



THE POWER OF THE ECP

Leveraging Your Unique Strengths to Impact
Patients and the Industry

As an eye care provider,
you have unique strengths
that make you a vital
resource to your patients.
To be successful, we
must be able to bring
those strengths to the
forefront of our everyday
patient interaction.

In this ebook, we are going to cover what sets you apart as the expert ECP. Your specialties, expertise, and practice are all unique. By identifying and leveraging what makes you special, you'll grow your business and leave patients more satisfied with their eye care.

Each section comes with advice on how to leverage this ebook.

Links throughout the ebook will send you to helpful resources to help you leverage your strengths.

Your Strengths

You are set apart in the industry because of your independence and expertise. Your ability as the eye care provider to make choices based on your experience, as in, your expertise in technology and performance is the absolute strongest asset you bring to the table. You may not be leveraging all of your strengths now, but you can be. As you leverage more of them, you'll find your practice naturally starts to attract more patients.

The following strengths are pillars to build upon. These serve as a baseline you'll use regardless of who you are. How you apply them, and the unique flair you apply to each will be your own.



EXPERTISE



**TECHNOLOGY
AGILITY**



**PATIENT TRUST &
RELATIONSHIPS**



**PERSONALITY
& BRAND**

1

EXPERTISE

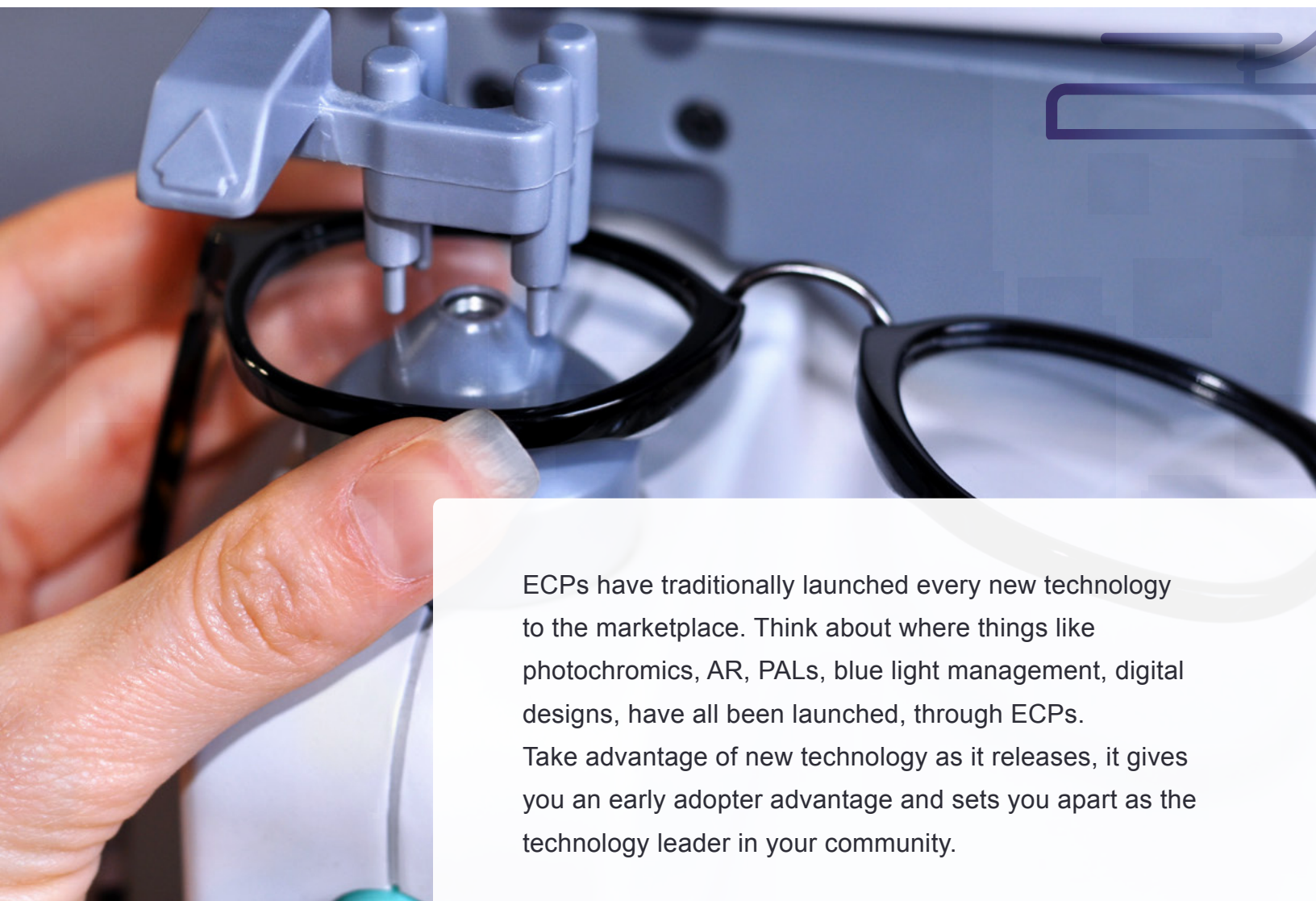
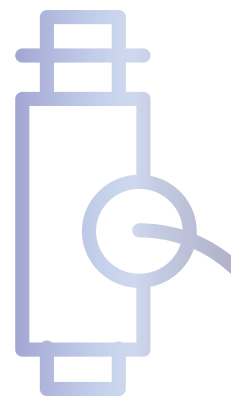
You are in the perfect position to make objective decisions based on quality and performance. The knowledge, clinical experience, and your strong prescribing ability make you the absolute expert. By taking that to a high level of personalizing prescriptions to patient function and lifestyle, you are then able to create the amazing experience that is unique to an ECP in the field. You are the expert, more so than any other sales avenue for patients, especially when compared to commoditized sales channels.



2

TECHNOLOGY AGILITY

Agility is the ability to change, to [always be on top of the newest technological advances](#). New technologies, concepts, and ideas mixed with the right ally are vital. You and your lens partner should collaborate with the implementation process and training of the team to integrate new knowledge to ensure that all stumbling blocks to a successful launch are clear. If you are leveraging agility, as a strength you should be able to move quickly to make directional choices as new ideas and technology emerge. A true ally will support your team [by investing in training materials and resources](#).



ECPs have traditionally launched every new technology to the marketplace. Think about where things like photochromics, AR, PALs, blue light management, digital designs, have all been launched, through ECPs. Take advantage of new technology as it releases, it gives you an early adopter advantage and sets you apart as the technology leader in your community.

3

PATIENT TRUST AND RELATIONSHIPS

Consumers expect good customer service and experience. However, great and amazing customer experiences stand out and move the needle on customer loyalty.

[Leveraging the right patient experience, you can create lasting relationships with patients,](#) and possibly with their whole family, for decades.

You need to bring your strongest asset to market, your team. When you build a reputation of expertise, personalized care built on relationships, and prove your integrity by always making the best recommendations, you create confidence and trust. This confidence and trust can be easy to lose, but difficult to tear away by your competitors. Patients whose trust you earn are patients for life.

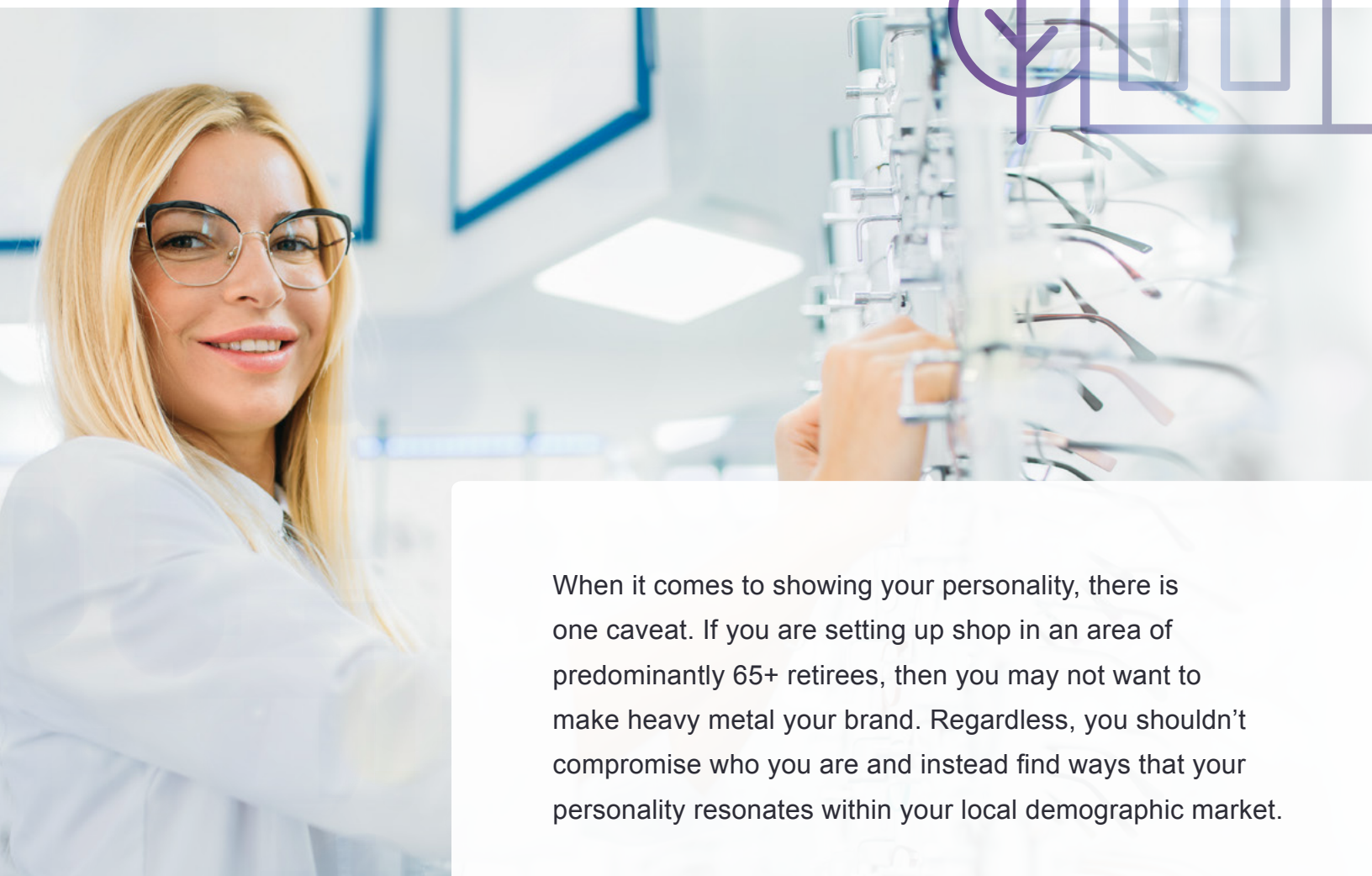


4

PERSONALITY AND BRAND

There are a lot of eye care practices, but there is only one of you (or maybe a group of you). This means you can stand out as yourself in the marketplace. You don't have to be anything but who you are. Lean into your personal brand as a way to stand out in the marketplace.

Your brand should be consistent throughout every avenue of your practice — from your waiting room to your exam room, your social media, website, email, or mailers to patients. The consistency and uniqueness of your personality will win over the bland, generic appearance of a box store any day.



When it comes to showing your personality, there is one caveat. If you are setting up shop in an area of predominantly 65+ retirees, then you may not want to make heavy metal your brand. Regardless, you shouldn't compromise who you are and instead find ways that your personality resonates within your local demographic market.

Identifying Your Strengths

While the list above starts as a reference point, it is important regardless of who you are to leverage expertise, adopt technology, and build a brand. It's the nuances inside each that are your unique strengths.

When identifying what strengths you want to leverage and build upon, take time for reflection and ask for input from patients and members of your team. For a place to start, use these questions:

What makes you stand out?

What do your patients say about you?

What excites you the most about providing eye care?

What do you nerd out about the most?

What excites your team about what they do?

What does your team think sets your practice apart?

Building On Your Strengths

Understanding and knowing your strengths is well and good, but how do you use them to give you a market advantage. Where do you start? What are concrete ways in which you can leverage your strengths to gain local market share and bring more recurring patients through your doors? The following advice can serve as a starting point for you as you leverage your expertise as the expert in the marketplace.

1

GO FORTH AND ESTABLISH YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

We don't mean you should set up an online store, that is a complicated and expensive process. You need to be found online, and to do that you need to have an online presence. Building your initial online presence [requires a dash of social media, a pinch of Google listings, and a heaping serving of a website for your practice.](#) This is the first step to showing up to the game in the modern world today.

If patients can't even find your practice when searching online for eye care, you have a whole set of hurdles ahead of you. Once you build a baseline online presence, you can use your website to let your brand and services shine through, and social media is a great way to find new patients as well as engage with existing fans of your practice.

Consumers are looking for companies they resonate with. They want to interact with brands they enjoy online. Make sure your personality and brand shine through online. If you are still working on building a brand, just let your personality shine through first since, after all, that's your best branding asset.

2

EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY TOOLS IN YOUR PRACTICE

We separated lens technology and technology tools into separate sections here on purpose. Adding the right technological tools to your practice can radically and positively change the patient's experience. [After all, if you are using analog tools from the '70s, then it becomes a lot harder to prove that your lenses are using the most modern technology.](#)

You must look and play the part of a technologically advanced practice! Bring in modern measuring tools that replace outdated PD sticks, evaluative tools that help diagnose diseases such as diabetes (and hopefully soon Alzheimer's). When you have innovative tools in your practice, it creates a premium experience that can help lead to higher sales and increased patient satisfaction.



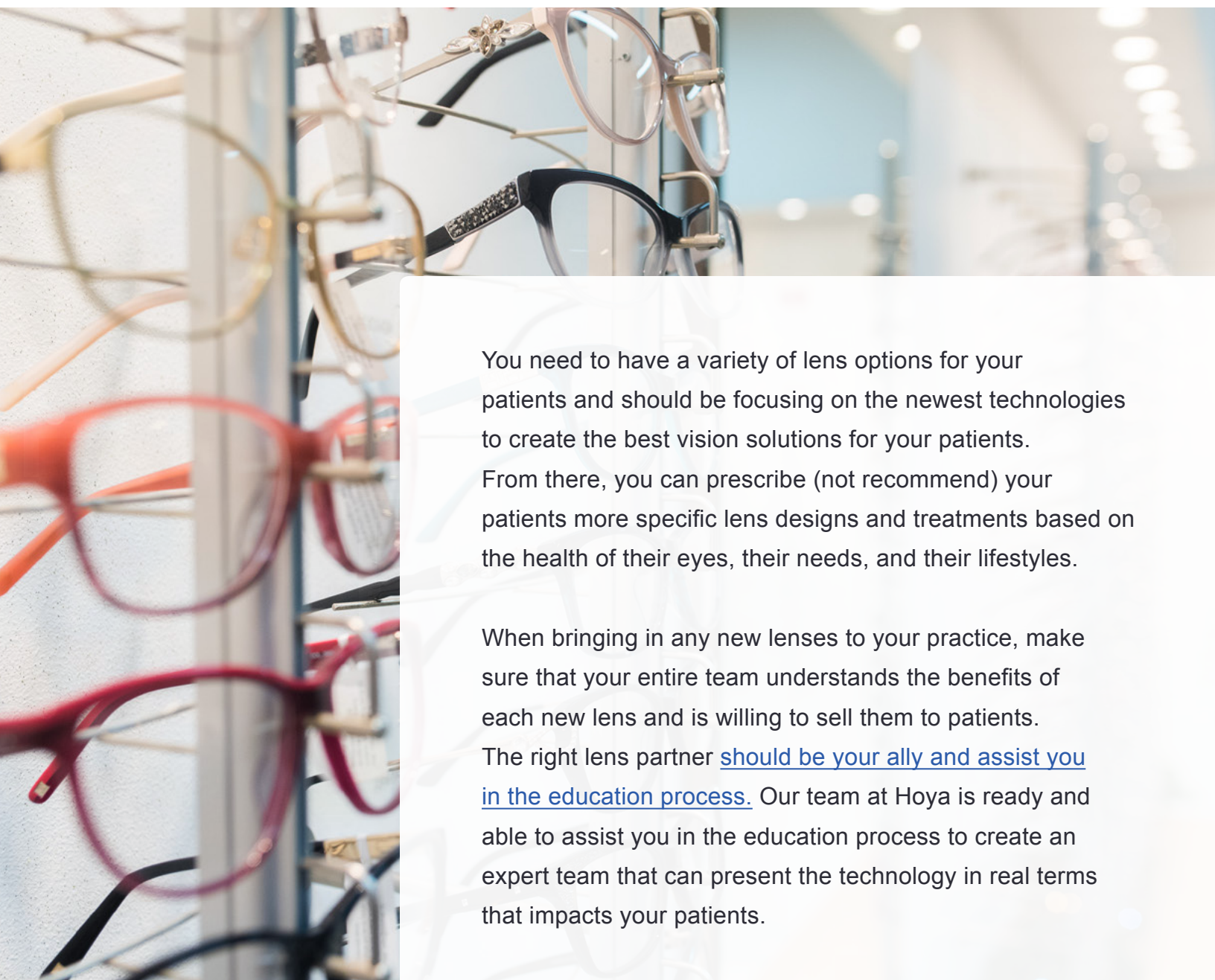
When adding new tools to your practice, make sure you get buy-in from your entire staff. These tools need to be mandatory to use, and not optional, or else you are just investing the money without the results. A high level of ease, understanding, and confidence in the tool is a must for all staff to communicate the message of technology to your patients. Proper training and retraining of staff is key to accomplishing this high-level, smooth delivery to patients.

When implementing technology, stay dedicated. It's not always an easy process. Stick with it and celebrate the wins while evaluating the losses.

3

OFFER THE LATEST AND GREATEST LENSES

No matter what, you need to keep up with lens innovations. However, embracing the latest and greatest to make it a part of your culture is a step above. When you adopt and understand the newest pieces of technology, you set yourself apart as a leader in the industry by using the latest and greatest lens designs.



You need to have a variety of lens options for your patients and should be focusing on the newest technologies to create the best vision solutions for your patients. From there, you can prescribe (not recommend) your patients more specific lens designs and treatments based on the health of their eyes, their needs, and their lifestyles.

When bringing in any new lenses to your practice, make sure that your entire team understands the benefits of each new lens and is willing to sell them to patients. The right lens partner [should be your ally and assist you in the education process](#). Our team at Hoya is ready and able to assist you in the education process to create an expert team that can present the technology in real terms that impacts your patients.

4

EDUCATE INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY

Part of being an ECP is teaching. It's your strongest and "least-salesy" sales tool. Educating patients is one of the easiest ways to increase sales, especially sales of premium lenses and multiple pairs. Your patients don't understand all of the benefits their lenses offer them the same way you do. Education is a benefit of going to your practice, so your patients are essentially permitting you to make an educational sales pitch to them.

Focus on the benefits and how it will improve the life of the patient. Maybe it's their first computer lens, or it's time to switch to progressive lenses. Whatever the solution, stay focused on the benefits and differences between lens and price choices.

Educating internally to your team is just as important. If your team doesn't know all of the benefits or downsides to your lenses or tools, then they cannot confidently sell them to patients. Any investment you make in new products must consider the time and cost of training as part of the investment.

If you don't make the investment up-front, you won't see the returns or growth you expect. This is frustrating for everyone, not just you.

Looking for more resources on education?

- [Access more information on continuing education courses.](#)
- Learn about our learning portal, [Empower U, a hub for each of our customers with prebuilt learning materials on products and onboarding new employees.](#)

EDUCATING FROM THE CHAIR

Within the exam setting, it's important to educate patients about lens technology. This should happen regardless of whether you feel education is a sales technique. It's completely fine to feel a little uncomfortable. Educating from the exam room can feel like a hard sell, but there's a big difference.

Patients want to know about what is available. They often won't find out if you don't tell them. This is what separates you from direct to consumer channels. You offer the knowledge to help prescribe the best solution for them. You need to be their Google, in part because we all know how dangerous it is to search for medical answers online, and in part, because that's what sets you apart.

5

EMBRACE THE MEDICAL CHANGES IN OPTOMETRY

Optometry is becoming more ingrained into primary care. More diseases can be diagnosed early or monitored by ECPs during a regular eye exam. The three most critical disease areas to focus on today in eye care are:

Diabetic Eye Disease

Macular Degeneration

Dry Eye Disease

Dry eye is the fastest-growing segment of the industry with tremendous opportunity to care for patients, to impact their lives, and to establish yourself as the expert medical eye disease practitioners in your field. New technology focused on Alzheimer's early screening through retinal imaging is another exciting field that will create unique opportunities in eye care. The future will only tell what else we can find through an eye exam.

It's always a constant challenge to encourage patients to come in for their annual eye exams, but it's too important both for their health and the growth of your practice. We like to think of it like going to the dentist twice a year. It's sometimes easier to understand when something is wrong with our teeth, and there's a factor of fear there. We don't recommend using fear with your patients, though when you think about it, we only have two eyes and somewhere between 28 and 32 teeth. As you are able to incorporate a more medical model into your daily work, multiple visits a year will become the standard protocol for visit frequency — as you are now part of their medical care team, on top of caring for their vision.

Educate your patients on the importance of an eye exam by focusing on the health benefits of updating their prescription. Make sure they understand the medical side of things. It is very easy not to realize we are having vision problems as changes are often gradual and hard to notice unless it becomes extreme. If the new breakthroughs and medical advances in eye care make you nerd out and excite you, leverage your knowledge as a strength or specialty.

6

ALIGN ON GOALS AND REWARD THEM

Make sure your practice is aligned on the goals that will help you grow your practice. Often these will be sales, and that idea can sometimes be difficult to act upon. After all, you are a medical professional helping people care for their vision. It's ok to focus on sales and have sales goals with your staff; in fact, we encourage it. We understand that it is through the growth of the practice that all boats rise. Change is the “constant” that your culture should embrace if you want to be at the forefront of technology.

The key is not to be too aggressive. Focus on sales through education and prescribing the best solutions, but if you never consult towards AR treatment or a premium progressive lens, then your patients never have the option, and you won't make those sales.

Set time as an organization to align on what your goals are, it's far easier for your practice to do this than a national chain. Be prepared to change your goals and set realistic ones.

These goals might be to learn the new tools and use them with 75% of patients in the practice or upsell to AR treatment on 100% of your lenses. Reward your staff with incentives for hitting these goals, both personally and as a team.

When it comes to rewarding your staff, ask them what they prefer and what is meaningful for them. Learning can be fun when there is a reward! Give them an opportunity to shine individually while also focusing on the overall company goals. This might mean that whoever attaches the most treatments gets a bonus or their favorite pair of designer frames for free, while the team earns a dinner out together on the practice if the overall goal is met.

7

— EVERY JOB IS UNIQUE, MAKE EVERY PATIENT FEEL UNIQUE

Personalized care is critical to [building a practice based on life-long relationships with our patients](#). After all, we want to keep our patients coming back year after year! Personal care not only means knowing who our patients' spouses and children are, but also understanding how they use their eyes during work, sport, and leisure. This knowledge is used to develop a very specific prescription treatment plan for each individual patient.

This idea of personal care is so key to how we design lenses and how we handle each job order from practices. [Every patient has a custom and unique need in prescription and features to improve their vision](#). It's a blessing and a curse at times. It's difficult to quantify what patients can expect from their new pair of glasses, even with tools like augmented reality, but what it also means is that every patient gets specialized attention.



Your expertise has a big impact on what you recommend and how satisfied the patient is with their glasses. This makes the stakes higher if something goes wrong, but also if it goes right.

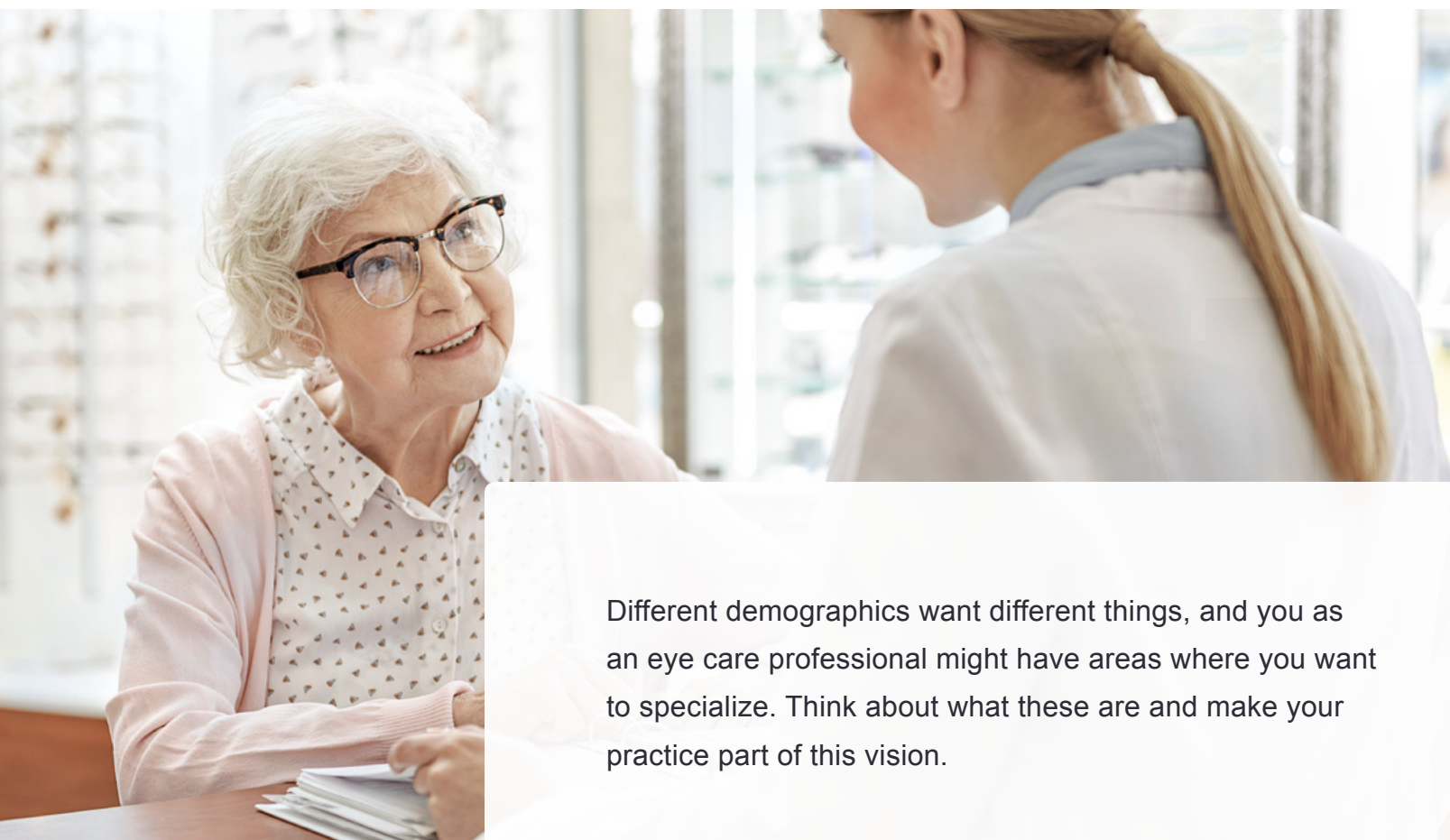
Treat every patient like their prescription, as a unique person who's looking to get the best solution so they can see better.

8

— CUSTOMIZE TO YOUR LOCAL AUDIENCE

By leveraging your agility as a practice, you can take a different approach to how you stock your practice, from the lenses you carry to the frames that accompany them. Think about who your patients are and know which demographics constitute your best customers. You can then tailor your offerings to them.

This might mean specializing in progressive lenses for an older population, or if your practice is situated downtown of a major work area, you might want to create a display all about computer glasses at the front of your practice. You can also invest in expanded lens selection as well as blue light treatments so that every worker that comes in for an exam over their lunch break can tie it directly back into their workday.



Different demographics want different things, and you as an eye care professional might have areas where you want to specialize. Think about what these are and make your practice part of this vision.

9

— FIND AN ECP-COMMITTED ALLY

One of the best things you can do to help the growth of your practice is to find an ally that exists to support you, the ECP. The right ally should be aligned with your goals as an ECP and not focused only on selling to consumers. Your partner needs to help facilitate your business and practice goals! If you don't feel your vendors are doing this, then it's time to either let them know how they can or find a new ally.



Some critical areas to evaluate your partnership are:

They respect your patient relationships

Delivers on all jobs in a timely manner

Invests in your success - including the customer support and laboratory infrastructure to support your growth

Supports your practice with consulting, education, and patient experience tools

Empowers you to control your retail pricing

Provides exclusive access to new, patented technology

Sells through you, not direct-to-consumer

Success with your practice, not in spite of it

Do they make it easier to train your staff and patients? Or do they let you fend for yourselves? Are they viewing your practice as their client or your patients as their customers?

[Find an ally that focuses on you as their client and supporting you in treating YOUR patients.](#)

Be Strong

Leaning into your expertise and strengths is all about doing the groundwork and self-reflection. Your strong and unique voice, brand, and expertise is the key to your success. A small practice in every rural or urban area has the ability to impact and influence their communities at the grassroots level. Allying with industry partners will give you the resources that you need, but you must have the determination and willpower to relentlessly tap into those sources. These tips will help you do you using the strengths that only you have. Go forth and conquer.

At Hoya Vision Care, we are here to support the eye care practitioners. We ask that you take the time to tap into us as a resource for knowledge, for training, and for the best lens designs, treatments, and materials! We'll be here to help along the way if you have questions.

If you want [more resources about how we can work together and leverage your strengths — head to our blog](#), updated constantly with relevant articles, best practices, and resources you can use to grow your practice.

Special thanks to Dr. Pham for her extensive contributions to the content of this e-book and to Dr. Andersen for reviewing from the perspective of an ECP in the field.



READY TO TAKE US ON AS AN ALLY?

Schedule time with our team of experts who can help you grow your practice, leverage your strengths, and have the knowledge to always be your backup.

SCHEDULE TIME WITH OUR EXPERTS

