

IDENTIFY NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE YOUR CAPTURE RATE

Now that you've read the first article about defining and calculating capture rates, are you ready to start improving them? A great first step is to examine “easy wins” within your current patient base.

FOCUS ON THESE 3 PATIENT GROUPS

Consider the types of patients who come to you for eye exams but do not purchase eyeglasses. These patients typically fall into 3 major groups:

- **CONTACT LENS WEARERS:** Only about 1 in 4 contact lens wearers purchase glasses during an exam visit. Yet, a recent national survey among soft lens wearers showed that more than 90% of them own eyeglasses and that 55% wear eyeglasses 4 days a week or more. It's clear that most contact lens wearers need a pair of eyeglasses in their current prescription, but if the office does not remind patients to update their glasses, an opportunity is lost.



Do you discuss the potential need for eyeglasses, such as a backup pair or glasses for a particular hobby or occupation, with all of your contact lens wearers?

Never assume that your contact lens patients **will not** be interested in purchasing eyeglasses. A practice with annual gross revenue of \$750,000 typically performs 63 contact lens exams monthly. If 40% of these patients buy eyeglasses, **that's an additional annual revenue of \$45,000**—a significant source of revenue from patients who may not typically purchase eyeglasses from you!

At the conclusion of the eye exam, suggest updating their eyeglasses prescription or recommend that they browse the optical to see the latest frames.

What to say...“With your contact lens prescription change, we should also update your glasses since you use them frequently during the week. You should also have a pair of glasses with your current prescription in case of an eye infection or illness that could affect your ability to wear contacts. We have some great new frame styles I think you're really going to like.” Or: “You mentioned that you have issues with glare when driving at night. Since your current glasses do not use No-Glare lenses, I recommend adding them to your glasses. I think you'll find they help make driving at night both easier and more comfortable.” These reminders will increase the likelihood that contact lens wearers will purchase eyewear during their exam visit.

- **PATIENTS WITH NO CHANGE IN THEIR PRESCRIPTION:** Not needing a new prescription was cited by 35% of exam patients as the most important reason for not purchasing eyeglasses during their visit. But, just because patients' prescriptions have not changed and their glasses appear to be in good shape does not mean that they would not welcome a new look, an upgrade to improve vision or comfort, or a second pair of prescription eyewear for use outdoors or for a hobby.



When you determine your patients' prescriptions have not changed, do you use the time to recommend a second pair or discuss upgrades with the latest frame, lens, material or no-glare advancements?

MBA faculty member Neil Gailmard, OD, recently recommended the following lead-in to a discussion about upgrading glasses: “Your prescription did not change much this year, which is always good to see, but there are some other aspects of your eyeglasses I want to talk with you about. There have been some amazing advancements in lens technology in the past year, which can improve your vision.”

Dr Gailmard then advises that a patient's daily vision tasks be reviewed, his or her current glasses be examined for missing features that can be added and an upgrade recommendation be made. Patients with no prescription change are also good candidates for a second pair of glasses for specialized use.

What to say... "Because your prescription did not change and your current glasses are in good shape, this would be a great time to consider a second pair of glasses to use when you're working at your computer. With specially designed computer glasses, you will find that you can see the screen more clearly and comfortably."

- **PATIENTS WHO TAKE THEIR PRESCRIPTIONS TO OTHER PROVIDERS:** These patients may be seeking a broader frame selection, better assistance or lower prices. Optical chains and online retailers make eyewear merchandising their top priority and devote much of their office (or screen) space to eyewear display. Independent practices that lack adequate merchandising space may be sending an unintended signal to patients that selling eyewear is not their specialty or priority.



Considering your practice, how might you maximize the optical dispensing space to better communicate fashion appeal, variety and exclusivity?

Allocate enough square footage for dispensing and ensure it is always attractive, well-organized, well-lit and well stocked with frames. To learn more about creating a space designed to sell, check back for the next article.

By addressing the perceptions and needs of each of these groups, practices can increase their capture rates with a dramatic positive impact on revenue.

HELPFUL HINT

For patients who cannot be persuaded from leaving with their prescription, make the most of the opportunity by learning from the experience. Politely asking these patients why they choose to go elsewhere may reveal deficiencies in the practice's eyewear presentation process that can be eliminated. By demonstrating the practice's interest in helping patients to select eyewear, the question also may result in some patients reconsidering their intent to go elsewhere. An anonymous patient satisfaction survey is another technique to discover why some patients choose to buy eyewear elsewhere. For patients insistent on getting their frames elsewhere, offer them the opportunity to come back to have their lens prescriptions filled with your practice. This communicates that you are committed to providing patients with the best vision solution for their needs.

Educate practice staff on identifying opportunities for increasing capture rate. [Share this article with your staff.](#)

Learn more about improving your capture rate. Check back [here](#) to read the next article in the series.