a new surgery center and a new retina institute.
29	30	Rosin Eyecare	\$41.6	\$39.0	49	51	
30	31	Wisconsin Vision, Inc.	\$39.8	\$35.5	38	38	Wisconsin Vision operates its 38 offices throughout Wisconsin. It reports that it launched teleoptometry services using the Digital Optometrics platform in 2021 and plans to accelerate its expansion via the platform in 2022. The company reports that about 5 percent of its 2021 revenues come from online sales, 80 percent of which are from contact lenses, another 20 percent from eyeglasses.
31	34	SEE, Inc.	\$37.0	\$31.5	44	44	SEE Eyewear operates its locations across the country in major markets emphasizing fashion on-trend eyewear, sunwear and accessories to the retailer. The company says that e-commerce is a focus for 2022; in 2021, about one percent of its revenues came from online sales, nearly two-thirds of which are eyeglasses and about one-third from sunwear.
32	32	Today's Vision Licensing Corporation	\$35.0	\$34.9	47	47	Today's Vision reports they will invest in marketing, technology and a new corporate HQ in 2022. A leadership transition occurred at the group last fall when Greg Watson, executive director and 16-year employee of the group acknowledged his upcoming retirement. April Oliver, OD, has moved into the role of chairman and president of the TVLC board while Deise Golden has been named to succeed Watson as executive director.
33	36	Dr. Tavel Optical Group	\$31.0*	\$25.0*	23	22	Established in 1940, Dr. Tavel is still a family-owned business operating 23 store locations across Indiana. Each store offers a range of eye health services.
34	33	Houston Eye Associates	\$29.5*	\$32.0*	21	22	
35	37	LION Eye Group	\$24.5	\$20.0*	20	18	LION Eye Group, which launched Jan. 1, 2020, describes itself as a management services organization for a network of 20 (as of year-end 2021) independent optometry practices based in New York. Founded as the Long Island Optometric Network, the group has expanded into Manhattan and the surrounding boroughs, utilizing new technology and business partnerships.
36	40	J.A.K. Enterprises, Inc.	\$24.5	\$19.0	21	21	J.A.K. Enterprises, based in Peoria, Ill., is the parent company of Bard Optical. Executives noted that the organization's key achievement in 2021 was the effort and work put in "to rebound after the pandemic caused havoc in 2020." In 2022, the group will continue to attract and retain outstanding ODs and staff while continuing to automate lab processes.
37	N	New Look Vision Group (US)	\$22.0	N	20	N	Company acquired LOH in December 2021. Overall, New Look Vision Group operates a total of 463 stores in the United States and Canada, including: Iis (143 units), Vogue Optical (99 units), New Look Eyewear (93 units), Greiche & Scaff (45 units), Edward Beiner (13 units), Morgenthal Frederics (14 units), Robert Marc (7 units), Georgetown Optician (4 units) Black Optical (3 units) and a range of small independent locations as well.

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38	39	Standard Optical Company	\$20.8	\$19.5	21	20	Standard Optical acquired West Point Eye Care of West Point, Utah, in April 2021, which increased its location count to 21. Other achievements in 2021 included the launch of an e-commerce site and four new private label lines. In 2022, Standard Optical intends to invest in mobile/pop-up eyecare clinics, and to review the possibility of three to four acquisitions this year.
39	41	Associates in Eyecare	\$20.0	\$18.0	10	10	Based in Ashburn, Va., Associates in Eyecare was acquired by MyEyeDr. in December 2021.
40	N	Lumina Vision Partners	\$20.0*	\$10.0*	11	6	Lumina Vision Partners, which was founded in mid-2020, makes its debut on the Top 50 Optical Retailers report at No. 40. The group expects to be more active in 2022, with plans to reach 25 or 26 locations by late summer, executives noted.
41	38	CVS Health	\$20.0*	\$20.0*	52	49	As of early June 2022, CVS had 52 optical departments in the following states: California, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.
42	N	Clarity Vision, LLC	\$13.5	N	6	N	Clarity Vision LLC is the parent company of this practice group, and it owns the brand, logo and website. It licenses the use of the brand and buying power to the six locations. The executives note that the practices are viewed as licensed locations operating more as a "cooperative," rather than franchises (since they do not operate under a franchise manual).
43	46	Metro Optics Holdings Inc	\$11.1	\$9.1	5	5	Metro Optics, which operates in the New York City market, achieved a 22 percent increase in gross revenue in 2021. The company said it will invest in "people and equipment" in 2022.
44	45	Midwest Vision Centers, Inc.	\$10.8	\$9.2	18	18	Midwest Vision Centers, based in Sauk Rapids, Minn., achieved a revenue increase of more than 17 percent in 2021 across its 18 locations, all of which operate under the Midwest Vision Centers banner.
45	47	Optyx	\$10.0	\$7.9*	11	11	New Jersey-based Optyx said its key achievement in 2021 was achieving a more than 20 percent increase in revenue. The group is in the process of purchase of three additional locations and expanding medical services.
46	44	Eyecare Plus PC	\$9.2	\$9.9	8	7	Based in Murfreesboro, Tenn., Eyecare Plus added one new location in July 2021 and finished the year with eight eyecare offices.
47	48	Eye Surgeons of Richmond, Inc. / Virginia Eye Institute	\$8.7	\$7.1	7	7	Eye Surgeons of Richmond operates practices under the Virginia Eye Institute name. The revenue total reported includes only optical sales of eyeglasses and contact lenses.
48	42	True Eye Experts	\$8.0	\$11.4	5	4	Tampa, Fla.-based True Eye Experts acquired Mezmereyes Optical of Crystal River in June 2021. The company also created a yearly scholarship open for any college student who submits a short essay about their vision of the future. In 2022, the company will increase training and support for staff by bringing on a corporate trainer and district manager to help educate and provide uniform training across all stores.
49	N	Europtics	\$7.9	N	4	N	The Denver-based Europtics makes its debut on the Top 50 Optical Retailers list this year. Executives noted that the team was able to maintain a sense of stability and growth in the chaos and uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, Europtics said it will build on the strong foundation it has established and its ability "to take advantage of upcoming growth opportunities."
50	50	Visual Health Doctors of Optometry	\$6.8	\$6.3	8	8	Visual Health Doctors of Optometry, which added three locations in 2020, stood pat in 2021 with its eight eyecare offices, which produced a sales increase of 8 percent for the group, which is based in the northern Virginia area.
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$18,007.9*</b>	<b>\$14,738.7*</b>	<b>16,071</b>	<b>15,100</b>	

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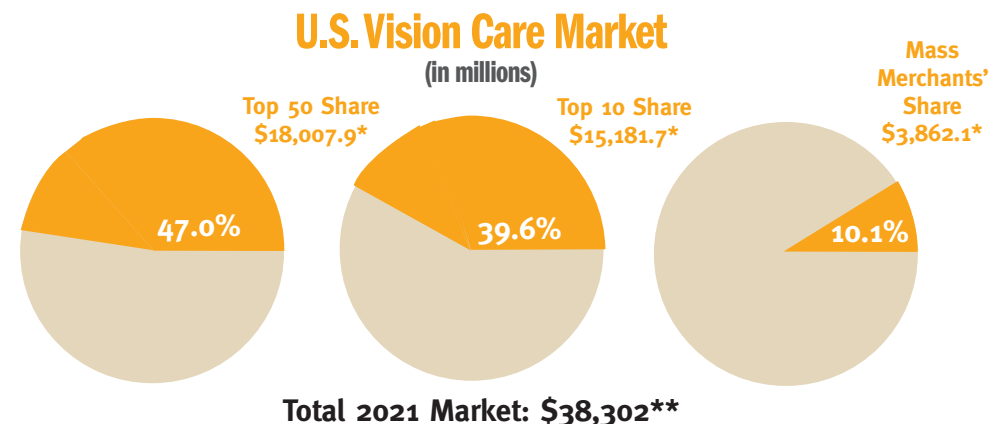
## A 2021 Sales Comeback, Combined With Acquisitions and New Entrants, Shape VM's 2022 Top 50

MARGE AXELRAD / SENIOR VP, EDITORIAL DIRECTOR  
AND MARKTOSH / SENIOR EDITOR

NEW YORK—In contrast to the harrowing year that was 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic shook the world and forced many stores to close in the U.S. for many weeks, the 2021 business year saw a comeback for the U.S.'s Top 50 Optical Retailers and groups, *Vision Monday* has learned. Based on submissions from companies as well as VM's own estimates, the collective Top 50 Retailers' sales for the 12 months ending 2021 ended up higher by some 21 percent from the previous year.

Most retail executives shared that their second half of 2021 was back in a strong way, despite their having to operate by appointment in some markets as COVID infections continued. Consumers looking at digital screens for more hours a day did impact their vision correction needs and concerns. And even though it was a cyclical year of ups and downs as per store closings in some parts of the country, consumers and patients returned to stores and to eye doctors to take care of their eyes and purchase eyewear and contact lenses.

The new Top 50's share of the total U.S. optical market sales of \$38 billion as reported by The Vision Council's VisionWatch for the year, saw that the Top 50 collectively generated sales of \$18.0 billion or 47 percent of the market. The Top 10, though, who got larger, many via acquisition,



\* VM Estimate \*\* Vision care products and services sold at optical retail locations.  
Source: The Vision Council's VisionWatch Data is from 12ME Dec. 2021

others through organic growth and comp store gains, grew substantially, representing 39.6 percent of the total U.S. market's sales, comprising \$15.2 billion collectively per VM's estimates.

Mass merchant optical departments benefited from the uptick in general traffic to the stores they were in, and they saw sales of about \$3.9 billion among them, or about 10 percent of the total U.S. market.

There were some changes among the Top 10 groups ranked by VM for their calendar year 2021 performance. And several sales milestones were set. National Vision exceeded \$2 billion in sales as the company expanded its store count. MyEyeDr.,

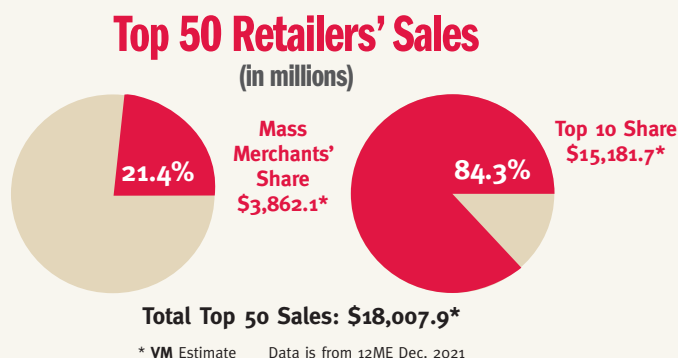
with comp growth as well as some larger regional acquisitions plus smaller offices, broke through the \$1 billion sales mark. EyeCare Partners moved up to the number 5 position from its spot as number 7 in the prior year's ranking, driven by its acquisitions of both MD and OD practices.

Visionworks, part of VSP Vision, opened up new stores and grew sales. Keplr which continued its acquisition of doctor practices made it to the Top 10. And Warby Parker, which had been in the Top 10 before, based on its online and in-store sales, went public and for the first time released its sales numbers for the year, maintains its number 9 position. ■

## The Top 50 and Leading Optical Mass Merchants Saw Major Sales Gains in 2021

NEW YORK—The VM 2022 Top 50's collective overall estimated dollar sales increased significantly, some 21 percent, in calendar year 2021, with the overall group's total dollars rising to \$18.0 billion compared to the VM's 2021 Top 50 of \$14.9 billion. The Top 10 Retailers, with a few moves in rankings and new entrants for the 2021 ranking, comprised 84.3 percent of that Top 50, generating collective sales of \$15.2 billion

Among Mass Merchants, their collective share of the Top 50 remained similar to last year from a percentage share point of view—21.4 percent (compared to 22.5 percent of the VM Top 50 in 2020). But the estimated collective revenue dollars from the Mass Merchant optical businesses rose about 16 percent to reach \$3.86 billion in calendar year 2021, compared to an estimated \$3.34 billion in hard-hit 2020. ■



\* VM Estimate Data is from 12ME Dec. 2021

Download a PDF of VM's complete 2022 Top 50 Report at [www.VisionMonday.com](http://www.VisionMonday.com) under the VM Reports category by clicking on Top 50 Retailers.

## Mass Merchants and Clubs Saw a Healthy 2021 Optical Sales Performance

NEW YORK—Mirroring their overall companies' sales performance in 2021, which saw the U.S.' mass merchants and warehouse clubs reflect strong consumer buying activity and a healthy return to business after the initial pandemic year of 2020, those operations with optical departments experienced healthy gains as well. Collective revenues from this sector of the market rose some 16 percent for the year, reaching \$3.86 billion in calendar year 2021, according to their

reports and VM estimates.

The collective number of optical departments within the group also grew by 32 locations overall, propelled by the 11 new Costco Optical locations, 12 new departments within Target, and 9 new locations within BJ's.

In terms of sales, Walmart's total optical presence reflected a 10 percent sales increase, per VM's estimates. Within that total, the 230 departments operated within Walmart by National

Vision Holdings rose by a solid 16 percent.

With the addition of its new optical departments plus organic growth, Costco Optical's sales rose 27 percent in 2021, making it the second largest mass merchant player in optical.

Target Optical also realized a nearly 10 percent increase, per VM's estimates. BJ's Optical realized an approximate 11 percent increase in sales per VM's estimates. ■

## Leading Mass Merchants, Clubs With Optical Departments

Rank 2021	Rank 2020	Mass Merchant (Operator)	2021 Retail Sales (\$ in Millions)	2021 Units <sup>1</sup>	Class	2020 Retail Sales (\$ in Millions)	2020 Units <sup>1</sup>
1	1	Walmart Walmart National Vision	\$1,757.0* \$1,592.0* \$165.0	3,105 2,875 230	MM	\$1,592.0* \$1,450.0* \$142.0	3,105 2,875 230
2	2	Costco Optical Costco Wholesale	\$1,402.7	543	WC	\$1,106.5	532
3	3	Target/Super Target Luxottica Retail	\$450.0*	548	MM	\$410.0*	536
4	4	Sam's Club Walmart Inc.	\$156.4*	547	WC	\$145.0*	547
5	5	BJs Optical Centers BJ's Wholesale Club Holdings Inc.	\$84.0*	219	WC	\$76.0*	210
6	6	Fred Meyer National Vision	\$12.0	29	MM	\$11.0	29
		<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$3,862.1*</b>	<b>4,991</b>		<b>\$3,340.5*</b>	<b>4,959</b>

Source: VM's 2022 Top 50 Optical Retailers

\*=VM Estimate MM=Mass merchant WC=Warehouse club  
<sup>1</sup> optical locations





# Snapshots of Optical's 10 Largest U.S. Retail Players

## 1 VISION SOURCE, LP

Vision Source is North America's most extensive network of independent optometrists, and once again ranks as the No. 1 group in the VM Top 50 Optical Retailers report. The organization, which was founded in 1991, consists of more than 3,100 locally owned optometric practice locations with 4,500 doctors.

In 2021, Vision Source said it expanded upon the single private practice initiative "that actively provides solutions for all of the life cycle challenges of optometrists, 'Vision Source Next.'"

With the resources that Vision Source said it has available, the organization is able to support ODs who are looking to start-up new practices, add associates, explore and/or prepare for the transition to another private practice owner. "We introduced the Vision Source Next Fund to support practice owners with supplemental funding to enable more private practice startups, expansions and transitions," executives told VM. "We will continue to invest in Vision Source Next in 2022."

Also during 2021, the Vision Source Foundation, whose purpose is to provide financial assistance to any OD who has been impacted by catastrophic events such as natural or other disasters or serious health-related events, financially supported 41 ODs during their times of difficulty.

In its planning for 2022, Vision Source said it expects the group's greatest investment will be in the Vision Source infrastructure, which remains essential to delivering results for members. "We continue to invest in people and programs anchored to our purpose of ensuring our members' practices are winning. We have nearly 350 people, including 180 local doctor leaders and 100-plus local staff leaders, dedicated to helping ensure the success of our member practices and other qualified private practice owners who wish to join," executives said.

## 2 LUXOTTICA RETAIL

Luxottica Retail is a part of the retail network of EssilorLuxottica (Bloomberg:EL:FP). Luxottica Retail store brands/dbas in the U.S. and Puerto Rico include, at the end of December 2021, LensCrafters (923 total locations

including 96 LensCrafters inside Macy's); Pearle Vision collectively 517 locations: (Pearle corporate: 59 locations, Pearle Franchise: 458 locations); Target Optical (548 locations), Oliver Peoples (25 locations); Persol (2 locations); Ray-Ban (24 locations); OSA (3 locations); and Alain Mikli (1 location).

In its year-end report, the Group said that its retail sales in North America experienced positive comps. LensCrafters opened its latest "flagship store" in San Francisco in November 2021 following two previously opened flagship stores in New York City the prior year. At the time, Alfonso Cerullo, general manager of LensCrafters North America said, "We look forward to advancing the LensCrafters brand this year. The expanded assortment of luxury optical and sun styles along with superior lens design and technology by Essilor, will give the brand a larger footprint in the eyewear market."

Last fall, LensCrafters initiated the "See Clearly, Drive Safely" campaign, a 360-degree marketing initiative that highlights the importance of having a personalized vision solution for driving, in support of EssilorLuxottica's partnership with FIA. This year in February, Golden Globe award-winning actress and producer Sharon Stone became the face of the LensCrafters' new 2022 "Your Eyes First" communications campaigns.

Pearle Vision, a mix of corporate and franchised locations in the U.S., grew the number of its franchised offices in 2021. Target Optical experienced strong growth as well, expanding by 12 locations inside Target Stores in 2021 for a total of 548 locations, doing sales of \$450 million, a VM estimate.

In July of 2021, EssilorLuxottica completed 77 percent of its transaction for GrandVision (it concluded its tender offer for outstanding shares in early 2022). GrandVision operates leading optical retail banners in more than 40 countries across Europe, the Americas, the Middle East and Asia, including the For Eyes locations in the U.S.

In February of 2022, VM reported exclusively that EssilorLuxottica N.A. created a management services organization option to invest in practice transitions. Referred to internally as "TeamVision," the MSO assumes non-medical responsibilities of the practice, including product, inventory, staffing and marketing.

In May 2022, EssilorLuxottica also announced the launch of OneSight EssilorLuxottica Foundation, a move which unites Vision for Life, Essilor Vision

Foundations in North America, India, Southeast Asia and China, Fondazione Salmoiraghi & Viganò in Italy and the company's long-term global partners OneSight and the Vision Impact Institute.

## 3 NATIONAL VISION HOLDINGS, INC.

For National Vision Holdings (NASDAQ: EYE), 2021 was highlighted by record sales and profits, and the company began 2022 with plans to increase its store-opening program by at least 80 new locations this year while building upon a successful "remote medicine," or telehealth, pilot project. For the full year 2021, National Vision reported sales climbed 20.6 percent (compared with fiscal 2019) to \$2.08 billion, marking the first time the company has exceeded the \$2 billion sales mark. Comparable-store sales growth was 15.1 percent and adjusted comparable-store sales growth was 14.7 percent, the company reported.

Net income increased 291 percent in 2021 to \$128.2 million. And the company grew its overall store count 11 percent from Dec. 28, 2019, to Jan. 1, 2022. The company added 73 net new locations last year, and ended the year with 1,278 stores, including 840 America's Best locations.

CEO Reade Fahs noted that an expanded focus on its remote medicine pilots "will ensure that [we] can serve ever-increasing patient demand." At year-end 2021, he said, "Given the success of these pilots, I'm pleased to report remote exams are currently offered in over 100 locations. In 2022, we plan to expand the remote medicine offering and expect to have a total of at least 200 store locations by year's end. Simply put, we believe everybody wins with remote medicine. Optometrists like the flexibility that it provides, while patients benefit from the increased exam availability."

National Vision also is adding a proprietary electronic health record (EHR) system, further digitizing the patient's customer experience, Fahs said.

The company's Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) efforts have been a priority. National Vision expanded this last year, including several firsts, such as completing its first greenhouse gas emissions inventory, and publishing its first corporate responsibility report.

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In May 2022, the company launched its first Pride Collection, a limited series of gender-neutral eyewear celebrating Pride Month in June and the LGBTQ+ community. The capsule was available in America's Best Contacts & Eyeglasses stores and Vision Centers brought to consumers by Walmart. In conjunction with the launch, National Vision is donating \$25,000 to support the Matthew Shepard Foundation.

National Vision's 1,278 stores at the end of 2021 include America's Best Contacts & Eyeglasses (840 locations); Eyeglass World (125 locations); Vision Centers inside Walmart (230 locations); Vista Optical in select Fred Meyer Stores (29 locations); and Vista Optical in select military exchanges (54 locations).

## 4 WALMART

Walmart has been a big player in the U.S. optical retail market for many years, but it is becoming increasingly clear that the big retail company has its sights set on the wider health care market. Indeed, this spring the company opened five new Walmart Health centers across North and Central Florida. The openings marked Walmart Health's expansion into Florida. As of this spring, Walmart operated 24 Walmart Health locations in four states.

"Two years after the launch of Walmart Health, we continue evolving and growing to make health care even more accessible to the communities we serve," Dr. David Carmouche, senior vice president of Omnichannel Care Offerings at Walmart, said at the time. "With only one primary care doctor per 1,380 Florida residents, these Walmart Health centers will help address the demand for care in three major cities in the Sunshine State, delivering quality health care at the right time in the right setting, right next to where many Floridians get their groceries."

In its optical business, the number of departments at Walmart and Sam's Clubs remained steady at 3,422 locations and the company continued to rank No. 4 in the VM Top 50 Optical Retailers report.

With its nationwide store base, Walmart has grown to a position in which 90 percent of the U.S. population lives within 10 miles of one of its stores, and 70 percent of the population lives within 5 miles of a Walmart store. Executives also noted that Walmart has

achieved an NPS (net promoter score) of 80 with its health care offerings, and that the retailer is set up to provide telehealth services across all 50 states via its 2021 acquisition of MeMD, a multi-specialty telehealth provider.

## 5 EYECARE PARTNERS

The year 2021 was quite busy for the EyeCare Partners (ECP) organization. ECP added 20 new practice groups and more than 200 sites of service to its organization. As a result, ECP has moved up two spots to No. 5 in this year's VM Top 50 Optical Retailers report.

In 2021, ECP finished the year with 686 locations. Optical sales also rose significantly, increasing 70 percent to almost \$1.6 billion.

David Clark, chief executive officer of St. Louis-based ECP, said he expects the group to be active again in 2022. "Our first quarter this year is actually more active than it was last year," Clark told *Vision Monday* in an interview this past spring.

ECP – which is a portfolio company of the global private markets firm Partners Group – now provides care for more than 3 million patients annually across the U.S. From October 2021 through the end of the year, ECP partnered with 12 new practices, including CEI Vision Partners (CVP) in Ohio, Kentucky and Virginia; and The Eye Institute of West Florida (EIWF).

Like the practices that are already part of EyeCare Partners, these new practices bring incremental knowledge and experience to the national network, which is a crucial and foundational component of its continued success as the nation's leading provider of clinically integrated eyecare. As of March, ECP had more than 8,400 team members in 680-plus locations across 18 states. This includes more than 1,000 doctors, including optometrists and ophthalmologists.

In 2022, one of the main goals and greatest investments will be elevating the experiences of patients and care teams with the E360+ platform. In support of this, ECP will pilot a new clinically integrated electronic medical record in a handful of practices this year.

ECP notes that its focus is to work toward developing a clinically integrated model across its markets.

## 6 COSTCO

The Costco Optical departments turned in a solid performance last year. Costco added 11 additional optical departments last year, finishing the year with 543 locations. And the group turned in a banner sales year, also, with optical sales rising almost 27 percent to \$1.4 billion, yet Costco dropped one spot to No. 6 in the VM Top 50 Optical Retailers report this year. (No. 5 retailer EyeCare Partners also had a banner year in 2021 as it added more than 200 locations.)

Costco Optical prides itself on having some of the most knowledgeable employees in the industry. The staff consists of trained opticians that are well regarded in the optical industry. The optical departments carry a wide range of contact lenses, brand-name designer frames and sunglasses and offer the latest technology in high-definition lenses.

A Costco membership is not required to receive an eye exam at Costco warehouse clubs, but it is required to purchase frames and/or lenses from the optical department. Costco optical centers offer a variety of prescription and special lens options for Costco members. Many Costco optical departments also have an independent optometrist (OD) in or near the optical department.

As of March 2022, Costco operated 828 warehouses, including 572 in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, 105 in Canada, 40 in Mexico, 30 in Japan, and 29 in the United Kingdom, among other nations. The company also operates e-commerce sites in the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, Mexico, Korea, Taiwan, Japan, and Australia.

## 7 VISIONWORKS

Visionworks of America operates stores under the Visionworks and Empire Visionworks names. Visionworks closed the year with 716 locations, a net gain of 18 new locations. For the 2021 calendar year, Visionworks operated 631 Visionworks stores, which generated sales of \$913 million, the company said. The 67 Empire Visionworks locations in 2021 generated sales of \$228.3 million, the company reported to VM. The company stated its biggest achievement in 2021 was "to provide safe quality eyecare to our customers post COVID while driving record sales and profit."

Visionworks also reports that 1 percent of its sales

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are online sales of eyewear, breaking out to 25 percent contact lenses and 75 percent eyeglasses. The company also said that it did add technologies to enable “remote” eye exams for patients and added that it intended to expand the capability in 2022.

In December of 2021, Pete Bridgman, president of Visionworks, assumed an expanded role as VSP Global's new chief network officer. He is leading the organization's network strategy and associated business areas, including network development and management, VSP Ventures, onsite clinics, Eyeconic and Visionworks.

Greg Hare, who had taken over as interim president of Visionworks after Bridgman's role was expanded, was named president of Visionworks in May of 2022. He previously was the organization's chief customer officer. He joined Visionworks in 2018 as senior vice president of strategy and transformation.

The company noted that one of the key priorities in 2022 is adding a “new technology platform that will allow for simplified customer experience.” VSP Global, rebranded as VSP Vision in April of 2022, acquired Visionworks in October 2019.

## 8 MYEYEDR.

MyEyeDr. (Capital Vision Services) achieved several milestones in 2021, including crossing the threshold of the \$1 billion revenue mark. The group finished the year with revenue of \$1.1 billion across 817 locations. The company operated 659 eyecare locations at the end of 2020.

Among the key additions in 2021 for MyEyeDr. was the Rx Optical group (a former Top 50 Optical Retailer) with its 54 locations across Michigan and Indiana. In addition, the Rx Optical partnership further solidified the presence of MyEyeDr. in the Midwest. (Rx Optical was founded in 1947 in Kalamazoo, Mich.) Other key additions included Associates in Eye Care in Northern Virginia/Washington, D.C.; MVC Eyecare in New Hampshire; and Dr. Michael Reade's Texas State Optical (TSO) practices in Houston.

Also in 2021, MyEyeDr. invested significantly in efforts to improve the patient experience, with the creation of an online scheduler and patient portal to give staff more time to focus on patient care and less time on administration. The number of appointments booked online has more than doubled since the launch of the

new scheduler, the organization noted.

In addition, MyEyeDr. partnered with the American Optometric Association (AOA) to roll out a technician training program across its organization, and invested over \$6 million in 2021 in optometry equipment to support its doctors.

As of March, MyEyeDr. operated more than 820 locations, with 1,400 optometrists and 6,400 non-optometrist staff members.

MyEyeDr. has seen significant growth in top-line numbers and physical locations since it partnered with Goldman Sachs Merchant Banking in 2019. Executives also noted that MyEyeDr. had partnered with many practices at the end of 2021 and, as a result, used the early months of 2022 to integrate these practices with system conversions and other integration programs.

## 9 WARBY PARKER

2021 marked a major milestone for Warby Parker which issued its initial public stock offering on Sept. 29 (NYSE: WRBY), becoming the first “public benefit corporation” to go public through a direct listing. Overall, Warby Parker generated total sales for the calendar year ending 2021 of \$540.8 million with a total of 161 stores, including 3 in Canada. In the U.S., VM estimates that with 158 Warby Parker stores and its direct-to-consumer online business that the company generated sales of \$534 million.

As reported, Warby Parker experienced double-digit sales increases for both the fourth quarter and full year of 2021, as the company opened 35 new stores during the year. The company said it expects to open an additional 40 stores in 2022, primarily in existing markets, as it moves to surpass the 200-store mark by the end of 2022.

On the bottom line, for the full year 2021, Warby Parker said its net loss was \$144.3 million, with full-year adjusted EBITDA of \$24.9 million. The adjusted EBITDA margin improved 270 basis points year-over-year to 4.6 percent.

Simultaneously with the IPO, the company launched the Warby Parker Impact Foundation, a nonprofit organization, with a mission “to advocate for wider access to vision services.”

In 2021, Warby Parker authorized up to 1 percent of the company's outstanding shares for future grants to the foundation or other like-minded charitable organizations. In 2021, Warby Parker distributed 10 million pairs of glasses through its Buy a Pair, Give a Pair program.

The company published its 2021 Impact Report in April 2022. Also last year, the company opened its second in-house laboratory in Las Vegas. Its first lab in Sloatsburg, N.Y. opened in 2016, has since expanded to a 52,000-square-foot facility. With the Las Vegas lab, the company said it will be able to better serve West Coast customers through the new 69,000 square foot facility.

The Virtual Vision Test by Warby Parker, introduced in July, is an app that allows eligible users to renew a glasses and contact lens prescription from anywhere, at any time, using an iPhone. Users take a quiz and if eligible, they're guided through a 10-minute vision test and within 48 hours a doctor reviews the results and provides a renewed prescription (if the user's vision has not changed) at a cost of \$15 for each renewed Rx.

## 10 KEPLR VISION

After a busy year of adding new partnerships and practices in 2021, Keplr Vision moves into the Top 10 U.S. Optical Retailers list for the first time. As of March, Keplr Vision consisted of 286 practice locations in 35 states, with 600-plus ODs and 3,000-plus members of the Keplr Vision team. Keplr added roughly 100 new locations in 2021, and it is an OD-owned and led organization.

The organization has a diverse set of goals for 2022, including the effort to adopt standards from award-winning health care organizations, particularly around data collection and analysis. The belief is that the group will become even stronger in terms of performance through data-driven decision-making.

The group saw improvement in operating metrics through most of 2021 as eyecare and other business sectors recovered from the depths of Covid-19 in 2020. But, like other eyecare groups, the Omicron variant wave led to some setbacks in late 2021 and early 2022. But by March, trends had begun to improve and the strong growth trends of 2021 had returned, the organization noted. Keplr has budgeted for another strong year of new partnerships in 2022, while at the same time it will work through the integration of the 100 offices added in 2021.

In addition, Keplr Vision continues to focus on full-scope optometry in the U.S. Keplr Vision was formed in July 2019 when two portfolio companies of Imperial Capital of Canada —Total ECP and Visionary Eye Partners — merged to operate as a combined entity under the Keplr Vision name. ■

