

**Your business evolves,
so does your patient.**



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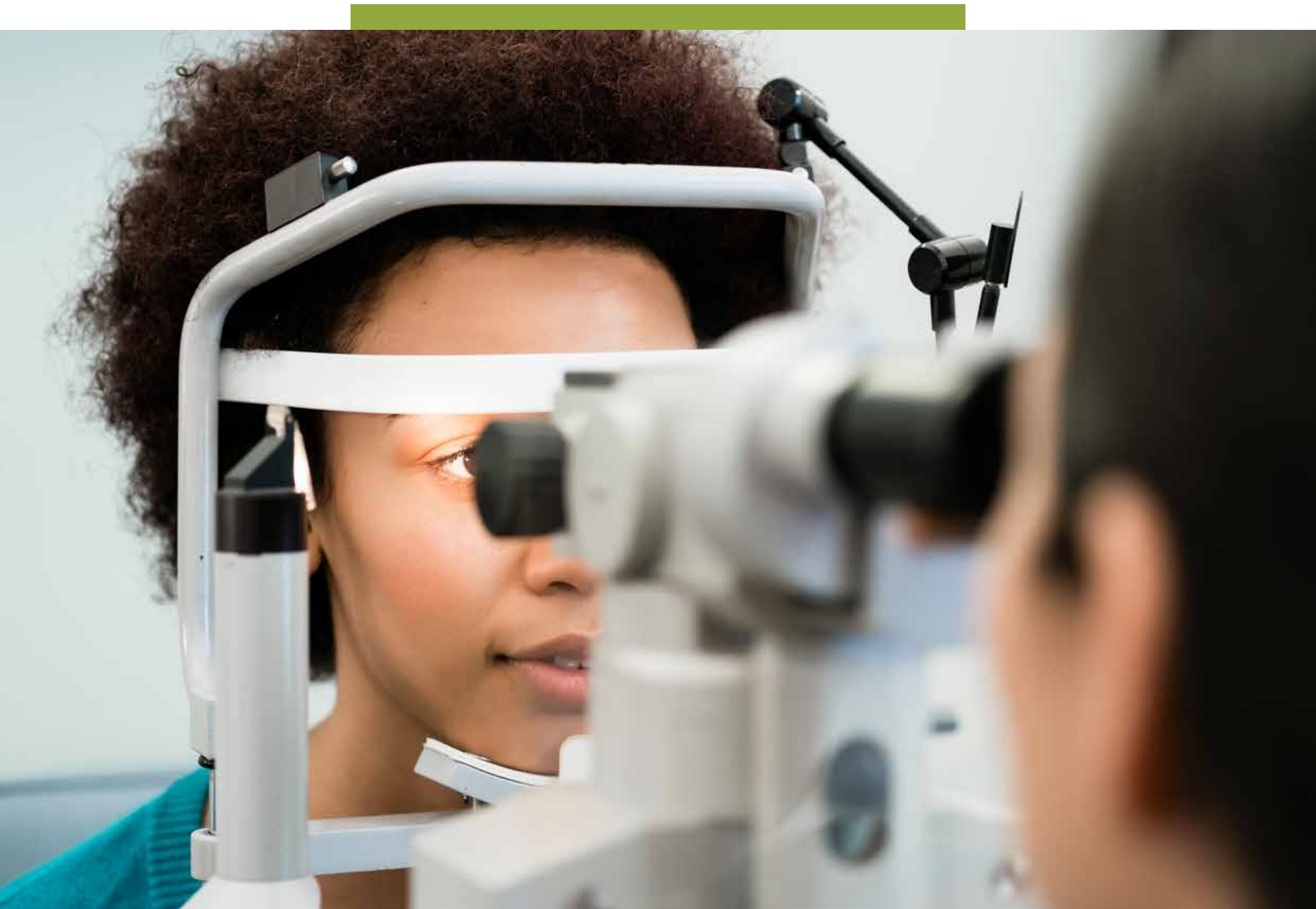
Optometry has three components to it which need to work cohesively with one another in order for a business to experience continuous success. These components are academic, clinical and business.

For years as the Optometry Industry we have been referring to the people that come to our practices as patients. However since there is an educational, health and retail component, shouldn't we then refer to the people as consumers? Then within consumers, you have patients, customers and clients.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Well, consumers as a whole have distinct needs, requirements and expectations. Our responsibility as professionals is to ensure that we cater to those specific needs in a manner that enhances and protects their overall care.

Let us now look at a couple of consumer examples that give the above statements context so that you can apply them in practice.



SCENARIO 1 – MANAGING THE PATIENT

“The patient is the person that has an eye problem that needs to be solved. They are usually the person that comes to the practice for the first time or are referred by a health care professional. They currently do not have any visual correction.”

| CHARACTERISTIC | IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Question(s) | They want to know about the diagnosis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be clear & specific in outlining their problem so that they fully understand what it will take to fix it. |
| Answer(s) required the most | They want answers to what caused their problem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They want to know exactly why they have their problem, what causes it, how it can be solved if it will be solved permanently. |
| No. 1 Need | Treatment plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will their medical aid pay for what they need? Staff must outline what they need & its importance versus what will be paid. |
| Want(s) | Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patients are sceptical about wearing any spectacles or contact lenses & they are relying on you to make informed decisions. Ensure they understand in detail what is wrong with them & what it will take to solve it. |
| Challenges | Costs Involved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patients are not willing to pay more than what their medical aid pays & usually need more than that. Staff need to explain adequately the clinical benefits versus the financial capacity of the patient. |
| Outcomes | Return Date <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff need to be able to thoroughly explain to patients when they should return and how often. We take this for granted at times; hence we don't remind them accordingly. |
| Financials | Benefits of management plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If patients don't understand what is wrong with their eyes, they will not understand what it will take to solve it. |
| Desire(s) | Quick solution at low costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Build a trust relationship with the patient in a manner that they understand the new journey of you being their optometrist & what it will involve. |
| Do's | Competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number one rule: be the best at what you do as a practice. |

SCENARIO 2 – MANAGING THE CUSTOMER

“The customer is the person that currently wears a prescription; knows that they need visual correction or what their problem is but they are not necessarily the person that has been to that particular store before. Not loyal to a practice as yet and may need an upgrade on their current correction.”

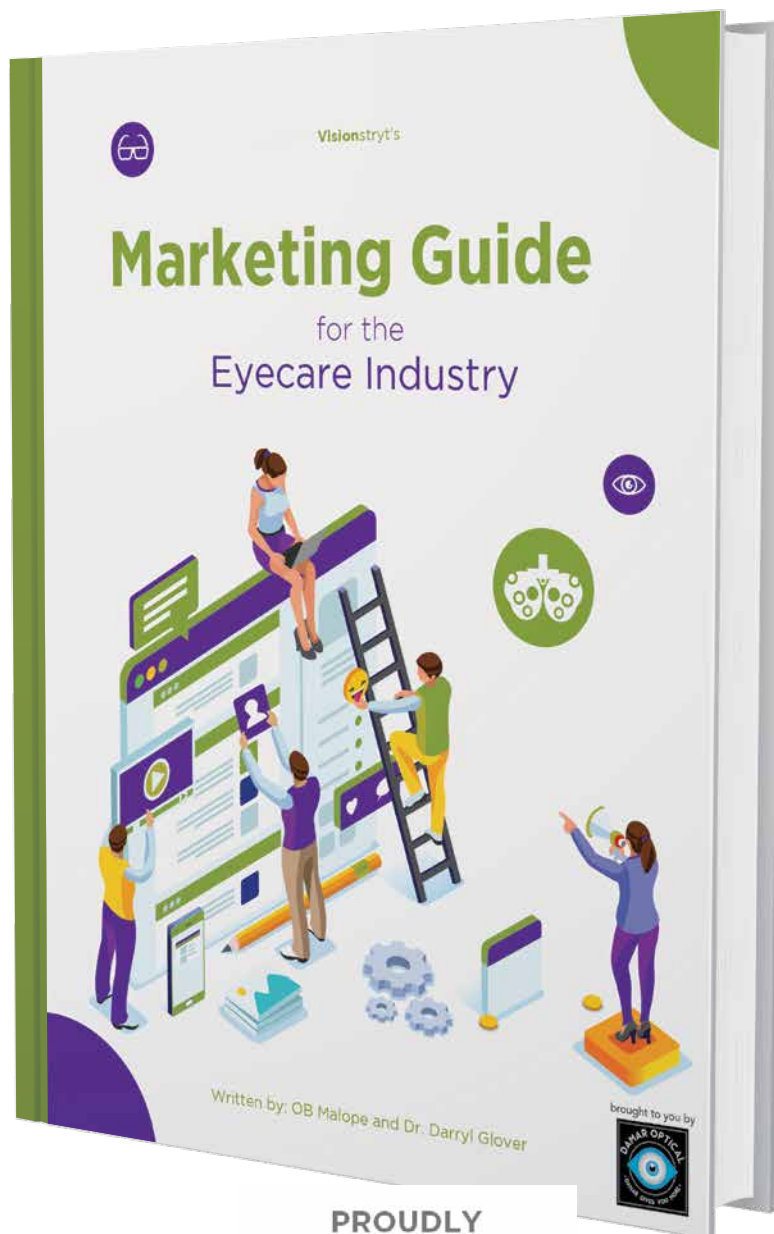
| CHARACTERISTIC IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY | |
|--|--|
| Question(s) | Prognosis? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline what the current prognosis is & detail the benefits that their visual correction had. |
| Answer(s) required the most | Management options available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They want to know exactly why they have their problem, what causes it, how it can be solved and if it will be solved permanently. |
| No. 1 Need | Cost implications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They probably got what the medical aid paid for last time & could not afford what they need. Staff needs to describe the upgrade benefits in detail. |
| Want(s) | Follow-ups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers must be informed about the management regimen in terms of the wearing schedule, time frames, return dates, follow-up's structure & prognosis. |
| Challenges | Record keeping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order to transition customers into clients, they records must be in order. Staff need to know what they wearing, what their medical aid benefits are, etc. well in advance before they come for their appointments. |
| Outcomes | Service improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The only acceptable standard of operation is excellent quality service by the practice, nothing else and nothing less. |
| Financials | Features and benefits of management options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinical versus financial management options need to be elaborated clearly to the customer. |
| Desire(s) | Progressive solutions at similar costs to before <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember they want the best but are not willing to pay for it. Your job is to take them to where you both want to go. |
| Do`s | Service delivery improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number one rule: go the extra mile in what year business does. |

SCENARIO 3 – MANAGING THE CLIENT

"The client is the person who keeps coming back to the same practice year after year for all their visual requirements and management options."

| CHARACTERISTIC | IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Question(s) | Preparedness for their return <ul style="list-style-type: none"> File needs to be out already, benefits checked and management options should be already set out in advance. |
| Answer(s) required the most | Relationship building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff need to know the visual correction what the client is wearing, what they are supposed to be wearing, how long they have been a client, how often they come into practice, etc. |
| No. 1 Need | VIP treatment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients trust your products & services by now, so never stop advising on better products in the management options available. |
| Want(s) | Business development within the practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients want to see new frames, cleaner store, improved quality service excellence, increased staff performance & most importantly strong leadership. Does your practice reflect that? |
| Challenges | Specialised deals/discounts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clients appreciate it greatly when you give them some form of discount on the extras they need. |
| Outcomes | Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the benefits for the client to keep coming back to your practice? What is it about your business that sets it apart from others? |
| Financials | They will buy far more than they need and in regular intervals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong mutually beneficial relationships between the practice & the client will result in them being loyal to your business. |
| Desire(s) | They want loyalty from you and they will be loyal to your business throughout <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No matter how great your relationships are with clients; never compromise the quality of products & services you render to them. Most importantly, stay innovative. |
| Do's | Relationship investment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number one rule; make clients feel great about themselves every time they come to your store. |

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CONCLUSION

The consumer still requires these things more than anything else:

- Excellent quality of service delivery
- Genuine and advanced primary eye health care
- Affordability of quality products that address their visual needs
- Convenience and ease of access to your products, services and solutions

As your business keeps evolving, the consumer also evolves.
Never become complacent when it comes to how you manage them.

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