

LabTalk

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CAUSE AND EFFECT: HOW NEW LENS TECHNOLOGIES CAN IMPACT LAB EFFICIENCY

NEW LENS DESIGNS AND MATERIALS ARE GAME-CHANGERS, BUT LABS NEED TO CHANGE WITH THEM

A Publication of
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FEATURES

TIPS FOR NEW TECH

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EDITOR'S LETTER



Maybe you've noticed the new photo? It depicts your humble Editor at one of his "happy places"—outside Celtic Park in Glasgow, Scotland.

Celtic Park is home to my favorite soccer team, Glasgow Celtic, a team who's history and tradition are intertwined with the Irish "diaspora"—the migration of generations of people away from the so-called Emerald Isle. This migration brought my ancestors to these shores.

But I'm not sharing this photo with you for the purposes of a history lesson. Rather, I am using it to illustrate another point: Recently, I attended an industry event during which, the keynote speaker asked the audience, "What is your

why?" In short, he meant: What gets you out of bed in the morning?

Funny, but the vast majority of lab guys—and gals—I know, love what they do.

Six years ago, I was working for a small, family-owned communications company and, without realizing it at the time, I asked myself, "What is my why?" When I realized I didn't have a reasonable answer, I made a change. That decision, indirectly, brought me here to LabTalk.

But you don't have to make a major career change to find your "why." Instead, consider this question—frequently.

—Brian P. Dunleavy

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CAUSE AND EFFECT: ***HOW LENS TECHNOLOGIES CAN INFLUENCE LAB EFFICIENCY***

NEW LENS DESIGNS AND MATERIALS ARE GAME-CHANGERS, BUT LABS NEED TO CHANGE WITH THEM

By JULIE BOS

Continually adapting to new lens technologies is no cake walk. For every new lens, coating or technology, there are countless ripple effects for laboratories. Some are positive—like increased revenue, less waste and greater customer satisfaction. Other changes, however, may shake things up a bit, requiring the purchase of new equipment, revamping some workflows or even expanding your workforce.

Certainly the pros outweigh the cons (otherwise no lab would jump on board with new products), but it's always nice to be prepared and keep the surprises to a minimum. If your lab is considering adopting a newer lens technology, knowing exactly what you're up against (and how other labs have addressed the same issue) may help you avoid some headaches and improve your chances for a successful transition.

We reached out to several leading labs to hear about their product-adoption journeys.

Freeform Ain't Free

Believe it or not, there are still some labs that have not yet made the transition to digital freeform processing. If you're one of those labs, the following perspectives may be helpful.

For Cherry Optical, freeform is now “the rule” for progressive lens designs. Single-vision and enhanced bifocals are slowly gaining momentum, but for PALs, this lab is already at 99 percent freeform. According to Adam Cherry, President, the efficiency gains have been “outstanding.” He credits his success to great collaboration with freeform vendors and excellent lab management software (he uses the DVI).

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Full Back-Side (FBS) freeform technology has streamlined Cherry Optical's lens inventory while also expanding material and color availability. While the cost of equipment for freeform may be much greater than it is with conventional surfacing, the cost of scrap and warranty replacements has been reduced dramatically.

"Converting from conventional surfacing to digital surfacing is a big undertaking for any optical laboratory," said Cherry. "The skill sets are similar, but digital surfacing requires a lot more attention to process control since the polishing step will not correct errors or allow for 'professional adjustments.'"

To do digital surfacing correctly, Cherry offers these tips:

- Don't try to "do it cheap." Give special attention to room environment (sustained heat/humidity), coolant temperature (very important), polish temperature and Baume.
- Trying to cut corners or extend the life of tools and pads will only lead to increased scrap and headaches. Follow the equipment manufacturers' guidelines for tool and pad usage. (In fact, Cherry Optical reduces manufacturers' recommendations by 10 percent just to prevent possible issues.)
- Assign the right workers. You'll need organized people who are very detail-oriented and comfortable with ultra-precise calibration procedures. Forgetting a PM, entering calibration data incorrectly or relying on auto-calibration will cost lots of additional money over time.

Meanwhile, FEA Industries started working with digital freeform designs about six years ago, and the increased level of efficiency has been huge.

"The transition has greatly reduced our lab's level of inventory, which has reduced the likelihood of backorders and increased turnaround time tremendously," said Bill Heffner, Marketing Director. "It also means that we can be more competitive on pricing, since we don't have to carry large dollar amounts of inventory, and have much less inventory on hand."

At the time of transition, FEA already owned the necessary equipment because it needed additional capacity, even for traditional surfacing. However, it still needed to update some generators and polishers, and

add some new equipment, like a laser engraver.

In addition to updated equipment, the transition to freeform required a few process changes:

- A switch to more "soft" polishing tools. Instead of using hard tools to pick the correct base and cross curve, labs now simply use one of a very limited selection of "soft tools" that conform to a wide number of curves.
- Simpler training. Training staff members on freeform wasn't much different than other surfacing methods. In fact, Heffner claims it was easier. Since the machine was taking over a lot of the calculations and tool-selection decisions, there was actually less for the staff to do.
- More time needed for quality control. When implementing freeform, the lab essentially becomes the manufacturer of the progressive. That means there's more to control in terms of the process and quality inspection. This often means more frequent calibration, maintenance and refreshing of consumables (for example, polish, cutting bits) is necessary. Heffner's tip: Don't try to stretch consumables, since this will result in an immediate decrease in quality.

Finally, Walman Optical began implementing in-house digital processing in 2007 because it knew freeform was the future of lens manufacturing. Since then, the transition to the still-new technology has yielded a number of benefits for the lab.

"It has allowed us to reduce our costs on those products, providing us as independents a greater ability to be more competitive with vertically integrated competitors, and allowed us to have a faster turnaround time with our customers," said Jon Nordman, Director, Optical Service Center.

However, to make the transition, Walman needed to make a few internal changes:

- Purchase new equipment. Before implementing the digital processing line, the lab had one generator, one polisher and one laser. Today, the lab has 20 generators, 21 polishers and eight lasers. In order to keep up the inventory of digital lenses, the lab needed to ramp up its equipment and lab

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space to accommodate it all. In order to maximize efficiencies, Walman has centralized its digital and non-glare manufacturing to four facilities, which service the 32 branch locations across the country.

- Change the workforce. Walman needed to hire new lab staff to cover the new equipment and new processes.
- Learn new digital processes. This step can be tedious and time-consuming. Nordman's advice: It's best to first start doing toric work with the equipment, to help fine-tune the process and add capabilities, as needed. Once your lab is ready, introduce the digital processing. This makes the transition process much easier.

No Dip, With Dip

Dip coating is another technology that has changed the way labs think about their processes. While this practice has become much more commonplace in recent years, it also presents some new and unique challenges.

FEA has used dip coating for the past four years—and has learned much along the way. “Prior to dip coating, labs would simply use a spin coat on the backside,” said Heffner. “With dip coating, however, labs now need to address the front side of the lens as well as the back. While the back of the lens is raw material, the front side is often already coated. This necessitates a process to either remove or ‘rough up’ the front surface in order for the dip coating to successfully adhere. Unfortunately, different lens materials and coatings often respond differently to various processes, which means labs need to maintain multiple procedures to accommodate them all.”

With a few years of experience, Heffner offers these suggestions to labs considering adopting dip coating:

- Don't try to create a one-size-fits-all process. Every manufacturer has different coatings, so trying to devise a universal process is an easy way to cause defects or otherwise destroy lenses. For labs that deal with a large number of products, determining the correct processes for each lens and material type can be quite an ordeal. The payoff, however, is a superior scratch coating, as well as solid

improvements to AR coating performance.

- Be prepared to make some investments. Creating an effective environment for dip coating is essential. While backside spin coating can be done in a normal lab environment, dip coating is a totally different animal. It needs a clean room that's temperature- and humidity-controlled. Your lab will also need ovens for the curing/drying process—usually several of them at different temperatures, to accommodate different materials.
- Additional staff (and more training) may be required. There are many steps that go into dip coating. You have to pre-clean and prepare the lenses before they go into the coater, run them through the coater, then make sure the lenses are properly cured afterward. This is much more involved than the “normal” hard coating process.
- Don't expect to save time. For FEA Industries, adding dip coating actually made the lens fabrication process longer, since dip coating takes longer than spin coating. However, the quality of the hard coat that is produced from this process far outweighs the additional process time.

Successful incorporation of a novel lens product can be a boon for your lab as well as for your customers. And while the journey to success will be different for individual labs, being prepared to make changes to your processes will help smooth the path. ■

“ With dip coating labs now need to address the front side of the lens as well as the back. Unfortunately, different lens materials and coatings often respond differently. ”

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Tips for New Tech

OUR PROCESS EXPERT OFFERS KEYS TO SUCCESS FOR YOUR LAB

By **ROBERT MINARDI**

New technologies are great. They can open your lab up to new markets and revitalize your business. They can also provide your employees with new skill sets and opportunities to excel.

The question is: *How* do you incorporate new technology with as little pain as possible?

It's all fun and games working out your projected profits and reading shiny brochures, but what do you do once the equipment has been ordered? The truth is, many labs or offices postpone incorporating new technology because they're worried about the potential hassle it will cause them. They worry about how it will disrupt their current production efficiency

and processes. While you always want to maintain a healthy level of anxiety about taking on new technology, you shouldn't fear it.

Here are some guidelines for making your next technology upgrade as smooth as possible. I will mostly reference a freeform install, but the guidelines can be used for anything.

Legwork, First

First, we need to assume that you've done all the necessary legwork before deciding any new equipment is right for you and your lab.



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Ideally, you've visited, or at least spoken to, labs that are using the exact equipment you're going to purchase to get a "real-world" evaluation of the product from your peers. You don't want to procure equipment only to find out that the specific model you're acquiring has issues or doesn't mesh well with your current equipment setup.

Assemble a Team

The next step is to get people involved. Generally, you need a group of stakeholders whose responsibility will be the successful installation and implementation of the equipment.

The group should include someone at every level of the command structure. You'll need someone from upper management, the lab manager, supervisors, leads and the people who will be working with the equipment daily.

The size of the team will usually depend on the amount of equipment you're purchasing. If you're installing an entire freeform line from blocker to engraver, you may need more people than if you're just installing a single generator.

Stakeholders will all be assigned duties. For example, your supervisor and lab manager may coordinate infrastructure upgrades, while the line workers and leads work out the new floorplan. Everyone checks on each other's progress and everyone's goal is success.

Infrastructure

If you've purchased the equipment and have a scheduled install date, more than likely you've already had at least one on-site visit by a manufacturer technician. During these visits, you need to nail down what needs to be done internally to ensure successful installation of the equipment. This usually falls into four main categories. Power, fluids, network and logistics.

Power requirements are based on the manufacturer's recommendations. Although you may be a wiz with a multimeter, you should have a licensed electrician

come in to verify your power situation is robust enough to handle the equipment. They have the experience and familiarity with the local power system to inform you of potential issues. This is crucial because if your power supply can't handle the new equipment's load, you may be tripping breakers every five minutes; production will go down the tubes and payroll through the roof.

Fluid requirements are different from machine to machine. Some may only need room temperature tap water, while others require deionized (DI) water or chilled coolant. This is important because, in the case of DI water, for example, you'll need to find out the lifespan of the DI tanks and set up the appropriate tank change out schedule.

Since you're purchasing some new technology, you'll most certainly need it connected to your network. It's important to have your IT department run the cable and prepare the network well in advance. Also, be sure to contact your LMS provider and let them know the date of your equipment installation. They may need to set someone aside specifically to handle any issues you may have. You don't want to call them on the day of the install and assume they have someone available. Also, from personal experience, make sure you have all usernames and passwords ready to go for every computer in your building. Sometimes we forget about computers we don't have to access very often, but trust me, Murphy's Law says you'll need to access that dusty black box under the table to complete the install.

The logistics of the physical installation of the equipment is not to be overlooked either. Be sure to get all machine dimensions and plan the exact path the equipment must take to reach its final destination in your building. While it's easy to slide some equipment out of the way, make sure there's nothing permanent, like plumbing or structural members in the equipment install path. For larger pieces of equipment, you also have to consider that it will need to be on a forklift to get it into position. You need to find out what type of forklift will be needed and account for the height of the equipment while elevated at least six inches off the floor.

The manufacturer can only tell you what needs to be done, it's up to you to make sure it all happens by the delivery date. All infrastructure and logistic

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considerations should be fully completed at least two full weeks before the equipment arrives. Otherwise, you may be stuck with the largest and most expensive paperweight known to man.

patterns in performance and breakage for weeks or possibly months. Gathering as much information as possible is crucial for figuring out issues as soon as they arise. Creating logs (see below) for each new piece of equipment may be a bother at first, but will save you a lot of time down the road. ■

Document Everything

The equipment's new and the technology may be completely foreign to you so you won't be able to spot

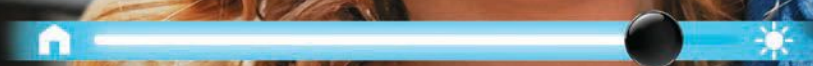
Robert Minardi, ABOC, has been in manufacturing for almost 25 years. He's a certified Lean Six Sigma Black Belt with a background in quality control.

Here's a table of logs you should create for each new piece of equipment along with some guidelines for what they should contain:

Log Type	Log Contents
Errors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Error name and step by step procedure for clearing it. • Your goal is to build a custom troubleshooting manual on the fly.
Defects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defect type, material, power, lens design, date, time, etc.
Consumables (milling bits, diamonds, polish pads, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumable lifespan or daily consumption. • In the case of milling bits and diamonds, you'll want to keep track of how many cuts before they need to be replaced. • For items that need changing more frequently, like soft lap polish pads, include a container to hold discarded materials. This will help establish real-world daily usage data. • Never order consumables based on the expected lifecycle of the consumable. Your material mix and daily production are unique to you and play a huge role in consumable consumption.
Coolant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document coolant levels and temperature. • Perform this hourly for the first couple of weeks. This is important because coolant temperature (or temperature in general) can affect your calibration.
Manufacturer calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the issue was, who you talked to and what they suggested as a fix. This is commonly overlooked because usually the call's focus is the issue, but if you keep track of who told you and when, techs can quickly get ahold of other techs to find out their reasoning behind a certain solution. This speeds up troubleshooting substantially.

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TECHTALK

After talking with lab owners and managers, we found that they want even **MORE** technical information than before, not less. So *LabTalk* is giving you, *TechTalk*, technical information that labs can use.

FOR THIS INSTALLMENT OF TECHTALK, WE ASKED INDUSTRY LEADERS TO PROVIDE INSIGHTS ON HOW LABS SHOULD PREPARE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF MANUFACTURING—INDUSTRY 4.0. HERE ARE THEIR RESPONSES:

THE “ONE THING”



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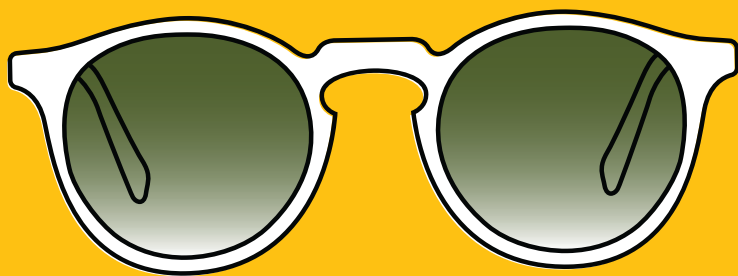
The foundation of Industry 4.0 is data, so being able to gather that data and channel it to the right places is critical to fully leveraging its power. As our industry embraces this latest production revolution, there will be many challenges to go along with tremendous opportunity.

Unlike other innovations we have seen in the past 10 years or so—digital production and automation, for example—the concepts of Industry 4.0 can, and should be, leveraged by all production facilities of any size.

The most important thing to consider as we move in to this new age is how it affects your workforce. Increases in efficiency will mean lower labor needs—but a different skill set will also be required. This doesn't mean you should rush out and hire a PhD in computer science; most of the heavy lifting will be done by software that, once set up, will collect the data and present it in ways that are meaningful to you. It does mean, however, that you will need team members who understand networks and how they operate and are comfortable with concepts like “Internet of Things” and “If This Then That.”

Now is the time to begin the process of identifying and recruiting key personnel who will be willing and able to help with this transition.

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GUIDO GROET
Chief Medical Officer
Luxexcel

A disruption in ophthalmic is on the way through 3D printing. Several industries have already been taken by storm—for example, hearing aids, aerospace and medical implants. In our industry, we have seen 3D printing in frame manufacturing and now also in lens manufacturing.

The benefit of 3D printing of lenses is of course that a lens can be created on the spot without a semi-finished blank as a starting point. It allows for simplified manufacturing, lower inventories and less handling and waste. In addition, and this is where the biggest benefit shows, the bandwidth of products that can be manufactured is enormous. Within the current lens products, a lab will be able to offer its customers many products that today are difficult to manufacture. In addition, an entire range of new products will become available—for example, lenses with different refractive indexes, integrated sensors or electronically switching sunglasses.

3D printing is a truly new-generation technology where from a tablet with a few clicks a custom lens can be created matching the exact needs of the patient. Through remote connectivity, new products can be easily added to the portfolio of both the lab and the optician.

PREPARING FOR WAY FOR INDUSTRY 4.0



KEVIN CROSS
Vice President Sales,
North America,
Schneider Optical
Machines Inc.

As today's lens manufacturing moves more towards Industry 4.0, we want to prepare ourselves as best we can to be ready to make the necessary changes that keep us in the game.

The one major change we can get a head start on is DATA. Data, our use of and access to it, will drive the functionality and efficiency of our labs going forward. We want to make sure we are in a position to use that data, in real time, to our advantage.

You can start by making sure that as you look at new systems and machines that they have the features in them today that you can use tomorrow and beyond. All too often, we buy a smart device or machine and by the time we get it in production it's become obsolete! So, before you make any machine purchases ask your vendor: Are your systems and machines "Smart Machines?" Will the machines alert me to process drift and upcoming maintenance needs? Are they able to extract and show process data in real time? Can I access this data in an easy-to-view-and-process format like a production dashboard? Can I change what data is being shown based on the needs of the person viewing it?

This is critical since you want the right data to get to the right person in the lab—you want your maintenance team to view maintenance related information, you want your lab management team to be able to see capacity and utilization and other production based numbers... you get the point.

Start making sure that you are collecting data, processing data and storing it. This will get you on the path towards becoming the production lab of tomorrow—today.

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SPOTLIGHT ON...



Professional Vision Care, winner of the award for Best in Patient Experience, invited partners from Walman Optical and Transitions to the stage for the award presentation. Shown accepting the award are (l to r) Jeff Szymanski of Walman Optical, Kay Jensen of Transitions, Brian Green of Walman Optical, Carole Burns, OD, of Professional VisionCare, Anita Gardner of Professional VisionCare, Kyla Cologgi, OD, of Professional VisionCare, Kristyne Edwards, OD, of Professional VisionCare, William Lay, OD, Professional VisionCare.

LABS PLAY KEY ROLE IN 21ST ANNUAL TRANSITIONS ACADEMY

ORLANDO—More than 650 industry professionals gathered at the Swan Resort here in February for the 21st annual Transitions Academy organized by Transitions Optical.

During the two-day event – themed “My Light” – attendees took part in professional development and product technology workshops, heard from experts on marketing and business trends, and interacted their peers from both North and South America.

Darragh O’Connor, vice president of global marketing, and Patience Cook, director of North America marketing, also previewed a new consumer marketing campaign for the Transitions brand, which has the tagline “Live the Good Light.”

The industry elective breakout session options included:

- **Dollars and Sense: Profiting with Vision Care Plans** is a course presented by Jay Binkowitz, president and CEO of Gateway Professional Network. Following the course, Binkowitz will moderate a panel featuring John Lahr, OD, VP Provider Relations/Medical Director, EyeMed Vision Care; Scott

Hamey, CFO, Davis Vision and Daniel Mannen, OD, Chairman of the Board, VSP Global

- **Mastering the Selling Process and Overcoming Objections** from Tina Graziotto, Dale Carnegie
- **Finding the Style in Lenses**, a guide to style trends led by Coco & Breezy, founders of Coco & Breezy; Sheena Taff, partner/optician at Roberts & Brown

The final evening of the Academy was highlighted by the presentation of the annual Innovation Awards and a post-dinner night of music and dance. Transitions honored Professional VisionCare, Westerville, Ohio with the 2016 Best in Patient Experience. Raquel Miller, Practice Director at Professional VisionCare, accepted the award on behalf of the practice at Transitions Academy. Best in Patient Experience finalists Costco Optical (Canada) and Visionworks were also recognized for their commitment to providing patients the highest level of support and protection.

"We extend our warmest congratulations to Professional VisionCare on the programs they initiated in 2016 that helped the company grow and continue to innovate," said Drew Smith, director, North America Channels, Transitions Optical. "Professional VisionCare smartly asked all staff members to help define what a great patient experience would look like in their office. Thanks to this process, they employed new strategies for improving patient experience with the best products, including Transitions® lenses."

Transitions also honored Pacific Eye Care of Port Orchard, Wash. with the 2016 Best in Growth Achievement. Jamie Nelson, Practice Manager at Pacific Eye Care, accepted the award on behalf of the practice, which includes Earl Buchanan, OD, and Joseph Trull, OD. Best in Growth Achievement finalists Henry Ford OptimEyes and National Vision, Inc. were also recognized for their commitment to Transitions lens growth.

Both Pacific Eyecare and Professional VisionCare were brought to Transitions Academy by Walman Optical, which serves as the lab for both practices.

Meanwhile, Transitions also recognized Transitions Value Optical of Trinidad as Best in Marketing for 2016; New Look Eyewear of Québec, Canada, as Best in Training for 2016; and Sheena Taff of Roberts & Brown Opticians in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada as Transitions Brand Ambassador for 2016.

Reporting provided by Mark Tosh of Vision Monday.



Keynote speaker Jason Dorsey discussed the challenges of "unlocking the power of generations" to achieve better business results.



Value Optical chief executive officer Christopher Lewis (c) talks about the effort his team made to win the Best Marketing Award.



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SPOTLIGHT ON...



Ken Lin (center) of X-Tra Lite Optical receives COLA's Goodfellow Award from Phil Epperson and Lori Treadwell.

COLA SPRING MEETING

TEMECULA, Calif.—Lab executives and industry leaders gathered here April 27 and 28 for the 2017 meeting of the California Optical Laboratories Association (COLA). Now affiliated with the Lab Division of The Vision Council, COLA, which was founded in 1957, has provided its members with a venue for education and networking and, since 1981, recognized local lab leaders with its annual Goodfellow Award.

Held at the Temecula Creek Inn, situated on a hillside overlooking Southern California's wine country, this year's event kicked off with a golf tournament, followed by the Goodfellow Dinner. This year's honoree, the 36th industry leader to receive the award, was Ken Lin of X-Tra Lite Optical in Huntington Beach, Calif. Lin, an electrical engineer with degrees from the University of California-Irvine, worked at Northrop Grumman for several years before joining X-Tra Lite, the family business (the lab was started by his parents), in 1994. He has since taken on several leadership positions within the industry, including in COLA, and has also been active in several vision-related charitable initiatives.

Phil Epperson, long-time COLA member and a former Goodfellow honoree himself, described the Goodfellow as a "giver and a doer, not a taker," before handing the mic over

to Terry Yoneda, West Coast Area Sales Manager for Younger Optics, who introduced Lin. Upon receiving the honor, Lin said, "I never planned to be in this business. I have been very blessed." Of COLA, he added, "We are all competitors, but away from the lab, away from work, we can all hang out. That's what makes this group so special."

The following day's education sessions focused on the theme of "Industry 4.0"—which has been described as the next generation of automation and data exchange in manufacturing. Speakers included Ashley Mills, CEO, The Vision Council, who shared updates on the Vision Expos and current consumer outreach efforts. Mike Karlsrud, president, The Karlsrud Company, shared the seven key skills of successful business leaders, and noted that, "Change is not just putting in a new piece of equipment. Change is hard."

Specifically on the keynote theme, Dale Turner and Xiaochun Li, PhD, of the Smart Manufacturing Leadership Coalition, a think tank spearheading the U.S. government's Industry 4.0 efforts, presented on the concept and the resources that are available to business owners interested in bringing their facilities in line with emerging standards for efficiency and data sharing. Steele Young, Satisloh; Kevin Cross, Schneider Optical Machines; Bill Ball and John

Keane, DVI; Robb Kohn, A&R; and Fabio Verzeri, MEI, then discussed how their respective companies were working with customers to prepare them for Industry 4.0.

"Our industry needs the super ninja geek desperately," Young said. "We need new tools to make better decisions. Data is good for nothing unless we process it." He and the other vendor representatives described how each of their companies are working to improve automation, efficiency and data exchange for their systems.

The event closed with Michael Vitale, Technical Director, The Vision Council, sharing updates on California Proposition 65 and ANSI and ISO standards, as well as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Unique Device Identification (the Vision Council recently successfully petitioned the FDA to exempt optical labs from this regulation). Hedley Lawson, Managing Partner, Aligned Growth Partners, then discussed the potential impact of the new minimum wage on optical labs.



Mike Francesconi, Katz & Klein; Paula Toerner, IVA/PERC; and Eric Lindquist, Vision Dynamics, share a drink during the opening reception of the COLA Spring meeting.



Xiaochun Li, PhD, of the Smart Manufacturing Leadership Coalition, talks Industry 4.0 with COLA members during the group's spring meeting.

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LABTECH

Coburn Technologies Introduces New Lens Generator to the Cobalt Product Line

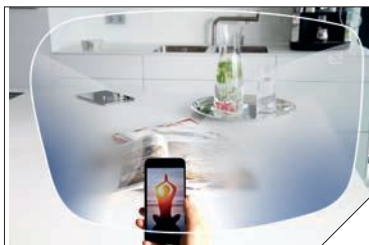
Coburn Technologies has added a new lens generator to its Cobalt product line—Cobalt NX. Key features of the Cobalt NX include: auto-calibration for more efficient and faster processing, on-board engraving with capabilities to produce simple shapes and alpha-numeric using the secondary axis, interrupted cut (eliminating the need for a granulator) and cold mist/dry cut.

“The Cobalt NX continues to push the limits to produce superior quality lenses in terms of form and finish, and more accurately replicates the target lens geometry,” said Alex Incera, President of Coburn Technologies. “Cobalt NX is a result of extensive market research efforts and customer visits in Asia, Latin America and the US.”

“Cobalt NX brings next level lens generating techniques to our product line. We are also excited to say that this new generator is validated on several branded and non-branded freeform lens designs,” added Wendell Slone, Director of Coburn’s Lab Works Group. [For more information, visit www.CoburnTechnologies.com.](http://www.CoburnTechnologies.com)



ZEISS Introduces EnergizeMe Lens for Contact Wearers



Continuing its tradition of innovation, Zeiss has launched EnergizeMe™—the first and only eyeglass lens designed specifically for vision needs of contact lens wearers. Contact lens wearers often keep their lenses in for extended periods and that causes them to experience eye strain and fatigue. Historically, eyeglass lenses were not made to refresh the eyes of contact lens wearers in these conditions—until now.

Zeiss EnergizeMe Lenses are a unique combination of a new lens design with Digital Inside Technology and DuraVision BlueProtect coating for optimum comfort and protection from digital eyestrain and blue light. They are designed to help tired eyes relax and prevent eyestrain caused by digital devices. Three EnergizeMe lens options are available to meet the vision needs of virtually any contact lens wearer: single-vision (with +0.40D add), digital (with +0.65D power boost) and progressives (from +0.75D to +4.00D add).

“For more than 170 years, Zeiss has built a tradition of firsts. We have reached yet another milestone by offering the first ever eyeglass lenses made specifically for contact wearers,” said Veneeta Eason, Senior Director of Marketing, Carl Zeiss Vision, Inc. “Digital eye strain and eye fatigue caused by contact lens use are pervasive, and Zeiss EnergizeMe Lenses will allow Eye Care Professionals to optimally serve the vision needs of the 40 million contact lens wearers in the market.”

Company research suggests that there are as many as 26 million contact lens wearers in the U.S. who also enjoy wearing eyeglasses, especially while reading, watching television, and using mobile devices. [For more information, visit www.zeiss.com/vision-care/en_us/home.html.](http://www.zeiss.com/vision-care/en_us/home.html)

Younger Expands Transitions Availability

Transitions Signature polycarbonate composite lens technology has been expanded to include FT35 bifocal lenses and 7 x 28 trifocal lenses in both gray and brown. This is in addition to the FT28 bifocal lenses released last year. According to Younger, approximately one in five pairs of lenses sold today are segmented multifocals, and a majority of those are bifocals and trifocals.

“Despite growing demand for progressive and digital designs, there is still a significant demand in the market for segmented lenses,” said Catherine Rauscher, global director for lenscaster partners, Transitions Optical.

“Younger Optics and Transitions Optical have developed a polycarbonate composite lens that incorporates a thin photochromic front surface bifocal or trifocal layer made of Trivex®—resulting in a lens delivering Transitions Signature VII performance and superb segment cosmetics in a product that is surfaced, polished, edged and dispensed just like a clear polycarbonate lens,” added David Rips, president and CEO of Younger Optics.

Transitions Signature polycarbonate composite lenses are now available in FT28 and FT35 bifocals and 7 x 28 trifocals, in both gray and brown, exclusively from Younger Optics through any optical laboratory. [Technical specifications can be referenced at youngeroptics.com/transitions](http://www.youngeroptics.com/transitions).

Data Communication Standard 3.11 Approved for Publication

The Lens Processing and Technology division of The Vision Council has announced that the Data Communications Standard committee, chaired by Robert Shanbaum of Ocuco Inc., has approved version 3.11 of the data communication standard for publication. This new version contains many enhancements to the standard developed over the last two and a half years by the volunteer members of the committee. A copy of the new version can be obtained from the Standards section of The Vision Council's website. [For more information, visit https://www.thevisioncouncil.org/members/standards](https://www.thevisioncouncil.org/members/standards).

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Coburn Technologies Introduces Duality All-In-One Lens De-Taper and Cleaner



Coburn Technologies introduces a brand new system: Duality. Duality is built with a variety of key performance features, including a de-taping mechanism for efficient removal of surface saver tape; mechanical two-sided lens cleaning (with high-pressure wash) for removal of polish, tape adhesive and blocking materials; and a small footprint (less than 12 square feet). Each of the three stations (tape removal, front side cleaning, and back side cleaning) completes its function in 20-30 seconds, according to the company.

“Duality is unlike any other machine on the market today,” said Alex Incera, President of Coburn Technologies. “We have combined two crucial steps of lens processing into one machine, and have automated those processes in a cost effective and compact platform.” [For more information, visit www.CoburnTechnologies.com.](http://www.CoburnTechnologies.com)

SeikoVision Launches Sensity-Light Reactive Lenses and Distortion-Free Optics

SeikoVision, through a partnership with Hoya Vision Care, has announced the launch of two new products: Sensity, a new brand of light-reactive lenses and Hoya DF, distortion-free optics.

“The only way for independent practices to overcome commoditization and price erosion is for Hoya to provide them with new technology that is not available anywhere else,” said Barney Dougher, President of Hoya Vision Care, North America. “Sensity is not a ‘me too’ product. It has distinctive technological advances in its processing and performance that will provide points of differentiation for independents that will make their patients happy.”

Sensity lenses feature StablighTM Technology, which ensures consistent performance in varying climates and temperatures. The lenses’ deep, natural colors provide excellent contrast and glare reduction as well. Hoya DF is a complete eyewear solution designed to provide true distortion-free and obstruction-free vision to the world by combining the patented Avantek mounting and frame system with premium, lightweight lenses. [For more information, visit www.seikovision.com/contact-seiko.](http://www.seikovision.com/contact-seiko)

IOT Releases Two New Lenses at VEE

IOT has released its latest innovation in dual-sided digital progressive lenses—Camber Steady progressive addition lenses. According to the company, the Camber Steady provides more efficient vision through superb image stability, using a patent-pending design methodology to reduce mean power error in the periphery, which results in a significant reduction in lateral aberrations, swim and peripheral power error. For more information, visit Camberlens.com.

In addition, IOT has introduced Neochromes DynamicTM photochromic lenses, which are designed to offer superior fade back speed without sacrificing a desirable level of darkness outdoors or good transparency indoors. According to the company, Neochromes DynamicTM photochromic lenses: fade back up to twice as fast as other photochromic lenses, quickly darken in sunlight, block 100 percent of UVA and UVB light, offer superior protection against blue light and are available in a wide range of materials in both grey and brown. [For more information, visit www.iot.es.](http://www.iot.es)

LABNOTES

Satisloh Consultants Improve Lab Processes and Quality

Satisloh hopes to bring a little bit of “touch” back to lens processing, through its Aftermarket Consultant team. The company believes that as the optical industry migrates from manual to ever-increasing automation, there are fewer human touches to monitor lens quality as it moves through production processes. With less manual intervention, the lens isn’t seen until the end—no more tweaking mid-production to adjust for issues that occurred.

All of which, according to Satisloh, makes it more critical than ever that these processes are running at peak efficiencies and accuracy. To address this need, labs with Satisloh equipment have access to the company’s unique team of Aftermarket Consultants.

“Our team of five consultants, with 120 years combined optical experience, continues our partnership with customers long after equipment installations. We provide process-specific consumable implementation and maintenance. They’re trained to identify challenge areas in lens processing and provide recommendations and resolutions to improve quality and throughput,” said Steve Schneider, VP Aftermarket, Satisloh North America (photo).

The Satisloh Aftermarket Consultants have expertise in all lab process areas: blocking; generating; polishing; coating; and finishing as well as consumables, fluid management, and automation.



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Digital Eye Lab to Receive New Business Partner Award

Digital Eye Lab, a division of ABB Optical Group, was recognized during Arc of Westchester's Annual Employer Breakfast on April 26th with the organization's New Business Partner Award. Arc of Westchester has been connecting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as those with autism spectrum disorder, to the Westchester employment community since 1949. Digital Eye Lab has four employees who were recruited through Arc of Westchester and regularly partners with the organization to promote a diverse workplace.

"We are fortunate to have such a strong foundation of supporters, which made the task of selecting award winners a difficult one," said Shari Lewitt, director of career development and support services for Arc of Westchester. "This award recognizes the contribution that Digital Eye Lab has made to further employment opportunities for residents of our community with autism and other development disabilities."

"We feel honored to receive Arc's New Business Partner Award," said Scott Pearl, managing director. "We cherish the profound impact these employees have on their co-workers, and recognize the tremendous value that they bring to our organization."

New National Optronics Distributor Announced

National Optronics equipment is now available through two industry stalwarts. Starting April 1, DAC Vision will become a National Optronics equipment distributor in addition to Satisloh North America.

"Both Satisloh and DAC have large, loyal customer bases. While there is some overlap; there is a significant segment of the market that is complimentary. This new arrangement provides labs and ECPs throughout the US with easier access to National Optronics products," said Pete Lothes, President and CEO, Satisloh North America. The company has distributed National Optronics equipment since 2010.

Technical service for all customers will continue to be provided by National Optronics, based in Charlottesville, VA and with field technicians as well. All National Optronics equipment is built in the US.

Laramy-K Optical, OpticianWorks.com Launch Free Optician Training YouTube Channel

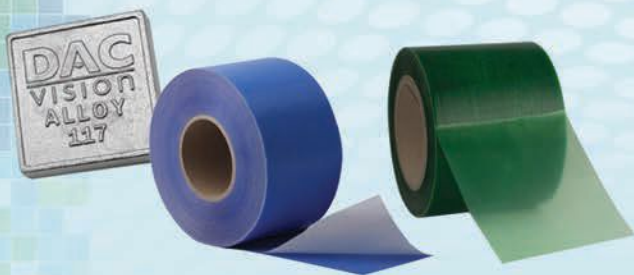
As part of their education mission, Laramy-K Optical are now producing free, weekly training videos that cover a wide range of optician-related topics. The YouTube channel features video lessons covering prism, Prentice's Formula, the 30-45-60 rule and much more. The series is presented in a friendly yet informative way and viewer participation is encouraged.

"A new series on in-office finishing is currently in production," said John Seegers, Director of Education, OpticianWorks.com. "Our plan is to release video content that covers all the lessons from the OpticianWorks website and far beyond. Our production process is already evolving, we are trying our best to be different by providing videos that are both entertaining and educational."

"Laramy-K has always tried to be on the forefront in offering online educational material. In keeping with our mission to serve independent opticians, the Laramy-K YouTube channel will allow us to have a broader reach and ultimately help raise the bar for opticians everywhere," added Janet Benjamin, president of Laramy-K.

OpticianWorks, established in 2008 and acquired by Laramy-K Optical in 2015 is the first 100 percent web-based education site for optician education. **For more information, visit : <https://youtube.com/c/laramyk-optical>.**

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Hoya to Acquire Central Optical Company

Hoya Vision Care Canada has announced a definitive agreement to acquire Central Optical Company, an optical lab in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The acquisition was expected to close in April, at which time Central Optical was to be relocated to Hoya's recently expanded facility, also in Winnipeg.

The lab will be upgraded with advanced equipment and will be the largest optical laboratory in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, according to Hoya. Rob Soloway, president of Central Optical, will join the management team of Hoya Canada as a business development manager.

"We're excited to work with Hoya, since our model of distribution has always been to work with the independent, and that's their focus as well," Soloway said.

"With the acquisition of Central Optical, Hoya Vision Care confirms its strong commitment to increase geographical presence in the Canadian market and make available its high quality lenses and services as a strong partner to eye care practitioners," added Barney Dougher, president of Hoya Vision Care for the Americas.

The acquisition does not include Europa Eyewear Canada, formerly known as Cenoco, which Soloway continues to operate as a separate company. Central Optical was founded in 1955 by Soloway's father Charles J. Soloway, OD, and uncle Oscar Soloway, OD.



Digital Eye Lab Celebrates a Decade of Service

In 2007, with a team of 12 people and one fabrication line, Digital Eye Lab (DEL) opened its doors with a single mission: to fabricate digital lenses. It was the first fully automated optical lab dedicated solely to digital lens fabrication in the United States.

Today, while other labs have since followed in its path, DEL, which celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, continues to lead the way and pioneer new technologies for its growing, loyal customer base. Not only was digital surfacing a relatively new technology in 2007, but Digital Eye Lab also was an entirely new business sector for its then parent company, Optical Distributor Group (ODG), which later merged with ABB Optical Group in 2012.

Digital Eye Lab's proprietary Digital 5.0 personalized lens series was introduced in 2008, followed by the Digital Master Series in 2013, a proprietary lens line with more than 50 material and coating combinations. Also in 2013, DEL was named as one of Vision Monday's Top Labs for the first time, an honor the lab has achieved every year since. Another milestone for DEL was being selected as one of the first authorized labs to produce Shamir's Glacier Plus UV anti-reflective coating in 2014. In 2015, DEL became a Unity enabled laboratory, accepting VSP orders and fabricating Unity lenses and coatings in house.

With an experienced team that has grown more than 10 times its original size and two facility expansions, DEL today has fabricated more than 2.5 million pairs of lenses and is the second-largest independent lab in the U.S. The DEL portfolio of lens designs and coatings includes a large selection from Shamir, Seiko, and Unity, as well as its own proprietary product line. The lab's new bluDEFENSE Comfort Portfolio offers flexible solutions for digital eye strain discomfort, and its new MOD2 lens design builds upon one of its best performing progressive addition lenses to provide even better performance and acuity.

More growth opportunities are on the horizon for the 10-year-old lab following ABB's acquisition of Diversified Ophthalmics in 2016. As part of its 10th anniversary celebration, DEL is debuting a new logo with a more modern look that also better aligns with the ABB brand. The lab also plans to unveil limited-time, special 10th anniversary offers to select customers and commemorate its history with various initiatives throughout the year. **For more information, visit DigitalEyeLab.com.**

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Overheard at Transitions Academy

How Labs Can Leverage What Was Shared During Academy

By ROSE HARRIS

Now that Transitions Academy has come to a close, it's time to apply what you have learned from this year's event and start planning for next year.

What goals did you set forth during the event and what have you done so far to achieve them? This year's Transitions Academy was full of educational content for growing your lab and helping your customers grow their businesses with Transitions® lenses. The "My Light" theme encouraged you to think about what drives you to reach your goals, in life and at work. The variety of courses and workshops were chosen to inspire you and give you the tools and information you need to succeed with the Transitions® brand. Take a look at how you can leverage the information that was shared during this year's Transitions Academy, and how you and your customers can attend the event next year.

ACCESS MATERIALS FROM ACADEMY

Launched during Academy and new for 2017, the Transitions® Connect program is where you can get access to all of the best resources from Transitions Academy. Presentations, videos, handouts and more are all available for Connect members to access, download and share. As a connected representative you'll also enjoy fast-track priority access to other marketing and education tools, point-of-sale materials and easy online ordering, the latest product news, demo tools and free fits, and exclusive promotion programs designed specifically for connected representatives.

It all adds up to growth and success, for you and your accounts. Plus, you'll have priority access to register for Academy in 2018 and the opportunity to win an all-expenses paid trip to the event by participating in Connect Rewards throughout the year. Visit TransitionsConnect.com to get connected today.

EARN A SPOT TO ATTEND IN 2018

You weren't able to attend Transitions Academy this year and want to attend in 2018? Make it a goal to be a

Transitions Innovation Awards finalist this year and receive a trip for two to the 2018 Transitions Academy.

The Transitions Innovation Awards program recognizes and celebrates loyal partners and individual optical industry professionals from Canada and the U.S. who have shown the highest level of commitment to growing their business with Transitions Optical's family of products and programs. Optical laboratories that employ creative and strategic marketing tactics to effectively promote the Transitions brand or family of products among customers should submit their nomination for the "Best in Marketing" category. If you offer training for your customers in a creative way, the "Best in Training" category is where you can submit your best work for nomination. Finally, the "Transitions Brand Ambassador" category is perfect for the individual in your company who best showcases their dedication to being an influential advocate of the Transitions brand.

If you are interested in being considered for one of the specified categories, continue your hard work this year and keep an eye out for the Transitions Innovation Awards nominations period in October.

GET YOUR CUSTOMERS TO ATTEND

Share the Transitions Academy experience with your customers by getting them to attend in 2018. Inform your customers of the different ways they can attend and have them start planning now.

Do your customers already have success with selling Transitions lenses? Nominate them for the Transitions Innovation Awards. Would your customers like to grow their business with Transitions lenses? Let them know if you're planning to provide opportunities and promotions for them to earn their way and attend as your guest. Whether it's your first time attending Transitions Academy or you haven't missed one yet, there is always something new for you to take away.

Contact Rose Harris at rharris@transitions.com.

➔ [GO TO TALKONLINE.COM](http://GO.TALKONLINE.COM) TO COMMENT ON THIS ARTICLE.

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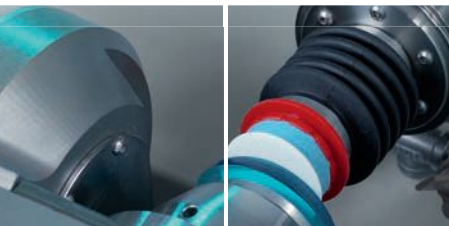
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