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Inside



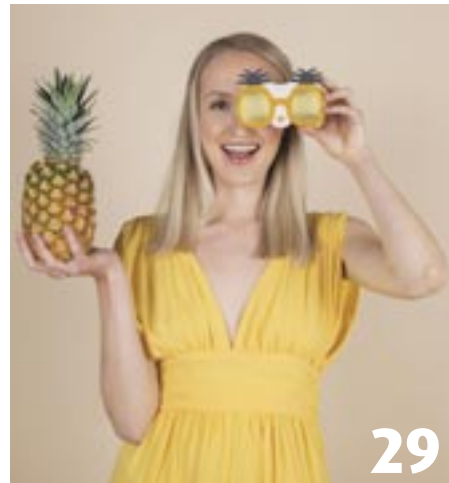
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13



14



29

News

- 4 Optinet purchases PCS assets
- 7 CLOs in Wales join EHEW
- 9 New role at UltraVision
- 11 Promotion at LOCSU
- 13 Lissamine green statement
- 14 New ProGear inner
- 14 An independent view**
Pulling together in troubled times
- 19 **Product profile**
Chopard Eyewear by De Rigo
- 20 **Product profile**
Big & Tall Eyewear
- 23 **Business matters**
Selling expensive lenses
- 27 **First person**
I can't see you. Can you see me?
- 28 **Style spotlight**
Eyewear accessories
- 30 **Suppliers' directory**

Editor's comment



As the Covid-19 crisis continues to wreak havoc with the lives and livelihoods of practitioners across the UK, the Optometric Fees Negotiating Committee (OFNC) has issued an urgent appeal to NHS England for an emergency GOS support package to enable as many practices as possible to remain open and deliver urgent and essential eyecare to communities. At the time of writing, there was still no additional provision in sight, despite GOS funding relief having already been provided in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. NEG recognises the very difficult situation that many members are now in, and is committed to providing whatever support it can – through its Preferred Supplier network, the NEG Business Club and other initiatives.

For the next three months, *Vision Now* will be online only via Issuu. You will be able to download the magazine as a whole PDF – or simply 'flick through' the pages as you would with a hard copy. We will send you the link as soon as the issues are completed, and please do make sure you are following NEG on Twitter and LinkedIn for the latest updates, including news about the 2020 Building for Success conference.

The dates for the conference have now been pushed back to 6 and 7 December, to allow time for the industry and profession to recover. As NEG operations director, Phil Mullins, says: "Our aim will be to celebrate all things independent at the end of this difficult year for business." Please make sure you keep checking the GOC website for the latest guidance for registrants, as well as your professional bodies and NHS England.

All that remains is to wish you, your staff and families well as we navigate our way through this crisis.

Nicky Collinson

Editor

The Editor welcomes letters, articles and other contributions for publication in the magazine and reserves the right to amend them. Any such contribution, whether it bears the author's name, initials or pseudonym, is accepted on the understanding that its author is responsible for the opinions expressed in it and that its publication does not imply that such opinions are those of The PK National Eyecare Group Ltd. Articles submitted for publication should be original, unpublished work and are accepted on the basis that they will not be published in any other journal. Acceptance of material for publication is not a guarantee that it will be included in any particular issue. Copyright © 2020 by Peekay Publishing Ltd. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying and recording, without the written permission of the publishers. Such written permission should also be obtained before any part of this publication is stored in a retrieval system of any nature.

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1 Essilor



Crizal Drive minimises reflections at 507nm lightwaves

Essilor's anti-reflective coating, Crizal Drive, will now be available across a wider range of designs, including Varilux X and E series, Varilux Physio 3.0 and single vision lenses. The coating, said to deliver up to 90 per cent less reflections when driving at night, has until now been exclusive to its RoadPilot driving lens. The range is also available with Transitions Xtractive to darken and reduce sun glare for drivers during the day.

To support the range extension, consumers will be invited to enter an in-practice prize draw to win a car, while practitioners get the chance to attend a driving experience with PalmerSport as part of a sales incentive. Managing director at Essilor, Tim Precious, said: "Crizal Drive is one of our premium anti-reflective coatings and we wanted to make it widely available to consumers to help them maintain visual acuity throughout the day and night. Research has shown that a third of people avoid driving at night and there's been a demand from ECPs and patients for a solution to this. As we typically spend more time behind the wheel, glare protection is a sensible option and it would be an excellent choice for a second pair of driving lenses as part of a multipair deal, making driving a more comfortable and safer experience."

2 Optinet

Optinet has purchased the assets and intellectual property (IP) rights of PCS Cheltenham and taken on the telephone support of the PCS Practice Management Software (PMS). PCS Cheltenham staff have joined the Optinet team and will continue to offer support to PCS clients.

Michael Daunt, Optinet managing director, said: "We are pleased to have finalised the agreement with Mike Preston of PCS Cheltenham to take on the support of the PCS PMS. We would like to reassure PCS customers that Optinet will continue to offer the highest level of support for the software. We see this as just the next step as Optinet continues to grow and further enhances the group's continued support of the UK's independent sector."

Mike Preston, former owner of PCS Cheltenham, added: "I'm delighted that as I step back from the running of PCS Cheltenham, the software and our customers



Mike Preston (left) with Michael Daunt

are in good hands with Optinet, who have a proven track record of supporting independent practice across the country. I would like to personally thank all PCS customers for their loyalty and wish them all the success for the future."

Optinet staff are currently working remotely, so would kindly ask that customers only call 0800 310 2400 if they cannot access their Optinet software.

3 Optrafair 20/20



New autumn dates

Optrafair 20/20 will now take place from 19 to 21 September at the NEC Birmingham.

The Federation of Manufacturing Opticians (FMO) has confirmed that all bookings will be transferred as a matter of course.

"We will be working hard on all aspects of the show to ensure it delivers," said FMO chair, Stuart Burn. "We now have the opportunity to realise our promise of the best ever Optrafair in September without the uncertainty which inevitably faces us all at the moment."

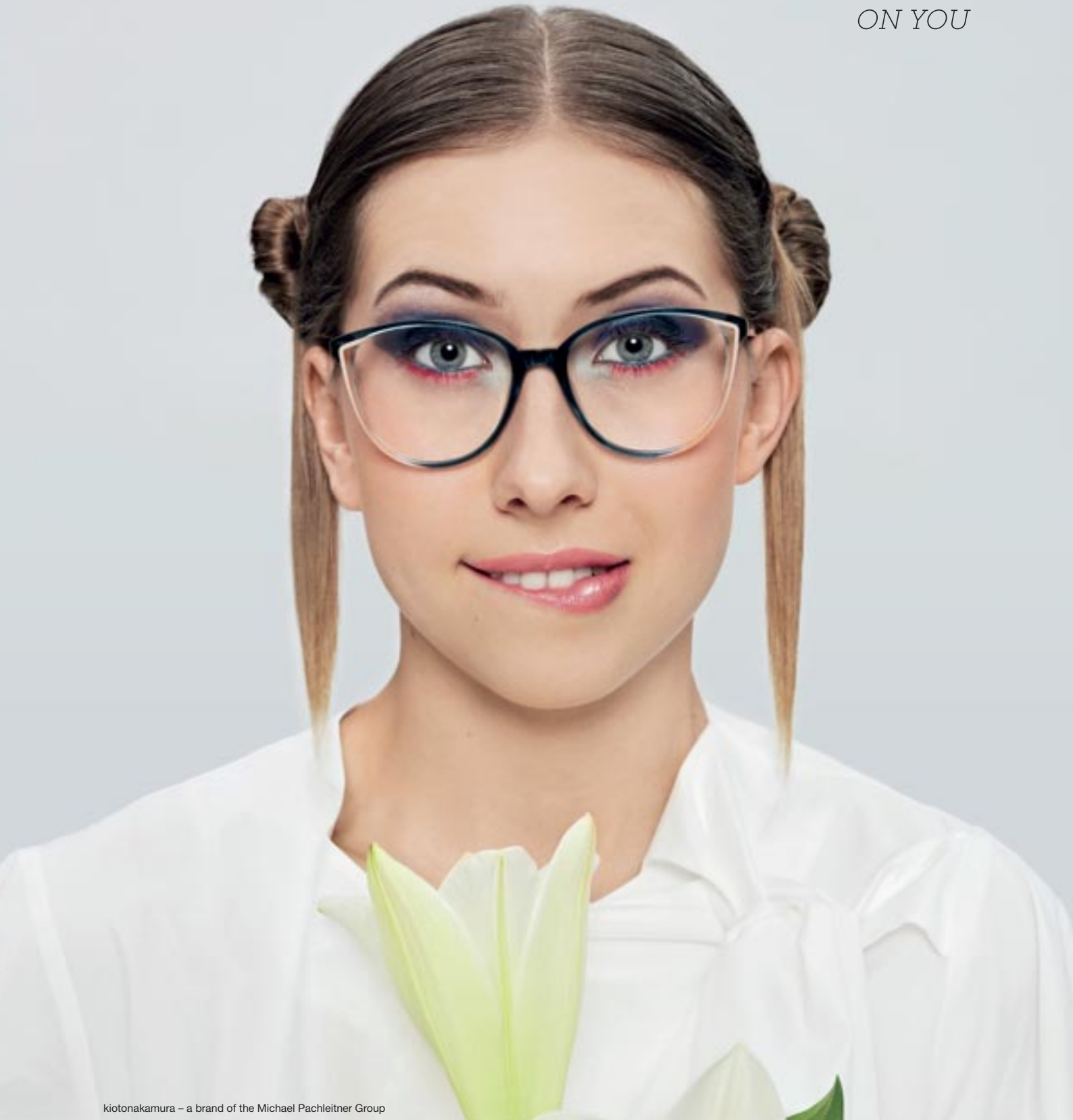
The Optician Awards will now take place on Sunday 20 September, and the Association of British Dispensing Opticians' annual dinner on Saturday 19 September – both at the Hilton Metropole Birmingham.

4 No 7 Contact Lenses

No7 Contact Lenses has launched Hydra-PEG – a new concept and process that encapsulates the entire lens surface in a layer of polymer (polyethylene glycol) up to a thickness of 40nm. "The results have been exceptional, from avoiding drop-outs to extending wearing times from just a few hours to all-day comfort," said Katie Harrop, No7 professional services director. "It's not very often that something dramatic happens in our industry, but Hydra-PEG is a real game changer and will definitely enhance the patient's wearing experience."

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5 Association of British Dispensing Opticians



Sharon Beatty

Contact lens opticians (CLOs) in Wales will now be able to work within the Eye Health Exam Wales (EHEW) scheme, joining colleagues in England already delivering minor eye conditions services (MECS). The EHEW scheme is part of Wales Eyecare Services (WECS), which enables patients to receive urgent care or monitor patients with certain conditions in optical practices within the community instead of the hospital eye service.

CLO Haylie Pritchard is one of the first to take part in the scheme. She said: "Having worked alongside optometrists delivering this service for a number of years, I have seen first-hand the positives of being able to provide primary eye health advice in practice. Patients can be seen swiftly and feel reassured they are getting expert assistance."

Sharon Beatty, EHEW clinical co-lead, training and accreditation manager, commented: "I am thrilled that WOPEC has been able to work with ABDO and Optometry Wales to bring such an exciting development to the EHEW service. We are delighted that contact lens opticians are joining the EHEW service and utilising their expertise for the benefit of patients in Wales."

Dr Nik Sheen, EHEW clinical co-lead, training and accreditation manager, added: "This is great news for Wales and particularly practices that are seeing increasing numbers of these patients so that the skills and expertise of contact lens opticians can be utilised fully."

6 Marchon



Kendall Jenner wears Longchamp Sun

Longchamp has released two new eyewear designs that play with dense contours and thin profiles, whilst maintaining the core features of lightness and comfort. Both styles star in the brand's spring/summer 2020 advertising campaign: the sunglasses are worn by supermodel Kendall Jenner photographed by Columbine Goldsmith in the immersive scenery of the California desert, under the intense light of the midday sun. Inspired by the iconic Le Pliage handbags, the acetate rectangular shape of the ophthalmic frame is embellished with a custom metal plaque embossed with the Horse symbol and paired with the Longchamp signature logo.

7 Norville

Tiny tots to teens are well catered for with Norville's latest collection of Blitz Kidz faves in just about every colour of the rainbow.

"Our Blitz Kidz styles bring together trendy designs with a broad choice of eye shapes for boys and girls," said Paul Willis, Norville Group sales director. "Particularly striking are the colour combinations of black/lime, black/orange, grey/blue, blue/yellow and gunmetal/orange. The younger models are designed for babies from six months and include low temples, non-jointed flex sides and elastic head strap options, and extra comfort silicone curls for toddlers.

"We provide a bespoke service to offer rocking pads to the plastic models and we can fit curl sides to some styles which do not come with them," continued Paul. "Side lengths can also be adjusted to ensure the



Bespoke options for tiny tots

perfect fit. Acetates and metal options come with tough Trivex lenses and a two-year guarantee. Trivex is the best lens material for little people as it is lighter than polycarbonate but is tough enough for the rough and tumble of playground life. It offers great optics and provides UV 400 sun protection."

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Reference: 1. Perez-Gomez I, Giles T. European survey of contact lens wearers and eye care professionals on satisfaction with a new water gradient daily disposable contact lens. *Clinical Optometry*. 2014;6:17-23.

*9 out of 10 patients agreed with the statement "With these lenses, I sometimes forget I have them on"

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8 Positive Impact/ Kirk & Kirk



Penelope in Cerise

As part of a drive to enhance value added service, Kirk & Kirk and Positive Impact have collaborated to provide a Kirk & Kirk branded Glasklar lens cleaning spray free with every Kirk & Kirk frame purchase in the UK, for a limited period. "Communicating the value of hand-made, independent eyewear to consumers is of paramount importance – and by giving them a high quality lens spray we are telling them to treat their beautiful eyewear with care and love," said Jason Kirk. "Not only is the cleaning spray superb but the packaging is colourful and totally on brand," added creative director, Karen Kirk.

The goal is to encourage independent opticians in the UK to stock the Glasklar refill system and offer customers the opportunity to regularly pop in for free refills. In addition to raising their level of customer service, this will help build relationships between the consumer and the optician and improve customer loyalty, the company believes.

11 Silhouette

Silhouette's new Infinity View collection is specifically designed to complement workwear and business style. Inspired by the timeless appeal of the pencil skirt and trouser suit, Infinity View features a range of classic, stylish shapes. There are four new shapes – two for women, one unisex and one men's – enriched by an assortment of transparent colours. Model 2922 (pictured) is the rectangular men's frame, which features the collection's signature transparent finish. It's available in Cool Glacier, Blue Steel, Champagne Grove and Simply Brown.

9 Louis Stone Optical

At the time of going to press, Louis Stone was responding to "unprecedented demand" for several products due to the Coronavirus crisis. Managing director, Paul Gaba, said he was "refusing to follow the role of several online companies who are charging high prices for these products". He commented: "We have a reputation built over 70 years supplying the optical industry and will not take advantage of our customers and their patients. It is currently integral that opticians use breath shields when operating slit lamps – they have a duty of care not only to their patients, but to themselves."

The company added that demand was particularly high for universal slit lamp breath shields, slit lamp chin paper, tonometer tips



Large slit lamp shields

and sterile wipes for instruments. Other items in demand have been the company's white tailor-made lab coats and lab jackets, and frame trays with covers. It has sent out orders for 5,000 large and small slit lamp breath shields and a large amount of chin rest paper and alcohol instrument cleaning pads. It has also secured a large consignment of material to make more shields. Contact the company direct for the latest stock information.

10 UltraVision



Debbie Hopkins

Debbie Hopkins has joined UltraVision as professional services consultant. With more than 13 years of experience in the hospital sector, Debbie will play a key role in supporting the company's hospital customers, offering technical assistance and providing education and training, including CET accredited content.

Debbie said: "I am thrilled to be joining UltraVision's specialist lens team. My hospital fitting experience, combined with UltraVision's expertise and extensive range of specialist contact lenses, is an exciting opportunity to support those working in this niche field."



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12 ACLM



Manual and website launched

The product manual of the Association of Contact Lens Manufacturers (ACLM) has now been published online as part of its newly launched website. In easily searchable form, the ACLM Contact Lens Year Book lists technical details for all the contact lenses, solutions and materials produced by ACLM member companies, and covers the overwhelming bulk of products available in the UK. It is also now available on computers, tablets, smartphones and other mobile devices.

The new ACLM website has been designed to encourage new contact lens wearers and support existing wearers – and includes a restricted area for eyecare practitioners. There is a separate restricted area in which the Year Book tables are available free of charge for all those who have purchased the latest hard copy version, as well as members of the British Contact Lens Association and selected students at the various training establishments.

13 ABDO



Clive Marchant with Laura-Jane Rawlings

ABDO has achieved the Youth Friendly Employer mark, showing an employer is invested in recruiting and supporting young people. Laura-Jane Rawlings, CEO at Youth Employment UK, spoke to the ABDO senior team at their recent annual meeting about the benefits of the collaboration. She also handed over ABDO's certificate of membership to ABDO president, Clive Marchant.

Nick Walsh, ABDO sector skills development officer, said: "Within the world of optics, there are so many career options open that people may not be aware of, so working with Youth Employment UK with their amazing reach, including over one million visitors to their website in 2019 by students and parents, will help to make eyecare a new consideration for those who may not have previously thought of this."

* 17 April is the closing date for applications for the new ABDO Level 5 Management and Leadership Training courses. Being offered entirely online, the courses will start on 1 May, with optional workshops. The Association is currently taking applications from members for the Management & Leadership Diploma and the Management Essentials Certificate. The courses will be accredited by the Chartered Management Institute, which will also assess and award the qualification. Find out more at www.abdo.org.uk

14 Transitions Optical



Vadim Gorovoy

Vadim Gorovoy has been appointed as Transitions general manager sales, Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA), with a brief to grow the Transitions brand and photochromic category in those regions. Russian-born Vadim has built a strong track record in branding, marketing and retail over the past 20 years including the last 12 years working for Lego. His arrival coincides with the European launch of the eighth generation of Transitions everyday lenses, Transitions Signature Gen8.

15 LOCSU



Richard Whittington

Richard Whittington has been promoted to chief executive of the Local Optical Committee Support Unit (LOCSU). Mike Fegan, chairman of LOCSU, said: "This promotion recognises the strong leadership which Richard has provided and the hard work and commitment he has shown in delivering LOCSU objectives. Richard will now take LOCSU forward with the aim of building on the progress of the last few years, within the context of major reorganisation of the NHS in England. His focus will be to ensure LOCSU provides the support that LOCs, regional networks of LOCs and PECs need to deliver the aims and ambitions of the sector."

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1. Reindel, W., Mosehauer, G., et al., 2018. Patient comfort, vision and cleanliness over 12-months of Samfilcon A Lens Wear. Poster presented at AAO.

2. Bausch + Lomb, 2017. A study to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of a silicone hydrogel soft contact lens when worn on a 7-day extended wear basis (#818).

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UK/ULT/19/032d Feb 2020

16 Marchon



Partnership extended

Marchon Eyewear and Italian fashion brand Liu Jo have renewed their long-term, multi-year global eyewear licensing agreement which began in 2014. The agreement is for the exclusive design, development, production and distribution of Liu Jo ophthalmic and sunglass collections. "We are incredibly proud to continue our longstanding and successful partnership with Liu Jo" said Nicola Zotta, president of Marchon Eyewear. "We are confident that we will continue to create innovative designs and products that drive the Liu Jo eyewear business forward."

19 GiveVision

GiveVision and the Sony UK Technology Centre (Sony UK Tec) are partnering to develop and manufacture the next generation of wearable technology for people with central vision loss. GiveVision, which joined NEG at Optrafair in 2018, has already developed a prototype device, called SightPlus, which has been shown to significantly improve the visual function of people with incurable sight loss. GiveVision will be working with Sony UK Tec to develop and manufacture a new, lightweight version of SightPlus condensing the existing 'vision enhancing' technology into a single pair of glasses.

Stan Karpenko, CEO of GiveVision, said: "Having access to Sony's world-beating technology, as well as their manufacturing

17 General Optical Council

The General Optical Council (GOC) has published a statement on the use of CE-marked lissamine green ophthalmic strips to assist registrants in ensuring they act in the interests of the public. The statement clarifies that there will be circumstances where it is necessary, in the patient's best interests, for optometrists and contact lens opticians to use CE-marked lissamine green ophthalmic strips (the marketing and supply of which is not currently opposed by the MHRA) within the scope of their practice.

GOC chief executive and registrar, Lesley Longstone, said: "This is a complex issue and we have worked closely with a number of stakeholders in developing this statement. Our role is to protect, promote and maintain the health and safety of members of the public and we hope it will give registrants clarity and reassurance



Clarification on lissamine green use
(image courtesy of Mid-Optic)

about using CE-marked lissamine green ophthalmic strips within the scope of their clinical practice." The full statement can be found on the GOC website.

18 CooperVision

CooperVision has become a Global Patron of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and will collaborate to bring greater awareness and action to the growing prevalence and severity of myopia in children worldwide. "We're optimistic about what our new partnership with IAPB will mean for millions of children, adults and families worldwide," said Daniel G. McBride, president of CooperVision.

In addition to its IAPB patronage, CooperVision contributes significant funding, knowledge and time to a range of eye health-focused organisations every year. These include being a founding member of the Global Myopia Awareness Coalition, a Global Platinum sponsor of Optometry Giving Sight, and partner in Our Children's Vision. As part of its corporate responsibility initiatives, CooperCompanies is also aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, concentrating on good health and well-being, responsible consumption and production and complementary partnerships.



Simulating human vision

skills and resources will allow our company to launch and scale our latest products at speed across global markets". GiveVision will be locating its design office to the Sony UK Tec facility in Pencoed, South Wales.

A recent study of the SightPlus prototype device, conducted by Moorfields Eye Hospital, found that almost 70 per cent of users reported that their visual acuity was enhanced to 0.2 logMAR or better.

20 Norville



Extra all-round protection

Norville's popular ProGear EG sports model is now available with an upgraded inner protection called Snowguard: soft foam on outer rubber that fits behind the goggle front to provide extra all-round rim buffer protection. "We know these will be a very popular line," said Frank Norville, "so do ensure you have at least

one complete model fitted with Snowguard, but they will have very many other user benefits too such as draught protection." The model is available in grey or yellow for all three sizes (except small).

21 Rodenstock



New practice opening

Champagne, cupcakes and a special offer for new and existing patients marked the recent launch of the new Allders Opticians practice in Biggleswade, Bedfordshire. Stella Bate, Allders Opticians operations manager, said: "We are delighted to have opened our new store in Biggleswade, which not only shows the vision of Allders Opticians with innovative optical equipment such as the DNEye Scanner and the ImpressionIST but also the passion of our staff. We wish them every success for the future."

22 Charmant

The Charmant Group has become a partner of the International Opticians Association (IOA). Chris Beal, Charmant's senior vice president for Northern, Eastern and Western Europe, commented: "As a global group, Charmant is delighted to support and be working with the International Opticians Association. We are confident that our partnership will help us both to develop, educate and enhance the optical profession for practitioners on a worldwide basis for many years to come."

IOA president, Fiona Anderson, said: "We are delighted to welcome Charmant as one of our partners – a truly international company founded in Japan, Charmant is highly regarded within the optical world as having products of extremely high quality. We look forward to working together."

AN INDEPENDENT VIEW

Pulling together in troubled times

With the UK now in lockdown, one thing is clear: in troubled times like these it is imperative that the independent sector works together. There are many aspects to consider, in particular how to ensure that the sector does not just ride out the storm and access all the support mechanisms that are being put in place, but that it takes advantage of any opportunities that may present themselves.

First of all, it is important that the clinical contribution that optometry makes to frontline NHS services is properly recognised at a time when resources are so stretched. In fact, it may be the golden opportunity to leverage the future positioning of community optometry in the provision of primary eye healthcare services. Independents are generally well placed to provide what should be properly funded clinical services to take pressure off hospital eye departments for the long term. Perhaps these services would also be open to all to provide (DVLA please note).

Next, make sure that you are receiving all available support from government and other sources, which should include business rate relief, grants where applicable, zero per cent business loans and support with statutory sick pay where appropriate. Your professional and representative bodies can help you access all you are entitled to. Use any down time productively; perhaps look at your practice's differentiation in your area, how your marketing is working, or look into branching out into other areas such as behavioural optometry. Perhaps you could review your supplier arrangements to make sure you are getting the best deals?

Now is not the time to get caught in a downward spiral. This is not the economic collapse of 2008 with its decade-long consequences, and we will come out of it quicker – and potentially stronger.



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Center Thickness	0.07mm (at -3.00DS)
Lens Mark	2 markers as “1Pure ₂ ” & “880”

SEED 1dayPure moisture for Astigmatism	
Water Content	58%
Base Curve	8.80mm
Diameter	14.20mm
Power	+0.25D ~ +5.00D (0.25 steps) ±0.00D -0.25D ~ -6.00D (0.25D steps) -6.00D ~ -10.00D (0.50D steps)
Cylinder	-0.75, -1.25, -1.75D, -2.25D (180° only)
Axis	180°, 90°, 160°, 20°
Center Thickness	0.11mm (at -3.00DS, -1.25DC)



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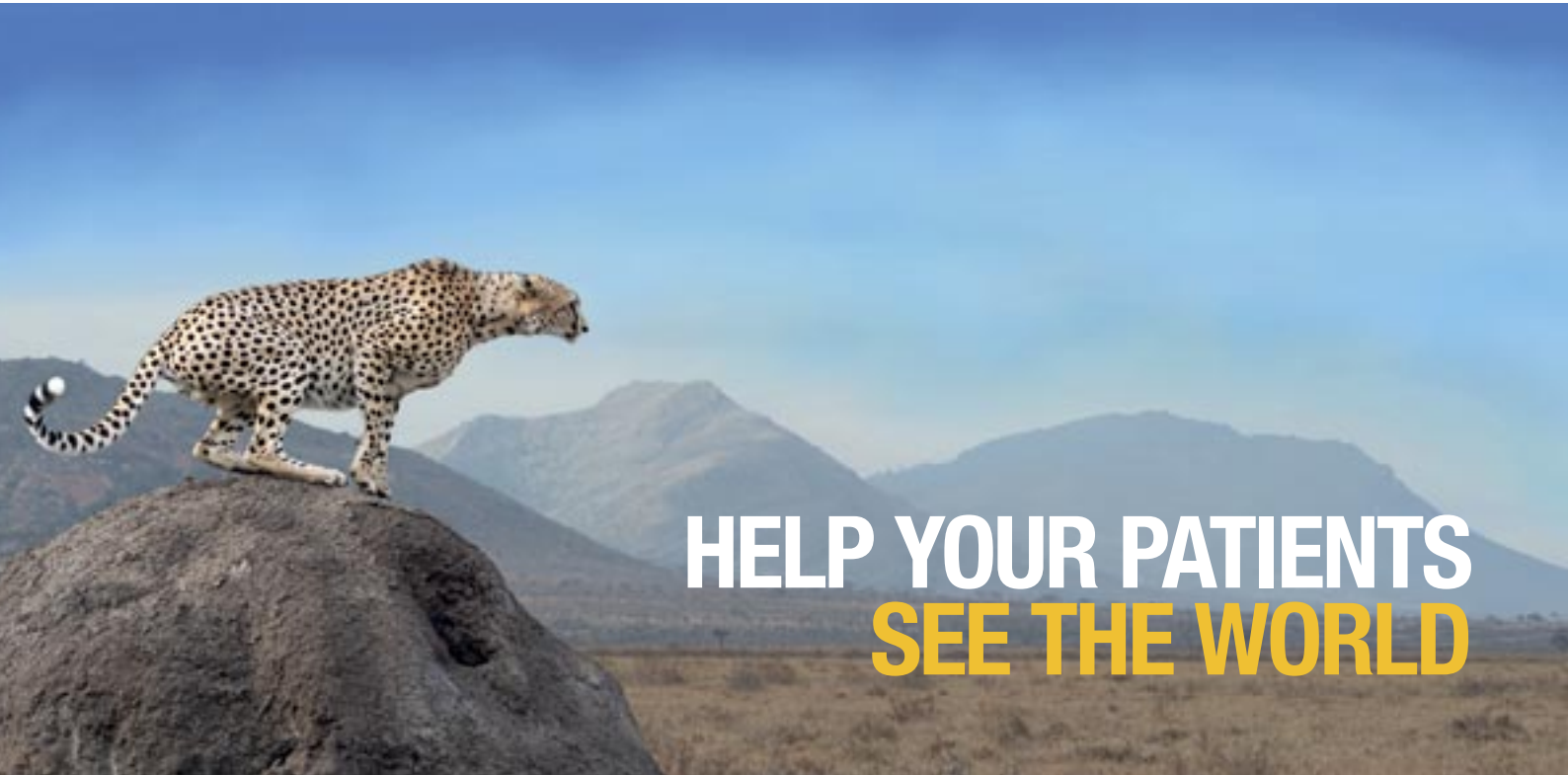
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Special edition gold aviators



Titanium men's eyewear

Under the impetus of the Scheufele family, Chopard experienced spectacular development. Renowned for its creativity, its state-of-the-art technology and the excellence of its craftsmen, Chopard has become one of the leading names in the high-end watch and jewellery industry. Entirely independently, Chopard is pursuing a time-honoured family tradition. Karl Scheufele and his wife have orchestrated the company's international expansion for more than 40 years and are still active in the firm. Their two children are its current co-presidents.

Running and developing a company such as Chopard could have not be done without a

precise and rigorous set of governing principles. Over the years, several corporate values have emerged; they form the 'backbone of Chopard' and they are: Independence, Quality and Excellence, Creativity, Heritage, Respect and Audacity.

Today Chopard stands for: *"the exclusive composition of diamonds, sapphires, rubies and emeralds of exceptional and unexpected cuts and sizes - opening up a world of unparalleled glamour and craftsmanship, where originality, creativity and technical mastery are pushed to their ultimate limits"*.

2020 EYEWEAR COLLECTION

The Chopard 2020 eyewear collection by De Rigo Vision is the epitome of two fundamental principles that characterise the celebrated Swiss Maison of High Jewellery: technological innovation and fine manufacturing. The choice of materials and ornate details that recall Chopard's most iconic jewellery lines, render this new collection both contemporary and glamorous, whilst maintaining the exceptionally high quality standards expected from De Rigo Vision, a leading player in the eyewear industry.

The new range celebrates the new statement of the Swiss company 'The artisan of emotions'. Styles echo the mood of the jewellery collections that inspire them and reinterpret their most iconic elements in a selection of elegant details. The stylish design of the Ice Cube jewels is conveyed in a cubic, three-dimensional look; whilst the unmistakable symbolic heart of the Happy

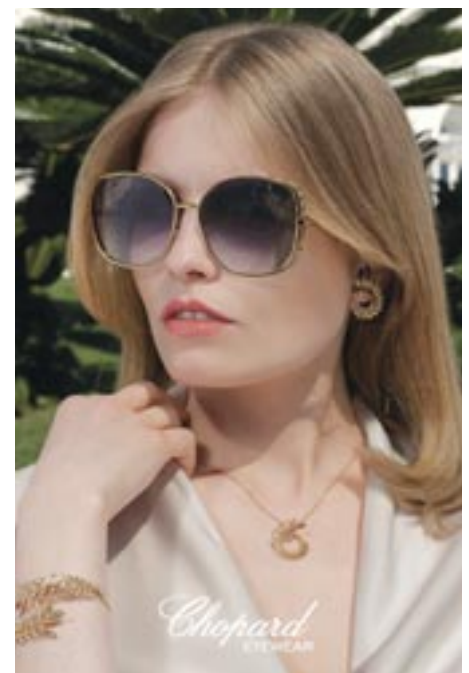
Hearts Collection appears again in the heart-shaped hinge, with natural stones such as the onyx or mother-of-pearl. References to the Imperiale collection are also found on the temples - lit up by precious and amethyst coloured crystals, creating real bejewelled glasses.

In the Chopard men's collection, titanium is pressed to create lightweight yet more fashion-forward frames, while the textured detailing on the sides transforms into 'spoilers' denoting a younger and more edgy style. Double-mirrored and palm-shape mirrored lenses re-establish a connection with the renowned red carpet.

EXCLUSIVE GOLD SUNGLASSES

Luxury and exclusivity for a contemporary, sporty gentleman: two souls that are perfectly balanced in a unique pair of sunglasses.

For the year 2020, De Rigo has designed a jewellery-inspired frame for the Maison, boasting a timelessly elegant aviator shape, including the double bridge with a decorative element characteristic of the 1000 Miglia watch case, engraved by hand by authentic eyewear jewellers. The 2g frame is made entirely from 18k 750/1000 yellow gold. The lenses boast 24k yellow gold plating. The sunglasses, crafted from a single piece for a top client, are accompanied by an elegant leather box and black velvet case.



Jewellery-inspired sunglasses

To view the Chopard eyewear collection, get in touch with De Rigo UK on 01923 249491 or email info.uk@derigo.com

Big & Tall Eyewear

For the love of a son

Atlantic Optical director, Jayne Smerald, describes the personal voyage that led to the birth of Big & Tall Eyewear

I have often looked back and wondered when we noticed that our youngest son was growing at an alarming rate. Was it at his debut Christmas Nativity play when he seemed a good head and shoulders above the nearest shepherd? Or when he was 12 when he flattened the school rugby coach with his towering enthusiasm? These are the questions you ask yourself when one of your children reaches 6ft 6in and you start praying he'll stop. From these seemingly random events, Big & Tall eyewear was born – all for the love of a son and the mother of necessity.

Over the years, I have watched, as any parent would, with heart-breaking disappointment for their child when trendy or even nice clothes were a nightmare to find let alone buy. Hours spent trawling through the internet during those teenage years was nothing but a chore. Thankfully, today's menswear collections have really caught up and there is so much choice around. Most established High Street and online clothing collections do those all-important 2TXL sizes. Our problem was resolved – or so we thought until glasses were needed. Not a comfort bridge in sight.

There have been big men's sizes out for years but for young men, there was little in eyewear that didn't have a double bar, a comfort bridge or were so conservative that 'boring' was being kind. As a company, we wanted to do something but needed to understand what the actual market size was. Mintel and NHS statistics confirmed that up to one in eight men in the UK need broader and bigger sized frames. Out of interest, the Netherlands have the tallest population in the EU. The further east you go, it's higher as face shapes broaden. We are not only living longer we are all getting bigger, taller, broader.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

It was in 2017 that I started working on shapes and, as you now know, using my



Big & Tall model 109 in Brown

own in-house 'model' to test out different shapes. After months of design, redesign, sampling and resampling, we finally had a small collection. One of our customers once told me to always ask yourself, "Is it commercial?", and that is a mantra I stick to.

In designing Big & Tall, we made sure the temples were super long – up to 155mm – but many can be shortened and even lengthened. Bridges go up to 24mm and can be adjusted and face width is, again, designed broader for comfort. Our design brief was 'trendy to business smart' – but also catering for the lycra and leather brigades with carbon fibre temples that fit snugly under cycling and motorbike helmets.

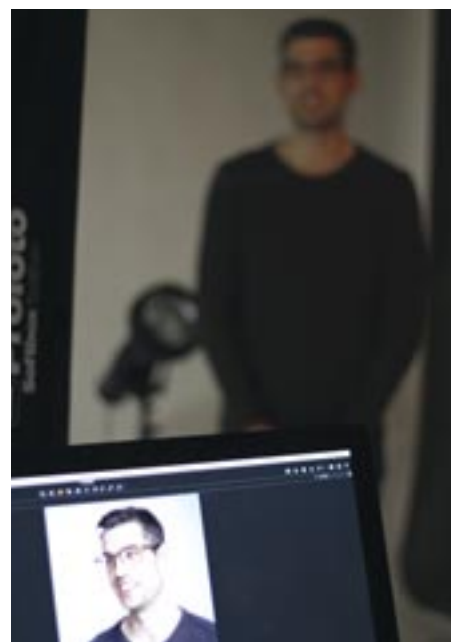
But before we launched, what about a name? We identified a need, designed the product but the name was a huge stumbling block. What on earth do we call the collection that doesn't raise eyebrows, annoy or offend? A number of years ago, we were offered a men's collection from the US with the word 'fat' in the brand. I didn't even look at the product.

I was determined to find a name that was both dignified, respectful and did 'what it said on the tin'. After searching through clothes collections for inspiration, I discovered that 'big and tall' was an established name in apparel for all larger sizes. I then asked a group of like-sized men of all ages how they felt about the descriptive words 'big and tall' when buying clothes? The answer was: "It's what we look for." Most importantly, they agreed that it was descriptive but not offensive.

Amazingly, Big & Tall Eyewear and Big & Tall Sunwear weren't trademarked at the time – but they are now. We own the trademark worldwide and the collection has 26 optical and five sunwear styles. It is the fastest growing collection we've ever had.

SENSITIVE MARKETING STRATEGY

So how can we all make those Big & Tall patients feel comfortable walking into a practice? The saying goes that people always ask how tall you are, but never how short you are. There's great truth in this, but



Behind the scenes shooting a promotional movie

why is asking someone how short they are deemed offensive when asking a tall person is acceptable? I can assure you it rarely is offensive to them – but they've heard the question so many times that the humour level is a little thin.

Clothes shopping is easier and less stressful than it was 10 or even five years ago, with all apparel plus sizes catered for in a more inclusive way. No-one wants to feel they are different to the next person and there certainly is no need of it anymore. So how did we now take those apparel marketing changes and transfer them into eyewear? Again, I looked closely how XL and plus sizes were marketed in stores or online. They are now easily identified within their own section by size. Within a practice, sizing is not an easy or simple way to display frames. By brand, gender, age and price yes – but by size is a challenge.

So how would we make it practical? We began by putting ourselves in the shoes of a Big & Tall patient – from arriving at the practice to finally being dispensed with their frames. By doing this, we were able to find a practical and beneficial solution for both practitioner and patient.

For example: a 'not so old' tall man must duck through the door or turn a bit sideways before entering the practice. Trepidation has most likely already kicked in for him and for the front-of-house staff. He knows, from experience, that finding frames is going to be a problem. He will be anticipating having to endure a lengthy search – especially if the dispensing optician has to discretely make numerous adjustments as quickly as possible.

So what can we do to limit that wait? How can we turn an uncomfortable moment into a comfortable and positive one? The answer is: by keeping Big & Tall frames separate and in their own 'size section'. The 10-piece display box, which we make available free of charge, can be presented with a variety of styles at the dispensing point. The patient not only has a selection to choose from but the dispensing optician can stay with the patient to speed up the process.

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS AND BENEFITS

These were our overall objectives: to stop the lengthy searching, turn uncomfortable to comfortable, and see a satisfied patient who would surely return again and again. Through the practices that kindly supported our research, we found that using the Big & Tall display box, and keeping the frames in

a size section, saved on average 15 minutes per dispense. Say you had 160 male patients who would benefit from larger fit frames: 160 patients x 15 minutes, you could save about 40 working hours per year. A lot of valuable time saved all around.

As you can appreciate, this is a suggestion to think about; you know your patients and throughout the UK areas can be so different. However, based on statistics each practice should have between eight and 12 larger styles available for use. We've always found that rural practices tend to have much larger fit patients, but look around any busy city centre or High Street today and you see big and tall men of all ages, shapes and sizes. They are now more the norm than the exception.

SOMETHING FOR THE LADIES

As we established the Big & Tall Eyewear collection for men, we started getting calls about doing a similar collection for women: a plus size women's eyewear collection. It seemed a natural move on our side, but first we needed to ascertain the market potential. We found that age is irrelevant; there are just more women across the board who need and want a more a comfortable size-appropriate frame that looks good. We discovered that it's actually a bigger market than the Big & Tall market for men.

It is wonderful to see the positivity in the market today regarding larger women – from 'size positive', 'body confident', 'image aware' personal identity catchphrases. Being who you are and not what magazines think you should be, the size rebellion is here to stay. Our benchmarks were fit and concentrating on shapes that enhanced and flattered, adding colour with boldness and delicacy. Personality was a big part of this brief too.



Made for You eyewear for plus size patients



Modelling Big & Tall model 106 in Tor

But once again we were back to that name challenge – with bells on. We wanted a name that was descriptive, accepting and distinctive. The answer eventually came following a chat with a friend after a trip to Hong Kong, where there's wall-to-wall, bespoke dressmaking and tailoring. When a friend commented on a coat I had made, "Wow, that looks made for you", the penny dropped.

So, we have just launched Made for You – our first plus size range which will be followed by petite and sunwear later this year. Again, we focused only on that patient and her needs. In the collection, we have started with nine styles in three gorgeous colours with more to come.

AND FINALLY...

I hope that by reading this, NEG members have had the opportunity to get to know me and Atlantic Optical a little better. We are passionate about what we do but also the reasons behind why we do it. Put simply, we do it for the patient and for you – the practice. None of us can compete with the A brands that are all safely tucked up with those Italian companies and we shouldn't even try; they do a great job. They focus on high volume 'centre' position sizes and shapes. High Street profiled ranges work for their business model. But we can make a difference through individuality – from us, as a UK designer and supplier, to you as an independent practice.

I recently read an article where the author said: "Make a difference, not just a living". I completely agree.



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Selling expensive lenses



Selling expensive lenses is difficult but not impossible, writes Julian Wiles

Costs and expenses are profit killers. How many business problems would a £30,000 cash injection solve? That's the prize. Now think about a time when your business was at its very peak. What would that look like today? No-one has the right answers for you; you can only ask yourself the right questions. Maybe it's not what you know that's important, but what you don't know. Facts change – and if you decide not to decide, then you have still made a choice. If you want different results, you have to do things differently.

Selling expensive lenses is difficult, but not impossible. Doing difficult things well needs practice and repetition, and the realisation that mistakes will be made. It's important you make those mistakes fast and early, and learn from them. Resilience is a strength, it's an important and much underrated skill.

Selling expensive lenses successfully means that you must identify all the features, and recommend all the benefits. Identify the problem you are trying to solve for your patient then tell them you have the right lens for their unique problem. Now run through all the benefits, every single one. You never know which benefit will be the one that makes them buy. Miss any one benefit out and you run the risk of missing the most important one. Learn by rote.

Fortunately, expensive lenses often have more than one benefit. This makes life a bit easier for you if you explain the benefits to people in a way they understand. People don't know what you know. Not everyone had the same education you did. This is not how they make their living, but it is how they live their lives. In order to make the

benefits simple to understand, try explaining the benefits to a 10-year old child. If they understand what you are saying, so will your patient.

DEVELOP YOUR OWN NARRATIVE

Selling expensive lenses is like selling other expensive consumer items; it's an art. It involves a high degree of empathy. It involves pride and professionalism in all aspects of your work. More importantly, it involves a narrative. The story you tell is the story people will tell themselves, their family and friends. The next time you are choosing your wine and you reach for the bottle which is £2 more expensive than your 'usual', you have just told yourself a story (or the label has). The importance of your story is that it's difficult to sell against. Your story will be flexible enough to adapt. You can do this because people trust you and they trust your brand.

The story you tell people may be the only thing that raises the cost of switching, when



Find ways to highlight features and benefits, such as the Transitions online quiz via www.transitions.com

the patient asks for their prescription to go somewhere subjectively 'better'. This is critical to your long-term success and profitability. After 70 years, lenses are now a commodity item. People can buy two pairs of prescription single vision lenses and frames for £19 and have them delivered to their door. It says so on TV. How convenient is that?

Switching is not always a rational decision, it's often an emotional one. The decision to switch suppliers might be solely down to price. "What's in it for me?" drives a lot of human behaviour and purchasing decisions are a behaviour. However, buying behaviour can be controlled and it can certainly be influenced. Behaviours have patterns and breaking an existing pattern, or creating a new one, is difficult. We are all familiar with people who switch for 'a penny', because the cost of switching (for them) is very low.


'Selling to everyone is selling to no-one'

Finding ways to raise the cost of switching is the single most profitable function for many businesses. Getting profitable people to keep coming back is the other. Deliberately re-positioning your business is one thing, having others do it for you is another. People switch supplier often because there is no perceived risk, or a greater reward on offer elsewhere. That reward may be financial, convenience, 'nicer' people, simplicity or finding someone who understands their needs better. The reason only has to make sense to the person making the decision. Selling to everyone is selling to no-one. It's a harsh reality for many.

To help you develop your own narrative you need to ask yourself three important questions:

- Is the product or service you provide truly intelligent, or at least an intelligent combination of existing technologies?
- Is it specifically targeted (with your ideal patient in mind) and professionally communicated?
- Is it a true technological development? (is it necessarily better?)

GET READY TO BOUNCE BACK WITH THE NEG BUSINESS CLUB



It's not about how far
you fall, but how high
you bounce.

We will be sharing weekly tools and tips to get you back to
break even and beyond, as fast as possible.



Go to practicebuilding.co.uk/neg
and get ready to bounce!



High-end options might include driving lenses such as DriveWear: resin polarised photochromic prescription sunglass lenses specifically for drivers

If the answer to all three questions is yes, then you have a product or service which automatically raises the cost of switching. Now you go to work on your soft skills, customer service and information, communication and education programme. To make sure your business continues to generate new, profitable and sustainable revenue streams you need to continually look for new (ideal) patients, to sell more to those people who already choose you, and to make people buy more often. All the other options open to you are outside the scope of this article.

HOW TO BEGIN TRADING UP

Expensive lenses rarely have only one benefit. You must explain why your lenses are different and better and present all those benefits in a logical sequence. You must prepare all the possible answers to the inevitable questions. People will search for the value and try to understand what's new and what's different. You must be prepared to welcome and overcome all reasonable objections.

People will buy your expensive lenses, so you must appeal to human emotions.

People rarely wake up in the morning and say: "I think I'll buy some of those expensive lenses today". Nor must you forget how many people are, or may be, involved in the final decision. If there is a third party involved in the purchase, ask the person you are speaking with what they think they would need to know?

People do have different needs, priorities, challenges or a particular problem, which is why you must explain every benefit. It will take time to discover which particular benefit works best, and this will vary from person to person. People will remember information if it is relevant, important or meaningful. And don't forget to ask for the order because it gives them a chance to say: "Thanks, but no thanks". Or order the lenses.

People who ask questions are letting you know where they are in the buying process. If someone says, "That's expensive", it's the signal you need to go to work. Expensive compared with, or to, what? If you re-phrase their statement in your mind to, "I'm sorry, I don't see the value in that", you now have a chance to explain all the benefits again. Giving people 'a reason why' is natural,

because most people are naturally cautious, wary or suspicious of the shiny new thing. Give them a major benefit followed by a logical sequence of other benefits. None of this is unethical or unprofessional.

COMMUNICATE, INFORM, EDUCATE

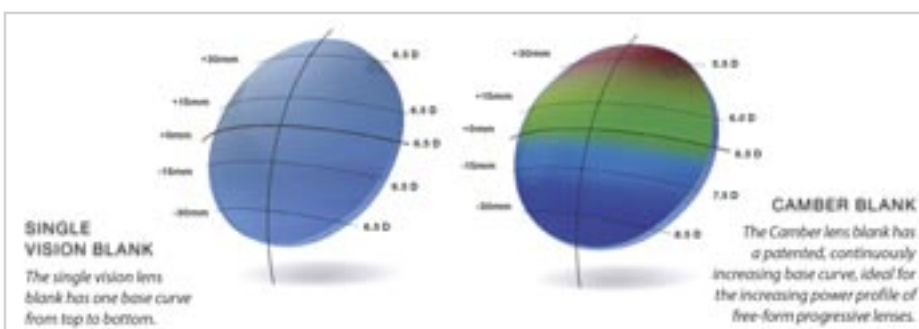
Don't assume people know about you, or indeed are interested in what you do. You might think a marketing plan is not particularly useful and even if it is, knowing where to begin is a challenge. Just because you didn't need a marketing plan before doesn't mean you don't need one today. Things change and to survive you need to adapt. Finding a 'marketing guru' is not difficult. Finding the right one at the right price, who delivers positive measurable results, is not so easy.

We have distilled their advice down into the following easy questions. Answer honestly. It won't cost you a penny. Not answering honestly may cost you a lot more.

- Why are you in business?
- Who will want to buy what you offer and why?
- Where will you find them?
- How will you reach them?
- How much can you afford to get the sale?
- What is the lifetime value of that customer?
- How will you talk to them?
- How often will you talk to them?
- What do you want them to do, and when should they do it?
- What incentives, if any, should you offer? A planned information, communication and education strategy or lazy marketing, sweeties, or worse, will you choose to tell someone else's story?
- What can you test and how (or what) should you measure?
- How do you make your communication style part of your marketing plan?

Remember: they are not interested in you, only in 'what's in it for me?' Answer that and you have them. Review all your existing methods of communication and edit out all references to 'we', 'us' and 'I' and re-write to include 'you' and 'your'. The first stage of persuasion is awareness and then to offer a benefit or avoid a loss. Your campaign will give your brand a consistent image. People will know who you are, and what you stand for.

Julian Wiles BA (Hons) is the founder and owner of Performance Lenses, and country manager UK and Ireland for Younger Optics.



Launched as an NEG member benefit in 2018, Eyecare Dual uses camber technology



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I can't see you Can you see me?

Daniel Williams, founder of Visualise Training and Consultancy, challenges the lack of profile and visibility for people living with visual impairment

After living with a visual impairment (VI) for more than 25 years, not much has changed surrounding the media and fashion industry's portrayal of people living with sight loss: we are still represented in a bland, old-fashioned light. Some sight loss charities seem to constantly portray images of older white ladies with white hair wearing dark sunglasses. This stereotype needs to change.

WHERE ARE WE?

The depiction of sight loss in the media plays a major part in influencing public perception, and has immense power to reinforce negative images and stereotypes, or to radiate positive and empowering beliefs. So why aren't we walking on the catwalk with our guide dogs, represented by mannequins in shop windows, on advertising boards or on TV?

TV programmes, such as soaps, continuously underrepresent people with a VI. Even when they do, they are rarely a lead character or they portray sight loss in a negative way – focusing on what they can't do rather than what they can. This seems very strange as people with a VI are part of our society.

Marketing campaigns for everything, from clothing to household goods, lack the portrayal of anyone with an impairment. Instead, they are given the focus of over or under achievement, which means blind and partially sighted people can never be who they are, constantly striving to overcome their disability and be accepted.

One of the most frustrating issues is when an actor for a soap, TV advert or film, without a disability is asked to pretend the role. So often, it's about ridicule, exclusion, pity and medical intervention, and yet no-one says a word.

SHINING A POSITIVE LIGHT

This persistent under-representation of people with VI in the media, or their misleading portrayal, reinforces the stereotypical image and seriously limits integration into the community. Instead of using portrayal of VI to



Dan with guide dog, Zodiac

add atmosphere and dramatic effect to visual and written scripts and depicting them as tragic victims, it would be nice to see a positive spirit of enlightenment. This might include professionals learning not to assume that the audience is non-disabled.

People with VI are also not one-dimensional characters, living with a funny abnormality and blending into the background. When actors with VI are used, they tend not to speak much or have no storyline, acting

more in a supportive role, while others take centre stage, facing the crises and problems of everyday life that people with VI don't appear to have, cocooned in their safe world of being cared for 24 hours a day.

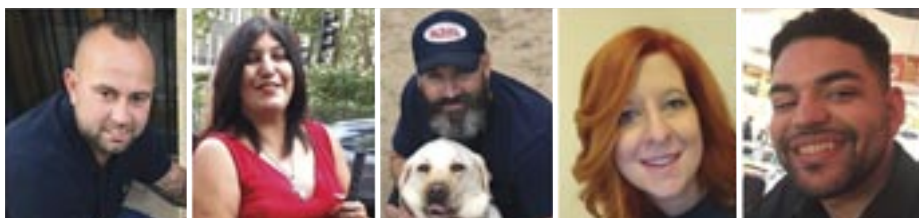
If film producers and the media in general could be encouraged to see reality, instead of being exploited by scriptwriters for dramatic effect or emotional appeal, then so would the general viewing public. And this absence of characters with VI in everyday roles reflects their same absence in the social structure: as family members, employees and employers, mums and dads. It just perpetuates the distance that exists between people. People with VI are still people.

UNEMPLOYED, UNEMPLOYABLE NO-HOPER

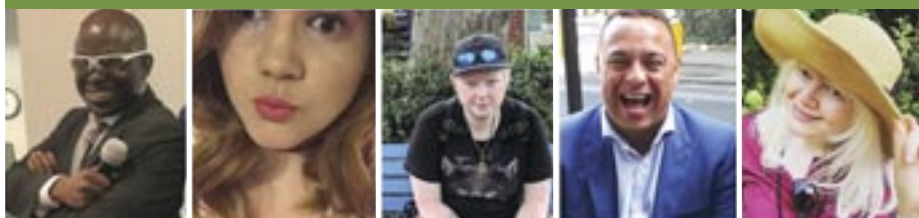
Another niggle is that few people with VI are seen in employment. It is more about claiming and complaining, about benefits and scraping a living. It leads to more segregation and isolation and being seen as an object of curiosity. And yet, these attitudes and beliefs are largely left unchallenged. Sometimes, it feels like you need to show 'super-qualities' to be noticed and gain respect. Instead of being recognised for your character and personality, you become categorised for an easily identifiable impairment, often sensationalised.

Marketing and media professionals need to change their attitudes and allow VI to be a part of the overall scene. If the media can abandon the stereotypes, genuine characters with VI offer new angles and storylines, with the opportunity to create exciting new and complex characters. They also can contribute to influencing social policy and society's attitudes to people living with all forms of sight loss.

Let's start the change and challenge these boring outdated stereotypes. Follow me on social media and help me spread the message.



Why aren't we represented in the media?



EYEWEAR ACCESSORIES

Chic & cheerful

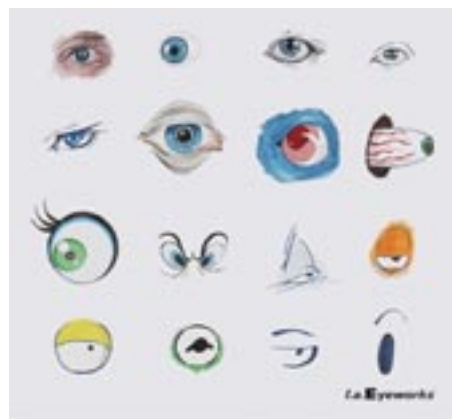
By Joan Grady

The grand French courtier Gabrielle Chanel adored accessories. When Chanel was dazzling the fashion industry and clients, eyewear (as we know it today) was still in its infancy. With her fondness for just the right accessory highlight, she most likely would have welcomed and appreciated the modernised trend pendulum that is captivating the eyewear market. Exciting options offer smart, useful and distinctive add-on possibilities for practitioners – and impressive, commanding fashion statements for patients.

Nowadays, eyewear accessories include fun and practical cases: unique chains, intriguing jewellery for frames, imaginative cleaning cloths, and handcrafted masks for display. Materials include contemporary choices, plus recycled items, as the eyewear sector seeks to discover new alternatives that won't cause damage to the planet.

INSPIRED CLEANING CLOTHS

For decades, the concept of distinctive eyewear accessories has been a long-standing initiative at I.a.Eyeworks. Designers Gai Gherardi and Barbara McRenyolds have complemented their collections with cleaning cloths that they commission to various artists. For spring 2020, Los Angeles based artist Julian Hoeber is among those who have created an imaginative, practical and useful cleaning cloth that further expands the brand's legacy of collaborations with visionary innovators – including artists, illustrators, graphic designers and photographers – to explore the spectacle lens cleaning cloth as a canvas for creative actions.



Julian Hoeber cleaning cloth for I.a.Eyeworks

Hoeber's artwork investigates the mysterious territory between rival oppositions – organic and inorganic, conceptual and experiential – as a way to illustrate the workings of the human mind. Hoeber's example of eyes on the cloth represents a journey from a literal self-portrait along a path of historical and pop culture references, to an almost complete – and yet a recognisable – journey of abstraction.

California's sunshine, beauty, warmth and its many natural splendours influence designs by Salt.



Natural splendour on Salt. Optic cleaning cloth

Optics in frames and accessories. The Salt. cleaning cloths are reminiscent of elegant paintings, depicting the seaside, mountains or extraordinary natural wonders and views. The latest designs capture the amazing aesthetics, light and majesty of the world in which we live.

CASES WITH CHARISMA

Spectacles provide enhanced vision; frames are an acclaimed accessory, and frequently give wearers confidence and assurance. With all these assets, eyewear frames are possessions to be cherished with care – and designers respond to this need with protective, fun, chic, practical and beautiful cases in which to store appreciated spectacles.



Clever Cat by Any Di for eyeglasses

Anne Dirkhardt was a professional tennis player before she launched her luxurious bag collection Any Di. The Munich designer also pioneered an innovative case that Dirkhardt fondly refers to as the SunCover. However, optical frames of any size and shape also fit into this sleek case. Designs are striking and truly eye-catching, as charming cats, a cute rabbit, an inquisitive wise owl and a country deer are all included in this imaginative collection.

Dirkhardt also creates exclusive cases in solid colours in beautiful materials that include suede, Nappa leather, Nubuck – plus canvas, and covers with metallic finishes. Certain styles also feature gold or silver-plated elements. Colours span from elegant monochrome hues, to vibrant red, and subtle pastels. The eyeglass case can be put in a handbag, or Dirkhardt has ingeniously created



Anne Dirkhardt, founder of Any Di Munich



Fun and functional: Pineapple SunSpec cover by Any Di

a strap that can be attached to a belt loop – or securely connected to the outside of a bag. Anne’s spacious and timeless creations – with a compartmentalised interior for innovative organisation – demonstrates a quintessential design for beauty and practicality.

At I.a.Eyeworks, the eyeglass case creed is that the designs are an extension of the brand’s passion for colour and expressive surprises that are communicated through the frames. The artwork this season is I.a.Eyeworks’ own interpretations of photo-collaged elements drawn from fabric swatches and other visual ephemera. As with so many aspects of eyewear nowadays, the designs are then digitally transferred to a fully compliant vinyl. The results are visually exciting cases and the finishing touch to vivid colourations in I.a.Eyeworks frames.

UK BORN AND BRED

With their collections of optical frames, sunglasses, and eyeglass cases for more than 50 years, quality and service is the philosophy and caring mindset for Dunelm Optical. The latest cases are available in a comprehensive spectrum that includes metal and metallic designs with magnetic and velcro closings, plus slip-ins, and diverse materials including metal, cotton, leather and combinations of these.

Progressing beyond the conception that eyeglass cases are for practical purposes, the



Expressive colour for cases by I.a.Eyeworks



Parisienne mood: cases by Dunelm Optical

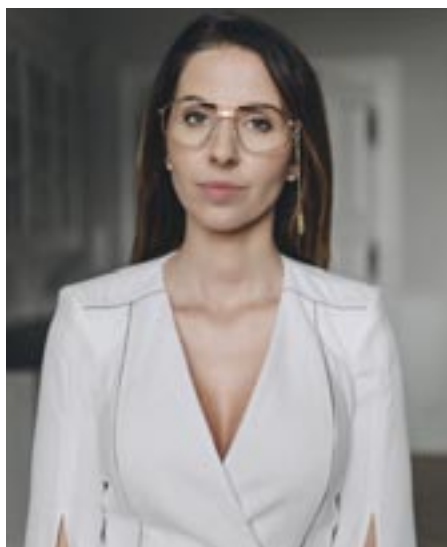
collection includes fun and whimsical designs that include unicorns, animals, a glorious array of flowers, hearts and Britannia-themed designs. All cases are designed and made in the UK. Also available are slim cases in solid colours including neutral tones of black, brown, forest green, burgundy and navy – as well as bright interpretations in shocking pink, red and turquoise.



Portable pooch: Puppy Love cases by Dunelm Optical

EYEWEAR JEWELLERY

At Monobi, Karolina Lechna-Kochmanska has combined her love of eyewear and her concern for the planet into a collection of intricate accessories with lightness, individuality and charm. The Polish



Eyewear jewellery by Monobi in Poland



Personalisation for frames by Monobi

entrepreneur creates jewellery to be worn on eyeglasses, as she believes that accessories should bring glamour, beauty and self-expression to the wearer. “This accessory is for women who want personalisation,” says Karolina, who exhibited at 100% Optical in London earlier this year.

Refinement and elegance characterise her creations, which are made of 100 per cent recycled materials with pure silver, or 24k gold plating. All items are hand-made and polished in Poland. The slim, graceful chains slip on easily to a frame, creating a subtle allure. Designs also include delicate feathers in lovely tones of violet, pink, cocoa, turquoise and red.

ARTFUL DISPLAY

Presentation is a powerful incentive to attract interest and attention, whether it is in frames or spectacle accessories. Jeremy Tarian has a passion for both eyewear and ceramics, and has successfully combined the two with mask creations on which to display frames. Influenced by mixed clays in superb colourations that makes the creations unique, Tarian crafts each mask individually in his Parisian atelier. “Opticians liked the masks and I completely sold out,” said Tarian, “so I decided to make a new series that will be released in the autumn.”

Eyewear accessories are stylish and fun, useful and innovative. Designers and brands offer extraordinary possibilities and new opportunities to develop and generate promising sales potential for independent opticians.



Handcrafted masks in mixed clays by Jeremy Tarian



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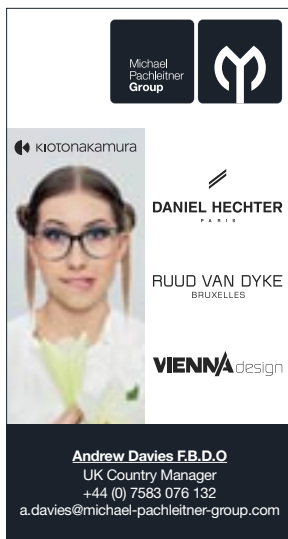
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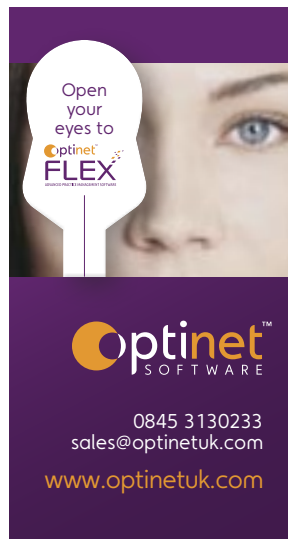
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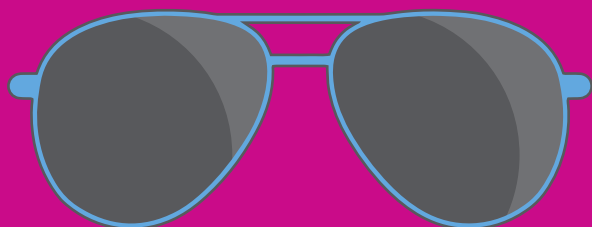
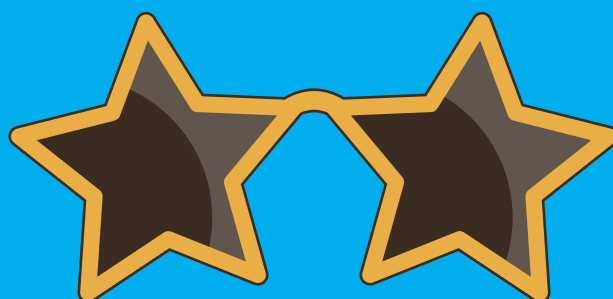
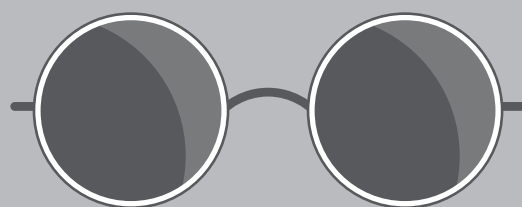
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