

Why Are You Buying Online

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1 hour course

Description

One of the things we all face if we have an optical in a physical location is patients wanting to buy online. This course will identify why people want to buy online and how we can address this in a positive way so they will purchase from our optical.

Learning Objectives:

1. We will address why people want to go online to buy their glasses?
2. What do we offer compared to the competition online?
3. How we address online glasses purchases with patients in a positive way so we can retain them as a customer or patient.

Outline:

I. Introduction

2 Min.

We all struggle with online glasses sales whether we are in a private practice or retail optical. Clearly online sales are not going away so we need to come up with a personal plan for our business on how we are going to handle online purchases in a way that is positive and is as easy as possible for our opticians. First we have to understand who our competition is and what their business model looks like.

II. Why are you going to buy online??

3 Min.

- A. Patients feel they can get their glasses online cheap and it will be the same quality they are getting in your optical.
- B. They like being able to shop at a time that is convenient for them.
- C. There is no pressure to buy a particular lens or frame.

III. What are they giving up?

20 Min.

- A. A professional to help them pick out lenses that will work best with their prescription.
 1. When we first started in the optical and had to learn all the lens materials and which worked best with their prescription and frame selection it took a while to learn even though we were doing it multiple times a day. There is no way a patient could read through and understand all the information it takes to make a good decision in a quick run through online.
 2. If a patient needs a multifocal lens there are so many specialty and customized lenses to give you optimum vision that takes a professional to analyze their prescription, choose the lens that will work best for the

patient's lifestyle needs and educate the patient on these benefits. It is like cell phones there are hundreds out there you need to understand what your needs are and which one would best work for you.

- B. A professional to adjust the frame pre-measurement so accurate measurements can be obtained to ensure optimum vision for the patient.
 - 1. Again think back to when you were learning to do adjustments and measurements for bifocal, trifocal and progressive lenses. I'm sure like me you had to watch other opticians do measurements multiple times and do several yourself and have trained opticians double check those measurements just to make sure you had them correct. How does a person learn to measure themselves when they have never been trained?
 - 2. They need to understand what the measurements are and know how to measure for PD (pupillary distance), segment height and if they are a custom fit they will need to measure vertex and they will have to take into consideration head tilt. That's a lot to know when you know nothing.
- C. A knowledgeable person to verify the prescription is correct after the glasses are completed.
 - 1. How many times do we have lenses come back from the lab and the prescription is not accurate or there is some other problem with the lenses?
 - 2. Patients have no way of verification that the right prescription is in their frame. The only way they will know is if the prescription is off enough that they can't see.
- D. What happens if they can't see out of their glasses?
 - 1. If this happens they have two options send them back not knowing what the problem is or go to an optical and ask if one of their opticians will work for free and try to figure out what is wrong with their online glasses. How would that work at a car dealership if you bought a cheap car to save money and then it did not work properly and you took it to a BMW dealership and asked them to figure out what is wrong with your car for free?
- E. Who adjusts their glasses to their face and head?
 - 1. This is the service part of what we do as opticians. This is an art to be able to custom fit a pair of glasses. If you do it correctly it takes time to learn how to make smooth comfortable bends and to have an eye for fitting nose pads and selecting plastic bridges that fit perfectly. This is learned over time it is not something you read online and you are an expert.
 - 2. They online companies tell them they can take their glasses anywhere they want to get them adjusted. That means to a physical location and have an optician do the adjustment.

IV. What can they buy online?

10 Min.

- A. There are several different companies on that sell glasses online. They vary greatly in price and quality.

- B. On the lower end is Zenni Optical, Warby Parker, and EyeBuyDirect. Their prices start at \$6.95 a pair. The quality reflects this pricing. If you adjust these in your optical please have them sign a disclaimer because they may not hold up to a simple adjustment.
- C. Other options online are some of the same lens and frame brands we sell in our optical but at a greatly reduced price due to no service.
- D. Some of the vision plans are contacting our patients while they are still in our office getting their exams to buy from them at their online opticals. Even some are offering lower or co-pays and overages if they purchase from them.

V. How do we address this and still be positive and profitable?

15 Min.

- A. The best way to combat online sales is through education.
- B. Educate the patient on the difference in our products compared to what they get online. There are a lot of Dollar Stores out there today that sell clothes but most people don't buy clothes there.
- C. Educate patients on the services we offer at no charge when a patient purchases their glasses from our optical. They have access to professionals to measure and adjust in our optical.
- D. If we know the patient is going online to purchase their glasses we have a form that thanks them for choosing us for their eye health needs and hope they will use our optical for all their eye wear needs but if they choose not to we understand but there will be a minimum charge for the services we offer for free when purchased with our optical. We list all the services with a price attached for each one. This is attached to their prescription when they pick it up.
- E. If a patient has made the decision to purchase their glasses online you may not be able to change their mind. Then you need to make it as positive as you can so you can retain them as a patient. If you inform them of the charges on services before they buy online they will not be so upset when they bring them to you for an adjustment or trouble shooting on prescriptions.

Summary / Q&A / Discussion

5 Min.

We can't control the decisions a patient makes where to buy their glasses. We can recommend and educate but our best efforts may not result in them purchasing from our optical. The best thing to do is to carry as many products as you can that are not offered online, offer top quality products and offer the highest level of service. If we handle this in a positive way and a patient is unhappy with their online purchase they will be more likely to come back and purchase glasses from you.