

# The New World Order

## Supplying Frames B2B in a 24/7 Online Marketplace



BY DEIRDRE CARROLL AND MARGE AXELRAD

NEW YORK—Buying optical products for your practice isn't what it used to be. New online resources are transforming the daily experience of ordering and reordering for thousands of eyecare professionals and optical retailers. 2011 has seen a significant uptake in the number of ECPs now using the internet to source frames, lenses and other products every day. And, from the experience of labs, distributors and suppliers in the field, projections are even higher for 2012 online B2B ordering to become more mainstream.

Last month, in the first part of this *VM* cover series, *The New World Order: Innovative Features Power Up B2B Online Ordering*, we explored how the larger optical internet portals such as Eyefinity, VisionWeb, ABB Concise and

ODG are reporting increased business-to-business (B2B) ordering “traction” among more ECPs than ever before. According to these experts, online ordering has become a more efficient, cost-effective way for busy practices to communicate with their suppliers. In short, the new world order.

In this second part of our report, we concentrate specifically within the frame arena to talk to a sampling of companies who have already been enhancing their password-protected B2B sites with a range of new features, resources, services and updated processes to streamline communications as well as ordering capabilities for their accounts.

A study conducted in August 2011 by Practice Advancement Associates on behalf of VisionWeb, one of the primary internet portals through which ECPs can place orders, found that ECPs defined the benefits of online ordering to include “24/7

availability, an ability to check order status online, no waiting time to reach a rep on the phone, and fewer errors.”

Eyewear company executives for this report concur. Several have been surprised at the rate of adoption among ECPs in this past year—some are already seeing as much as 20 percent of their incoming B2B orders being processed via their websites. This is leading them to continue to develop and augment what they offer to complement what their sales reps can achieve in face-to-face onsite meetings with their customers.

*Vision Monday* will continue to monitor this phenomenon and post site updates and enhancements as they come online from other companies. In the meantime, here's a glimpse of how some frame suppliers are tapping this revolutionary new trend. ■



## Online Resources Transform Order Taking for ECPs

### VIVA INTERNATIONAL GROUP Feedback and Usage

www.vivagroup.com

“Approximately 70 percent of Viva’s customers are registered on the site and that number grows every day,” said Sherry Lay, EVP and chief merchandising officer. “Our customers can shop by scrolling through collections or by searching for a specific style, or by filtering type, brand or gender. There are also lists of the top 10 sellers for each brand and collection broken out by gender. PDFs of the full catalogs or the top 10 can be downloaded as well.

“Customers are able to see a full history of their web orders and can reorder with just a few clicks. With this quick reordering capability, our customers can always have a fully stocked board and never be out of their best sellers. We believe this is critical to their success and will be focusing on making reordering even more efficient in the future,” she added.

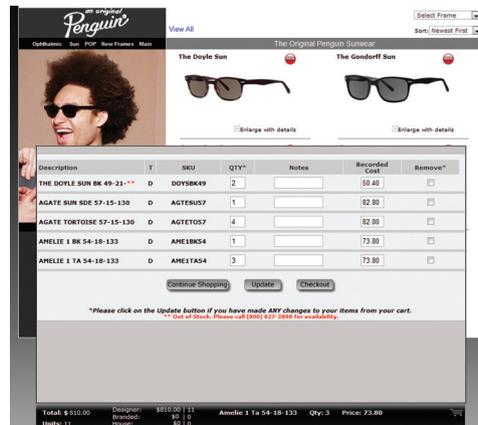
Viva’s high adoption rate has provided valuable feedback from accounts and reps alike. “Through our online ordering stats, we can get a real-time read on best sellers and stock information. Also, the online contact form makes it convenient for customers to provide instant feedback on their experience or ask a question if they don’t have time to call. Site improvements are planned for 2012, in both design and functionality. Many have been based on direct feedback from our customers and Viva’s sales consultants in the field,” concluded Lay.



### KENMARK GROUP Revamp and Promote

www.kenmarkoptical.com

“We offer online ordering and have been doing so for the last six years,” said Shelley Skaggs, co-director of marketing. “Today it is being used by several hundred accounts and 3 percent of all our orders come from our website but we consider this a small amount of growth, and we have not really promoted it.



“We are currently working on a total rewrite of our Order Entry online and with the future release of our updated site, which should be completed in spring of 2012; once its ready we will promote it to customers through our sales force.”

To help shape the new site, Kenmark relied on user input. “We are constantly getting feedback from our customers and sales force and we have used this feedback to help us with the future release of our revamped Order Entry portal. We have found that online ordering has made our business more efficient because it allows us to offer faster turnaround times, eliminates data entry errors and provides a display for accounts to monitor inventory levels on desired frames. Our customers have really come to rely on the site’s ease of use.”

In addition to the updated Online Entry option

slated to release in 2012, Kenmark will also provide frame pricing and purchase history for accounts in the new roll out, Skaggs said.

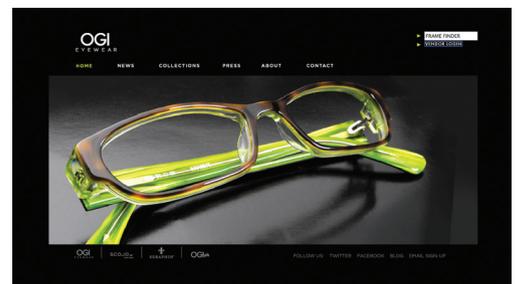
### OGI EYEWEAR Becoming Fully Automated

www.ogieyewear.com

“Our current site is two years old and it offers a full complement of services,” said Joe Tallier, vice president of global sales. “It is in essence a virtual sample bag of every product we offer. Accounts are able to add styles to a shopping bag and check out but as more people become in tune with online ordering, our site needs to evolve.”

Ogi is currently working on an updated B2B website scheduled to launch Jan. 1. “Currently, less than 10 percent of our accounts order online, with the new site I’d like to see that number at 25 percent within two years.”

In addition to an expanded online ordering function which will include analytics on buying habits for reps and accounts, as well as bestsellers and customer profiles, the new site will offer up-to-the-minute information on inventory, order and shipping status and online bill paying, he said.



Additionally, aligning with the company’s effort to go paperless, by April 2012, the entire sales force will be fully automated with iPads so they can write orders, process them and generate an emailed copy to the customer all before leaving

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## B2B Finds Its Niche in a 24/7 Marketplace

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the account's shop. (Ogi said it is currently working with Jobson Internet Solutions (JIS) on both the site and its mobile rep application.)

"Our goal is to remain customer service-centric," said Tallier. "There is no substitute for the sales rep or the sample but with the downsizing many retailers have had to face, we're trying to streamline and speed up the process. We want to provide 24-hour access so that anytime they feel like managing their account, placing an order or paying a bill, it's easy for them to do so, whether we're open or not."

### SAFILO USA

#### Efficiency Is Key

www.mysafilo.com

"Our customer service department fields the major-

ity of re-orders but the percentage is shifting toward the web each year," said Carlo Ruggiero III, manager of sales technologies. "We have continued to grow year over year since we launched mySafilo.com about three years ago and our web business will have almost tripled by the end of 2011. The success of mySafilo.com has given us the ability to make our Call Center more efficient."

MySafilo.com provides full ordering, product availability and shipment tracking capabilities. The company has tailored the site to be fast and efficient throughout the ordering process. "It was our goal to make the order entry process quick and easy to use," continued Ruggiero.

"Online ordering has allowed us to streamline the order process to become more efficient. For example, we have a Daily Cart option for accounts that order multiple frames each day. They can log

Welcome Carlo | Our Brands | Education | Co-Op Advertising | Manage Users | Preferences | Log Out

Safilo | HOME | BROWSE FRAMES | ORDER STATUS | TECHNICAL INFO | VIEW CART

NEW SEARCH | QUICK SEARCH | LOGIN

Welcome to mySafilo.com

My last 5 orders:

Order #	Date	Qty Ordered	Qty Shipped
3513173	14-Nov-2011	3	2
3513158	14-Nov-2011	274	51
3513157	14-Nov-2011	26	36
3513152	14-Nov-2011	0	0
3513152	14-Nov-2011	90	0

New Image View | Featured Collection

New Styles  
Compare to check out our 2011 2011! Or, explore the site you want using our new brand search engine!

Beyond the expected there is **CARRERA Xcede**  
Read More | Watch Video

November Catalogs  
The November 2011 catalogs and price list are available for download. Our PDF catalogs are updated monthly.

Click here to learn how to claim money on shipping with Daily Order!

INTRODUCING THE NEW EYEWEAR COLLECTION  
EYEWEAR COLLECTION  
EYEWEAR COLLECTION

How do you see Safilo?  
Click to see Safilo's brand new multi-media campaign!

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on multiple times a day and add frames to their Daily Cart. We then automatically process that cart every day at 1:30 EST. This ensures shipment that day and gives the customer the assurance that the order was processed without them actually having to complete the transaction. Not only is it easy but it saves our accounts money in shipping costs.

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## More ECPs Embrace Electronic Environment

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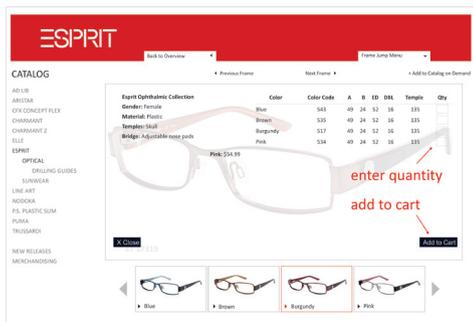
“Accounts that become accustomed to ordering online do not want to have to place a phone call to customer service. They want to log in, get the information they need, order, and log out,” Ruggerio said.

### CHARMANT GROUP New Kid on the Block

www.charmant.com

“We just launched our newly designed website in October that also offers the additional B2B feature of online ordering,” said Dee Berghuys, director of product development. “The re-launched newly designed site now reflects Charmant’s unified global presence with country specific information.

“It’s still a little too early to know what kind of adoption we’ll see but based on the reaction from the last two months, we expect a steady increase on orders coming in via the website. It’s really about offering our customers the ability to shop and place orders when it is most convenient for them.”



In addition to online ordering, Charmant’s new B2B site offers their accounts the ability to customize a specific catalog that best suits their practice’s needs, a feature that Berghuys said has been well received by customers, as well as an area for retailers to download the drilling coordinates for Charmant’s pressure mount products.

“Overall, the reaction to our site layout has been very positive from our customers and adding the bill payment option in the future is a particular request which we will be introducing next year,” she added.

In addition to the online payment for retailers on the B2B side, in 2012 Charmant will be adding new features to the site including a store locator on the consumer-facing portion of the site so that they can find a retailer in their area based on a specific brand request.

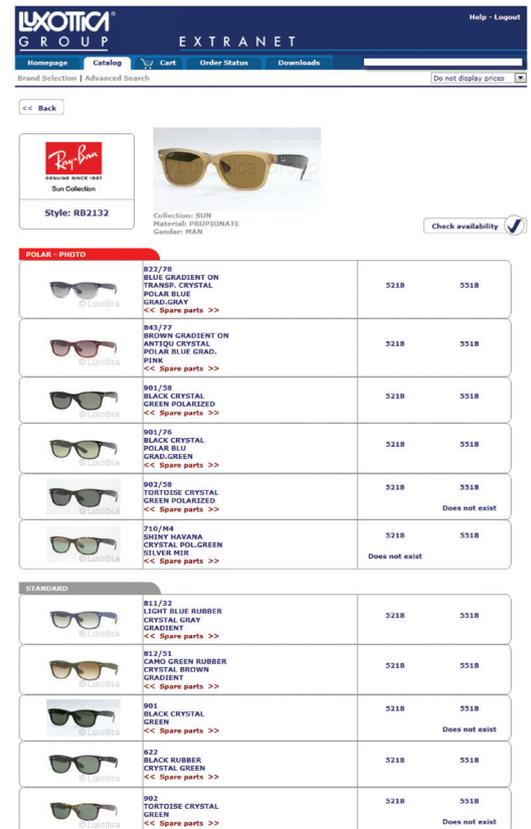
### LUXOTTICA GROUP On The Edge

www.luxottica.net

Luxottica first launched www.luxottica.net in 2006 and a company spokesperson said, “It has proven to be a very valuable tool that can be used by our customers to view product assortments, real time inventory, check the status of orders, view purchase and retail prices, and of course, place orders. Customers love to have the option of being able to order online 24/7 and it is a great alternative to phone ordering.”

Luxottica also noted that “a growing percentage” of its customers are now actively using Luxottica.net and that its B2B usage has continued to grow each year.

In addition, the company said it is continually evaluating B2B, based on customer feedback and requests for additional features. “Online enthusiasts are finding B2B to be a real asset to their business. Online ordering helps keep customers on the edge of the newest trends. With B2B, they can easily check out new products on a regular basis. It keeps them updated on optical fashion trends and keeps them informed of what’s going on in the industry.” Further, B2B has encouraged Luxottica’s accounts to order more efficiently by keeping best sellers on the board.



Luxottica also pointed out that B2B online features also provides ECPs with the ability to provide their customers with the ability to provide their customers with up-to-the minute news and trends with confidence. “Many find it a valuable resource for providing immediate answers on available sizes, colors and prices. They love having customers look through the collections right on their laptops—especially the sunglasses.”

As one customer puts it, ‘I push a button and it’s ordered.’ In addition, says another, “being able to show a client the retail price of an item on-line makes me look more professional. It adds credibility and reaffirms the integrity of our business.”

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## Online Ordering Streamlines Communications Process

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### L'AMY AMERICA

#### Invaluable Reference Tools

www.lamyamerica.com

L'Amey America has long been offering its accounts ways to utilize the company's website for learning more about the company's portfolio of brands, as well as for viewing statements, facilitating payments and referencing past orders.

New drop down menus and having a choice of various views of the company's brand catalogs and collection images also offer accounts various ways of viewing size, color and style options.

Just last March, however, the company introduced online ordering. And, according to Stephen Rappoport, L'Amey America's president, "The adaptation rate has really been swift. The

**L'AMY AMERICA**

profile speed ordering cart checkout favorites order history statements payments  
home brands company press contact register logout

**Columbia** FAST TREK 2 Back

Core Ophthalmic Collection  
IFT Ophthalmic Collection  
Fusion's Collection  
Griffin Collection  
Sunglass Collection  
Titanium Ophthalmic Collection  
Titanium Ophthalmic Collection  
Extended Size Collection

Note: this always displays above the models items that with the less color options that come with each SKU. You will only receive one frame here.

Material:	Other	Temples:	
Bridges:	LT GUN; DARK GREY - COMPASS BLUE; LT GUN	Lens:	undefined
Frame:	LT GUN; DARK GREY - COMPASS BLUE; LT GUN	Lens:	undefined
Color:	MTLLC GREY - BLUE FADE	Color:	undefined

\*Click on each thumbnail for additional lens information.

BLACK BLACK	LT GUN; DARK GREY -
- DECO	GREY -
YELLOW	COMPASS
BLACK BLACK	BLUE; LT GUN;
- DECO	MTLLC GREY -
YELLOW FADE	BLUE FADE

Eye A	B	EDD	BL	Template	Color
<input type="checkbox"/>	51	512655	18	140	BLACK; BLACK - DECO YELLOW; BLACK; BLACK - DECO YELLOW FADE
<input type="checkbox"/>	51	512655	18	140	LT GUN; DARK GREY - COMPASS BLUE; LT GUN; MTLLC GREY - BLUE FADE

Add to Cart

response has been terrific, and already 20 percent of our customer base is using the new function.

And that's in less than a year. We are very pleased."

He added, "We have been working with Jobson Internet Solutions (JIS) to advance our website even more and plan to continue to add new functionality to the ordering process soon, to make it easier for our accounts to interact with us."

### REM

#### All the Bells & Whistles

www.remeyewear.com

"We just launched our new online ordering system on Nov. 8 which allows customers to not only order anything from our catalog, but also quickly reorder frames using the rapid reordering feature, as well as order directly from a per-

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## EyeRep: A New Tool for 'Anytime, Anywhere' Access

The advent of tablets and wireless handheld devices, along with the internet's expanding "cloud" storage systems, are revolutionizing the way vendors and customers interact with each other.

One of the newest in the eyewear field is EyeRep, a new mobile sales rep iPad app, a tool developed by Jobson Internet Solutions (JIS) ([www.jobsoninternetsolutions.com](http://www.jobsoninternetsolutions.com)), which has been working with a range of leading industry frame suppliers on their B2B website capabilities.

Said Joe Savarese, president of JIS, "Moving to the iPad platform and the IOS framework is a huge technology shift. In the big picture, EyeRep means so much more freedom and flexibility for sales reps, who can work truly off the tether, over the air, with new flexibility and

fluidity and all the necessary information at their fingertips. And for accounts, this means enhanced service, fewer backorders and real-time info about their business."

EyeRep allows sales reps to have "anywhere, anytime access to their mission critical account information." Reps will be able to offer their accounts a quick and efficient way to view all their product information, product images, back orders and order history. Reps can update or place new orders right from within the app.

Sales reps and their optical retailer/ECP accounts will see a Virtual Sample Bag, be able to see order history and tracking screens. Some companies will also feature the higher resolution images that the iPad offers to minimize having to carry as many sample bags around to visit with accounts, Savarese noted.

"EyeRep represents the cutting edge, since it's also among the first of a new breed of Apple iPad B2B communications," he said. "Many apps in the past have been recreational or consumer oriented. EyeRep is full B2B, built and designed by optical sales reps for optical sales reps."

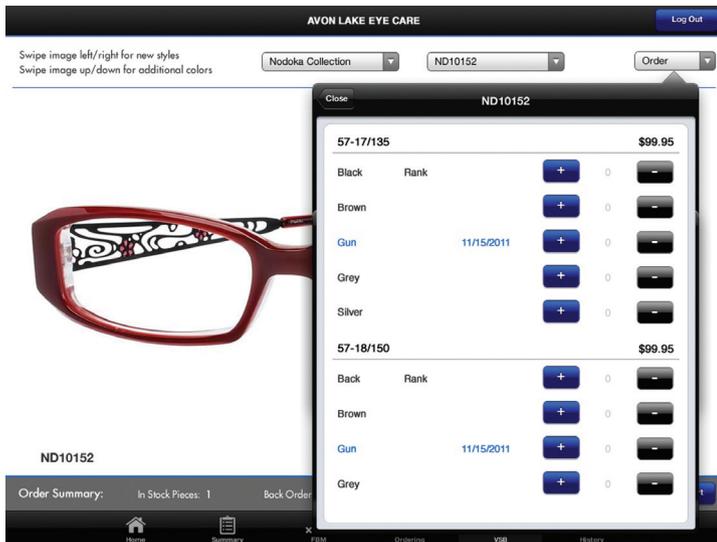
For both the rep and the account, Savarese pointed out, EyeRep "means more productivity for the sales rep and more accountability for the company and cost savings."

Many frame companies are going to be debuting the EyeRep iPad mobile app, equipping their salespeople in 2012. Among those confirmed to date are: Charmant, Tura, L'Amy America and Zyloware.

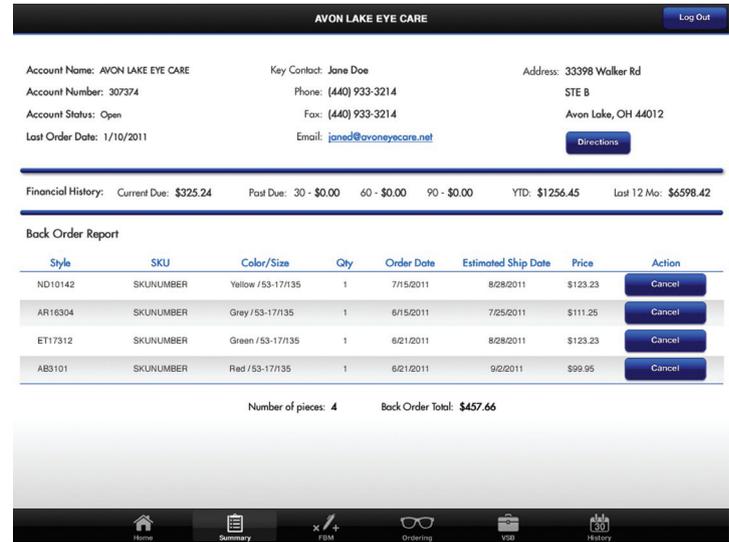
Stated L'Amy America's president Stephen Rappoport, "We are very excited to be at the leading edge with this new technology which



COVER TOPIC



*Sales reps can work with accounts to order directly with the EyeRep iPad app.*



*EyeRep shows a real-time account summary.*

will be a win-win for our sales team and our customers.”

Added Zyloware’s president, James Shyer, “We’ll begin our sales training in January and

start to use [the app] next year. Our customers will really benefit by being able to better manage their inventories and make even better buying decisions. With our B2B site and with

EyeRep, it all comes down to asking ‘What’s easiest for the customer? What makes the most sense for the ECP?’” ■

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