

All Summit Photos by John Calabrese Photography



## Leading Experts Agree the ‘Future Is Now’

NEW YORK—With leaders in their fields discussing Millennials, Big Data, omnichannel retailing, and wearable technologies, the 8th annual *Vision Monday* Global Leadership Summit once again showed how the future is now.

Anticipating which innovations will impact the optical profession, the VM Summit hosted a sold-out crowd of 400+ of the industry’s leading executives. Sponsoring this year’s “Future/Now” Summit were Premier supporters, Essilor and Luxottica, Signature sponsor VSP Global, along with Adlens, Alcon, CareCredit, DAC Vision and Think-AboutYourEyes.com.

Citing some predictions that have come to fruition since being introduced at previous Summits, such as the advent of health care reform, the rise of social media and profits-with-purpose, Marge Axelrad, VM’s senior VP/editorial director introduced the program.

The morning session began with a presentation from Michell Zappa, head of the technological trend forecasting firm Envisioning Technology. “Designing and utilizing technology is at the core of what it means to be human,” he said. Zappa

called technology “an upward leveling force to make our lives better,” but he observed that “It’s no wonder we’re scared to death when technology shape shifts.”

Saying he often gets new ideas about future technology from science fiction books and films, Zappa noted that “Good sci-fi can set the mind rattling.” To illustrate his point, he offered science fiction scenarios involving the wired world and virtual reality. Zappa defined himself as part of a generation of “kids with broadband” who are completely comfortable with technology and who tend to “fix everything they encounter, without intermission.” This generation is creating “a more flexible, interactive future” in which “everything is up for grabs.”

Session Two, Millennials, focused on the consumer attitudes and social habits of the millennial generation, or shoppers aged between 18 and 35. VM senior editor, Deirdre Carroll, set the stage for the first speaker, Jeff Fromm, who said, “your goal is to be a favorite brand, not the nearest end competitor.” Fromm, who is executive vice president of Barkley, a marketing agency, and co-author of

**Continued on page 26**

### Sessions and Speakers

#### View of the Future...24

**Michell Zappa**, Emerging Technology Strategist and Founder of Envisioning Technology

#### Millennials...28

**Jeff Fromm**, Executive Vice President, Barkley  
**Steve Hartman**, Managing Director, Urban Outfitters, Direct and Marketing Division

#### Data View...30

**Charlie Schick**, PhD, Director, IBM Watson Foundations, Healthcare and Life Sciences

#### Leadership & Innovation...31

**Sarah Thurber, M.S.**, Managing Partner, FourSight, LLC  
**A Conversation With Andrea Guerra**, CEO, Luxottica Group

#### Eye<sup>2</sup> – Wearables...34

**Insiya Lokhandwala**, Business Development, Google Glass  
**Sina Fateh, MD**, Executive Vice President, Atheer Labs  
**Edward Tang**, CEO and Co-Founder, Avegant  
**Corey Mack**, CEO & Head of Design, Laforge Optical  
**Tim Moore**, Founder, Venture Glass, Director of Digital Vision, Rochester Optical  
**Matt Alpert, OD**, Chairman of Optometric Innovations, Board-Member, VSP Global

#### Omnichannel...36

**Aaron Dallek**, CEO & Co-Founder, Opternative  
**Carlo Privitera**, Luxottica Digital and E-commerce Innovation Lab President, Glasses.com  
**Roy Hessel**, President, Online Initiatives, Essilor



# Navigating Emerging Technological Change

The study of technology is one of the most compelling ways of understanding humanity,” declared Michell Zappa, the Sao Paulo, Brazil-based futurist and emerging technology strategist who was the Summit’s lead-off speaker. “Designing and utilizing technology is at the core of what it means to be human,” he remarked.

Throughout his 30-minute presentation that was both provocative and informative, Zappa examined and questioned the technological status quo in our connected world. He called technology “an upward leveling force to make our lives better,” but added “It’s no wonder we’re scared to death when technology shape shifts.”

As a member of the millennial generation that he called “kids with access to broadband,” Zappa said he became technologically adept at an early age. Growing up in Stockholm, Sweden, which he noted was one of the first places to introduce broadband technology, Zappa embraced science fiction books and films.

He said his love of the science fiction informs his analysis of trends. “Good sci-fi can set the mind rattling and give us better foresight,” he said. “It helps us see what happens when what is scientifically possible becomes socially feasible.” To illustrate his point, he offered two science-fiction-like, future scenarios involving Wearables, Big Data and the Internet of Things.

Zappa observed that technology is accelerating the pace of life. “Today is the slowest day you’ll ever live through. Tomorrow will be faster,” he predicted. He believes that because of technology’s pervasive influence on our lives, we need to reconsider our relationship with it. “Get rid of the idea that technology is limited to physical objects,” he suggested.

The biggest agents of change are “kids with broadband” who are creating “a flexible and interactive future in which everything is up for grabs,”



## Michell Zappa

Emerging Technology Strategist  
 Founder, Envisioning Technology

Michell Zappa is a keynote speaker on emerging technologies. He has presented in both corporate and public settings and his 30-minute talks focus on how imminent technological changes are likely to impact society.

Zappa discusses what technology means, presents future-shocking technologies and extrapolates plausible science-fiction scenarios of the near future. His talks give recipients an edge in foresight thinking and aim to resonate a message of questioning veiled truths to improve our future. He has presented to executives at Vodafone, Tesla Motors, Twitter, Schiphol, KLM, Philips, Deutsche Bank & Samsung and he has spoken at Global Futures Forum, The Next Web & PICNIC.

Zappa heads Envisioning Technology, a technological trend forecasting firm that focuses on explaining where society is inexorably heading in the near future by extrapolating on current developments and advances in keynote presentations and visualizations. Envisioning Technology’s research facilitates understanding the field for those who work in technology by painting a bigger picture of where the landscape is heading. In this, the firm tries to guide both corporations and public institutions in making better decisions about their (and society’s) future.

Zappa said, “Kids with broadband fix everything, without intermission, even if it doesn’t need fixing. We abandoned the world around us because we’re busy building a new one.”



*Michell Zappa, emerging technology strategist, takes a sci-fi approach to the future.*

Zappa stressed the necessity of coming to terms with technological change. “Suddenly the kids with broadband are asking how they can radically change your industry,” said Zappa. He urged the audience to listen and learn from them.

“Don’t panic,” he advised. “If you resist technology, you lose. If you ignore technology, you lose. If you deny technology, you lose.”

Zappa ended his presentation by urging Summit attendees to “Undo the chains of hierarchy. Lose your fear of falling forward.” ■

*akarp@jobson.com*

## SPECIAL REPORT

# Back to the ‘Future/Now’

Continued from page 24

“Marketing to Millennials: Reach the Largest and Most Influential Generation of Consumers Ever,” emphasized that it is willingness to take risk and implement new ideas, not a big budget, that will win over Gen Y customers. “Don’t use traditional KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) when thinking about blue ocean ideas. You’re going to hit the ‘No Go’ button every time,” he said.

Steve Hartman managing director, Urban Outfitters direct and marketing, pointed out attributes of the artistically inclined clothing store that allow it to relate to millennials’ desires and expectations. One way the company effectively reaches millennial consumers, Hartman explained, is to hire them. “Give them a platform to participate in the company,” he said. “Millennial marketing takes creativity and authenticity, and speaking in a way that they can relate to and is not corporate.”

Kicking off the Leadership & Innovation session, Sarah Thurber, MS, managing partner, FourSight, LLC, a publishing firm that specializes in developing research-based tools to enhance innovation and performance, stated, “Disruptive innovation has arrived. Someone you didn’t think of as a threat, someone who may have been marginalized, has started to encroach on your area.” After explaining her three-step approach to creative innovation she said, “Innovation is a team sport. As a leader you are not responsible for having the right answer but you should come up with the right question—‘How do we stay relevant?’ This is your world. Shape it or someone else will.”



*A sold-out crowd of leading optical executives sat transfixed at the VM Summit.*

In a session on the rise of “omnichannel,” Aaron Dallek, CEO/co-founder, Opternative, introduced the concept of his company’s proprietary online refractive technology that determines sphere, cylinder, axes, Rx, and PD that “anyone anywhere can do themselves.” Stressing that the technology

will undergo more testing while Opternative seeks FDA approval, he added, “we’re not here to take everyone’s business away; we’re here to work together.” His hopes for the technology are to make it easy for the 50 million people in the U.S. and 2.5 billion people in the world who never had an eye exam to get started focusing on eye health. To that end, he said his firm would be “putting together a think tank of some of the brightest minds in the industry.”

 @VisionMonday

 Facebook.com/VisionMonday

APRIL 21, 2014

VISIONMONDAY.COM

Also in the omnichannel session, Roy Hessel, head of Essilor's Online Initiatives, explained how the independent ECP remains central to the optical retail ecosystem, flanked by chains and e-commerce and surrounded by optical technology innovations, Big Data/cloud computing, value apps and disruptive technologies.

Another theme emerged during the omnichannel session when Carlo Privitera, Luxottica's digital and e-commerce innovation lab president, observed that today's consumers are "people who want to decide how to live their life." Privitera declined to make a prediction about the size of the future online eyewear market saying that "down the road, there will be a blend of online and in store purchasing."

Illustrating futurist Zappa's reference to "kids with broadband," who seek to "live as they want," were a group of wearable technologies



*VM Summit attendees experienced Google Glass.*

experts curated by Andrew Karp, group editor, lenses and technology, Jobson Optical Group. With Google Glass being the best known among them, the other wearable technologies were from Atheer Labs, Avegant, Laforge Optical and Rochester Optical.

Having just announced a partnership with Luxottica earlier in the week, and also with VSP Global for Rx lenses earlier in the year, Google Glass promises still another "very important partnership announcement," according to Insiya Lokhandwala, business development, Google Glass. With Glass still in the early adopter Explorer phase, she said there are three types of reactions – 1) people who are instantly excited, 2) those who are instantly skeptical but then try them on and come around, and 3) those who just stare. "We think wearable computing will change the world," she said.

Charlie Schick, PhD, director, IBM Watson Foundations, Healthcare & Life Sciences, illustrated how IBM's computing capabilities have evolved from tabulating to programmable to cognitive computing with their Watson technology. He shared specific examples of how the company has partnered with various health care organizations to substantially improve the quality of health care. Schick pointed out that the problem is not technology but organizational barriers that prevent companies from becoming Big Data adopters. "If you're not data driven you won't be successful."

One of the highlights of the event was a one-on-one interview Axelrad conducted with Andrea Guerra, CEO of Luxottica. "We're living in a world fantastic and full of global opportunities," he said, citing an unprecedented two to three billion new global consumers. Other trends he observed were 3D printing changing R&D and the doubling or tripling of business in the last six years in emerging markets such as Brazil, Mexico, Turkey, India and China. Overall, he predicted substantial sunglass growth in both emerging as well as established markets. "It has the smallest market penetration in the biggest markets in the world," he said. ■

—VM Staff

## SPECIAL REPORT

# Sharing and Caring: Millennials Value Connection With Brands

As the session on Millennials took hold, certain truths emerged: convenience, price and “value” in the traditional sense take a back seat in young consumers’ shopping carts. What millennials do value, which they communicate through their social sharing, sustainability interests and personal autonomy when making purchasing decisions, is connection.

More than their iPhones and Instagram accounts (though both certainly play a role), the millennial generation of consumers, aged roughly 18 to 35, covet connection with the brands and products they purchase. Be it alignment with the brand’s philosophy or mission, appreciation for the brand’s “authentic” creativity or locally beneficial production or the brand’s ability to communicate effectively through social media or a successful commercial campaign, millennials seek a positive, personalized experience, in-

store as well as online.

VM senior editor, Deirdre Carroll, set the stage for the first speaker, Jeff Fromm, who began his presentation with this pearl of Gen Y wisdom: “Your goal is to be a favorite brand, not the nearest end competitor.”

Fromm, who is executive vice president of Barkley, a marketing agency, and co-author of “Marketing to Millennials: Reach the Largest and Most Influential Generation of Consumers Ever,” emphasized that it is willingness to take risk and implement new ideas, not a big budget, that will win over Gen Y customers.

“Don’t use traditional KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) when thinking about blue ocean ideas. You’re going to hit the ‘No Go’ button every time,” he said.

There are “Seven Simple Truths About Great Modern Brands,” according to Fromm:

1. Embrace the “Participation Economy.”
2. Engage early adopters.
3. Treat content as brand fuel.
4. Listen and activate social communities.
5. Create experiences and adventures.
6. Leverage disruptive schemas.
7. Stand for more than your bottom line.

Some standout statistics Fromm pointed out were that the millennial is two and a half times more likely to be an early adopter of new technology than members of older generations; one third of millennials say they like a brand more when the brand uses social media; and 69 percent of millennials say they consider themselves “adventurous.”

What these “Brand Love Truths,” as Fromm called them, communicate is that this generation of consumers is ready and willing to have active relationships



*Vision Monday's senior editor Deirdre Carroll fields questions from the audience for Steve Hartman (l) and Jeff Fromm.*

with the brands they choose and that this willingness, along with that of trying and utilizing digital platforms, can be the means to a happy end consumer and brand.

The next speaker, Steve Hartman, managing director, Urban Outfitters direct and marketing, pointed out attributes of the apparel store that connect to millennials: focus on culture, customer, marketing, social engagement and collaboration.

Urban Outfitters effectively reaches millennial consumers by relating to their desires and expectations. One way of doing this, Hartman explained, is to hire them. “Give them a platform to participate in the company,” he said. “Millennial marketing takes creativity and authenticity, and speaking in a way that they can relate to and is not corporate.”

Hartman presented company videos profiling real-life Urban Outfitters customers—a young male musician in San Diego, a female student artist in Los Angeles—each representing core values of the brand which positions itself toward those interested in individuality, personal style and do-it-yourself creativity.

Another engagement tactic Hartman highlighted was Urban Outfitters’ “No Tweet Left Behind” policy, in which the company attempts to answer each question and comment posted to its social media properties so that customers are assured they are heard—and, in true millennial form, pass that experience along to their peers. “People are so excited to be replied to,” he said. “And then they share that content and experience.” ■

*cwolinski@jobson.com*



## Jeff Fromm

**EVP, Barkley; Co-author, “Marketing to Millennials”**

Jeff Fromm is the executive vice president at Barkley, a marketing agency based in Kansas City, Mo., as well as co-author of “Marketing to Millennials: Reach the Largest & Most Influential Generation of Consumers Ever.” On behalf of Barkley, Fromm spearheaded the Millennials research partnership with The Boston Consulting Group and Service Management Group. He is also the founder of ShareLikeBuy, a Millennial Insights & Consumer Trends Conference, co-author of four trends reports and the lead editor of the blog, [www.millennialmarketing.com](http://www.millennialmarketing.com). Fromm has more than 25 years of brand marketing and new product innovation experience for Hallmark, KC Masterpiece BBQ Sauce, Build-A-Bear Workshop, American Italian Pasta and other brands. He received his marketing degree from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.



## Steve Hartman

**Managing Director, Urban Outfitters, Direct and Marketing**

Steve Hartman is the managing director of Urban Outfitters direct and marketing division. He is responsible for the [urbanoutfitters.com](http://urbanoutfitters.com) e-commerce business as well as Urban Outfitters’ creative and marketing activities in North America. Prior to Urban Outfitters, Hartman held numerous leadership roles at ebay including overseeing advertising on [ebay.com](http://ebay.com) and running eBay Partner Network, eBay’s global affiliate marketing network. He currently sits on advisory boards for Gundlach Bundschu Winery and [Sparefoot.com](http://Sparefoot.com). Hartman has a BS in Mechanical Engineering from Carnegie Mellon and dual MBAs from the Haas School of Business at UC Berkeley and Columbia Business School at Columbia University.

## SPECIAL REPORT

# Making Sense of Big Data for Today's Health Care Sector

The tagline on the IBM Watson Foundations website declares “Make data make sense” and that’s just what IBM’s Charlie Schick, PhD did for Summit attendees as he led a fascinating and informative discussion on Big Data, outlining what it means to today’s world of health care and ultimately, how it might impact those in optical.

As director of Healthcare & Life Sciences for the IBM Watson Foundations, Schick briefly traced the paradigm shift that led to the rise of Big Data. Using IBM as an example, he illustrated how the company’s data computing capabilities have evolved from tabulating to programmable to cognitive.

Ultimately, he said, “Big Data is all data and there really aren’t any technological barriers to the adoption of analytics.” Schick emphasized that the problem is not technology but organizational barriers that prevent companies from becoming Big Data adopters. “If you’re not data driven you won’t be successful,” he warned the audience. “We have entered a new era of computing enabling new opportunities and outcomes.”

Schick has studied how Big Data is being utilized by hospitals, pharmaceutical and insurance companies and he shared specific examples of how IBM has partnered with various health care organizations to substantially improve the quality of health care offered.



### Charlie Schick, PhD Director, IBM Watson Foundations, Healthcare and Life Sciences

Charlie Schick, PhD, is director for IBM Watson Foundations, Healthcare and Life Sciences, responsible for driving solution development, sales consulting and go-to-client activities. IBM Watson Foundations is IBM’s foundational Big Data and Analytics components for the cognitive era, with an analytics platform that uniquely delivers innovative capabilities to help organizations outperform the competition. Prior to IBM, Schick worked at Boston Children’s Hospital, and at Nokia, in Finland. During his career, he has designed and launched web and mobile products; and provided Internet, social media and editorial strategy consulting services. He has a graduate degree in molecular and cellular biology from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

“Health care providers identify gaps in care with health analytics to reduce costs and improve outcomes.” He pointed to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, which personalized its web content to educate some 3 million members. Using clinical, claims and financial data, BCBS was able to improve member experience, resulting in a better view of health data and more comprehensive coverage.

The benefits of Big Data are obvious in health care sectors such as medical research where hospitals are now able to discover connections between drugs, disease and genetics to provide better care. But how do these Big Data procedures translate to the eyewear sector?

Something as basic as using data to understand results and effectiveness of email campaigns can make a big difference. Schick advised using the power of Big Data analytics to create “an omnichannel 360 view of customers, enabling retailers to track high value customers, improve marketing effectiveness and target consumers based on unique preferences and histories.

“In the eyewear industry, Big Data is giving suppliers insights about their customers as they gather data from different sources to understand consumers’ needs. This is what retail is all about, getting the full view to understand the customer.” ■

*mkane@jobson.com*

## Innovation As a Team Sport

It's not a Leadership Summit without dedicating a little time to the namesake topic. The Leadership & Innovation session addressed how executive leaders are learning to embrace and foster creativity and new ideas within their organizations.

Kicking off the session with a presentation titled "The People Side of Innovation," Sarah Thurber, MS, managing partner, FourSight, LLC, a publishing firm that specializes in developing research-based tools to enhance innovation and team performance, stated, "Disruptive innovation has arrived at the door. Someone you didn't think of as a threat, someone who may have been marginalized, has started to encroach on your area.

"Consumers are scanning the horizon, asking what new solutions are out there? Those who can answer this question could have millions of dollars delivered to their door," she said.

Thurber went on to explain her three-step approach to help leaders develop creative innovation within their organizations:

Step One – Shift your thinking paradigm.

Step Two – Discover your thinking style.

Step Three – Build diverse thinking teams.

"The thing that juices innovation is human creativity," she explained. "What you want are people who can figure out stuff when there is no obvious answer. The last people you want on your team are the people trained to come up with the 'right' answer because they will all come up with the same answer."

After detailing each step briefly, including an explanation of the four types of thinking styles for creative problem solving—Clarify, Ideate, Develop, Implement—she walked the audience through a quick test to help determine their predominant thinking style. She said that everyone might possess traits of multiple styles but described Clarifiers as those who generally excel at clarifying the exact nature of a challenge; Ideators as those who generate ideas to tackle a problem; Developers as those who develop realistic solutions to the problem based on



*Sarah Thurber gets the audience thinking about the "People Side of Innovation."*

those ideas; and Implementers as those who put those solutions into action. Someone with an even approach to all four processes is what Thurber called an Integrator.

"The way you think, as leaders, has an effect on your entire team, your entire organization. Innovation is a team sport. It's your job to call on unlike minds and build diverse thinking preference teams," she said.

She concluded with these thoughts, "As a leader you are not responsible for having the right answer but you should come up with the right question—'How do we stay relevant?'" and she shared a quote from Gary Lew, author of the book "Our World War:" "This is your world. Shape it or someone else will." ■

*dcarroll@jobson.com*



### Sarah Thurber, M.S. Managing Partner, FourSight, LLC

For the last 10 years, Thurber has worked in partnership with academic researchers and top innovation consultants to develop "FourSight: Your Thinking Profile" along with a range of other online and print-based training tools that support cognitive diversity and creative problem solving. FourSight tools, now available in seven languages, have served as a platform for promoting innovation for clients like Nike, Disney, HP, IBM, Kraft, Prudential, US Bank, L'Oreal, the BBC and the Canadian Government. She is coauthor of "Creativity Unbound—An Introduction to Creative Process" (5th ed.), as well as "Facilitation — A Door to Creative Leadership" (4th ed.). As part of her M.S. degree in Creative Studies, Thurber developed "Your 2-Minute Thinking Tip" video series to share creativity skills through social media. In 2012, she was awarded the Firestien Family Creative Achievement Award for her graduate work at the International Center for Studies in Creativity.

## SPECIAL REPORT

# A Conversation With Andrea Guerra, CEO, Luxottica Group

The VM Summit's Leadership & Innovation session explored the perspective of global leaders today; those charged with managing complex organizations, executing strategies and coping with new, emerging forms of competition. To that end, Andrea Guerra, CEO of Luxottica Group, took the stage for an intimate one-one-one conversation with *Vision Monday's* Marge Axelrad.

Axelrad's first question focused on what sort of "thinking style" Guerra possessed based upon Thurber's presentation. "I think I'm a simple guy and I always try to be where things happen," answered Guerra. "I try my best to listen and to capture things that are not necessarily always said by our people. You know it's not so easy to always say the truth to your boss, so I think sometimes it is very critical and important to go out and try to get things that maybe people are telling you.

"I think that we're living in a world that is just fantastic and it is full of opportunities globally. I cannot imagine another entrepreneurial generation that could say that the things that are happening to us have happened in the last 100 years," he said. "Globally we have two to three billion new consumers, no one before us could have said such a thing. And we have been living through a huge industrial revolution.

"We often talk about the internet, digital, social but that's not the only technology change. There is



*Andrea Guerra and Marge Axelrad.*

a whole new way of doing things; a new way of planning your factories, of working with your products. 3D printing has totally changed the way we do our R&D engineering. We get our samples and prototypes and think about style and design much, much quicker than before. And I think that these two things—this vast world of consumers and the technologies that have become available—have changed the way we all think."

Guerra was then asked about how a company as large and established as Luxottica handles these

sorts of changes in terms of management and prioritization. "You know I think I'm a little bit masochistic sometimes, so whatever success, whatever we have done, it's over. I am immediately onto the next thing," he explained. "I think today we could, each of us, get lost in this sea of opportunity. Especially when you are big and successful everyone thinks that you can do anything. Even inside [our company], people say, 'Why don't we do this? Why don't we do that?' It's a world full of opportunities but on the other hand, it's very unstable.

“We do not know what tomorrow brings. In a week’s time, in a month’s time, in three months’ time, we do not know. So I have pushed dramatically much more into strategic planning and sharing. Then people say if it is so unstable why do we plan? It’s useless, we should plan three months, every three months and tackle things as they come up. And I say no, this is totally wrong because we need to pick our battles and if we plan well and if we get more people included into the projects it’s easier, much easier to readapt what we are doing to account for the things that are changing. And this is what we, I, am trying to do every day,” he said.

“So does that mean as you are considering possibilities and changes that people are managing things they know could change later?” asked Axelrad.

“The thing is to allow people to understand what the opportunities are and what the limitations are,” Guerra explained. “This is a constant game. In this world, if we decide to go one way, it becomes pointless if after a week we are already bored with it. Our people have to stick with it and they have to love what we are doing. The more people inside the company we are able to share with, the better.

“Three months ago I made a decision. We have a daily online magazine for everyone in the company and I made the decision to edit and publish our three-year plan for the first time so anyone can look at it. And people said ‘But Andrea, that is a secret! That is so risky!’ And I said the risky part is [in our head] and it’s important that we communicate what we are trying to do. If people think that they are contributing even just a little to what we are trying to do, it will go much faster.”

Guerra has now been CEO of Luxottica for 10 years. So what does he think is the biggest change to the industry and what hasn’t changed at all?

“I think one major thing that changed is the emotional link between people and frames and sunglasses,” he stated. “I think that has totally changed in the last decade. I would say that the

primary link a decade ago was functional—I am covering my eyes from the sun. I am seeing better with my frames.

“All of that is still there but we have introduced emotion, we have introduced brands, we have introduced dreams, we have introduced fashion and luxury, we have introduced everything that takes consumers to another place with a different attitude about what they’ll spend. So, they are not leaving their house anymore saying ‘I have to get a new pair of glasses.’ But maybe they are buying a pair just because they love the window display or because they saw Angelina Jolie in it.”



*Andrea Guerra talked about how technology is changing production as well as the way we think.*

Slower to change, according to Guerra are the individual markets. “The things that have changed little are the markets; especially the U.S.,” he explained. “There is one special thing in the U.S. that has somehow heavily influenced the industry and that is insurance and managed vision care. I think that that is still the element that makes this market so different from any other market in the world and which makes things here go a little bit slower.”

So how does a company, like Luxottica, that is in a position to help those within its organization, as well as its customers, grapple with these changes,

asked Axelrad.

“I think that we have a great responsibility,” agreed Guerra. “We are happy. We are successful. We’re growing. There are lots of people that want to do business with us across the world. That’s fantastic. But I think we have a great responsibility and I think the position we have taken is to really ignite conversation, open up conversation, tell stories. Allow people to understand how many different ways you can run your business.

“It’s an attitude. The point is, let’s open up, let’s think, let’s understand what we want to do. Who could have ever guessed the things happening in the world today? Who would have guessed that Amazon would become one of the largest sunglass retailers in the U.S.? Who could have guessed it three, five, seven years ago? What should we do? Forget it? Fight it? I think that we all have to be customers, suppliers, competitors, partners, friends, enemies at the same time. When I see Hubert [Sagnières] from Essilor, I tell him on Monday and Tuesday you are my supplier. On Wednesday and Thursday I am your customer. Friday we’re good partners. Saturday we fight.”

Finally, an audience member asked about the infamous *60 Minutes* interview. “First thing is that interview happened in September 2012 and four months later our stock price went from 25 to 40, so I always connect the two things and say *60 Minutes* brought us good luck,” he joked.

“I think they had a very clear mission and the mission was to demonstrate functionally that with our products and our brands we are robbing consumers. The interview lasted an hour and 50 minutes and I didn’t know that lady [Lesley Stahl] before, and I don’t think I want to see her again, but she asked me the same questions over and over and over. And I think you would agree with me that I remained patient, answering very politely all of her questions but I do not think she took our message home. I don’t think so,” he concluded. ■

*dcarroll@jobson.com*



## SPECIAL REPORT

## Wearable Technology: Coming Into Its Own

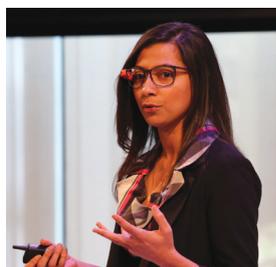
With six different speakers discussing at least as many smart eyewear technologies that have moved from research and into development, the Eye<sup>2</sup> session on “Wearables” demonstrated for the Summit audience the reality of this exciting new intersection of technology and eyewear. The rapidly emerging field of wearable technology, specifically smart eyewear, was covered by a panel moderated by *Vision Monday* lens and technology editor Andrew Karp and consisting of speakers representing specific smart eyewear products.

Google Glass led the pack followed by other wearable technologies from Atheer, Avegant, Laforge Optical and Rochester Optical. Having just announced a partnership with Luxottica earlier in the week, and also with VSP Global earlier in the year, Google has already partnered with two of optical’s powerhouses and promises still another “very important partnership announcement,” according to Insiya Lokhandwala, business development, Google Glass.

With Glass still in the early adopter Explorer phase, she said there are three types of reactions from those first encountering the technology – 1) people who are instantly excited, 2) those who are instantly skeptical but then try them on and come around, and 3) those who just stare. “We think wearable computing will change the world,” she said. (*Editor’s Note: on April 15, Google opened enrollment to its Explorers program.*)



Andrew Karp, group editor, lenses and technology, Jobson Optical Group.



Insiya Lokhandwala, business development, Google Glass.



Her presentation took attendees from how it all began as a way of solving the problem of smartphone users always looking down to access information, to the first clunky contraption of wires and devices connected to glasses, to today’s sleek version of Google Glass. She then showed the recently introduced version that’s capable of accommodating prescription glasses. Day-in-the-life videos when traveling, cooking and running a business showed exactly how Google Glass is viewed by the user.

In addition to Google the corporation partnering with other companies in the eyewear space, the Google Glass technology itself integrates with other existing technologies: “Glass is not replacing your smartphone, fitness band or camera,” she said. “Instead, it enhances your experience with those products and may even be the better alternative for some cases. Glass is whatever one makes of it.”

Following Lokhandwala’s presentation of the evolution and expectations for Google Glass, a five-person panel took the stage to introduce their own smart eyewear technologies and discuss the prospects for the

future of the category and how it might fit into the optical realm. As Karp moderated the group, each participant had the opportunity to participate in the discussion as well as present their own smart eyewear technologies.

Sinah Fateh, MD, EVP, Atheer Labs, showed how Atheer Glasses can present a virtual screen of information in the viewer’s line of sight and be used

for medical, industrial, retail and other applications. “As a hands-free mobile device, Atheer Glasses integrate seamlessly with the existing networked devices throughout the hospital,” for use in medicine.

“Atheer Glasses can recognize equipment, pull needed information such as service manuals and repair instructions from the cloud, all while sharing the worker’s point of view with remote experts,” for industrial applications. And for retail environments, “Customers can see the product they are looking to buy virtually in front of them in 3D and to scale and interact with it in a natural way.”

Presenting “A premium mobile experience...without a screen,” Edward Tang, CEO and co-founder of Avegant, showed how his company’s Avegant Glyph wearable technology (virtual retinal display) projects an image from a wide variety of electronic devices directly into the user’s eye. He stressed that corrective optics customized for the user are built into the system and that the way the device looks is important to ensure that it will be worn and used at all. When worn, Avegant’s device looks just like the user is wearing headphones, tapping into the trend toward wearing them in public, until the user slides the viewer down in front of their eyes to access the viewing experience.

Corey Mack, founder, CEO and head of design for Laforge Optical took the audience on a tour of Eyewear 2.0, with examples of products that do and don’t achieve that distinction. His company’s product, Icis, achieves the status of Eyewear 2.0, he said, with its touchpad, virtual display, onboard camera, smartphone communication, folding temples and embedded pre-



*Sina Fateh, MD, executive vice president, Atheer Labs.*



*Edward Tang, CEO/co-founder, Avegant.*



*Corey Mack, CEO/head of design, Laforge Optical.*



*Tim Moore, founder, Venture Glass, director of digital vision, Rochester Optical.*



*Matt Alpert, OD, chairman of optometric innovations, board member, VSP Global.*

scription. One of the features that makes Icis unique, he said, was the fact that the information displayed appears from top to bottom in the viewers' peripheral vision to both the right and left of their line of sight. Among the concerns he voiced was, "Most of the consumer electronics industry has not engaged ECPs."

Representing Rochester Optical, which recently introduced prescription eyewear that can be attached to Google Glass, Tim Moore, founder of Venture Glass and director of digital vision for Rochester Optical, discussed "The Evolution of Digital Vision." He predicted the easy adoption of this technology among today's kids when they become teenagers. "Kids today, they're not going to be afraid of this technology when they become teenagers," he said. "They're going to breathe it like air."

He also forecast that ECPs will be pivotal to the integration of vision correction with smart eyewear. "For anyone who is going to be using any display, I don't care which one it is, if they need corrected vision, guess who they're going to come to? They're going to come to us, and we're going to need to provide some type of assistance. Wearable eyewear has to be fashionable, and they have to have prescription-based models in place."

Matt Alpert, OD, an early adopter who has been trying out Google Glass as an "Explorer" testing the

technology in his optometric practice and elsewhere, also joined the panel to discuss real-life applications of smart eyewear technologies. As chairman of optometric innovations for VSP Global, which partnered with Google Glass earlier this year, he's intimately familiar with the technology.

Everyone had an answer when Karp asked the panel, "What are some of the barriers in terms of

mainstream adoption of wearables? What's it going to take to put it over with U.S. consumers?"

"As the applications develop, and it becomes more personal to the individual, that will help break down and make it more mainstream," answered Alpert.

"There is a 'we've got to get used to it' phase," replied Moore. "We're seeing the wrist is now probably the avenue that's going to go up to the eyewear."

"When it comes to wearable tech, most companies driving it are electronics companies, and they're not engaging the existing ecosystem, so for instance, smart watch companies aren't engaging companies like Timex or Rolex," observed Mack.

"Now, we are all limited by the physical size of our display; just imagine a projector as really small and the size of the screen and the content is huge," said Fateh.

"So many companies are focused on the technology, the application, what are the cool things that you can do with it, but ultimately, if it's not fashionable, if it's not wearable, if people aren't willing to wear it, then that's the biggest barrier," Tang warned. ■

*jsailer@jobson.com*

## Meeting Business Challenges by Riding the Currents of Change

**E**ssilor's Howard Purcell, OD brought energy and enthusiasm to the stage at VM's Global Leadership Summit as he addressed a packed house of the industry's leading executives about navigating through change and innovation. Essilor was a Premier sponsor of the Summit for the third year in a row.

In his remarks to the audience, Essilor's vice president of customer development likened today's business challenges to swimming in the ocean and fighting for survival. "We can crash against those waves and get tossed and turned or we can ride aboard that surfboard and find a way to navigate through change."

Essilor, a global organization that has been recognized by *Forbes Magazine* as one of the world's most

innovative companies, continues to expand the scope of its business, which has grown to include a robust e-commerce capability.

"With all due respect to our virtual players in the room, I would suggest that you know about as much as bricks and mortar as we knew about e-commerce five or six years ago. Our job is to look at the innovation taking place in our industry, understand what's going on, and identify the disruptive elements. How do we use this to support our customer? To me, our customer is the ECP, the doc, the dispenser, the technician and ultimately the consumer."



## SPECIAL REPORT

## E-tailing Shares Stage (And Screen?) With Online Refraction

What does the blurring of “brick” and “click” mean for eyecare? In the process of answering that question, the “Omnichannel” session introduced a technology so disruptive that, in contrast, it demonstrated how firmly established online optical retailing has become. This was followed by speakers representing the world’s largest frame and lens companies, both of which have invested heavily in online retailing by acquiring some of the largest e-tailers around.

“Today’s customers expect retailers to keep up with them. They want to interact with their retailers and their brands regardless of the channel,” said Marge Axelrad, *VM*’s senior VP/editorial director, defining omnichannel and introducing the session.

Aaron Dallek, CEO/co-founder, Opternative, then presented the first technology that can offer online refractions. “At Opternative, we’ve created the first online refractive eye exam technology to deliver a valid prescription. I know you’re thinking this is disruptive. That’s because it is, but we all can benefit if we keep an open mind and work together.”

His company’s proprietary online refractive technology “that anyone anywhere can do themselves” determines sphere, cylinder, axes, Rx, and PD, according to Dallek. Stressing “we’re not here to take everyone’s business away; we’re here to work together,” he said he hopes the technology will make it easy for the 50 million people in the U.S. and 2.5 billion people in the world who have never had an eye exam to start focus-

ing on eye health. To that end, he’s “putting together a think tank of some of the brightest minds in the industry,” and he invited those in the audience to email him to participate.

To ensure that performing online refractions works within the laws of each state, Opternative plans to use its web-based technology along with a licensed ophthalmologist to provide a prescription within 24 hours to those who have their refractions taken online.

This bleeding-edge, online refractive technology, was followed by two presenters who discussed online optical retailing, a technology that itself was once disruptive but has quickly become firmly established and appears as if it is here to stay. The fact that the

next two speakers were Carlo Privitera, Luxottica digital and e-commerce innovation lab president, Glasses.com, and Roy Hessel, president, online initiatives, Essilor, representing the world’s largest frame and lens companies, respectively, shows just how entrenched e-tailing has become in the optical sphere.

Hessel cited the benefits that come from optical e-tailing, “We can take advantage of all these wonderful tools to expand, to increase the average order value, to increase the frequency of purchase, and to really do the service we should toward vision con-



*The panel discussed the implications of online refraction and the rise of online optical retailing. (L to R) Opternative’s Aaron Dallek, Luxottica’s Carlo Privitera and Essilor’s Roy Hessel.*

sumers.” He showed how the independent ECP remains central to the optical retail ecosystem, flanked by chains and e-commerce and surrounded by optical technology innovations, Big Data/cloud computing, value apps and disruptive technologies.

Discussing the session’s topic, Privitera said, “I always have a lot of fun when someone tells me we are going to define the customer experience. We do not define the customer experience anymore. In an omnichannel world, the customer today decides how to move between all the different channels.”

While the event’s “Future/Now” subject pervaded all the presentations, another theme emerged during the omnichannel session when Carlo Privitera, Luxottica’s digital and e-commerce innovation lab president, observed that many of the presenters throughout all of the sessions were also discussing another trend—“people who want to decide how to live their life.” The opportunity to interact with their retailers and their brands in an omnichannel environment is one means to that end. ■



*Aaron Dallek, CEO/co-founder, Opternative.*



*Carlo Privitera, Luxottica Digital and E-commerce Innovation Lab president, Glasses.com.*



*Roy Hessel, president, online initiatives, Essilor.*

*jsailer@jobson.com*

