

# Review<sup>of</sup> Optometric Business

## How to Deliver the Ultimate Patient Experience

By the Editors of Review of Optometric Business

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### Delivering a Memorable Experience

Today, optometrists and optical retailers are challenged to go beyond delivering great service and outstanding value.

In order to capture and retain patients—while expanding the goods and services that you provide to those treasured patients over the long term—you must provide a memorable experience with each patient encounter. You and your staff must deliver...the ultimate patient experience.

There are three prerequisites for you and your staff to make measurable improvements in the experience that your patients have in your office.

**Get them in.** To succeed, you need to be effective and efficient in getting patients into your exam chairs and maxing out your appointment schedule.

**Make it easy.** Make it easy for patients to pay. That means offering the financing they need in order to purchase the goods and services that you recommend—and to do so before they leave your office.

**Help them, don't sell them.** The key to doing well in your dispensary: *Help* patients to buy versus trying to *convince* people to buy.



### Get Them In

Being effective and efficient in getting patients into your exam chair requires systems in:

- **Patient retention:** You need a patient retention system that does more than prompt you to send out postcards. You need to WOW the patient with a personalized message. You need to resolve any service errors that can seem unduly irritating to us all. Finally, you need an effective recall system that both automates and personalizes your communications with patients.
- **Patient reactivation:** You need a patient reactivation system with several key features. It should facilitate data mining. It should be an opt-out and not an opt-in program. Finally, the system should allow you to control the flow of patients.
- **Patient acquisition:** You need a patient reactivation system that generates new patients, the key to your future growth. This system should accommodate current patient referrals and have an effective means for generating new patients.

Fortunately, systems are on the market today that heighten total patient engagement—and empower your staff to extend their reach effectively and efficiently.

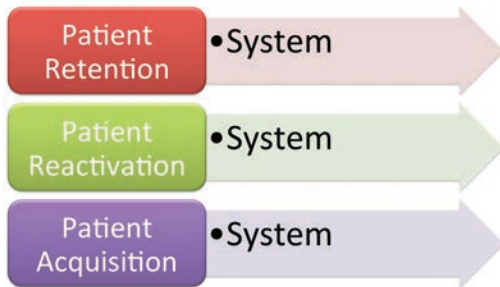
### Make It Easy

Helping people to buy, versus convincing people to buy, is a critical key in the sales presentation. Also, helping people to buy is much better suited to you, the eyecare professional.

The kernel within this truth: Separate needs and wants. The consumer who is your patient has an ever increasing list of wants—literally hundreds of them—and a smaller but no less important list of needs.

It is critical that you and your staff understand how to help patients to bring these two components of the buying process together.

### Be effective and efficient in getting patients into your chair



### Help Patients to Buy

Begin by addressing a need.

**Need:** Polarized sunwear decreases glare while driving. You prescribe it, as such, saying, “When you are driving, do you want your lenses with glare or without it?” In posing the question, you’ve made it easy for the patient to understand the need and to fulfill that need—because they now want it.

**Making it Easy:** By making available patient financing, you help the patient even more. You enable every patient to obtain the goods and services they need when they need them. Right after you prescribe specific eyewear, you can mention that patient financing is available. You complete the cycle of action: Identify need...understand need...satisfy need, which has become a want.

### Help patients buy versus trying to convince people to buy



### Timeline

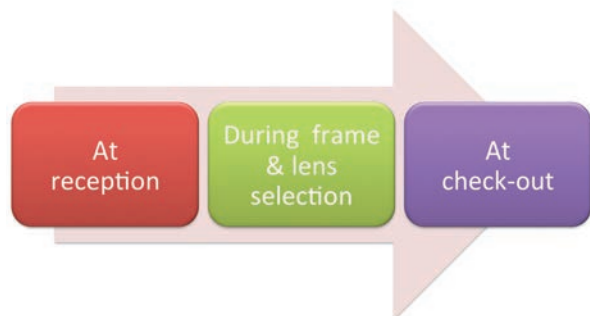
Presenting patient financing effectively is a multi-stage process.

**Introduce it.** Introduce the availability of patient financing at reception. Set the patient’s mind at ease from the start. You can communicate this in various ways: an item on your web site, a door sticker, a counter brochure, or a mention by staff at reception.

**Repeat it.** When you recommend eyewear in the exam room, repeat the message that patient financing is available. Repeat it again during frame and lens selection.

**Reinforce it.** At checkout, reinforce the message that patient financing is available. Explain that it can be used at other medical practices, as well.

### Timeline



**Mark Wright, OD, FCOVD,** is professional editor of Review of Optometric Business and founder of Pathways to Success, based in Westerville, Ohio. After growing his practice to employ nine ODs, he has devoted himself to consulting, lecturing and teaching on business-building strategies for optometrists. He directs the Business Management Program at The Ohio State University College of Optometry.

# Driving Growth Through the Enhanced Patient Experience

## Transforming a Clinical Experience in a Retail Buying Opportunity

There are three drivers to transforming a clinical experience into a retail buying opportunity:

- Design
- Content
- Communications

### Design

#### “What’s up front?”

That’s the first question any owner of an OD practice or optical shop should ask.

What message does your signage send out about what sort of experience your patients will encounter?

#### “What’s inside?”

This is the next question you should ask: What sort of floor plan or layout have you chosen that maintains an optimal patient flow?

### DESIGN: What Do They See?



#### “What do they see?”

Examine your sight lines. Be a “patient” and walk through your entire office space. What is the first thing patients see when they enter your office? Do they focus on something that communicates what you are all about? Or do they see clutter and confusion? Especially when they look at your eyewear displays, what do they see? Is an appealing optical dispensary the first thing they see when they exit the exam room?

#### “What else do they see?”

Do your patients see the kinds of eyewear brands that define your office and the experience they will have there? Are you leveraging your eyewear assets and brand choices visually?

#### “Where do we guide them?”

Apart from your office and dispensary, consider your web site and your other communications. Do you guide the patient through their experience? Or do you throw a confusing amount of visual information at them? For example, does your site guide the patient to make an appointment online? Does your site guide your patient to shop online? Does it let them know that you offer patient financing?

#### “Is your web site easy to navigate?”

Web sites need to be concise. If yours has grown into a hoarder’s delight, it’s time to do a web site house cleaning. Simplify your message. Provide an orderly and logical menu on your home page--and also make “Make an appointment” a highly visible go-to area. Also, you need to optimize your web site for mobile devices, the fastest growing means by which consumers find your practice and interact with you.

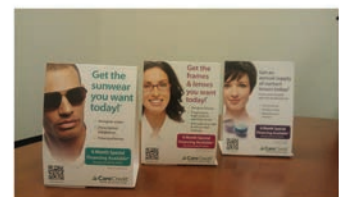
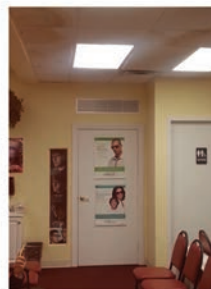
#### “Does it make you want more?”

Finally, does the design of your office provide the patient with a feeling they really do want to shop for eyewear following an exam? That’s a big Yes! Or an unfortunate No!

### Content

In considering the content that your patients experience in your office, again be a patient and “see what they see.”

### CONTENT: See What They See



**Signage.** What signage stands out in your office? Are you using manufacturer displays and point-of-purchase information effectively?

**E-communications.** Are you utilizing the latest technology in your communications? Do you have video on your website and in-office? Do you have a service that takes your patient communications to the next level?

**Excitement.** Going to the eye doctor used to be a dull experience. Now, it can be an exciting one where patients are excited to improve both their vision and their appearance. Use technology to make that experience even more exciting.

**New tools.** Are you using the latest tools, like eyewear measuring systems, to communicate that the exam and the eyewear fitting they receive is the most exact exam and fitting they can have?

**New products.** Are you featuring the latest technology in frames, lenses and contact lenses...and even in new electronic eyewear like Google Glass and other amazing new products?

**Electronic eyewear.** Displaying the latest in electronic eyewear and new vision technology establishes you in the minds of your patients as the authority on what's new. You are the expert in optics; you are not forfeiting that role to some kid at an electronics warehouse store. Be the prescriber of new and amazing eyewear.

**From needs to wants.** Providing the ultimate patient experience, and doing well financially in your practice, is all about bridging the gap between two concepts in the minds of your patients: needs and wants.

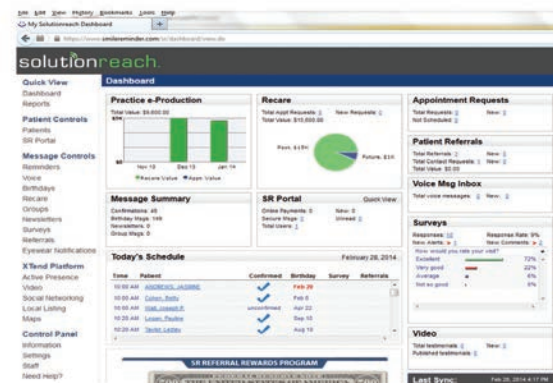
In developing recognition of patient needs, you must create "top of mind" awareness through consistent messaging:

- Pre-visit
- During the visit
- After the visit
- Throughout the annual cycle

And in each touch-point in your communications, provide solutions to patient needs.

## Communications

### COMMUNICATION: All-in-One



There are both digital and analog means to maintaining good communications with your patients:

- Electronic
  - » Email
  - » Text
  - » Voice
- Postal Mail

Today, there are systems with very affordable terms that can deliver a far more effective series of touch-points with your patients than you and your staff can achieve on your own. These offer all-in-one communications on:

- Appointment reminders
- Eyewear notification
- Surveys
- Referrals
- Birthday messages
- Automated voice messaging

Good communications with patients is what leads to growth—and growth is all about three things:

- Recare
- Recall
- Repeat

Additional engagement with your patients maintains top-of-mind awareness with your patients.

Finally, review how you communicate with patients. If you follow best practices of patient communications, make sure that you are utilizing the following:

- Integration of multiple channels/coordination of efforts
- Pre-launch testing
- Dedicated personnel to handle all facets of outreach
- Continuity of messaging
- Collection and implementation of patient feedback.



**John Bonizio** is owner and general manager of Metro Optics, a four-location optical retail company based in New York City. He lectures frequently on issues related to optical retailing, branding and staffing. He is an enthusiastic proponent of featuring cutting edge technology like electronic eyewear in his optical shops.

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## VIEW THE WEBINAR...

For more on this subject, play the pre-recorded webinar:

### "How to Deliver the Ultimate Patient Experience"

with presenters

**Mark Wright, OD, FOCVD,**  
Professional Editor, Review of Optometric Business

**John Bonizio,**  
Owner & General Manager, Metro Optics, NYC

[www.ReviewOB.com/webinar.aspx](http://www.ReviewOB.com/webinar.aspx)



## About CareCredit...

CareCredit has been around for over 27 years — exclusively in healthcare. Today there are over 180,000 providers who accept the CareCredit healthcare credit card and over 8.5 million cardholders.

Adding CareCredit as a payment option can help make your practice become more competitive by providing patients with an easier way to purchase the products they want. CareCredit's convenient monthly payments often means less stress on a patient's budget and more purchasing power for: designer frames, premium lenses, multiple pairs, annual supplies of contact lenses, prescription and plano sunwear, Ortho-K, vision exams and more.

### CareCredit Benefits:

- No cost to enroll and no monthly fees.\*
- Payment in two business days with no responsibility if patient delays or defaults.\*
- Easy patient application, right from your office via phone, mobile, online or tablet. Credit decisions provided almost instantly.
- Patients can use for ongoing vision care for the entire family.\*\* They will also appreciate it for additional health care needs from other enrolled providers such as dentistry, cosmetic, hearing, chiropractic and veterinary care.
- When patients leave with what they want, they are more likely to return and to refer family and friends.

**Learn more...** about how accepting CareCredit can help keep prescriptions from walking out of your door. Call (866) 853.8432.

\*Subject to representations, warranties and covenants of the CareCredit Card Acceptance Agreement for Participating Professionals.

\*\*Subject to credit approval. Minimum monthly payments required. See [www.carecredit.com](http://www.carecredit.com) for details.



## About Solutionreach...

Once the pioneer for text and email patient messaging, Solutionreach now is a full platform of patient engagement and communication solutions for eyecare professionals. Utilizing the latest text, email, voice, video, web, and social media tools, Solutionreach equips eyecare providers with "high-tech" solutions that don't sacrifice the "high-touch" personalization needed when interacting with patients.

Solutionreach offers a CareCredit Edition of their platform, which allows eyecare professionals who are already utilizing CareCredit the ability to notify their patients that they have a financing solution available. This integration makes it easy for patients to apply for CareCredit online before their appointment!

In addition, Solutionreach engagement tools can automate and personalize nearly every type of customized communication including text, email, or landline appointment reminders; confirmations; reactivation; referrals; birthday wishes; surveys; newsletters; customized education and promotion campaigns and more.

The Solutionreach service is all-inclusive and backed by a Satisfaction Guarantee. All customers are provided with unlimited support from dedicated representatives and a Price for Life Promise.

**Learn more...** about Solutionreach and the CareCredit Edition of Solutionreach today! Call (866) 315.4046 or visit [www.solutionreach.com/carecredit](http://www.solutionreach.com/carecredit).



**THE NEW CARECREDIT EDITION OF SOLUTIONREACH IS A GREAT WAY TO EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY RETAIN, REACTIVATE, ACQUIRE AND EDUCATE PATIENTS. THE CARECREDIT EDITION OF SOLUTIONREACH INCLUDES INFORMATION ABOUT CARECREDIT IN YOUR PATIENT COMMUNICATIONS, SUCH AS:**



**APPOINTMENT  
REMINDERS**



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NEWSLETTERS**



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AND OFFERS**



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REFERRALS**

**With the CareCredit Edition of Solutionreach, you can let your patients know you have a financing solution available so they can apply online before their appointment!**



## Don't let prescriptions walk out your door.

When they're ready to **step out** in the latest frames and lenses, **step forward** with special financing options\* available with the CareCredit credit card.

Let your patients know about special financing options\* available with the CareCredit healthcare credit card so they may not hesitate to get the frames, lenses or other products you recommend — and they want — while in your office.

Make CareCredit a part of your daily routine.  
Call for more information and enroll at no cost today.^

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\*Subject to credit approval. Minimum monthly payments apply. See [carecredit.com](http://carecredit.com) for details. ^Subject to change.

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