

NAVIGATING CHALLENGES AND EMBRACING OPPORTUNITIES



As an entrepreneurial optometrist, I am excited to share this issue with you! One of the reasons I chose optometry was because it let me chart my own course within the profession, giving me the freedom to bring my vision of optometry to life. As the profession evolves, so must we. Whether you are a practice owner, co-owner, or employee, there are patients to care for and businesses to run. This dual responsibility presents both challenges and opportunities that carry the potential to reshape the future of our profession.

THE CHANGING TIDES

The business of optometry is no longer just about providing eye exams and prescribing corrective lenses. Today's optometrists must navigate a multifaceted industry that includes retail, technology, regulatory changes, scope expansion, and people skills.

Vertical integration, declining reimbursements, and staffing challenges, among many other outside pressures beyond our control, are forcing us to rethink our business strategies. Many of us have responded by enhancing the patient experience, offering personalized services, focusing on high-quality products that differentiate our practices, and specializing in niche segments of optometry. Moreover, advances in technology play a crucial role in shaping the future of optometry. Innovations in augmented intelligence, AI, and diagnostic tools have enabled us to provide more accurate and efficient

care, while targeted therapies and interventions allow us to offer patients customized care. Adopting these technologies requires the right culture, an investment—both in terms of capital and training—and a shift in mindset. Practices and optometrists who can successfully integrate new technologies, build the right systems, and execute implementation will not only survive, but also thrive.

EMBRACE OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Despite the changes and challenges we face, there are numerous opportunities for us to build thriving practices. Focusing on patient-centered care, embracing the growing demand for disease management, and creating an office culture that is modern and attracts the right patients are all worthy endeavors that can pave the path to success. (This looks different for everyone—you need to determine *your* definition of success.)

Looking ahead, the business of optometry, which incidentally, is the cover focus of this issue, will continue to evolve. Optometrists who can adapt to these changes, embrace innovation, and focus on delivering exceptional patient care will be well-positioned for success. The future of optometry lies within you, our readers. We hope these pages provide you with valuable information to help build your confidence. Together, let's continue to enhance and hone our clinical excellence, emotional intelligence, and business acumen. Happy reading to all! ■

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