

ALLDocs Enters the Digital Age



**Kerry Gelb, OD
President**

ALLDocs is embarking on a brand new digital initiative that's going to help its members communicate more effectively with their patients. This new cutting-edge, patient-retention strategy is more than just another way to send text messages and emails to patients, it aims to educate them about eye care while stressing the importance of an annual eye exam.

ALLDocs is currently in discussion with our valued partner, CooperVision and their WebSystem3®/EyeCare Prime® Premier divisions, on how to best fulfill this important initiative.

In the meantime, ALLDocs encourages all our members to start collecting patient cellphone numbers and emails because that is what will be needed to carry out this initiative in an efficient and comprehensive manner.



PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dry Eye Kits

You asked for it and ALLDocs and Abbott Medical Optics (AMO) delivered! This year, AMO and ALLDocs have teamed up to develop a revenue-based Dry Eye kit to be sold within our members' offices. Loaded with products designed to help identify and combat Dry Eye Syndrome, the kit includes useful tools like patient questionnaires and instructions for use. Look for free samples of this kit to be delivered to those ALLDocs members who attended the 2015 Annual Meeting in Cancun. Your local AMO rep will stop in soon to explain how to best execute the program.

Upcoming Annual Meeting

This year's ALLDocs Annual Meeting will be held on Buccaneer Island at the Ocean Reef Club, which is located on the northern tip of Key Largo in the Florida Keys. This exclusive club offers a saltwater swimming lagoon and a village of shops. Many activities abound including eco-tours at the club's Nature Center, a fitness center, golf, tennis, snorkeling, scuba diving and the luxurious Spa at Ocean Reef Club.

We're also seeking speakers, so if you have any recommendations, let us know. Look for the 2016 Annual Meeting online registration coming soon.



GALLERY

The Ocean Reef Club



A Yacht to Offer

The Marina at Ocean Reef is the port for hundreds of international sailboats, fishing vessels and a whole world of water sports.



Shop Until You Relax

Visit over 25 private boutiques and shops, pubs and cafes at the New England-style Ocean Reef Club Fishing Village.



A Picture of Health

Pamper yourself at the Ocean Reef Club full-service spa and state-of-the-art fitness center. You'll want to stay here all day.

Buccaneer Island at the Ocean Reef Club





Crafting a Stronger Brand in 2016



Alex Wilkes
Vice President
Vision Care
LensCrafters

LensCrafters' Alex Wilkes has a global view on marketing, and that's no surprise considering his nomadic background. Born in New Mexico, he lived in Germany for 10 years, and then went to high school in suburban Detroit. He studied economics in international business at the University of Iowa with a minor in German (which he jests was a fairly easy minor for him since he already was fluent in the language).

Before joining LensCrafters five years ago, he spent nearly a decade working at both Deloitte and Accenture as a marketing/business-planning consultant. He dedicated his time to interfacing with retailers and technology companies, focusing on new-idea strategies—essentially anything that would touch the customer at the end.

While at Accenture, he was a consultant for BestBuy. "They had acquired a small, 40-person company in Indianapolis called The Geek Squad," he recalls. "Our project team took The Geek Squad from a pokey organization to an innovative 10,000-employee company with \$4 billion in annual revenue."

His respect for the potential of retail businesses grew from such experiences and continues to imprint on current marketing programs at LensCrafters. He sees 2016 as a transformative year for LensCrafters. The company's secret weapon is its independent optometrists.

"LensCrafters optometrists are more than stakeholders; they're marketable

points of differentiation," he says. "The question we've been addressing in our marketing is how do we make our doctors stand apart? The answer is with the best technology, best tools and best training to create an experience that's second to none in optical retail."

That marketing push is evidenced in the AccuExam® technology platform, which he says is second to none in the world. In 2015, the AccuExam program was tested successfully in 200 locations nationwide.

"In 2016, we're launching an additional 700 stores," Wilkes adds. Based on consumer feedback, the AccuExam name is being rebranded to Clarifye™ made with Zeiss technology—a more modern moniker that he says resonates better with consumers. In support of the expanded Clarifye launch, LensCrafters is working on a more comprehensive marketing campaign.

"It's really going to be a 360-degree marketing launch," Wilkes says. In addition to traditional media such as 15- and 30-second television spots and a print campaign, LensCrafters is using digital and one-to-one customer relationship marketing, which will be activated with cookies whenever someone visits a LensCrafters website or searches for eyewear. Those strategies are designed to drive more traffic into the optometrists' offices.

"We're looking forward to working more closely with the ALLDocs members foremost as partners and collaborators. I think we have, as an organization, embraced ALLDocs as a tremendous source of good training and leadership. They've created a common bond and culture among our doctors. I look forward to what is to come."



Michael Bolhuis
Senior Manager
AMO

Sparing Eye-care Patients the "Wall" of Tears

Dry eye is a growing problem but often remains undiagnosed because its vague symptoms can range from being asymptomatic to burning/itching/tired eyes or even excessive tearing.

"The challenge with dry eye is that due to its core mechanism, it will continue to get worse if left untreated" says Michael Bolhuis, Senior Manager Consumer Eye Health, Abbott Medical Optics (AMO). Dry Eye can damage the ocular surface and decrease the Dry Eye sufferer's quality of life.

"ALLDocs recently approached us, suggesting it would be great to have a patient dry-eye kit to help manage this condition," Bolhuis says. AMO responded with the co-branded ALLDocs Blink Tears Dry Eye Relief Kit. ALLDocs, in turn, created a Dry Eye Questionnaire for identifying the condition in patients along with Rx Pads detailing patient instructions. Each kit contains four Blink® Tears Lubricating Eye Drops packages and two Blink® Gel Tears Lubricating Eye Drops packages shrink-wrapped together in a box.

"If you only provide patients with a sample, they may face confusion at the retail "Wall" of Tears—so named because of the many products in this category. With the Dry Eye Relief Kit, patients can leave the office with what they need.



An Eye on Nutrition



Zac Denning
Product Science
Specialist
SBH

The CDC reports that recommendations for fruit and vegetable intakes—key sources of eye-healthy nutrients—are met by fewer than 18 percent of us.¹ While supplementation can be a good option to bridge these nutrient gaps, not all supplements are created equal.

“A major concern for both doctors and consumers is the massive confusion in the market when it comes to selecting quality supplements,” says Zac Denning, Product Science Specialist at Science-Based Health (SBH). As the first nutrition company focused exclusively on visual health, SBH pioneered research-based supplements with the highest quality nutrients,” says Denning. Founded by eye doctors, the company’s mission is to provide premium quality supplements that doctors can feel confident recommending to their patients.

Science-Based Supplements

The AREDS trials opened the door to nutrition being regarded as integral to eye care, he says. “We’re learning that nutrition plays a vital role in eye health. Many parts of the eye contain concentrated nutrients that have protective properties.” Beyond AREDS nutrients, research is emerging on other nutrients such as B vitamins for AMD, and plant-based polyphenols for protecting retinal circulation.

Lesser-Known Nutrient

In addition to offering pharmaceutical-grade nutraceuticals, SBH is actively

involved in conducting its own clinical research.

The company’s research has recently focused on a lesser-known omega fatty acid called gamma-linolenic acid (GLA). GLA is a unique anti-inflammatory omega fat that is not found in diet or fish oil. Studies show that GLA, in balance with other nutrients, reduces inflammation and stimulates lacrimal production. In a clinical trial, researchers found that women taking HydroEye had improved symptoms, lower inflammatory markers and smoother corneas versus those taking placebo.² This was the first study to show GLA relieves dry eye in post-menopausal women—who make up the majority of dry eye sufferers.

SBH is engaged in ongoing product research and is now supporting an exploratory project in nutrition and eye health at Harvard Medical School.

“Over the years, we have seen exciting nutrition research open new avenues of treatment in eye care, and this is only the beginning,” Denning says.

“We look forward to bringing future developments in nutrition and visual health to our customers.”



References:

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2. Sheppard JD Jr, Singh R, McClellan AJ, Weikert MP, et al. Long-term supplementation with n-6 and n-3 PUFAs improves moderate-to-severe keratoconjunctivitis sicca: A randomized double-blind clinical trial. *Cornea* 2013;32:1297-1304.



Texting Matters

Text messaging is the fastest and most convenient means of communication today and email is the second, according to OptometryCEO.com. Thirty-one percent of American adults prefer text messages to phone calls, reports a Pew survey. A 2014 Gallup poll found that texting is the most frequently used form of communication among Americans younger than 50.

That’s why contacting your patients with a computer platform that reaches out through texting and email is so valuable to expanding your optometry practice. Cloud-based software has been developed that does just that.

Your practice has a much better chance of reaching patients with texting and email because those forms of communication go to the individual as opposed to the household like the telephone. Also, the message remains as a visible reminder in the inbox, unlike voice mail, which is usually gone after it is heard.

Text and email messages from the doctor’s office are impressive and can get patients talking to others about your practice. The easiest way to use texting and email to confirm appointments is to subscribe to one of the software programs that specialize in electronic communication. Some of the best-known companies that optometrists use are Websystem3, Solutionreach, Demandforce and 4PatientCare. These work with patient cellphone numbers and email addresses gathered at patient check-in.

In addition to appointment reminders, you can also text or email thank-you messages, surveys, dispensing notices, recalls, newsletters, videos and more.





Patients Respond to a Great Technology Story

For many contact lens patients, discomfort is so much a part of daily life that they do not discuss it with their doctors. But when eye-care technology comes along that can change the patient's experience, it's worth generating a buzz about.

Improving customer satisfaction in contact lenses can generate practice success. This requires our clinical expertise and advanced contact lens technology. In DAILIES® TOTAL1® water gradient contact lenses, for instance, the latest technology can bring significant comfort.

Manage Expectations

The easiest patients to convert to this lens are the overtly uncomfortable ones—those who come in unhappy, frustrated and looking for something better. The more difficult to spot and counsel are patients who are cognizant of their discomfort in contact lenses, but don't complain about it—at least, not to their doctors.

When I talk with my patients about their experience in contact lenses, I am quick to add that contact lens technology has changed quite dramatically in the recent past. This is critical to emphasize; patients with 10 or 15 years in contact lenses may have been underwhelmed more than once by a new lens material. It helps to let patients know that contact lens discomfort is a recognized problem, but also, with regard to our ability to address it, that times really have changed.

Share the Technology Story

DAILIES® TOTAL1® contact lenses are differentiated by their advanced technology and this makes for a great story. Begin by asking patients, "Why

do we have tears?" They typically respond, "To keep the eye moist;" to which I reply: "No! The real reason we have tears is to give us sharp vision by creating a smooth optical surface."

When we put a contact lens on the eye, it affects the ocular surface in complex ways.¹ The surface of the eye isn't very water-friendly. In fact, the tears would not stick to ocular surface cells but for a material called the glycocalyx, which adheres to these surface cells and transforms the environment from non-wetting to very wettable.

Then explain that the scientists who developed DAILIES® TOTAL1® contact lenses created something similar. They used water-loving surface molecules to hold moisture onto a lens core that would otherwise repel water.^{2,3}

Problem Solving and Beyond

DAILIES® TOTAL1® contact lenses are an excellent choice for patients who complain of dryness associated with their current contact lenses as well as for patients just starting in contact lens wear. The lenses are easy to handle, and they start a new wearer off with a very positive lens-wearing experience.

Arthur B. Epstein, OD, FFAO, is the director of cornea-external disease and clinical research at Phoenix Eye Care, PLLC, and the head of the Dry Eye Center of Arizona in Phoenix, AZ.

References:

1. Nichols JJ, Willcox MDP, Bron AJ, et al. The TFOS international workshop on contact lens discomfort: executive summary. *Invest Ophthalmol Vis Sci.* 2013;54:TFOS7-13.
2. Thekveli S, Qui Y, Kapoor Y, et al. Structure-property relationship of delefilcon A lenses. *Contact Lens Anterior Eye.* 2012;35(Suppl 1):e14.
3. Angelini T, Nixon R, Dunn At, et al. Viscoelasticity and mesh-size at the surface of hydrogels characterized with microrheology. *Invest Ophthalmol Vis Sci.* 2013;54:E-abstract 500.



See product instructions for complete wear, care and safety information.

Alcon

a Novartis company



OD Origins



Stewart Ginsberg, OD
Natick, MA

Averting Boredom with Optometry

When growing up in Philadelphia, Stewart Ginsberg saw a pediatric optometrist who made eye exams fun. "Cartoons were always running and there were toys everywhere. He was a very happy, funny guy on top of it," he recalls.

He eventually entered healthcare as an administrator. "I was trained to run a healthcare facility, got a hospital job doing that and began my MBA," he says. The problem? It was boring.

Noticing, his hospital mentor said, "If you don't like this now, you're going to hate it later." Ginsberg's pleasant memories of his childhood eye doctor resurfaced, and he enrolled in the New England College of Optometry.

Decades later, he says that his most memorable patient was a man in his fifties who hadn't seen an optometrist in 10 years. "He was suffering from hypertensive retinopathy and he couldn't see to drive or read," he recalls. "His blood pressure was also through the roof. I told him I was calling an ambulance." His wife rushed him to the hospital where he narrowly avoided a stroke.

"That little eye exam saved his life. Every day, people walk into our offices and we fix issues with their eyes that they may or may not know are there. Almost everyone can be helped; that's what makes optometry so satisfying."



Should Your Practice Offer Credit to Patients?



Paul S. Rymer

President
National Healthcare
Collections

When you offer treatment, but fail to recognize that patients actually have budgets and don't always have the means to pay cash, write a check or charge a credit card, you are not providing a solution to your patients to purchase your service. You've taken time with them explaining potential treatment, but you are not fulfilling the true potential of your revenue for the practice if you send patients away without accepting the treatment plan.

The Good Side of Bad Debt

Some doctors are proud to say, "I have no bad debt." But imagine if the CEO of Best Buy or any other retail chain came into a boardroom with this statement! The board and investors would wonder why this person even had a job! The fact is that the only way to grow a business is to extend credit internally through the accounts receivable, assuming some bad debt, but obtaining much more revenue. Best Buy offers their own credit card, essentially extending credit to all consumers in order to purchase their products. They have spoon-fed their customers a way to pay, providing an easy way to purchase products through their own credit card. Terms are different for each consumer, and yes they do have some bad debt, but the revenue increase far outweighs the bad debt that has been incurred.

By extending credit on established patients, you can grow your practice. Always ask for payment at the time of service. If payment can't be made, work with the patient to establish reasonable payment terms based on their budget (three-, six- or twelve-month, etc.) to accept potential treatment.

Walk-ins and new patients should be cash, check, CareCredit or other external financing company, as you have no history on the patient and there's too much risk. But, if the patient is established, you can with reasonable certainty extend credit and feel confident that the person will be able to pay.

"Nothing of nothing equals nothing," applies to doctors who say they have no bad debt, but know they could increase revenue by offering payment terms. They believe that bad debt is horrible and they are ahead by not having it. Upon closer examination, the hundreds of thousands in increased revenue from treatments reclaimed through credit availability can exceed the amount lost due to bad debt. If average bad debt is 3 percent, doctors can increase revenue by extending payment terms on projected treatment plans, assuming that 3 percent bad debt. The result is a dramatic increase of revenue with a 3 percent loss. As long as overhead is less than 97 percent (which of course it is), the practice has increased their revenue. Even using bad debt at a higher percentage, such as 10 percent, there is still increased revenue.

When Bad Debt Occurs

National Healthcare Collections (NHC) is able to assist with accounts that do go bad. We collect on patient debt and are the only company that collects exclusively on healthcare accounts. NHC provides revenue back to the practice on previously deemed bad debt accounts in a manner that is consistent with your professional billing protocols, establishing payment arrangements and getting the balance paid so the patient can return for additional charges. Bad debt occurs in practices where there is an active policy to extend credit or when a patient forgets their checkbook or there is a balance after insurance. There is always a level of bad debt in every practice.



Optometric Barbie



Barbie Has a New Career

Bored with her Dream House, pink convertible and stylish wardrobe, Barbie has moved on to become a career woman. And what better career than optometry? The Barbie Careers Eye Doctor set includes her first patient, an adorable toddler replete with a pretty floral dress, pink sneakers and matching pink eyeglasses. Children can place the young patient in the special pink chair, check her vision with a Snellen chart, then fine tune her prescription with a refractor. If Dr. Barbie prescribes glasses, there are four pairs from which to choose including pink hearts, cat eyes, colorful circles and "modern black." Barbie's career wardrobe includes a white coat over a fashionable outfit and the usual spike heels that perhaps could use some rethinking. The doctor's full name is Barbara Millicent Roberts, OD—named after the daughter of Mattel's co-founders, Ruth and Elliot Handler. Get one for your office today!



PROFILES

Two Special Cases in Optometry



Jeffrey Case, OD
Towaco, NJ

In the 1942 movie *Adam's Rib*, a husband and wife (Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn) sparred in court as competing lawyers. Jeffrey Case, OD, and his wife Susan met in optometry school and chose competing paths in their careers as well.

Susan opened a solo practice in 2003 in Towaco, New Jersey. She prefers a private setting while her husband says he prefers the high energy of his optometry practices inside of LensCrafters stores in Freehold and East Brunswick.

Practice Paths Differ

"My wife practices in a private location, spends a lot of time with patients and has an optician who works with them personally on eyewear," Dr. Case says. He adds that while she enjoys that pace, that type of environment would bore him.

Despite their competing businesses, the two of them get along just fine—most of the time. Occasionally, however, Susan suffers from Technology Envy.

"We have spirited conversations now and then regarding our favorite product and how to take care of various patients," he says. "LensCrafters gets the latest and greatest products first before anyone else. Sometimes Susan doesn't think that's very fair, but I have access to those items so if she needs a product, I can get it for her."

He adds that his LensCrafters practices have much more sophisticated equipment for medical eye examinations. "That's a big advantage. Patients like that. They marvel at both our exam and contact lens technologies."

Sharing a Passion

Dr. Case says the one thing they both share is their passion for vision care. "There's really nothing more rewarding than to take care of patients for years and years," he says. "Often I see their family members and their children. It's very gratifying to save and maintain their eyesight. That's what it's all about."



**Dr. Susan Przetak-Case
and Dr. Jeffrey W. Case**

The couple has three daughters. When asked if any of them might someday take over their practices, he replies "We've been down that road. Before they made decisions to go to school, we discussed that possibility." However, their oldest daughter went into fashion marketing, their middle daughter is becoming a nurse and their youngest is majoring in business accounting and finance.

He adds, philosophically, "They all chose separate paths."

Eye Openers!

150 million

Wearers of eyeglasses or contact lenses in the U.S., representing slightly less than half the population

>24%

Projected growth for the optometry profession through the year 2018 according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



GALLERY

ALLDogs



Roxie Norman

Dr. Karen Norman's 10-year-old Short-haired Dachshund is an "only child" now that the kids have left the nest.



Henry Young

Dr. Michael Young's 10 year-old Pug craves tortillas, french fries and hot dogs. Can you please pass the mustard?



Shelby Ginsberg

Dr. Stewart Ginsberg's 18-month-old Australian Labradoodle enjoys scraps from "down under" the kitchen table.



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