

The importance of
DOCTOR'S CHOICE



Understand how practices are adapting to key challenges posed by the market challenges ODs face, including the key professional relationships that are helping practice owners adapt and win.

Review
of Optometric Business



DOCTOR'S CHOICE PART I: Cultivating Patients for Life

BY SHAZEEN ALI, OD

Cultivating patients who return to your practice year after year, referring friends and family, is a key to long-term success. As my practice has weathered the severe disruption that COVID-19 caused, I have noticed more than ever the difference quality products and strong professional partnerships make in helping to retain patients. With the many stresses in our patients' lives during this time, they know they can continue depending on us for the health of their eyes and eyewear that provides visual superiority and comfort.

One of the professional partnerships making such a difference to our ability to deliver such products, and a high level of service to our patients, is **Essilor Experts™**. Essilor Experts was developed to give eyecare professionals an edge in the marketplace with lens brands that ensure patients return, year after year. Participating practices enjoy a suite of benefits including exclusive advertising, training and technology which attract and engage patients, and optimize business results.

EASY CHOICE

Signing up for Essilor Experts was a no-brainer. It didn't require a fee or time commitments. In fact, the only commitment required from a practice owner is that the majority of the lenses they dispense come from Essilor and participating labs. For ECPs like me who know and trust Essilor lens brands, this is an easy decision – and one I am glad I made as the program has provided tremendous support throughout the worldwide pandemic.

MORE POWERFUL PATIENT-PRACTICE TOUCH POINTS

One of the most powerful aspects of Essilor Experts is its ability to keep us in touch with our patients and community. With updates to protocols and safety measures, it has become clear that we need a strong communication pipeline between our office and our patients.

Our practice's online presence has soared thanks to Essilor Experts advertising that drives patients to our practice through the **Essilor Experts' doctor locator**. After viewing advertising on primetime TV, social media and other



frequently viewed web sites like Pandora, consumers are guided to input their zip code. Our practice appears in the listing, driving traffic to our practice web site, and, ultimately, our exam chairs. We are proactively reaching our patients so they can find the information about our practice they need.

EASING PATIENTS' WAY TO YOUR EXAM CHAIR

Patients under stress from the pandemic, with so many responsibilities for work and family, require flexibility in how they reach us. Patients today demand the ability to make an appointment whenever they like without having to call into an office to speak with a receptionist. Essilor Experts has connected our practice with its **SmartBook** technology, which gives patients access to an online booking tool on our web site. They can browse our office schedule at their leisure and click to request an appointment. As much as 40 percent of our appointment bookings are now made online.

DELIVERING PRODUCTS, SERVICES AND EXPERIENCE TO DRIVE PATIENT LOYALTY

We frequently receive requests from patients for Essilor products they learned about through marketing from Essilor Experts. For example, we have had many patients visit our office expressing interest in **Eyezen** lenses with technology that helps protect eyes from harmful blue light. Patients arrive primed to try this innovative lens. They understand the benefits from the start, simplifying our job of educating on the advantages of purchasing the Essilor lens brands we choose to dispense.

5 ACTIONS TO CREATE PATIENTS FOR LIFE

Patient Touch Points: Market and advertise on popular social media and consumer web sites where your patients spend significant time. Come to them rather than waiting for them to come to you.

Train Staff to Deliver Topnotch Service: The right professional partnerships provide not just great products, but the support you need to train staff. A well-prepared staff can educate patients about the value of the products you have prescribed, ensuring patients are connected to products that precisely serve their needs.

Create Product Packages that Meet Patient Needs. Use your support from professional partners to

create bundled lens packages that result in patients who have their total lifestyle needs addressed in the eyewear you prescribe.

Make It Easy for Patients to See You. Technology that facilitates online appointment booking is a way to ensure the patient can reach you for an appointment whenever they happen to think of it.

Stay Ahead of the Competition. Professional partnerships that bring your practice together with the most cutting-edge and advanced eyewear technology gives you a boost over competitors. Your patients will return to an office that they know has the latest in eyewear innovation.

CREATING AN OFFICE EXPERIENCE WORTHY OF RETURN VISITS AND REFERRALS

New office protocols means that our staff needs more training than ever before. It's easy with so many changes to forget the fundamentals of the products we offer. The training support we get from Essilor Experts in-office training makes it easy to teach everyone how to speak to patients about the eyewear I choose to prescribe.

We have all of our employees—not just our opticians—learn about how to talk to patients in terms of benefits rather than technical features. We want all staff members to speak the same language in how they converse with patients about the eyewear we sell. Instead of telling patients about technical aspects of the lens material, we talk about how a lens is the “thinnest and lightest lens for your prescription.” When talking about progressive lenses, we have learned to focus on the positive, telling patients that their new progressive lenses offer “the most natural viewing you can get out of a lens whether looking far away or up close.”

EMPOWERING PATIENTS TO LEAVE YOUR OFFICE WITH THE VERY BEST

Lifestyle needs have increased during the pandemic. This means patients now often need blue light protection in addition to their progressive glasses. Essilor Experts has helped us create lens bundles that answer multiple patient needs making for a better patient experience and creating patients for life.

Giving our patients access to the eyewear we feel will

most benefit them, while boosting optical sales, has gotten simpler. The reps we consult with through Essilor Experts give us ideas for the lens bundles that our patients will most appreciate. For instance, I often prescribe **Varilux® X Series™** design lenses with **Crizal Sapphire® 360° UV**, and then will add in Transitions to create a bundled package that gives the patient all they need for superior vision.

PIPELINE TO INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY: GIVING PATIENTS THE MOST ADVANCED CARE

When the world becomes more difficult, patients want every product they purchase, including eyewear, to provide relief. They want products that solve problems effectively, easily and with comfort.

The forward-thinking lens technology and innovation of tools like SmartBook help our practice keep pace with consumer expectations. I choose Essilor because they are following how society and technology trends are going, and tailoring lens offerings and practice tools that drive patient satisfaction. Essilor Experts ensures we have easy access to all of these things, so both our patients and practice benefit. It's no wonder our patients so often return to our office! They know we can provide them with exactly what they need to live their best lives, however trying the circumstances.



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DOCTOR'S CHOICE PART II: Building Loyalty One Patient at a Time

BY CAROLYN J. DAVIS, OD

The stress of the pandemic has made it more important than ever for practices to show patients the value of the doctor expertise, services and products they offer. Patients are looking for providers they can depend on in a crisis to take care of basic needs like eye health and visual clarity. When you provide the most advanced technology for glasses, so patients can see the difference receiving care from your practice makes, lifelong patients are created who return and refer many others.

Varilux® progressive lenses are some of the most valuable eyewear resources I provide to ensure my patients leave each visit to our office with the highest in visual quality and comfort. Recommending *Varilux* lenses shows our patients we won't compromise on their vision care. This enables us to help patients during a difficult time by providing elevated care, while creating a practice differentiator that sets us apart.

ONLY THE BEST FOR OUR PATIENTS

Our philosophy is to provide patients the best vision with every lens we prescribe. When I prescribe *Varilux* lenses to my patients, I know that they will not call our office with adaptation issues and that there is little to no chance that a remake will be required. In fact, by prescribing *Varilux* lenses, thanks to their quality, our remake rate is near zero. Our patients trust us to provide them our best visual solutions, which means with *Varilux* lenses, we don't compromise when it comes to their vision care.

SUPERIOR VISUAL SOLUTIONS

Patients want lenses that will work the first time around, that are easy to adapt to, and provide them with sharp vision at every distance. When our patients are prescribed *Varilux* lenses, they experience enhanced sharp vision and a *Varilux* adjustment period to their new progressive lenses, which solidifies their trust in us as the experts in their eyecare.

The level of visual acuity that *Varilux* lenses provide our



patients enhances their visual experience and allows them to see sharply at all distances and even in dim lighting. *Varilux* lenses also include innovative technologies that can significantly reduce the "swim" effect many patients experience in other progressive lenses and reduce the head movement necessary to achieve optimal vision. In fact, my patients often tell me that their *Varilux* lenses provide them with the natural vision they had before becoming presbyopic.

ACHIEVING AN EDGE OVER THE COMPETITION

We rarely, if ever, hear back from our patients who are wearing *Varilux* lenses because they are so happy with their new eyewear. Once in a while, when a patient does stray to another practice, they will return the following year because the eyewear the other practice provided did not match the visual quality of the progressive lenses they got from us. And when they come back, they will even apologize to us! Nothing creates better loyalty than lenses that provide natural, sharp vision and smooth transitions across vision zones.

MAKING IT EASY FOR PATIENTS TO GET EVERYTHING THEY NEED

My practice is in the Essilor Experts partnership program, which means we have the opportunity throughout the year

6 WAYS TO GAIN LOYAL PATIENTS

to pass along great savings and opportunities to our patients. For example, we are able to offer second-pair packages in which the lenses for the second pair of glasses are free, so that the patient is only responsible for covering the cost of the frame. This creates an experience in which the patient leaves the office with a feeling of having won.

DEVELOPING A STAFF THAT PROVIDES TOPNOTCH CARE & SERVICE

Superior products like *Varilux* lenses are only part of the benefit of having eyecare partners like Essilor. Another essential benefit is staff training. Essilor often sends reps to our office, and, during the pandemic, offers online meetings in which our staff learns how best to educate patients about the eyewear we prescribe.

Our entire office—not just our opticians—learns about the value of products like *Varilux* lenses, so if a patient asks anyone in our practice about why they should opt for the progressive lenses the doctor prescribed, the message will be the same. Patients will learn that *Varilux* lenses provide natural, comfortable vision with seamless viewing zones that can reduce the need to move their head to see sharply near, far, and every distance in between.

GENERATE FRIENDS & FAMILY REFERRALS WITH BEST-IN-CLASS PRODUCTS

Our office has thrived and grown based entirely on positive word-of-mouth. We have invested in no paid advertising outside of publicizing new eyewear offers on social media.

When a presbyopic patient, who has struggled to regain the comfort of youthful vision, finds a solution that helps them live their best life, they remember the doctor and practice that made that solution possible. And they don't keep it a secret. They let friends and family know where they, too, can find exactly the eyewear they need.



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Prescribe & Deliver the Best.

Prescribe products that give patients the solution they need the first time around, with no need to return to the office for improvements or remakes. Patients return year after year because they are happy, rather than a few weeks later because there is a problem.

Empower Patient Comfort & Success.

When prescribing eyewear like progressive lenses, make it easy for patients. Products like *Varilux* lenses, with their wide viewing zones, mean patients experience an easy transition to their new eyewear. Patients will happily tell everyone they know about their simple and satisfying experience with your practice.

Make Your Practice the ONLY Practice for Patients. When products are prescribed that meet all of the patient's needs, and do so by enabling excellent, seamless vision, they will quickly find that other practices and online retailers fall short. They will be back in your office in short order.

Expand Access to Visual Solutions.

Partnering with a company like Essilor gives your practice the ability to pass along savings to patients, enabling eyewear promotions, like second-pair sales, that work for both the patient and practice.

Develop the Staff Your Patients Need.

A partner like Essilor provides staff training that makes it easy for patients to understand the benefits and value of the products the doctor has prescribed. Such training support aligns the whole staff around the same, winning patient education messaging.

Make Friends & Family Referrals the Only Necessary Marketing. Great products that provide quick, easy solutions for patients, improving their lives, require little more than great word-of-mouth. Products like *Varilux* lenses are the generators of that kind of positive, organic advertising.

DOCTOR'S CHOICE PART III: The Premium Eyewear Lenses Taking Our Patient Care & Service to the Next Level

BY ADAM DEPOE, OD

In a difficult time like the one we're living through, it's a relief when you can provide eyewear that enhances patients' lives. In our practice, we do just that by prescribing and selling only the best. Among the most essential products we provide our patients are **Crizal® No-Glare** lenses.

When you recommend *Crizal* lenses to your patients, not only are you providing them with the clearest vision, so they can fully benefit from their new prescription, but you are also giving them confidence in the durability of their lens and the protection it provides for their eyes.

CREATING SATISFIED, LOYAL PATIENTS

Our goal at **DePoe Eye Center** is for every patient to leave our office with their very best vision. We believe the *Crizal* No-Glare lens brand is the best product to partner with in order to achieve this goal.

People go to the eye doctor to see better. This is our mission, our goal and our reason for existing. When we share our true passion for eye health and superior vision, it translates into patient-doctor loyalty and trust. The *Crizal* brand helps us maintain this loyalty and trust by providing quality products with superior technology that make a real difference in the performance of a patient's lens.

A TRUSTED, CONSISTENT NO-GLARE BRAND

There are many no-glare lens options for ODs to choose from, but none has such reliably consistent quality as *Crizal* No-Glare lenses. By offering this premium no-glare option, we provide patients with many optical benefits that our competitors do not. And as the expert in this situation, we are advising the patient to invest in their vision, trust our expertise, and trust that the product we are offering will make a difference in their daily lives. With a product like *Crizal*, that so dramatically (and consistently) improves visual performance, you can always deliver.

Our patients immediately see, upon leaving our office with their new glasses, how much better they can see the world while going about their normal routine and enjoying everyday life.



A BRAND PATIENTS KNOW & ASK FOR

The quest to provide patients with the highest level of care is made easier when they come into your office with a base of knowledge about the best products you can prescribe.

Essilor does significant marketing to consumers to educate and introduce the public to their products. That means when you recommend a *Crizal* product to a patient, they have usually heard of it before, and will not only trust your recommendation as a doctor, but also see you as someone who is intimately aware of the current hierarchy of products and market trends. *Crizal* is also endorsed by two reputed institutions – *Crizal* carries the Good Housekeeping Institute Seal of Approval, and more recently has earned the Skin Cancer Foundation Seal of Recommendation for safe and effective sun protection. The Essilor brand is one we are proud to be associated with.

A LENS FROM A STRONG ECP ALLY

The long list of benefits that premium products like *Crizal* lenses offer are not a surprise, given the company that developed this lens technology. We know we can rely on Essilor to provide our practice, and, ultimately, our patients, with products we are proud to prescribe and sell. Essilor has invested in advanced-lens technology and devoted a significant amount of resources to educating the ECP community on what their lenses offer. This allows a doctor

EMPOWERING LONG-TERM, LOYAL PATIENTS

Prescribe & Sell Only the Best: Educate patients about the difference the best eyewear products make, and how your practice can deliver eyewear that will improve their lives.

Partner with a Trusted, Recognized Brand. When patients come to your office with a base of knowledge about the products you prescribe, you are one step closer to providing premium care.

Strengthen Relationship with a Partner that Delivers Consistent Quality. Providing products you can proudly stand behind is easier when those products come from a partner you know is as reliable to your practice as you seek to be to your patients.

Provide Products that Fulfill Patients' Greatest Current Needs. The significant time patients are spending in front of electronic devices calls for products that safeguard eyes against harmful blue light*. Providing eyewear that does this shows patients you understand what they need.

Create a Wow Experience. When patients walk out of your office in their new glasses and notice an instant transformation of their vision, they never forget who provided them with such an outstanding product. They also won't forget to return and refer many others to your practice for their own eye care.

to listen to a patient's lifestyle and hobbies and prescribe a lens solution that sufficiently protects the patient and gives them superior vision within that specific lifestyle.

The most important thing in a partnership is that your core values are the same. We know without hesitation, that Essilor is committed to patients achieving their best vision. We share those values and the ultimate goal of elevating patient care. Essilor has bettered our practice with education, support and a shared desire for everyone to have their best vision.

A SOLUTION TO THE LIVES WE NOW LEAD

The pandemic has sped up the road we were already on to ever-greater use of electronic devices. With online meetings and distance learning remaining a huge part of our current lives, there has never been a more important time to offer protection from harmful blue light*. The majority of our patients are on electronic devices 8-10 hours per day.

In addition to heavier-than-ever use of electronic devices, the average patient is much more aware than they were before the pandemic that blue light can be harmful*. They are increasingly asking us what kind of impact spending extended amounts of time in front of computers, tablets and smartphones will have on their, and their family's, sight.

We are committed to educating patients on how they need to protect their vision and what lens technologies will best accomplish that. Our partnership with Essilor empowers us to offer eyewear that meets this challenge. We proudly offer the following Essilor product solutions to our patients: **Crizal No-Glare lenses, Crizal® Prevencia® lenses, Eyezen® lenses and Transitions® Lenses.**

WHAT'S GOOD FOR PATIENTS IS GOOD FOR THE PRACTICE

We currently have 10 locations, and 92 percent of all AR lenses sold are Crizal No-Glare lenses. We believe our patients leave our office with their best vision, and that is only made possible by the premium products, like Crizal No-Glare lenses, that Essilor has made available to all of us.

There is nothing more satisfying than a patient putting on their new eyewear and having a "wow" moment. This happens every single day, thanks to product portfolios like Crizal. Our patients are always amazed by how well they can see with their new eyewear. That ability to exceed patients' expectations is the result of having partners like Essilor, and offering products we know will deliver the greatest possible quality.

Patients remember their positive experience, and the superior vision they achieved, and return to us every year.

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