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NOVEMBER
2019

ARE YOU READY TO MULTITASK?

3 PRO O.D.s reveal
just how to expand
your scope with
multiple subleases

PAGE 12

5 Qs WITH
NATIONAL
VISION'S
BILL CLARK

ONE O.D.'s
BACKSTORY
ON A CLINIC
FOR KIDS



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Are You Ready to Multitask?

Thinking of expanding your scope by having multiple offices/subleases? It can be a juggling act. Here, 3 corporate O.D.s get honest and explain the pros and cons of it all.

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The COT! Interview

COT! sits down with Bill Clark, the first-ever "Chief People Officer" of National Vision, Inc., to get his take on chain retailing, optical careers, and the corporate optometry environment today.



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Are You a Multitasking Pro?

If you've got your eye on growth and success, then running multiple subleases might just be for you.

In our cover feature in this issue, we catch up with three busy corporate optometrists—some running as many as five subleases—to learn about the pros and cons of the endeavor.



“Having five LensCrafters subleases makes it easier for me to employ blanket marketing over an entire area. Plus, employees can be shared between locations, and my vendor support increases.”

—Torrey Carlson, O.D., tells us in this issue's *Are You Ready to Multitask?* feature

One of the big pros: Staff fluidity + coverage.

“Your staff from your first office can cross-train the staff in the newer one. You can move staff around to cover vacations or unexpected leaves,” says Carla Gavilanes Gasparini, O.D., who runs two Walmart subleases in Austin, TX.

One of the cons: Staffing + time management.

“There are some disadvantages with having to find doctors, add more staff, and time management issues,” says Torrey Carlson, O.D., who runs five LensCrafters subleases in Tennessee.

For more key pros + cons, check out our ***Are You Ready to Multitask?*** feature (starting on **page 12**), written by *COT!*'s contributing editor, Maria Sampalis, O.D.

In our **New Grad column** in this issue on **page 10**, Dr. Sampalis also delivers five must-read tips for new O.D.s who are about to sign on the dotted line. **Teaser:** negotiating is sometimes a must, as is consulting with a lawyer or your state or local optometric association.

There's also much, much more in this content-packed issue of *COT!* On **page 16** check out our enlightening and inspiring interview with National Vision's “Chief People Officer,” Bill Clark, on developing a strong company culture.

We hope you enjoy the issue!

P.S. Want more? **Check out our Facebook page: @CorporateOptometryToday!**

Erinn Morgan

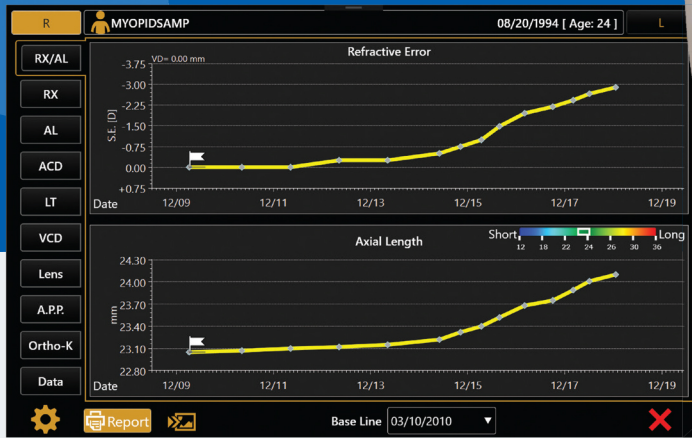
Editor-in-Chief + Editorial Director
Corporate Optometry Today! + *Eyecare Business*



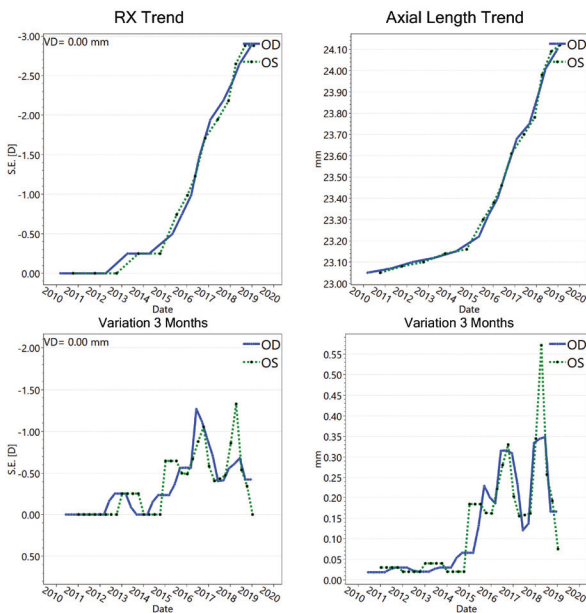
In this issue of *COT!*, 3 corporate O.D.s reveal the pros + cons of having multiple subleases

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TREND TRACKER

COTI PINPOINTS THE KEY TRENDS OF INTEREST FOR CORPORATE OPTOMETRISTS



Pearle Vision Goes Navy

Pearle Vision and the **Navy Exchange Service Command** (NEXCOM) have partnered to bring national optical retail centers to naval bases in Virginia Beach, San Diego, and Groton, CT, with the opportunity to expand to additional bases in the future. This is Pearle Vision's first partnership with a military organization and NEXCOM's first partnership with a national optical retailer.

"This contract with Pearle Vision will support our mission to enhance the quality of life for our military members and their families stationed at these naval bases," says Greg Thomas, SVP, Store Operations, NEXCOM.

The Pearle Vision EyeCare Centers will have optometrists on-site and will accept Tricare and other national insurance plans. They are open to patients with a military ID. —*Susan Tarrant*

Walmart Clinics to Include Eye Exams

Walmart is jumping feetfirst into the healthcare field, opening a standalone clinic in Georgia that will provide comprehensive and low-cost primary care. The clinic, dubbed **Walmart Health**, is located next to the main store to provide additional privacy to patients.

Optometric services are offered in addition to immunizations, lab tests, dental care, audiology, and behavioral health services. It's not yet known if future clinics will be located by Walmart stores that already have working opticals, or if optometry services will be taken off the menu at any that are. (walmarthealth.com)

Another Walmart pilot program in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina will involve selling Sam's Club "healthcare bundles" to members that feature discounted health services, including eye exams and eyewear. —*S.T.*



60%

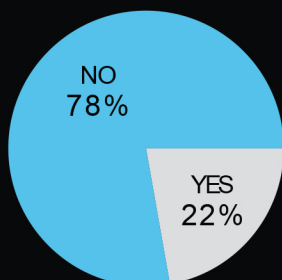
According to the 10th annual Transitions Optical Employee Perceptions of Vision Benefits survey, 6 in 10 Gen Z employees (ages 18-24) are enrolled in a vision plan—compared with just half of Gen Z employees surveyed in 2018.

65%

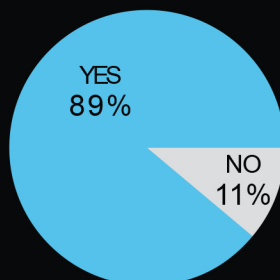
Two-thirds of Gen Z employees are likely to visit an eyecare professional within the next 12 months, compared with around half (56%) in 2018.

A RECENT STUDY OF 265 LARGE RETAILER PATIENTS SHOWS:

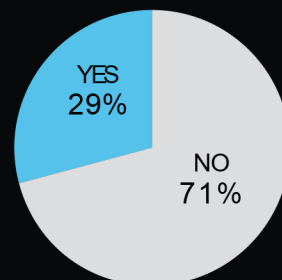
Do you like the "Puff Test"?



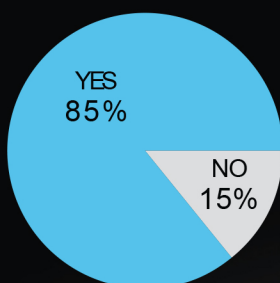
Is the new test more comfortable than the "Puff Test"?



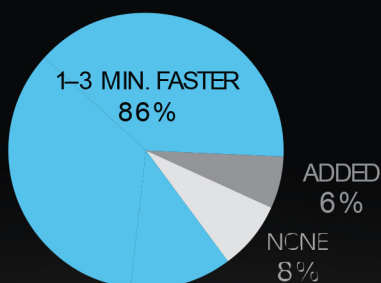
Would you visit the eye doctor sooner if you did not have the "Puff Test"?



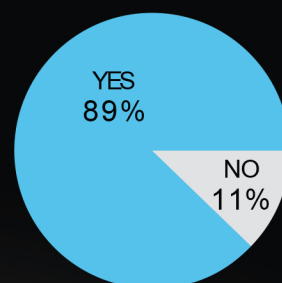
Would you return/recommend this retailer to your friends or family because of the new "NO PUFF" test?



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TECHNICIAN RESPONSE
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Ready to Sign on the Dotted Line?

Do you understand (and agree to) everything that's in your employment contract? Here are 5 critical things to know.





IT CAN BE A GREAT FEELING

when you finally land a job as a new graduate. Most optometry schools do an excellent job of preparing you for the job clinically, but you may graduate with limited experience on things like employment contracts and other business aspects.

For instance, do you understand the different components of a standard employment contract?

Here are some general tips to understand. They are intended as a resource guide, but it is vital that you contact an attorney for your specific situation.

And, remember, states can have varying laws when it comes to employment and optometry.

CONTRACT ELEMENTS.

To protect yourself, you must understand what you are signing. Here are some elements of a standard contract that directly affect you.

- » **Notice.** Many contracts have a clause that requires you to give enough notice if you decide to leave the company. Typical clauses are 30 to 90 days. If you do not give enough notice, there is a monetary penalty that is written out in your contract that is binding.
- » **Restrictive Covenant.** This is an employment agreement with a noncompete clause. It restricts your ability to practice in a certain geographic area for a specific duration.

“Many contracts have a clause that **requires you to give enough notice** if you decide to leave the company. If you do not give enough notice, there is a **monetary penalty** that is written out in your contract that is binding.”

The typical clause is between a 0- to 3-mile radius up to a year, and it is usually negotiable.

Pay attention to the language in these restrictive covenants and how they may affect your future opportunities. If a company has multiple locations in that state, the language can restrict you in other cities and beyond the 3 miles.

- » **Fill-In Work.** If you would like to “moonlight” and work for other companies or offices when able, make sure that opportunity is made clear at the time of employment. Corporate optometry can provide great opportunities for fill-in work, so make sure you are able to take advantage of it if you want to.

NEGOTIATE? YOU BET.

Not all contracts are standard. Contracts are designed to protect both parties. Many corporate opticals will have a standard contract, but items contained within it can be negotiable. If the terms heavily favor the employer over the optometrist, it might not be the right position for you.

Don't be afraid to talk to your prospective employer about elements of the contract. You can ask to amend the contract or completely remove certain clauses. When in doubt, consult with a lawyer.



“Don't be afraid to talk to your prospective employer **about elements of the contract.** You can ask to amend the contract or completely remove certain clauses. When in doubt, consult with a lawyer.”

ENFORCEMENT.

Generally speaking, if a contract is reasonable it is enforceable.

Enforcement questions are case by case and depend on state law. That makes it vitally important that you understand what you are signing because the penalties—should you violate the contract—can be enormous.

Therefore, paying close attention to detail is important for the future of your career.

Should you need help in this area, contact a lawyer and your local state organization for help to guide you through this process. **COT!**

—*Maria Sampalis, O.D.*

Are You Ready to Multitask?

Thinking of expanding your scope by having multiple offices/subleases? 3 corporate O.D.s explain the pros and cons of it all.

BY MARIA SAMPALIS, O.D.

Corporate optometry can be an excellent path to having your own business.

Many young O.D.s aspire to running their own practice—and find that working as a corporate optometry sublease is a fast way to accomplish that.

But what about when you're ready to grow?

Corporate optometry can allow you to do that, too, by having multiple practice locations.

As with any practice situation, there are pros and cons to having multiple subleases. *COT!* asked three successful corporate optometry business owners about their paths to multiple locations, and how they balance it all.





DISCOUNTS + OPPORTUNITIES

When you have multiple locations, vendors will provide more support for your practice and possibly better discounts for the volume that your office orders. The money “saved” through bigger discounts can be used for more marketing and growing your practice.

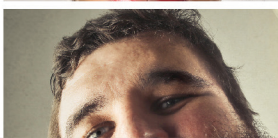
Those taking on a sublease do have to be ready to be a hands-on business owner in addition to being an optometrist. Having multiple subleases requires the O.D. to field many admin-type tasks, so thinking like a CEO is crucial—hiring the right talent, growing the business, and maintaining balance to have time with your family.

Torrey Carlson, O.D.

5 LensCrafters subleases
in Tennessee



● **PROS:** “Having five LensCrafters subleases makes it easier for me to employ blanket marketing over an entire area. Plus, employees can be shared between locations, and my vendor support increases.”



● **CONS:** “There are some disadvantages with having to find doctors, add more staff, and time management issues.”

SHARING THE LOAD

Sharing expenses, duties, and staff among several offices can be a great benefit to an optometrist who has multiple lease locations. Staff can be cross-trained and utilized at more

than one location.

This way, office duties and practice roles can be switched or adjusted according to the time of the year without putting a financial burden on the practice.

● **PROS:** “Your staff from your first office can cross-train the staff in the newer one. You can move staff around to cover



“Having five LensCrafters subleases makes it easier for me to employ blanket marketing over an entire area. Plus, employees can be shared between locations, and my vendor support increases.”

—TORREY CARLSON, D.O.,
5 LensCrafters subleases in Tennessee



vacations or unexpected leaves. Your revenue at your first location should be able to pay for an associate O.D. and auxiliary staff costs plus 15%.

“The boss (you) will be working at the new office, so you don’t want to be stretched too thin financially. You can delegate some things such as staff training or insurance billing to the first location (assuming you have the same EIN).”



Carla Gavilanes Gasparini, O.D.

2 Walmart subleases in Austin, TX

● **CONS:** “The feeling that you are not giving enough attention to the first office location. You must delegate a fair amount to others at your first practice so that the transition is smooth. Also, patients becoming up-



“Your staff from your first office can cross-train the staff in the newer one. You can move staff around to cover vacations or unexpected leaves.”

—CARLA GAVILANES GASPARINI, O.D.,
2 Walmart subleases in Austin, TX

set that you are not available at the first location. Overlapping patients between both offices can also be a pain if your EMR is not in the cloud.”

PLAN FOR SUCCESS

Deciding that the pros outnumber the cons...what’s the next move in being a successful multiple-location

optometrist? Having an action plan to be able to handle multiple subleases is the key to your success.

So, where to start? Another one of our corporate O.D.s shares some advice.



Christine Yang, O.D.

2 Target subleases in Santa Clara, CA

● **SOLID ADVICE:** “Having a system and setting things up so they can run as autonomously as possible is really important. You need to have your staff on board and train associates regarding your expectations.

“It’s important to be very organized and consistent in how things are done. I try to foster good relationships with those I work with and, in return, they can help me with small things like supplies, cleaning, answering patient requests, ordering contacts...the list goes on.”

GO CORPORATE + PRIVATE

After you have successfully set up your first sublease and there are no options for another sublease within that brand, O.D.s who have the entrepreneurial spirit can open a private practice as an additional location (if allowed in the sublease contract).

Many optometrists have been able to balance having a private practice *and* a corporate practice if they have the right contract terms and are able to accommodate the hours in both their lease and private practice.

● **PROS:** You’ll get to expand your office demographics by being able to see certain patients who might be limited due to insurance coverage. Being able to hire your own optical staff in



“Having a system and setting things up so they can run as autonomously as possible is really important. You need to have your staff on board and train associates regarding your expectations.”

—CHRISTINE YANG, O.D.

2 Target subleases in Santa Clara, CA

a private setting can be an appealing factor, as well as determining your own business hours not dictated by retail hours. The costs of private practice are usually offset by the income of the corporate location until the private practice starts to build up steam.

● **CONS:** Some cons are the higher expenses that are incurred in opening a private practice and the additional attention that a private office needs compared with a turnkey sublease.

There are many opportunities in corporate optometry to have multiple practices. Evaluating the benefits and disadvantages of doing so can help you determine if being a CEO is the right option for you, and help you plan your course correctly. **COT!**



MARIA SAMPALIS, O.D.,

is the founder of the Corporate Optometry group on Facebook and corporateoptometry.com. Currently, she is owner of Sampalis Eye Care in Cranston, RI, and has a sublease at For Eyes by GrandVision in Rhode Island.

THE INSIDE LINE... WITH Bill Clark

COT! sits down with the “Chief People Officer” at National Vision, Inc. to get his take on chain retailing + corporate optometry today

BY STEPHANIE K. DE LONG

Bill Clark has joined National Vision, Inc. as its first-ever “Chief People Officer.” In that newly created position, he is responsible for leading, integrating, and enhancing the human resources, training, and organizational development functions to ensure that National Vision continues to provide a strong company culture and experience in which associates and optometrists can thrive.

Here, Clark answers *COT!*'s big questions about culture, people, enhancing the corporate optometry environment, and more.

DEVELOPING TALENT

Q: You come from a strong retail background. What do you bring to this position?

A. I have spent my entire career helping companies attract and develop talent and creating innovative HR solutions that drive people-focused environments. National Vision has a rich history and a unique culture that I am excited to not only be part of, but to help continue to evolve as the organization grows.

CAREER BUILDING

Q: How will you help enhance the environment to make sure people want to build their careers at National Vision?

A. The mission and vision of an organization—and how that comes through in helping patients and customers—as well as a culture reflective of those values are key to creating a place where people want to build a

career. People gravitate to organizations where they feel valued, respected, and inspired...and they want opportunities for development. I look forward to working with the leadership team and colleagues to build on that strong foundation.

WHY “PEOPLE”?

Q: What does the title “Chief People Officer” signal in terms of the direction many savvy businesses are moving?

A. A business is only as good as its people. The “people” functions in an organization have the ability to influence all aspects of work, either directly or indirectly. Businesses today must create cultures that differentiate them from others.

They must be transparent...people



BILL CLARK



“A business is only as good as its people. The ‘people’ functions in an organization have the ability to influence all aspects of work, either directly or indirectly. Businesses today must create cultures that differentiate them from others.”

have to see the path to success and understand how to get there.

Organizations must also establish an environment of trust and authenticity where people see opportunity for development.

CULTURE + EXPERIENCE

Q. Tell us about the emphasis on culture and experience, plus any steps you can discuss.

A. I’ve spent time in many of our retail locations and with our support teams to understand the associate experience. I am also excited to collaborate with our Professional Services team to understand the experience of optometrists who are part of the National Vision Doctor of Optometry network, including independent doctors who work at offices inside our locations.

All of this learning will help inform the path forward, ultimately working to align all the “people” parts of the business around the same goal of making National Vision and its locations the best place to work.

TODAY’S CONSUMER

Q. How does all this reflect what is important to today’s consumer?

A. It goes back to a business being only as good as its people. If employees don’t feel valued, respected, or inspired, that comes through in every interaction. Today’s consumer has so many options at their fingertips, and if they have a negative interaction with someone, it could easily lead them to get their needs met elsewhere. **COT!**

CARE FOR KIDS

Veronica Mendez, O.D.



Veronica Mendez, O.D.

Veronica Mendez, O.D., is the assistant director of vision and clinical care for the Houston Health Department's See to Succeed Program. Involved in the day-to-day activities of managing the clinic, she is also the primary optometrist for the program's follow-up clinic. Here she shares details of the program.

► To learn more about the See to Succeed program: houstontx.gov/health/sts/.

1 SUPPORT

See to Succeed is a public-private partnership and safety-net program

providing free comprehensive eye exams, quality eyewear, and follow-up care to school-aged children (ages 6-18) in the Houston area. Thanks to our donors, partners [including Berkeley Eye Center on the retail side], volunteer organizations, and doctors who come back year after year, over 70,000 eye exams and 65,000+ pairs of glasses have been provided since 2011.

2 NUMBERS

Over 92% of the children need correction, because all of them have already failed a school vision screening and parents/guardians were unable to take them to an eye doctor. We see about 125 children daily at our home location October through March and 200 to 400 a day at four external clinics for one week each—over 10,000 patients per year.

3 SCHEDULING

We start planning, scheduling, and recruitment in August. And about four weeks after the exam, our optical team—including an optician to fit and adjust—delivers glasses in person at each school. **COT!**

—Stephanie K. De Long



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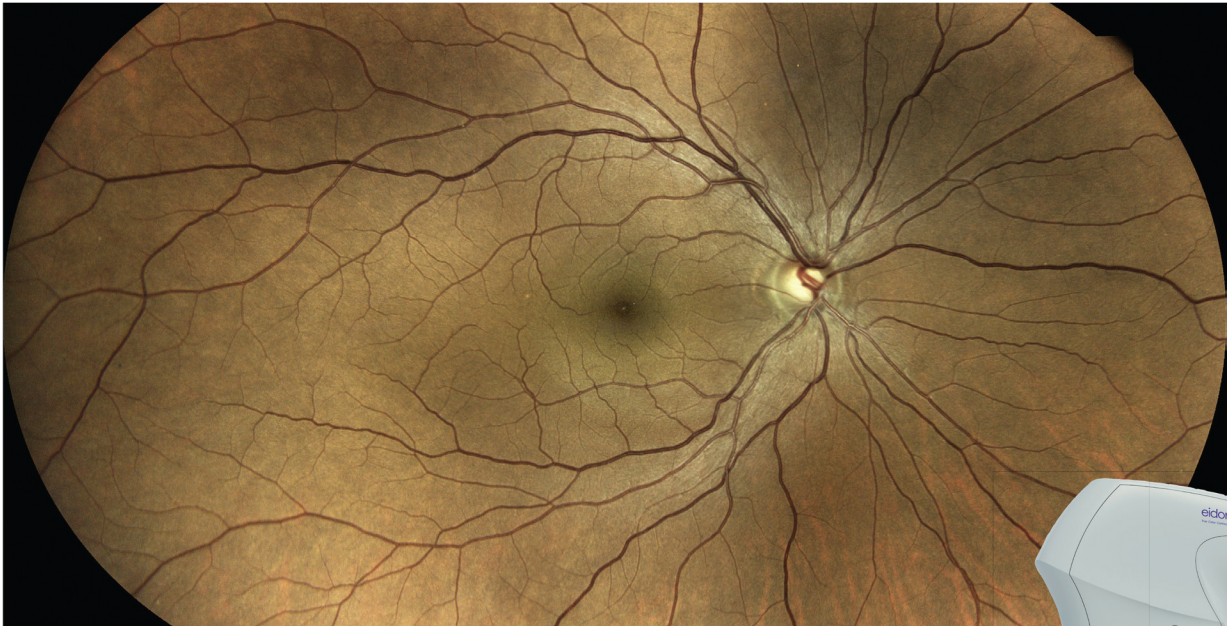
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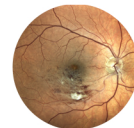
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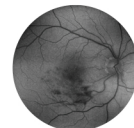
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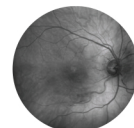
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