

INVISION®

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE AMERICAN EYECARE PROFESSIONAL | JANUARY 2015



FOLIO OZZIE AWARD 2014

GOLD WINNER

New Magazine Design

**Better
Retailing**

LOSE YOUR
FEAR OF SALES
SUCCESS

(SPECIAL FEATURE)



SUNWEAR
Super-Chic
Mirror Lenses

FRAMES
Vintage Meets
Modern

CATEGORY FOCUS
Practice
Management
Software

AIM HIGH

THE BIG
STORY

21 WAYS TO MAKE 2015 YOUR BEST YEAR EVER

THE LATEST RELEASES FRAMES

\$125



SHINE ON, WINTER!

→ British celebrity Alexa Chung knows that sun protection is as important in January as it is in July. Here, she sports **TOMMY HILFINGER** model TH 1287/S, a rounded retro-inspired shape with a soft keyhole bridge, also available as an optical frame. safilo.com



\$245

BREAK THE ICE

→ A tortoise pattern along the brow bar and temples gives model 3526 from **FYSH UK** a dramatic take on the modern cat's-eye look. The full-rim acetate frame is available in nude tort (above), black tort, purple tort and gray tort. westgroupe.com

AIM HIGH

→ **ASPIRE**, a new line from ClearVision, launches this month with 12 sleek styles in lightweight materials, an adjustable nose pad system and distinctive looks. With its bold appearance and minimalist hinge, Model Special may appeal to men and women. cvoptical.com



\$240

BUTTON UP

→ Fans of **BURBERRY** will warm up to a collection of sunglasses inspired by the trench coat. Model BE 4189 has a horn-look acetate front to recall the coat's buttons, and the check detailing on the temples is a nod to the coat's lining. luxottica.com



\$225

SPORTING LIFE

→ Model L159SL from **LACOSTE** is a metal frame double-bar aviator with leather inserts on the temples and a racket — in homage to the brand's tennis heritage — on the temple tips. In black, blue and burgundy. marchon.com



\$186



\$249

AWASH IN COLOR

→ Gorgeous translucent tinted acetate fronts and tips harmonize with carved stainless steel temples in model 9209 from **OGI**. A smooth swooping brow adds charisma to this feminine, watercolor-inspired frame, seen here in brown/blue streak. ogieyewear.com

FREEDOM OF CHOICE

→ The first eyewear collection from Devo founder Mark **MOTHERSBAUGH** and Shane Baum includes Akronite, made of corrosion-resistant beryllium with 3-D tooled temple tips and CR-39 lenses. baumvision.com



\$325

*All prices MSRP, except where noted.

ANTI-RETAIL OBJECTION #2 "BUT THEY DIDN'T TEACH US BUSINESS IN OPTOMETRY SCHOOL."

It doesn't matter. Dr. Courtney Dryer opened 4 Eyes Optometry, in Charlotte, NC, when she was just two years out of optometry school. "I designed my practice knowing that most of my profits will come from my optical dispensary," she says, adding that she's found that optical sales make up for falling reimbursements for eye exams and ancillary testing.

Dryer created a one-of-a-kind dispensary that reflects her personality, is super-functional for staff and patients, and uses strong visual merchandising. Read more about how she did it at invmag.us/1155. OK, it's true that Dryer was a business major as an undergrad, but you can sharpen your business smarts by networking with other business-minded ODs online, by taking continuing education classes — and by keeping up with INVISION and other business media.

The key thing to remember is that the patient in your chair becomes a customer in your dispensary. You can ease that transition and lessen the chance of people leaving with their prescription by talking with patients about their individual eyewear needs before they leave the exam chair. Steve Whitaker, owner of Whitaker Eye Works, suggests lines like these to help you master the handoff:

→ "Your new Rx calls for an update with your eyewear. Would you be willing to talk to the folks in the eyewear area? They are really good at what they do and I want your glasses to represent our eye exam accurately. Let me introduce you..."

→ "I strongly recommend that you let us provide you new eyewear. What do you think? You will appreciate the increase in detail with your new Rx. The folks out front will make sure your glasses match my Rx exactly. Right this way..."

Want to make more money? Start by selling patients they eyewear they really need.

ANTI-RETAIL OBJECTION #3 "WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH SPACE."

Size isn't important. It's what you do with what you have. Silver Lining Opticians, one of our 2014 America's Finest Optical Retailers, has just 700 square feet for its Manhattan showroom, but it makes the most of those tight quarters

with creative displays including fine eyewear arrayed on open glass shelving and even spread out on a vintage pool table.

Of course, bigger can be better: In his column in this month's *Invision*, John Marvin says that picking the wrong location — or one with too little space — is a primary reason for lackluster sales. Marvin's rule of thumb for size? Think a minimum of 2,500 square feet, including at least 1,200 to 1,500 for the dispensary. (Read more on page 52.) But if you're committed to the space you're in, you can still sell more eyewear through doctor recommendations, clever promotions and excellent customer service.

Another idea if space is tight: Offer frames that people won't find everywhere else. Best Image Optical founder Mark Dolabany so strongly believes that eyewear should only be fitted by experienced pros that his company sells only through independent ECPs. That way, people can't "showroom" your offerings, then order them cheaper online. Other companies that focus on independents include WestGroupe and Studio Optyx.

ANTI-RETAIL OBJECTION #4 "I'D HAVE TO HIRE MORE PEOPLE."

And that's a bad thing? Staff are an investment, and if you hire the right talent — people who love eyewear and know how to sell it — they'll make money for you. Add a front-line person to create a concierge-like experience, and you'll reap wide word-of-mouth and rave online reviews.

"I think many optometric offices function on a permanent skeleton crew. They barely have enough people to get the basics done, let alone go above and beyond with patients," says Bonilla-Warford of Bright Eyes. "We place a very high premium on customer service. I personally hate all medical experiences and I assume our patients do, too — especially the waiting. You'll be more effective at sales by making patients feel that they're being attended to."

Bonilla-Warford says this especially applies to premium lenses, because they're complicated. "Intentionally staffing to provide that level of ser-



A vintage pool table makes a creative display area at Silver Lining Opticians in New York City.

vice may result in some downtime, and you won't need that level of service for every patient who walks in the door. But it'll make enough difference to enough patients that a motivated, well-trained optician, one who's able to sell premium lenses, multiple pairs of eyewear and a year's supply of contact lenses, will more than carry their weight on your payroll."

ANTI-RETAIL OBJECTION #5 "I CAN'T COMPETE WITH CHAINS, SO WHY TRY?"

Stay positive. Take pride in your expertise. Even when it seems like every week brings news of a frightening new competitor to your business, keep your head up.

"If you have a defeatist attitude in business, you're not going to win," says Glazier. "You may not be the cheapest," says Glazier, "but you are an expert and people pay for the advice and counsel of experts."

Your business might not be a fit for the chain-store or online buyer now, but that doesn't mean that *someday* they won't want something better than a \$129 pair of glasses. Believe us, they will.

How can you make *someday* happen a little bit faster? Make sure your optical area is attractive, well organized and tells product stories. Or as Glazier puts it: "If your optical is not looking sexy, you're not going to get those sales."

DR. NATHAN
BONILLA-
WARFORD



"Most of my profits
come from my
optical dispensary."
DR. COURTNEY DRYER



MICHAEL
BLOCK



DR. ALAN
GLAZIER

