

ANNOUNCING VM'S Most DARING!



VM's 1st ANNUAL DISPENSING AND RETAIL
EXCELLENCE AWARDS



Winners of the 1st Annual D.A.R.E. Awards Revealed...

NEW YORK—*Vision Monday* is proud to present the winning retailers in our 1st Annual Dispensing and Retail Excellence (D.A.R.E.) Awards.

The D.A.R.E. Awards was conceived to honor daring optical retailers and dispensers of all sizes from across North America in five different categories, with an additional winner, chosen by reader vote, for a sixth award.

Retailers and ECPs were asked to submit entries from June 27 through July 31. Those submissions were reviewed by a panel of judges (more on them on page 56) and the winners in each category, across three size tiers—10 or fewer locations, 11 to 49 locations and 50+ loca-

tions or online only—were identified. The judges also selected five entries they saw worthy of recognition for their daring approaches across different aspects of optical retailing.

From Aug. 15 through Sept. 2, readers were then able to vote on those five nominees at www.VisionMonday.com/DARE for a special "We the People" Reader Vote Award.

When we first launched the contest we hoped to get a good response. What we got was far beyond what we had hoped for.

We received several dozen entries from all over the U.S. and Canada, as well as more than 600 unique reader votes, and now for the first

time all the D.A.R.E. honorees can be revealed.

If you missed entering this year or were just waiting to see what it was all about, we hope the caliber of our winners inspires you to participate. And have no fear, we were so gratified by the number of entries and votes we received we're doing it again next year!

So please help us in congratulating our inaugural winners and be sure to look for the interactive story in our Digital Edition which will provide live links to the winners' websites, social media platforms and submission videos. ■

dcarroll@jobson.com

40 THE SHOP IT LIKE IT'S HOT AWARD



FOR MOST DARING STORE DESIGN, RETAIL ENVIRONMENT, MERCHANDISING AND/OR WINDOW DISPLAY

(10 OR FEWER LOCATIONS)

VALLEY VISION OPTOMETRY

PORT ALBERNI, BRITISH COLUMBIA

WWW.VALLEYVISIONOPTOMETRY.CA

OWNER: SHAUN GOLEMBIA, OD



SUBMISSION ESSAY...

"Shaun Golemba dared to imagine that this hopelessly outdated ugly duckling could be turned into a retail powerhouse. He believed that the building could somehow be transformed into a ski-lodge style optical office that would get his practice noticed. He challenged his design team to use natural materials and colors to create an environment that echoes the active outdoor lifestyle of the community. He also commissioned a local native artist to carve the colorful tribal-style sculpture that welcomes patients at the reception desk. A new skylight lets daylight pour through the center of the building over a new rock wall. The big new front window showcases the greatly expanded optical. The taller, gabled roof and wood-clad walls lend Alpine charm to the exterior.

The project started out as a major interior remodel with a cosmetic update for the exterior. As the planning progressed, it became apparent that the exterior would require a completely new roof design as well. The desired look and visual impact could not be achieved without increasing the construction budget. It was a daring move to accept the higher risk of borrowing more, but Golemba saw it as a good investment in his future. Today, new patients constantly stream in thinking it's a brand new building since they never noticed the old one. Golemba had to take daring action not just once, but twice. He could have ended up with a slightly improved exterior by sticking to the original budget but dared to risk even more and go for his dream. Now, he's enjoying the rewards—sales up 22 percent over last year—and has a unique office environment that reflects local culture and boosts community pride."



More →

THE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE AWARD



FOR MOST DARING COMMUNITY OUTREACH, PHILANTHROPIC OR PATIENT EDUCATION PROGRAM

(10 OR FEWER LOCATIONS)

ST. CHARLES VISION

NEW ORLEANS, LA.

WWW.STCHARLESVISION.COM

OWNER: CHARLES GLASER



Terence Blanchard: Looking Forward

Terence Blanchard has established himself as one of the most influential jazz musicians and film score masters of his generation. Terence belongs to a jazz legacy that has shaped the contours of modern jazz today. As a jazz musician, Blanchard is a four time-Grammy Award winner who often finds himself touring with his band and jazz giants like Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter, and recording with rap artists like Common. He is the Artistic Director of **The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance**, which he helped move from Los Angeles to New Orleans on the campus of Loyola University. The Monk Institute's Jazz Performance program is the world's most intensive graduate-level college jazz education program, attracting top young jazz musicians from around the world. Terence wanted the program in New Orleans because after Katrina, New Orleans was shaken and its musical roots were threatened. He grew up in this city and learned about jazz here with other young jazz musicians. Terence knew that the Institute could have a great impact on jazz and our communities. He wanted to work hard to help jazz and New Orleans flourish once again. Through the Institute's community outreach, he has seen young people that have had traumatic experiences in the aftermath of Katrina, but no verbal skills to communicate them. Art, Terence believes, is one way to release those feelings and allow kids to find their way through the world – a ripple effect that is positive for our community.

Terence moved back to New Orleans in 1995 after over 15 years in New York. He wanted to come home where it all began, to reconnect out of necessity, where people play music because they love it, not just to be famous.

First of all, Terence would like to see another Super Bowl win. But in all seriousness, there is a need to bring back music education in our schools. Music is part of our history in New Orleans. He'd also like to see more live/bringing in int and expose yc Terence firmly over 50 films, I

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SUBMISSION ESSAY...

“St. Charles Vision has undertaken an initiative to highlight community leaders who have met some of New Orleans’ toughest post-Katrina challenges, for the betterment of all who love New Orleans. St. Charles Vision links the community to these leaders and their organizations through their website and shares the community leaders’ idea of vision and how it applies to the Crescent City. The first three people honored include:

- Jazz musician Terence Blanchard—the artistic director of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance, which he helped move from Los Angeles to New Orleans on the campus of Loyola University in order to attract top young jazz musicians from around the world.
- Architect Allen Eskew—the founding principal of architecture firm Eskew+Dumez+Ripple and is leading the “Reinventing the Crescent Riverfront Development Plan.”
- Social entrepreneur Andrea Chen—the executive director and co-founder of Social Entrepreneurs of New Orleans, a local nonprofit that supports creative problem solvers advancing great ideas for social change.

This project embodies St. Charles Vision’s commitment to healthy eyes and a healthy community.”

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(50+ LOCATIONS OR ONLINE ONLY)

EYE CARE CENTERS OF AMERICA/DAVIS VISION

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

WWW.ECCA.COM

CEO: DAVID HOLMBERG

WWW.DAVISVISION.COM

PRESIDENT: STEVE HOLDEN



SUBMISSION ESSAY...

“Eye Care Centers of America (ECCA) retail associates closely partner with Davis Vision to support Davis Vision’s outreach initiatives including Focus on America. Davis Vision’s worldwide community outreach efforts provide much needed vision care services to those who may not otherwise receive it. Over \$21 million in products and services have been provided through Davis Vision’s outreach initiatives.

Davis Vision has 52 outreach events scheduled in 2011 and ECCA’s dedicated team of volunteers—spread across the 39 states—will support over 80 percent of these events by providing vision screenings and vision care education to the attendees, including many students and parents. The participation doesn’t stop there. Those who require additional vision care receive vouchers for a free follow-up exam and eyewear. When the recipients of these vouchers visit the ECCA locations to redeem their vouchers, the retail associate gets the opportunity to assist the recipients through the process of getting their eye exam and selecting a new pair of eyeglasses. They also share in the excitement of delivering a new pair of eyeglasses to an individual who might not have had any eyewear at all.

What we hear from the ECCA volunteers is that they appreciate the opportunity to connect with their community. They thoroughly enjoy the smiles they receive from hundreds of children and the relief in the parents’ voice when they find out that a much needed pair of eyeglasses will be provided. We have also heard wonderful stories from recipients as well. These individuals feel like the support they receive from Davis Vision and the ECCA retail associates makes a big difference in their life.”



More →

44 THE SEEING GREEN AWARD



FOR MOST DARING ECO-CHIEVEMENT

(10 OR FEWER LOCATIONS)

EOLA EYES

ORLANDO, FLA.

WWW.EOLAEYES.COM

OWNERS: KERRY GIEDD, OD

BRIGHID WILLIAMS, OD



SUBMISSION ESSAY...

"Eola Eyes is dedicated to being responsible and eco-conscious. Every step they take to grow their business is treated with respect for the environment and their community. Their downtown location is ecologically friendly and green from the ground up. Green features include:

- Flooring made from sustainable bamboo.
- A front wall lined with double pane low-e windows to reduce energy usage.
- Countertops made from 100 percent recycled glass and concrete.
- Ceiling lights outfitted with energy-efficient compact fluorescent bulbs.
- Acoustic "whisper wave" baffles to reduce excessive noise pollution throughout the showroom.
- A lighting system on a special programmable electrical box and rooms with motion sensors to reduce electrical usage.
- Bamboo foundation, instead of wood, since bamboo only takes five years to fully mature.
- Specially designed airflow ventilation system throughout the building to maintain maximum comfort without excessive energy usage.
- State-of-the-art heat pump technology and circulation system to achieve a cool, comfortable, eco-conscious showroom.

From choices of construction materials and finishes to smaller details such as installing a bike rack, using an electronic rather than paper recall system, and changing from plastic to recycled paper shopping bags, they continually try to foster and promote an eco-conscious business model."

More →



FOR MOST DARING ECO-CHIEVEMENT

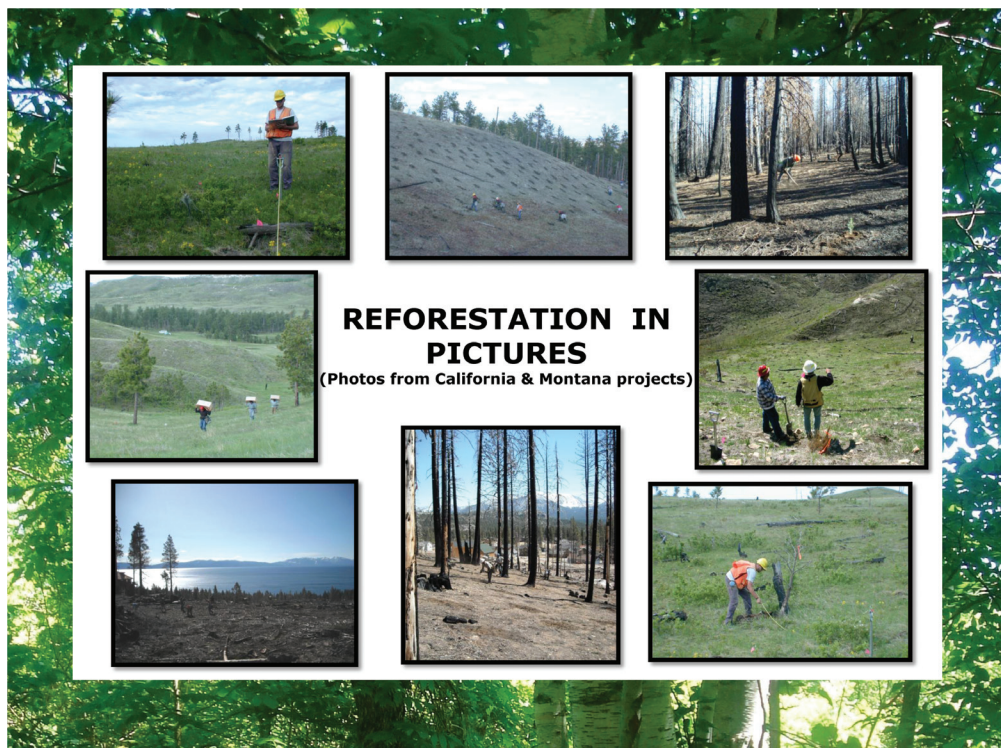
(50+ LOCATIONS OR ONLINE ONLY)

SHOPKO EYECARE CENTERS

GREEN BAY, WIS.

WWW.SHOPKO-OPTICAL.COM

OWNER: W. PAUL JONES



SUBMISSION ESSAY...

“Through committed dispensing, ‘teammates’ and a supportive patient base, to date Shopko Eyecare Centers have been responsible for the planting of over 22,000 trees in desperately needed conservation projects around the world. Truly an eco-chievement! Shopko’s Green Bay buying office recently made a major commitment to our environment by placing Nouveau Eyewear’s 24-piece Global ReLeaf frame collection into all of their 136 Eyecare Centers. Each time a Shopko teammate dispenses a Global ReLeaf frame, proceeds of the sale are sent to American Forests and one tree is planted in one of American Forests’ many projects around the world. Teammates at each Shopko location are motivated by monthly email blasts giving them the latest tree count. Patients are made aware of their contribution by the updating of a counter card that also shows the latest tree total. Through their commitment to Global ReLeaf and American Forests, Shopko Eyecare Centers have helped create a vision of a better tomorrow.”

More →



FOR MOST DARING ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN (PRINT, TV OR RADIO ADVERTISING)

(10 OR FEWER LOCATIONS)

WILSON EYE CENTER

VALDOSTA, GA.

WWW.WILSONEYECENTER.COM

OWNER: STEVEN M. WILSON, OD



Services

eyePOD (Personal Optical Delivery)

Wilson Eye Center is proud to be the first to offer optical delivery. Our delivery driver was hand selected with the

Text Size

A A A

Common Questions & Concerns

- + What is astigmatism?
- + What is hyperopia?



SUBMISSION ESSAY...

"At the Wilson Eye Center annual management retreat in 2009, the challenge of creating a 'brand' that was 'sticky' was conceived. Our goal was to create a simple, clean and recognizable brand along the line of TNT Network's We Know Drama or TBS's Very Funny concepts. What we came up with was the 'eyePOD' (Personal Optical Delivery) home delivery vehicle. The purchase and implementation of the eyePOD simultaneously created brand awareness, took patient service to a much higher level, helped us combat mail order contact lens competition and gave us a constantly moving and highly visible billboard advertising campaign."

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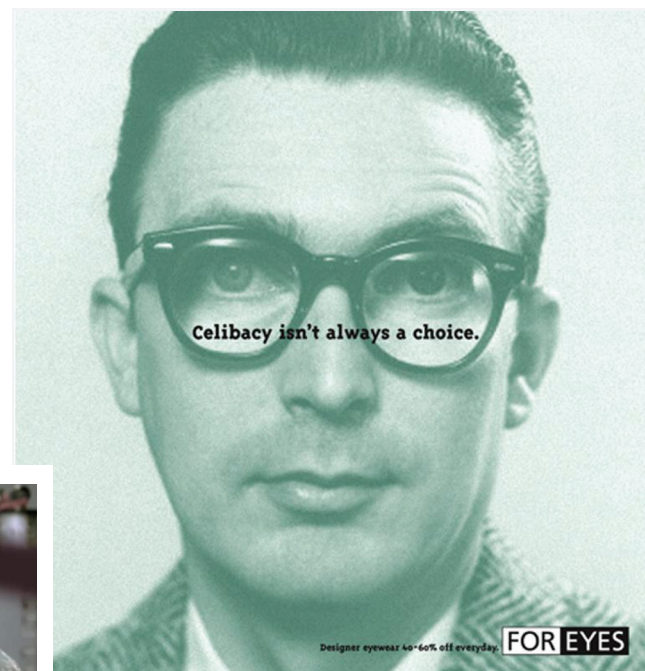
(50+ LOCATIONS OR ONLINE ONLY)

FOR EYES OPTICAL

NEW YORK, N.Y.

WWW.FOREYES.COM

CEO: LISA WOLMAN



SUBMISSION ESSAY...

"As eyewear is increasingly being marketed as a beauty and fashion product, For Eyes Optical continues to roll out advertising which expresses that there's no need to pay for illusions that glasses can't deliver. The TV, radio and print advertising created by the DeVito/Verdi agency pushes the envelope with the insight that consumers get satisfaction from finding great deals on high-end fashion items like glasses. For Eyes advertising includes:

- TV spots that caution eyewear buyers: "Unless The Glasses Can Perform Miracles, Don't Pay More Than You Have To."
- Print ads which communicate that there is no reason not to look good in glasses.
- Radio spots that highlight the point that there is no need to pay too much for glasses.

Overall, the advertising has been successful in not only building positive awareness of the brand, but also by driving traffic and local sales."



More →

THE LEAD, FOLLOW OR GET OUT OF THE WEB AWARD



FOR MOST DARING SOCIAL MEDIA OR WEB PRESENCE (INCLUDING WEBSITES, SOCIAL NETWORKING AND VIRAL MARKETING)

(10 OR FEWER LOCATIONS)

SHADY GROVE EYE AND VISION CARE

ROCKVILLE, MD.

WWW.YOUREYESITE.COM

CEO: ALAN GLAZIER, OD, FAAO

Shady Grove Eye and Vision Care website features a clean layout with a navigation menu on the left. The main content area highlights 'Most Experienced Eye Care Staff in Rockville' and lists various services including 'Contacts', 'Frames & Lenses', 'Lasik', and 'New Tech'. A 'Book Online Now' button is prominently displayed.

The Eye Information Blog screenshot shows a list of recent posts, including 'With My Family History, What Can I Do to Protect My Eyes?'. The blog includes a search bar and a 'Find Us' button.

Facebook page for Shady Grove Eye and Vision Care. The page features a 'Best of Bethesda' award graphic and a 'See that?' graphic with an arrow pointing to the 'Like' button. The page also includes a 'Wall' section with posts and a 'Share' button.

SUBMISSION ESSAY...

"In 2007, Shady Grove Eye and Vision Care boldly eliminated all forms of traditional marketing in favor of search engine optimization and social media. Dr. Alan Glazier took a daring risk to eliminate traditional marketing to grow his practice and now successfully uses social networking, websites, a wonderful blog and other types of viral marketing. He has seen so much success with social media in his practice, that he wrote a book: 'Searchial Marketing, How Social Media Drives Search Optimization in the Web.'"

More →

THE LEAD, FOLLOW OR GET OUT OF THE WEB AWARD



FOR MOST DARING SOCIAL MEDIA OR WEB PRESENCE (INCLUDING WEBSITES, SOCIAL NETWORKING AND VIRAL MARKETING)

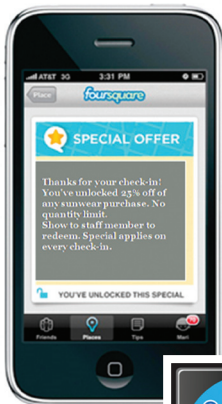
(11 TO 49 LOCATIONS)

EYECARECENTER

ROCKY MOUNT, N.C.

WWW.EYECARECENTER.COM

PRESIDENT: ALLAN BARKER, OD



SUBMISSION ESSAY...

"In December 2010, eyecarecenter launched its first social media campaign to provide valuable vision health education and content to our patient base and to drive new patient traffic into the offices. In order to keep our communities engaged and interested, we create daily educational content that covers a variety of categories, including: children's vision, visual fatigue, celebrity/pop culture and general vision research. We have extensively trained our office staff on our social media initiatives and have created in-office point-of-purchase signage and social media business cards so patients can connect with us after a visit. We have also experienced success by responding to customer questions and comments through Facebook. Additionally, we use social media to connect with our community through posting some of our local awards and charity involvements. With seven months under our belt, we have only just begun our social media outreach. Plans for new content and new local event synergies are coming up in the next couple of months. @eyecare2see #winning"

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(50+ LOCATIONS OR ONLINE ONLY)

COASTAL CONTACTS INC.

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

WWW.COASTALCONTACTS.COM

WWW.CLEARLYCONTACTS.CA

CEO: ROGER HARDY



SUBMISSION ESSAY...

"For over a year now, we have been giving away thousands of free glasses to new customers via our Facebook page. We wanted to demonstrate how easy it is to order glasses online. We also wanted to showcase the performance of our customer care team who exceed the expectations of our customers every day. Since we started regularly hosting 10,000 free glasses giveaways on our Facebook pages we have increased the number of fans of our CoastalContacts.com and ClearlyContacts.ca Facebook pages hugely. Just over a year ago, CoastalContacts.com and ClearlyContacts.ca had fewer than 10,000 Facebook fans each. Today, CoastalContacts.com has almost 350,000 fans and ClearlyContacts.ca has almost 152,000 fans to give us just over half a million fans of our U.S. and Canada brand Facebook pages! With the number of fans of Coastal Contacts Inc's U.K., Australia and New Zealand fans on Facebook, Coastal Contacts Inc. has a fan count of almost 650,000, making Coastal Contacts Inc. the largest optical brand on Facebook."

More →

54 THE "WE THE PEOPLE" READER VOTE AWARD



FOR MOST DARING RETAILER

WINNER...

LUXOTTICA RETAIL/ONESIGHT

MASON, OHIO

WWW.LUXOTTICA.COM

ONESIGHT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: GREG HARE



SUBMISSION ESSAY...

"Through outreach efforts, OneSight volunteers have given the gift of sight to their 8 millionth patient, Marokey, a 35-year-old mother of four. Marokey is just one of thousands of people who will receive clear vision in The Gambia as part of a 3-year partnership between OneSight and SightSavers International (SSI). A small country in western Africa, The Gambia is home to 1.6 million people and only three eye doctors. OneSight and SSI are daring to change these statistics. They will provide local residents access to ongoing, sustainable care through existing eyecare centers, as well as 15 new centers being created throughout the country."



HONORABLE MENTIONS...



METRO OPTICS

BRONX, N.Y.

WWW.METROOPTICS.COM

OWNER: JOHN BONIZIO

SUBMISSION ESSAY...

"When it comes to innovation in advertising and name recognition in the Bronx, Metro Optics owns the market. Metro floods TV and various print media with videos and print ads focused on quality, professional optical offerings. Their recurring theme—"Get Framed"—is repeated in seasonal ads, and is adapted during the holidays to "Frame Someone" to encourage consumers to purchase eyewear and services as gifts. Metro promotes heavily on the internet, driving traffic to their website which includes fashion videos, educational videos, ordering and scheduling capabilities and updated specials for their patients."



EOLA EYES

ORLANDO, FLA.

WWW.EOLAEYES.COM

OWNERS: KERRY GIEDD, OD

BRIGHID WILLIAMS, OD

SUBMISSION ESSAY...

"Eola Eyes believes strongly that connecting with existing and potential patients online is our most effective strategy for growth, and that our online image needs to be consistent with the in-office experience we provide. In 2010, we cut our Yellow Page budget to invest in redesigning our website. We relocated in early 2011 and 'dared' yet again to spend no money on Yellow Pages. Since moving and launching our new optimized site, our gross revenue is up 40 percent, website traffic is up 50 percent and the time visitors stay on the site is up 150 percent."

More →



D.A.R.E. JUDGES

KAREN GIBERSON, THE ACCESSORIES COUNCIL

Giberson has over 20 years of experience in marketing, merchandising and public/media relations. She is the president of The Accessories Council where she sets the vision of the organization and is responsible for over 16 events annually, including the ACE Awards. She is also a partner in Fred Siegel Partners, has executive produced the television show/product line "Avec Eric," airing on PBS since 2009 and a partner in Hunter & Moss, a line of environmentally friendly handbags. www.accessoriescouncil.org

CLODAGH NORTON, EYESTYLIST

Norton is a British journalist who has worked in the optical sector for over 12 years. She is editorial director of 20/20 Europe and co-founder of the

Eyestylis, The Fine Eyewear Design Review, a new site dedicated to high-quality sunglass and spectacle designs. Since 2008, she has also worked as a communications consultant specializing in consumer PR for eyewear companies. www.eyestylis.com

DEIRDRE CARROLL, VISION MONDAY

Carroll is senior editor of *Vision Monday* magazine, where she's covered frames, sunwear and fashion accessories as well as retail buying and merchandising trends for the past five years. She is the creator and editor of Style.Pages in print and Bold Face and High Visibility on VisionMonday.com. Carroll also serves as chief community officer for SightNation, the top social network community site for eyecare industry professionals.

DELIA PAUNESCU, VISION MONDAY

Having joined *Vision Monday* in 2010, Paunescu is the publication's assistant editor and social media coordinator. Her focus for the publication is on independent retailers and the professional associations. She is also the creator and editor of the Local Diary, In/Store and Communique features of *VM* in print.

MARGE AXELRAD, JOBSON OPTICAL GROUP

A 23-year veteran in the optical industry, Axelrad is currently responsible for the overall editorial direction of *Vision Monday* including its print publication, VMail, its e-newsletters including CLICK, VisionMonday.com and special events including the VM Global Leadership Summit. ■