

Contact Lenses as a Profit Center

BY GLENDA B. SECOR, OD, FAAO

It's no secret that there's a long-held mindset that contact lenses are not profitable products for practices. It's a hindrance that's held practitioners back from truly embracing contact lenses—something that can ultimately be a disservice to you and your patients.

Looking at the Big Picture

In reality, numerous studies have shown that contact lens patients are actually more profitable to a practice than spectacle-only patients. Contact lens patients return more frequently for care, they refer more often, and they still need glasses. But there's also a tremendous opportunity to build loyalty with contact lens patients, who will come to view you as the go-to expert for all of their eyecare needs. It's important that you take a "big picture" view when trying to look at the contact lens portion of your practice.

Finding the right contact lens products to support your practice is vital. VTI's NaturalVue multifocal contact lenses have a unique distribution pattern in that they are available solely at the practitioner's office, driving profits further for a practice. This not only enhances the bottom line, but it helps contribute to the validation that professional care is important.

When patients see that value, it begins to extend to everything else. They'll think to come to you for all their eye and vision needs, such as for their red eye, their glaucoma care, and so on. It all filters down to increased patient loyalty. But if you don't educate patients that it's important to come to you for contact lenses, too, they'll miss



your value in addressing all of their vision needs. Practitioners must be able to overcome their personal bias.

Overall Impact on Eye Health

There is substantial value in fully supporting all of your patients' needs. Studies confirm that patients who return to their practitioner for their contact lens refills as well as for regular visits have fewer eye health issues over the longterm. When patients understand this, they keep coming back.

The fact is, even in a world of managed care—or in the absence of medical benefits—if your patients trust your ability to solve their problems, they're going to keep coming back to you. They will recognize that they get more value out of a visit with you than going to another provider or online to get contact lenses.

Building Relationships With Patients

In the end, you're building a relationship with your patients that will far

exceed selling them glasses or contact lenses—and that's what is going to give you long-term stability. Of course, you need the right products to support your mission.

NaturalVue contact lenses are a good fit for the practice looking to build contact lens sales as a profit center because they support that assertion of value. They allow you to offer something that patients can't get anywhere else. When you couple that with proper eye health problem-solving, you'll build a relationship that results in lifelong patient trust. ●

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