

# Femme-tastic!

VM's 20-Year Celebration of Women Who Shape the Optical Industry

**20th**  
Anniversary

VM 2022  
**Most  
Influential  
Women in  
Optical**



Image Credit: Getty Images / Libera Caballo

**F**or many, 2022 has been a year of change, adaptation and newness. We have clung to hope for the past two years—waiting for things to go “back to normal,” like COVID-19 never happened. As we continue to live through this pandemic, it’s become clear that normal is something that will continue to change throughout our lives—something that we will be adapting to every day, week, month and year.

Women, of course, have been adapting to change throughout his-

tory. They’ve been at the forefront of it—driving change at home, at work and in society as a whole, and this year is no different. The women we’ve profiled in our 2022 Most Influential Women in Optical report have adapted to an ever-changing world and made it their own, finding their stride and creating a better world every day. We’ve profiled business owners, mentors, young women and more who have taken a year of change as a year of opportunity.

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## A Look Back at 20 Years of Success Stories

Back in 2003, the editors at *Vision Monday* put their heads together and came up with the idea of honoring women in optical who were making a difference in the industry. And so, VM's Most Influential Women in Optical was "born."

For 20 years now, VM's signature Special Report has been saluting women who play vital roles at all levels of the eyewear and eyecare industry and throughout various professions. Over the years, we have shined a spotlight on women making significant contributions throughout various market sectors, such as retailing, wholesaling, product design, manufacturing, distribution, the eyecare professions, academia and managed care.

A lot has changed over the 20 years. In the first five years of publishing the Report, we grouped the honorees by sectors, such as Retail Executives, Suppliers and Optometry. Then in 2008, in an effort to widen the scope of women we wanted to honor, VM solicited nominations and organized the honorees in four distinct sections: Executive Suite, Mentors, Rising Stars and Innovators.

And in 2020, VM added a new category to the Report called Above & Beyond, honoring women who have led the way in giving back to the industry, their patients and their communities.

The categories and the covers of the Special Report may have changed over the years, but one thing has stayed the same—the stunning achievements and contributions made by Influential Women in Optical have remained constant and strong for 20 years and *Vision Monday* has been honored to tell their stories. ■

—Mary Kane



Read previous *Most Influential Women in Optical* Special Reports on [VisionMonday.com](https://www.visionmonday.com).  
See an Alphabetical List of prior years' honorees and a complete PDF of this year's #20YearsofInfluentialWomen feature.

## VM's 20-Year Celebration of Optical's Most Influential Women

Continued from page 10

This year marks VM's 20th annual Most Influential Women in Optical report. Over the past two decades, we've met and profiled hundreds of women who have changed the face of optical for the better—this feature will honor these past nominees, too, with a trivia quiz and special quotes from women who've been featured in years past.

This year, the VM team received over 300 submissions of incredible women and chose 46 well-deserving honorees. These women are divided up into five categories: ABOVE & BEYOND, EXECUTIVE SUITE, RISING STARS, MENTORS and INNOVATORS.

As we've said for the past 20 years—we hope you enjoy meeting these 46 influential women, and reading their stories of strength, adaptation and, of course, success. We look forward to the next 20. ■

—The Editors

# 20th Anniversary

## Congratulations Dee Berghuys

Vice President of Operations at CHARMANT USA

FOR BEING NOMINATED:  
2022 MOST INFLUENTIAL WOMEN  
IN THE OPTICAL INDUSTRY

"A true leader and visionary who continues to improve the optical industry. Your hard work, dedication, and passion for eyewear motivates and inspires everyone around you. We feel very fortunate to work with you and could not think of someone more worthy of this nomination."

—From your team at CHARMANT USA

CHARMANT USA applauds all of the 2022 nominees.



# CHARMANT



# Above and Beyond

WOMEN WHO HAVE LED THE WAY IN GIVING BACK TO THE INDUSTRY, THEIR PATIENTS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

## Pascale Desroches

**HEAD OF MARKETING**  
Essilor Canada  
Montreal

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** “After joining Essilor in 2019, Desroches established herself as a key leader at EssilorLuxottica and has quickly developed a deep understanding of the optical market. She successfully launched multiple innovative products, including the launch of Crizal Rock in Canada and the North America launch of Stelless.”



Pascale Desroches describes herself as a “passionate marketer.” A relative newcomer to the optical industry, Desroches honed her skills at Paris-based L’Oreal, holding positions in brand building and marketing director. She also worked on luxury consumption in Canada, for brands such as Giorgio Armani, Yves Saint Laurent and Ralph Lauren.

“Being in the beauty industry for 17 years, I was looking for a new challenge

that would combine relatable, reliable brands with a strong sense of purpose,” Desroches said. “I was amazed by the hyper-personalization of the optical industry. I wanted to be part of a team that works to combine desirable products with a life-improving experience.”

Desroches said Essilor’s commitment to innovation is key. The company focuses on research, innovation and premium technology and produces vision solutions for people at every stage of their lives. “It creates this urge to present new innovations at their fullest potential. One key example is the groundbreaking launch of Essilor Stelless lenses, which allow our clients to provide a strong answer to the worldwide myopia epidemic.”

Desroches navigated the COVID-19 pandemic with aplomb. Flexibility and resilience were important. Essilor completely readjusted its plans to support its partners by listening to their needs. The company revised its offers and brought different innovations that would drive consumers to clients’ practices, increased information and training, and leveraged its local labs to maximize services.

**SHE SAYS...** “I always take the perspective of the consumer and client, wondering how to better answer their needs and enhance their experience. Fostering authentic curiosity for projects, research and people is a strong enabler of growth.”

## Yvonne Wolbeck

**HEAD OF CUSTOMER SERVICE,  
ZEISS VISION CARE U.S.**  
Carl Zeiss Vision  
Hebron, Kentucky

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** “Yvonne is a true problem-solver, not afraid to dig in and figure out the root causes. She works hard to ensure her team has the skills and support needed to be successful.”



Over the course of 25 years, Yvonne Wolbeck has risen from a customer service representative in a wholesale optical lab to where she is today—head of customer service and part of the vision leadership team for Zeiss U.S.

“I never thought 25+ years later I would still be in optics,” she joked. “However, the old saying still rings true—once you’re in optics, you never leave.”

Among Wolbeck’s many accomplishments, she’s proud to have successfully

centralized the customer service team— assembling a team that supports not only each other and the company, but business partners, as well.

Wolbeck makes her mark by advocating to produce the best lenses and coatings, inspiring and strengthening customer service teams, and developing processes that lead to company growth.

She also plays a critical role in making decisions for the future of Zeiss U.S.

“I’m not afraid to take on different projects,” she said. “I’m the can-do person and will always do my best to find solutions to issues and problems.”

Today, she is a standout leader because of her great devotion to customers and employees. Wolbeck is eager to listen to her teams, to expand her knowledge of the changes in the industry, and think creatively to solve problems within her reach.

She always makes time for everyone, and she manages to balance a lot of people and personalities to find the best resolutions for all.

**SHE SAYS...** “The best feeling in the world is when you make a difference, and you make someone’s day brighter.”

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## Janet Callif

**SHE SAYS...** “I think many women today still have to persevere for the right to play with the big boys: they need strong self-confidence and self-esteem, and the belief that they’re as capable and intelligent as men. But ultimately results are what count—if you don’t have results, you’re not in the game.”

ARCHIVES



WOMEN WHO HOLD POSITIONS SUCH AS PRESIDENT, VP, CEO, CFO, CIO, OR COO

## Dee Berghuys

**VICE PRESIDENT OPERATIONS**  
Charmant USA  
Morris Plains, New Jersey

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Dee is a strong, reliable, hardworking professional who is organized, determined, and a motivating force to all those that work with her. Dee has been in the optical industry for more than 40 years and has held several significant roles in each organization. She came to Charmant USA 23 years ago. During her tenure at Charmant she has hired and worked with many women, all of whom have continued to develop under her guidance.”



Dee Berghuys began her optical career 38 years ago at Optyl Corporation, and has grown continuously since then. At Charmant, she helps to steer the direction of the company in all of its operations, product and marketing efforts. Along the way, she has seen how her own career has grown alongside the optical industry. “It’s amazing how the optical industry has grown over the years and it’s exciting to see how new materials are developed and what new technology can be integrated into the eyewear.”

At Charmant, Berghuys helped launch an initiative for breast cancer

awareness, as well as one to support the American Heart Association. The Charmant USA team has always had a “team spirit” atmosphere, Berghuys said, something the pandemic has only made even more apparent.

“While most of us were working remote for a few months, everyone stayed connected and worked together to support each other and ensure what needed to get done for our customers and sales consultants was accomplished. It made us think outside the box and be creative in what we were doing.”

**SHE SAYS...** “Remain curious, take inspiration from those around you and maintain a positive outlook. It’s a great industry with a lot of talented people.”

## Bethany Fishbein, OD

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
The Power Practice  
North Brunswick, New Jersey

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She is in charge of several hundred offices’ consulting services, and has an amazing sense of ‘the right thing to do,’ and she is extremely intuitive.”

Bethany Fishbein, OD, was inspired to become an optometrist by working at Camp Marcella, a camp for blind and visually impaired children. She wears several hats now, including CEO of The Power Practice, which she joined in 2001 as a consultant. She founded with her husband, Jonathan Fishbein, Somerset Eye Care in North Brunswick, New



Jersey, and is the host of “The Power Hour,” an optometry podcast.

“I work with my amazing team of optometrists and business coaches to help our clients achieve their goals in their practices and find joy and profit in independent optometry,” Fishbein said. “A practice management consultant was instrumental in helping us succeed, and I was inspired to help others in the same way.”

Fishbein took on the role of CEO of The Power Practice in 2021 while continuing her practice at Somerset. She was chosen for the position, in part, because of intuition and ability to “know how to do the right thing.”

“I’m always inspired by how deeply our work affects others,” she said. “It’s not uncommon for a client to tell us that learning about managing their practice has also helped them in other areas of their life. When we coach someone in leadership, the effects ripple out to their staff, patients, and families.”

**SHE SAYS...** “Find people who ‘get you’—professionally and personally. It’s really helpful to have friends who know what you’re going through. I have an incredible group of optometry friends, most of whom are practice owners, from around the globe who are always there to provide support or listen.”

## Katy Hanson

**CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER**  
Eyemart Express  
Farmers Branch, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Under Katy Hanson’s leadership, the Eyemart Express brand has deepened connections with customers as the company has evolved from an established family-led business to a rapidly growing organization. Her strategic thinking and open-minded approach instilled a ‘test and learn’ culture in the marketing department, empowering her team and positively resonating with customers nationwide.”



For Katy Hanson, the role of chief marketing officer at Eyemart Express in Farmers Branch, Texas, has evolved beyond traditional marketing concepts. The core of her responsibilities is focused on partnering with teams across the organization to create strategic plans that drive the company’s growth and profits.

At Eyemart Express, Hanson has worked to implement new interactive strategies that enable team members across all levels to see immediate results, which then often spark new ideas and foster growth. She credits her involvement with two key industry orga-

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nizations—the Optical Women’s Association and The Vision Council, where she serves on the marketing committee—with helping her to quickly become immersed in the industry after starting her career in non-optical retail roles.

Hanson spent the beginning of her career expanding her knowledge and skillsets in various retail marketing roles, including with Blockbuster, where she worked her way up to become director of implementation and communications. She also spent nine years at Michaels Stores, where she was promoted to vice president of marketing.

“My experiences and the people I had the opportunity to work with have shaped my leadership skills and contributions at Eyemart Express,” Hanson said.

Hanson leads marketing operations and spearheads company-wide initiatives that impact everything from merchandise to customer experience, both in-store and online. Technology and real-time analytics allow her to have a hands-on approach and to optimize results.

**SHE SAYS...** “Don’t be afraid to ask questions or share new ideas. Curiosity is the foundation of innovation. Your experiences and perspectives are unique and could result in a new ‘pathway to yes’ that drives incredible results or makes processes more efficient.”

## Elizabeth Klunk

**SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT**  
Versant Health  
Linthicum, Maryland

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** “Liz has a passion for ensuring that individuals are educated about their health

and understand how to access and receive care. For the past three years, Liz has been on the executive leadership team board of the American Heart Association.”



Elizabeth Klunk has been in the optical industry for five years, quickly developing her role within the company. She is responsible for developing strategic solutions, nurturing partnerships, and delivering value to health plan clients and their memberships.

She has always had a passion for health care and has made it one of her outside office roles too. For the past three years, she has served on the executive leadership team board of the American Heart Association, Go Red for Women Campaign, Greater Maryland Chapter. She is also involved in mentoring up-and-coming female executive leaders as a founding member of Chief, Washington, DC.

She has received many honors for her work including two Stevie Awards for Women in Business.

Her background as a professional registered nurse has been a significant inspiration during her time in health care, noting it has become her personal North Star that allows her to influence change and take steps to ensure her clients enjoy the wonders of sight.

**SHE SAYS...** “I feel I have been a champion of the importance of eye

health and wellness. Vision care is not and should not be viewed as a commodity or a supplemental benefit. It is my professional goal to bring together the disparity between vision and eyecare, and overall medical and health care.”

## Traci Logan

**EXECUTIVE VP/CFO/COO**  
New England College of Optometry  
Boston, Massachusetts

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** “Traci has reset the bar when it comes to financial success and growth in optometric education. Her creative thinking, focus on cost and optimization of operations has changed the short and long-term picture for NECO and its community.”



Traci Logan’s diverse and varied career has made her a leading figure in the optical industry. She has served as a consultant to Brandeis University, the Harvard School of Dental Medicine, and the New England School of Acupuncture. She was also a member of the board of trustees for the Cambridge Health Alliance, a health care provider in Cambridge, Somerville, and Boston’s metro-north communities in Massachusetts. Today, she is a member of the board of trustees for the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals-Angell Animal Medical Center.

Logan said her inspiration comes from the people she works with including the students, patients, and the NECO mission: To Change the Way People See the World. She said sight is both a gift and a miracle, a key sense that drives our view of ourselves, each other, and the world we share. To be in a profession dedicated to vision and health is an honor, she said.

She believes in the importance of mentoring the next generation of leaders, adding that her success has been inextricably linked to the opportunities provided to her by other people.

**SHE SAYS...** “Everyone is part of a team, and success is a function of talent and luck—being at the right place at the right time, with the right idea, and the right people to support you is as necessary for your success as your talent, experience and skills. Recognize the importance of innovation, collaboration, and strategy. Grace under pressure will get you everywhere.”

## Kathy Melita

**VICE PRESIDENT – CORPORATE CONTROLLER**  
Marchon Eyewear  
Melville, New York

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** “Kathy works closely with Marchon’s president and his direct reports to guide global financial planning, forecasting, cost and profit management, accounting as well as strategy development. Under her stewardship, Marchon navigated through a most challenging 2020 and reemerged in 2021 as one of the fastest-growing leaders in the industry.”

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# Executive Suite

WOMEN WHO HOLD POSITIONS SUCH AS PRESIDENT, VP, CEO, CFO, CIO, OR COO



Kathy Melita has been in the optical industry for 18 years. She began as the corporate controller of Marchon and was promoted to vice president – corporate controller in 2015. Today, she leads a team of 80 including Marchon's global financial reporting, planning, and forecasting, overseeing the finance teams in Europe and Asia, providing M&A support, and assisting Marchon's management with planning and the implementation of strategic initiatives.

Her inspiration comes from working with a purpose-driven company such as Marchon's parent company, VSP Vision, which provides its employees with countless opportunities to give back including through the VSP Eyes of Hope mobile eyecare clinics. She said programs like that have helped her learn the importance of eyecare and that the stories she has heard from VSP members who have identified serious health issues through a routine eye exam reinforce the importance of the optical business.

She has always worked to create a positive work environment for her team while being transparent in communicating and interpreting results and forecasts. "I retained finance staff with training, development and teamwork, which were pivotal during the pandemic."

**SHE SAYS...** "As the optical business continues to evolve, be flexible and look for opportunities to add new skills to your professional tool belt. It is important to continue to grow, stay fresh, and be nimble so that you are equipped to deal with the level of change in the industry."

## Pelin Munis, PhD

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
RestoringVision  
San Francisco, California



**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** "Pelin recently accomplished reaching more than 20 million people globally with RestoringVision's vision programs and eyeglass delivery since the organization's inception in 2003. Under

her leadership, RestoringVision has built an unparalleled network of more than 2,500 NGO partners and government social service agencies who have added vision programming to their work."

Pelin Munis joined RestoringVision as executive director in January 2015. Her background and experience as a professional, applied psychologist and entrepreneur brought to the position more than 20 years of executive planning,

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**Kristen Tischler**  
*Vice President, Global Marketing*

**VISION MONDAY'S 2022  
Most Influential  
Women in Optical  
Honoree**

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ONE ALLIANCE  
SEVEN INDUSTRY LEADERS  
COMPREHENSIVE OPHTHALMIC SOLUTIONS

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administration, communications and marketing experience in non-profit sectors.

In her role with RestoringVision, her team has reached more than 20 million people globally with vision programs and eyeglass delivery since 2003. She has helped build a network of 2,500 NGO and government agency partners who have added vision programs to their organizations. Through these strategic partnerships, RestoringVision has expanded its vision programs from 70 countries to 144 countries since Munis joined the organization.

Her own experience of dealing with a family member with vision loss has had a tremendous impact on her work within the optical industry and she feels that bearing witness to her father's journey left an imprint and deep desire to help others.

**SHE SAYS...** "Go forward with confidence and leverage the many talented women and men in our sector whom I have found to be eager and excited to support one another. As you develop your career, seek out new experiences, engage and immerse yourself in both the for-profit and nonprofit aspects of our great industry. You will not only grow professionally, but you will also grow personally."

## Patricia Negaard

### PRESIDENT

Eye-Kraft Optical  
St Cloud, Minnesota

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** "Her story and the wonderful history behind Eye-Kraft are important examples of the strength women displayed in the roles they typically filled in

the late part of the last century and how those roles evolved into the industry-leading innovation, productivity, creativity and power women have in today's business world. Pat is a bridge between these two worlds."



Patricia Negaard began her career in the optical industry more than 68 years ago working as a secretary in a Benson optical lab in Billings, Montana. This is where she would meet her future husband Jim, and the rest as they say is history. The couple began Eye-Kraft with a couple of used machines in Jim's parent's basement and over time the company expanded to become one of the largest independent optical labs in the U.S.

Upon her husband's passing in 2006, Patricia took the helm and began to expand their client base after years of focusing on state-managed care optical work. She grew her leadership team and brought in additional capacity to grow production output.

She believes vision is one of the most important tools, and that labs like hers have a tremendous impact on the lives of others. Her strong faith and relationship with God have been one of her greatest supports throughout her time running Eye-Kraft Optical.

**SHE SAYS...** "Women (and men) shouldn't discount the strength,

resourcefulness, perseverance and dedication it requires to raise and support a family. Many of these skills translate into the business world quite easily, and the character traits required of both men and women with this experience give them a solid foundation in the workplace. See this experience as a strength, treat people like family, and you'll see positive growth and returns."

## Shondra Pistone

### SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, OPERATIONS

Keplr Vision  
Bloomington, Illinois

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** "Shondra Pistone is the quintessential servant leader. Her selfless investment in others' success inspires teammates to push well beyond their own perceived capabilities. Keplr Vision's rapid growth over the past three years would not have been possible without Shondra's consistent, authentic and accountable leadership style."



Shondra Pistone began her career in optical/optometry in 1997 as a patient coordinator and quickly moved into optician, optometric technician and leadership roles in retail and private practices. She also spent time as a financial analyst in the casino industry before her

love of the optical industry pulled her back in as a FP&A and strategy manager with a PE-backed optometry and ophthalmology group. (She has a black belt in Lean Management.)

After another career stop, Pistone took on an operations role with Visionary Eye Partners, which later joined forces with Total EyeCare Partners to become what is now Keplr Vision today.

Today, as SVP of operations, she is responsible for the overall operations of 286 practices in 35 states. Her team provides operational leadership, support and mentoring to teammates in the practices. This includes operational leadership in the form of process implementation, practice growth, patient experience excellence and teammate experience.

"The people who I serve as a leader and the patients that they serve are what drive me to do what I do each day," she said. "The optical industry not only allows me to make a difference in the lives of our patients, but our teammates as well. Being in an industry that enhances a patient's eye health as well as enhances their lives by providing them with fashionable eyewear drives me to be my best. Leading our teams through adversity and in success push me as a leader and keeps me focused. I could not imagine doing anything else."

**SHE SAYS...** "I am a firm believer that you learn from every single person you encounter. As a woman in this industry, you can make a huge difference by learning both what to do and what not to do from leaders you encounter. Build your toolbelt with all of your learnings and push yourself at each step along the way. It won't always be easy but it will be worth it."

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WOMEN WHO HOLD POSITIONS SUCH AS PRESIDENT, VP, CEO, CFO, CIO, OR COO

**Christine Schneider****EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,  
CO-FOUNDER**RevCycle Partners  
Glen Ellyn, Illinois

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Christine has built one of the leading stand-alone revenue cycle management firms focused solely on the eyecare market. Under her leadership, it has gone from startup to a multimillion-dollar RCM business, delivering services to eyecare practices in all 50 states.”

With 15 years of experience, Christine Schneider knows that insurance is

complex, and many practices need the support of a strong billing partner.

After starting her career by answering an ad for a biller position, Schneider built her expertise in optometry-related business and insurance best practices—dedicating much of her time sharing these best practices to help partners succeed.

In 2013, in her customer service role at RevolutionEHR, she launched RevCycle as an add-on service to customers. Five years later, she and a partner purchased the service and founded RevCycle Partners, a unique billing, credentialing and verification service supporting most major PMS/EHR platforms within the industry.

Today, Schneider is responsible for



the growth and development of this best-in-class company, and has already created more than 100 jobs. As a member of RevCycle’s board of directors, she continues to play a critical role in the company’s development and success.

“I have built a team of experts that evolve and grow as this industry does; and because of that, practices we have partnered with achieve greater

success,” she said.

Her dedication to helping others grow, build cohesive teams and learn from mistakes are all part of what makes Schneider an inspiring leader. She believes that making a difference begins with following your passion and investing in yourself—then offering your expertise to others.

**SHE SAYS...** “I feel I’ve made a difference because I took the time to listen and learn.”

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Congratulations

**PATRICIA NEGAARD**

VM 2022 **Most Influential Women** in Optical

**EYEKRAFT CELEBRATES ALL OF THE INSPIRING WOMEN RECOGNIZED THIS YEAR**

We are especially honored to work alongside our boss and the owner of Eye-Kraft, Patricia Negaard. While her husband, Jim, started Eye-Kraft in their garage in the late 1950s, Pat managed their home and the business’ social and entertaining activities. After his death in the early 2000s, Pat inherited the responsibility of running a multi-million dollar optical lab and through her faith and the strength of her leadership, grew it into a technologically advanced, competitive lab.

**At EyeKraft, we’re lucky to have had the direction, vision, and support of Pat for nearly 70 years. She’s a great example of the critical roles women play in both family and business.**



WOMEN WHO HOLD POSITIONS SUCH AS PRESIDENT, VP, CEO, CFO, CIO, OR COO

## Tommasina Pasqua Sideris, OD

**OWNER/OPERATOR**  
Eyes on Litchfield  
Litchfield, Connecticut

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Because of her entrepreneurial spirit, love of eyewear fashion and support for independent artists, she’s proven that you can have the practice of your dreams.”



After working for a year at a commercial establishment and an ophthalmology practice, Tommasina Sideris took a chance and followed her dream. She started her first practice from scratch in 1999 in Northern Michigan. Nine years later, she purchased six established optical practices with the goal of turning them around.

During this time, she was also nurturing a secret passion: eyewear design.

“I had the fun experience of having eyewear prototypes manufactured from my sketchbook,” she said. “Seeing the finished product created from a sketch has been one of the highlights of my career.”

In 2013, she found love, got married and relocated with her son to Connecticut. Too young to retire—and missing the excitement of being a business owner—she started Eyes on Litchfield

from scratch in 2016. It’s a high-end optical boutique with beautiful eyewear fashion from all over the world, and it’s been steadily growing.

“We strive to make each patient interaction a stellar one, and we love it when we hear, ‘This isn’t your typical doctor’s office,’” she said.

Sideris is also passionate about helping others. Not only does she dominate social media as an eye doctor, other business owners often come to her to collaborate and learn tips for social media success. In addition, she runs weekly meetings to help other entrepreneurs with business management technology to improve their business.

**SHE SAYS...** “Doing something to improve another’s life in some way is what inspires me.”

## Melissa Sorenson

**CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER**  
VSP Vision  
Victoria, Minnesota

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Melissa’s work has enabled VSP Vision to develop the framework to make well-founded decisions and is a main reason why VSP Vision has been named one of the Best Managed Companies for consecutive years.”

Within months of joining VSP Vision in 2019, Melissa Sorenson had achieved an enormous feat—development of the first enterprise strategy in the history of the company. In 2020, the board of directors listed the strategy as the top management accomplishment of the year.

This was just one major achieve-

ment for Sorenson, who in 2021, further developed the strategic process to include strategies at each line of business.

Another major accomplishment was the success of a significant communications campaign to ensure the entire employee base understands the company strategy, in relatable and relevant terms. An internal survey revealed that 87 percent of employees say they “have a good understanding of VSP’s strategy and goals,” which is critical to the company’s long-term success.

In light of her work, it’s no surprise that VSP Vision has been named as U.S. Best Managed Company by Deloitte and *The Wall Street Journal* for two consecutive years—an accomplishment that’s proudly shared by employees across the company.

“I’ve really enjoyed the opportunity to partner with the leadership at VSP Vision to continue to stretch our thinking about the role we play in the industry, and how we can lead the industry forward as the landscape changes around us,” she said.

**SHE SAYS...** “I always love to tell professionals to be someone that people want at the table. Show up well informed and with good intent, embrace transparency and empathy, and drive for results in a way that helps others achieve their goals, too.”



## Kellie Spector

**REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT**  
AEG Vision  
Dallas, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She does an amazing job of creating a positive, people-centric environment that enables her teams to thrive.”



Celebrating 25 years in the optical industry, Kellie Spector knows that creating a positive culture results in teams that make a difference. Early in her career, she grew Crown Vision Center from seven locations to 28 locations before it was acquired by AEG Vision in 2017.

Now, as AEG Vision’s regional vice president for the Midwest, she oversees optical operations in six states, manages 75 optometry practices with 600 doctors and associates, and ensures consistent operating procedures across many different business models.

Spector has a keen eye for talent and a proven track record of hiring strong teams. She empowers them with vision and tools for success, generating long-term sustainable results. As a result, patient satisfaction scores at Spector’s practices average 85 percent—considered world-class.

To build high-performing teams, she is first inspired by the patients. She then removes any obstacles that may prevent her teams from providing excel-

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WOMEN WHO HOLD POSITIONS SUCH AS PRESIDENT, VP, CEO, CFO, CIO, OR COO

lent vision care. She offers outstanding support by aligning teams' common goals, providing tools and resources, and always encouraging professional growth and mental well-being.

Colleagues describe Spector as someone who "walks the walk" and sets a great example by personally visiting practices, modeling behaviors, providing mentorship and training.

"Changing the life of someone by promotion is the 'why' behind what I do," she said.

With all her leadership successes, Spector believes in giving back to the community. As founding board member of Kids Vision for Life, her teams provide free, mobile eye exams and eyeglasses to over 10,000 underprivileged children in the St. Louis area each year.

**SHE SAYS...** "Never stop learning, even in an executive role."

## Kathleen Steele

### SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT & GENERAL MANAGER

Pearle Vision  
New York, New York

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** "She's a strong leader and is incredibly smart and strategic. She's built the skills to understand a market need and build a cohesive plan to address it."

During the first decade of her career in higher education, Kathleen Steele identified her passion for developing product and category strategy to address



market gaps. In 2011, she transitioned to the optical industry and joined Luxottica to lead contact lens strategy for LensCrafters.

After one year, Steele's focus shifted to lab innovation and eventually eyecare, before joining Pearle Vision in 2016. As her scope expanded to VP of brand operations, she was responsible for operations services, as well as communications, business analytics and stores. In that role, she helped launch a

managed supply chain for franchisees, which included the development of a complex infrastructure and significant change management.

"This launch was a transformative initiative, and with five years of results, a resounding success," she said. "Building and leading the team that developed the infrastructure and defined the category strategy was one of the most challenging and rewarding moments in my career."

In May 2022, she was elevated to general manager of Pearle Vision, overseeing the brand's 500 locations across North America.

At Pearle Vision, she has advanced the doctor-focused franchising model that makes Pearle unique and has built strong relationships with franchisees.

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Focused on your success.



## CONGRATULATIONS

# SUE BARRY

REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT  
WALMAN OPTICAL

For being one of Vision Monday's 2022  
Most Influential Women in Optical!

Your guidance and leadership have led your team and countless eye care professionals to excellence at every level. Thank you for your dedication and commitment, it is a privilege to have you on the team Sue.

Your family at Walman appreciates you and all others nominated and honored this year.

WOMEN WHO HOLD POSITIONS SUCH AS PRESIDENT, VP, CEO, CFO, CIO, OR COO

Steele and her team have helped Pearle earn the contract to operate North American optical sites for the Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM), plus top honors including the #1 Eyecare Franchise on *Entrepreneur* magazine's prestigious Franchise 500 list, and a Women's Choice Award for customer satisfaction among women.

**SHE SAYS...** "Knowing that our business success improves the lives of others is incredibly rewarding."

## Jennifer Tabiza, OD

### CO-FOUNDER AND CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

Westchester Eyecare Center, Dr. Contact Lens, Techifeye  
Los Angeles, California

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** "Jennifer is a visionary in the space of optometry. She understands what you need before you do, and is not scared to roll up her sleeves and make it happen."

Dr. Jennifer Tabiza has always had a curious fascination with eyes. As a child, she'd flip through her mom's magazines and make collages using only the eyes. "I knew early on that somehow eyes would be part of my mission in life," she said. Finally, someone suggested a career in optometry, and Dr. Tabiza's



career has surpassed her imagination.

Not counting her interest as a young child, Dr. Tabiza has worked in the industry for 13 years. After six years of subleasing a space in a local Walmart, she purchased a private practice in Los Angeles, where she overhauled the business and implemented all new technology and services. As she expanded and updated technologies for her practice, she also heard the cry of many ODs who were struggling to run a successful private practice. Thus, a new passion was piqued.

Responding to the need, Dr. Tabiza co-founded Dr. Contact Lens with a colleague in 2016—and the journey of building a tech company began.

"Our passion for consulting and empowering ODs in business led to the development of a technology alliance we founded in 2021 called Techifeye—a toolbox of technologies that streamline practices while generating more revenue," she said.

Dr. Tabiza currently runs operations and marketing at Dr. Contact Lens and Techifeye, while also seeing patients in her private practice, as well.

**SHE SAYS...** "My greatest passion is empowerment. I love helping other business owners find ways to run their practice with more efficiency, ease and confidence."

## Kristen Tischler

### VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL MARKETING

Advancing Eyecare  
Jacksonville, Florida

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** "Kristen is an amazing problem solver and innovator, consistently developing programs that improve and enhance the business of Advancing Eyecare."



From professional volleyball and advertising/PR to a nationally recognized wealth management company, Kristen Tischler's career path to the optical industry has been anything but conventional. But when presented with the opportunity to join Advancing Eyecare in 2017, she jumped at the chance—immediately drawn to the tight-knit vision care community.

Today in her role on the executive

leadership team, Tischler leads global marketing efforts for all of the Advancing Eyecare companies. Her responsibilities include digital innovation, branding, strategy and insights, product marketing, corporate communications, creative development and partnership programs.

"I wear a lot of hats, but I'm laser focused on our primary mission of advancing eyecare—ensuring everything we do is geared toward fulfilling the evolving needs of our doctors and the patients they serve."

Supporting that mission, she fosters a culture of high-performance, collaboration, continuous improvement, accountability and trust. She strives to remain agile and constantly growing, and said no two days are the same.

"In today's digital world, consumer expectations have rapidly evolved," she said. "In my position, I have the privilege of being able to connect with leading industry innovators, and I've really enjoyed bringing talented people with diverse backgrounds and experiences together to solve problems and add value. Together, we've been able to adapt what and how we communicate to meet the ever-changing needs of eyecare providers."

**SHE SAYS...** "Surround yourself with people who inspire you. Be curious. Ask questions. Say 'yes' to opportunities, even if it's uncomfortable."

More →



2014

## Tami Ortiz, Senior Manager, Marketing, Altair Eyewear, Rancho Cordova, California

**SHE SAYS...** "Life is much larger than a 'job.' People have goals and dreams that extend beyond the cubicle walls. It is my role to create opportunities for goals and dreams to be achieved."

ARCHIVES

### Emily Eisenhower, OD

#### OPTOMETRIST AND OWNER Vision Source of Newport Newport, Tennessee

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Emily is already a state president at the age of 31 and has helped grow a rural practice in Tennessee to the point where it has added vision rehabilitation to the office. She is a risk taker who is strengthening the profession at the grassroots level."



Emily Eisenhower, optometrist and owner of a Vision Source practice in Newport, Tenn., discovered her passion for optical in high school when she worked for local optometrists as a technician. Throughout her college career at East Tennessee State University, she worked in a primary care and a neuro-rehabilitation clinic. She graduated summa cum laude from the Southern College of Optometry in 2017.

At Vision Source, Eisenhower manages the neuro-rehabilitation clinic and therapies, conducts eye exams and performs general diagnostic interpretation, including the diagnosis and treatment of ocular disease.

Eisenhower is president-elect of the Tennessee Association of Optometric Physicians and has served on the TAOP board since 2019. She's also an active

member of the American Optometric Association (AOA), and recently received the AOA President's Award for exemplary dedication to optometry and the advancement of the profession.

"My inspiration is the impact I can have on my patients' lives, whether we're addressing someone's need for glasses, providing them with a diagnosis of a systemic-related eye disease, or recommending vision therapy to allow the eyes and brain to function more smoothly," Eisenhower said.

Eisenhower had no shortage of mentors when she was starting out in the field. "My mentors have made me the doctor that I am today," she said. "Dr. Jeff Foster and Dr. Kurt Steele, two of the great optometry giants from Tennessee, are the reason I became interested in optometry," she said.

**SHE SAYS...** "As women, we must continue to stay engaged in our profession and maintain leadership roles within our practice, and state and national organizations. If there's an area of optometry that you're passionate about, continue learning and share your expertise in that field. Practice with compassion and put your patients first. That way, you'll always be successful."

### Breann Forliti, OD

#### PRESIDENT Blaine Eye Clinic Blaine, Minnesota

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "She leads a team of almost 40 employees by role modeling, mentoring and inspiring. She gives back to the

community in her 'See The Good' campaign, which recognizes people who either have been 'the good in someone's life' or need to see the good, by donating a pair of glasses to the honoree."



Breann Forliti, OD, of Blaine Eye Clinic in Blaine, Minn., grew up in the optical industry; her father was an optometrist and business owner. She did everything from cleaning and filing to refracting for doctors at his practice, until she went to optometry school. Forliti got a degree in business from St. Cloud State and an optometry degree from Southern California College of Optometry. She was recently named a CooperVision Best Practice for 2022.

Dr. Forliti was chosen for this honor because she is committed to building and strengthening relationships among optometrists, and providing higher standards of eyecare. She recently joined the board of VOSH, one of the largest optometry and lay volunteer humanitarian nonprofits in the world.

"It's my responsibility to give a high level of care to all my patients and offer them understanding, education and tools to achieve and maintain their best vision," Dr. Forliti said. "I set the standard of care that we provide for patients. It's also my responsibility to be a smart businesswoman as my staff and their families depend on this. I also feel it's

important to give back and support the community around us."

Dr. Forliti's main mentor was her father, Dr. Lynn Sulerud, who instilled in her a good and fair work ethic and taught her that if she always makes choices in the best interest of her patients, everything else will fall into place. She was also mentored by his business partner who eventually became Dr. Forliti's business partner and friend, Dr. Georgiann Jensen. "She has modeled for me kindness, compassion, and exceptional patient care with uncompromising values," Dr. Forliti said.

**SHE SAYS...** "People more than ever are looking for authenticity. There is not one right way. Find what makes you passionate or unique or find something you feel really strongly about and build around that."

#### Tracy V. Green CO-FOUNDER AND CEO Nancey Harris CO-FOUNDER AND COO Vontelle Eyewear Brooklyn, New York

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "These owners, leaders and dear friends have worked tirelessly to build a loyal following (including Queen Latifah, among others) and to make accessible their beloved accessory, fashion eyewear. Their story is eye-catching because they left significant corporate jobs (Tracy is a former hospital CFO, and Nancey a sales executive) to make an impact. They seek to improve the quality of life for others and to advocate for the next generation."

More →



# Rising Stars

WOMEN WHO ARE 'UP-AND-COMERS' IN THEIR CAREERS AND COMPANIES



Vontélle Eyewear co-founder and CEO Tracy V. Green (r) and co-founder and COO Nancey Harris (l) are filling an essential niche. The global eyewear market in 2019 was valued at \$135 billion and is estimated to grow to \$259 billion by 2027. Yet, there's less than a handful of Black eyewear makers.

Vontélle Eyewear's handcrafted designs are created for diverse faces. Green and Harris said their research con-

cluded that many people wear ill-fitting glasses, so they designed wider bridges for the nose, and larger lenses for high cheekbones.

"Vontélle was an idea, that enabled us to create a brand with a mission," they noted. "The ability to combine the gift of sight and beauty is fulfilling and quintessential. We became entrepreneurs to fill a need in the marketplace ... and every day we receive confirmation that we are making people happy."

The Vontélle concept was born when both founders lost their expensive eyewear in the same year. They decided to buy from a Black-owned brand, but after searching for glasses with an ethnic flair, realized that none existed. That's when Green suggested they start

their own line.

The company produces luxury bespoke eyewear that has unique African, Caribbean and Latin designs.

**THEY SAY...** "Do your research and get the knowledge and answers you seek. Make sure you have a business plan with real costs and revenue projections. For every \$1 you make, you are likely spending \$3."

## Angelina Popovic, OD

**VP MEDICAL AND PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS**  
Shopko Optical  
Green Bay, Wisconsin

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Dr. Popovic's

influence has been felt broadly across the company since she joined the Shopko Optical team in late summer 2021. Dr. P, as she's affectionately known, brings energy and drive to leading the professional services organization and influencing the patient experience. Dr. Popovic has leveraged her years as an optometrist and optometry student mentor to enhance our doctor-centric practice model and culture."

Dr. Angelina Popovic joined the optical industry more than 15 years ago after graduating from the Illinois College of Optometry where she was awarded the Clinic Excellence Award for exemplary patient care services. During her career,

More →

## Our people are the heart of our success.

Eastman is proud that Rachel Oakley has been recognized as one of Vision Monday's Most Influential Women in Optical in the "Innovators" category.

Thanks to her dedication, passion for sustainability, and exceptional leadership, Rachel has helped open the way to new circularity for the eyewear industry.

Eastman congratulates and thanks all the influential women for inspiring the innovations of today and tomorrow!

For more information on our sustainability and diversity initiatives, visit [eastman.eco](http://eastman.eco) and [eastman.com/diversity](http://eastman.com/diversity).



Rachel Oakley Eyewear segment market manager

**EASTMAN**



Global  
Commitment



### Marisol Rodriguez, LDO, ABO-AC, NCLEC

**LICENSED DISPENSING OPTICIAN**  
Costco Optical  
Charlotte, North Carolina

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** “She understands that the decisions made today affect the opticians of tomorrow. If you ask her, her mission is to inspire others.”



Even 20 years after her career began, Rodriguez still finds herself in awe of the expanse of the optical industry.

She encourages new practitioners to break free from the mindset of “minimum requirements,” instead encouraging people to go for advanced certifications and master designations. Rodriguez leads by example—she continues to educate herself by reading two to four new articles every month, writing articles, supporting local seminars, and has successfully achieved advanced certifications and promotions herself. She challenges other women in the optical field to dive in and expand their skill sets by doing the same.

**SHE SAYS...** “To really make a difference, I practice proactive vulnerability—getting out of my own way. I encourage others to stay abreast with the profession, and to network, network, network!”

### Jennifer Tsai, OD

**FOUNDER**  
Line of Sight  
Hudson Yards, New York

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** “Jennifer is making eyecare exciting and trendy for the new generation. She’s a force to be reckoned with and an inspiration for many young women both in optometry and other professions.”

After the correction of her own childhood eye conditions and needing glasses, Jennifer Tsai, OD, grew up understanding the importance of vision and how proper eyecare can make a huge difference in one’s life.

Today, she is a board-certified optom-



she has aspired to work at a higher level to promote the continuous development of knowledge, skills, and quality of patient care with her peers.

She has taken on several roles during her time at Shopko including leading optometric services on executing operational activities impacting doctor operations, and overseeing staffing and recruiting of optometrists for Shopko Optical. She is also responsible for providing strategic direction and day-to-day operations of all Shopko Optical doctors and independent doctors of optometry.

As a child, Dr. Popovic was greatly impacted by a loved one who went blind. The slow and distressing process that nobody could stop was difficult for a child to understand. She recognized fear and helplessness, and it became a battle that she too needed to fight. She believes it was at this time she found her calling.

**SHE SAYS...** “My advice would be for women to remain passionate about optometry throughout your career. Be a team player, work in a collegiate and collaborative manner with compassion and professionalism not only toward your patients but staff as well. Your work and the way you work can inspire other women in optometry or in whatever their chosen field may be.”

Marisol Rodriguez is an inspiring leader who taps into the many realms of optical work. She enjoys the “mixed bag” of opportunities to problem-solve that make the day-to-day experience of opticianry exciting.

“Being of service in many facets of the industry really aligns with my personality and is quite rewarding,” she said. “What inspires me is the opportunity to keep growing.”

Rodriguez is a full-time dispensing optician, serves on the board of the North Carolina Opticians Associations (NCOA) and is an Ambassador for the National Academy of Opticianry (NAO). Always passionate about being of service to the industry, she regularly writes for *20/20 Magazine*, and volunteers as a moderator and content contributor to “The Optical Guild” group on Facebook. She specializes in advocacy, education and quality conversations about the future of optical care.

etrust, and the founder of Line of Sight, a cold-start practice she launched at the onset of the pandemic in January 2020. It’s a modern concierge practice with an integrative holistic wellness approach to eyecare. Even throughout the pandemic, Dr. Tsai ensures safety, educates and expresses true concern for her patients.

“I wanted to create a reimagined and elevated eye doctor’s office,” she said. “I believe a concierge holistic approach is the future of health care, and I strive to be at the forefront of this by integrating aesthetic procedures and cosmetic treatments into my practice.”

Dr. Tsai is also a health care speaker and content creator in the field of vision and entrepreneurship. She has contributed as an eyecare expert and speaker on TV, including the Today Show, Oprah and Fox, as well as publications like Allure, Seventeen and Shape magazine. She is passionate about eyecare and wellness, and shares her expertise and personal lifestyle on social media as @drjenandjuice with her combined following of 325,000 on Instagram, TikTok and YouTube.

In 2021, she was an honoree on Forbes Next 1000 for inspiring young upstart entrepreneurs and small business leaders.

**SHE SAYS...** “Real success happens when no one else is paying attention, so if you want it—don’t ever give up!”

More →



WOMEN WHO ARE 'UP-AND-COMERS' IN THEIR CAREERS AND COMPANIES

## Ukti Vora

### REGIONAL PRODUCT MANAGER

Topcon Healthcare  
San Jose, California

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Ukti bridges gaps to build robust telehealth solutions in the optical industry, and through her podcast, has built a community of 5,000+ eyecare professionals from around the world."

While living in India in 2008, Ukti Vora bumped into the field of optometry by accident, but quickly fell in love with the profession. She enrolled to become an ophthalmic assistant, and



later completed her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in optometry in India. After moving to the U.S. in 2016, she further advanced her career and reinvented herself in this country.

Over the past 12 years, she served in various roles—from being a faculty and practicing optometrist in India, to being a licensed optician in the U.S. After earning her MBA in 2018, she

moved into leadership roles with several ocular telehealth companies.

Today, she's the regional product manager for Topcon Healthcare's Telehealth Solutions in North America—a role that enables her to pursue her passion for telehealth.

"Being part of the telehealth revolution early on, I have seen the pre- and post-COVID transition," she said. "This experience has helped me gain deeper knowledge about the gaps, challenges and opportunities in this space."

Along with her full-time role, Vora was the first Indian optometrist to start a podcast channel called "Nerdy Optometrist," which aims to capture real-life stories of eyecare providers

from around the world. Nerdy Optometrist has since published 53 episodes, with audiences in six continents and over 15,000 downloads across various platforms.

**SHE SAYS...** "I'm proud that my channel has helped several young optometrists and professionals around the world who are trying to explore different roles and opportunities in the industry."

More →

# Congratulations

## Traci A. Logan

Executive Vice President and COO, CFO  
New England College of Optometry

We are #NECOProud of you being named a Woman of Influence in the Executive Suite. Thank you for your leadership and grace under pressure.

**NECO**

New England College of Optometry



## Sue Barry

### REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT

Walman Optical  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Sue goes above and beyond working with her team and the lab network to coach and educate the staff to become better in their roles to deliver the Walman standards out to the ECPs and their patients. She truly invests in her team to boost their professional knowledge to reach their career goals.”



Sue Barry started her career in the travel industry, where she spent 17 years negotiating contracts for the airlines and wholesale tour operators. After 9/11, she transitioned into the optical industry working for Soderberg Optical shortly before the merger with Walman Optical, where she has spent the last 21 years. Today, Barry oversees the sales and lab operations for Walman Optical's Central Region, including Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota.

“I keep my branch and account managers focused on our regional and divisional goals by working side-by-side in the field with them every week so that I can fully understand their needs,” she said.

“This industry is unique because we mass produce a custom-made product.

The products, state-of-the-art technology and processing advancements continue to improve, but it is still a personalized service industry that is about taking good care of people which includes our employees, our customers and their patients,” Barry said.

For a lot of people, the pandemic forced people to redefine their daily business routines. “We discovered how much could be accomplished virtually, how critical cross-training is and how important it was to connect daily and get to know one another in a much different capacity.”

**SHE SAYS...** “The optical industry has been life changing for me. I've found you need to be willing to learn, to work on the front line and develop new skills, take management/business courses and be open to stepping outside of your comfort zone to try new things.”

## Ali Binetti

### SENIOR DIRECTOR, KEY ACCOUNTS

Modo  
New York, New York

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Ali has had an amazing career in the eyewear industry with roles at Modo and with other organizations. She brings a wealth of knowledge to the table that helps push our organization to higher levels. On a one on one level, she guides a small team and offers great professional development to those on her team whether it be industry related with eyewear or trends or whether it is guiding her team through the sales process, from brand develop-

ment to prospecting and working through a sale from start to finish.

Ali's an amazing ambassador for the Modo organization.”



About 15 years ago, Ali Binetti “fell into” the optical industry after a friend suggested she look into an interview with Luxottica. Binetti started her career there, eventually moving to Safilo, where she was the recipient of the Account Penetration Achievement Award (2013, 2014) and Projection Achievement Award (2011). Now at Modo, Binetti develops Modo's national and regional accounts and works to diversify and expand Modo's product offering and grow its business.

Throughout the pandemic, Binetti continued to gain new customer acquisitions through new revenue streams, while adjusting alongside her team to a constantly changing world. “For me, undoubtedly the most positive development, in light of the pandemic, is that it has given me an entrepreneurial mindset as I now approach my business,” she said.

Binetti is inspired by the way the optical industry pushes her to think outside the box and grow, as well as the relationships she's built throughout the years. Her husband also works in the optical industry—he “has always been my biggest supporter and mentor,” Binetti said.

**SHE SAYS...** “Be yourself, continue to learn and be open to opportunities.”

## Summer Bouchedid

### VICE PRESIDENT, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT WEST

Carl Zeiss Vision Inc.  
Hebron, Kentucky

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Summer is one of the rare individuals in our profession who ALWAYS does the right thing for her company and customer/clients, no matter what.

She has influenced numerous people within the organization and the industry as a whole throughout her distinguished 20+ year career. Carl Zeiss Vision and the industry is better because of women in leadership positions like Summer.”



Summer Bouchedid came to Zeiss 19 years ago from Royal White Cement where she was the VP of Sales. At Zeiss, she started as the sales rep for Houston and then went on to become regional manager and then director of dispensing tools and instruments.

Today, as vice president of business development for the West region, she leads a large team of business development representatives, manages relationships with strategic partners and participates in key company projects both locally and globally. She has developed programs that “have fulfilled the needs

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## WOMEN WHO ARE TEAM BUILDERS AND DEVELOPERS OF TALENT

of our customers; those programs have been plug-and-play, highly scalable, and have allowed us to make customer conversions both organized and easy,” she said.

“I am very proud to work for Zeiss, a foundation-owned company that has been in business over 175 years and is a leader in innovation and technology. I am especially proud of our culture and mission—‘as the pioneer of scientific optics, we continue to challenge the limits of human imagination.’”

**SHE SAYS...** “Success requires positive outlook, focus, determination, creativity, persistence and massive action. Know what you want, reach for the stars, create a roadmap, evaluate and make constant and never-ending improvements and enjoy the journey.

*Above all, be yourself and remember to work and live with passion.”*

## Reagan Colpitts

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
MANAGER, INDEPENDENT  
CHANNEL, NORTH AMERICA**

Safilo

Montreal, Canada

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** “She uses a modern, out-of-the-box approach to sales. Leading and demonstrating with respect, she actively listens to challenges and coaches her people to a better zone of performance.”

Reagan Colpitts manages the sales team for Western Canada. With over eight years’ experience in optical, on



both the frame side and contact lens sides, she is known as a strong sales coach. Colpitts inspires her team with her keen business perspective, positivity and enthusiasm. “Seeing my team grow and develop is always inspiring, and so is hearing the passion in their voice related to their achievements,” she noted. “I also love sharing in their success and seeing their development over the years.”

Colpitts brings fresh ideas from out-

side the optical world, borrowing from her five years as a regional sales manager in the skin care field. During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, when offices were closed, she helped create a personalized sales newsletter that was implemented by Safilo sales teams in the U.S. and Canada. Using her social media savvy, she established Instagram accounts dedicated to educating and informing her region’s customers about the company’s various eyewear collections and brand news.

As a member of OWA’s digital marketing committee she brainstorms, creates content and pre-schedules posts on the OWA’s various social channels. She is the founder of Pink Tank, a global digital think tank designed to create and shine a light on women in business

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# WE’RE BETTER TOGETHER.

Congratulations to IDOC’s winners of the 2022 Vision Monday Mentor Award.

**IDOC**  
independent. together.™

**LEADERSHIP. TENACITY.**  
**INNOVATION. DEDICATION.**  
**MENTOR.**



Bridgette O'Brien  
IDOC Director of Marketing



Kelly Connor  
IDOC VP of Financial Planning  
and Analysis

We also want to extend our warmest congratulations and gratitude to all of those honored this year as the Most Influential Women in Optical!

with the goal to connect, inspire and motivate others.

**SHE SAYS...** “The sales rep’s role has evolved. It’s no longer about showing up and showing your product. It’s about how you will help your account with their business goals and ensure the product will sell. This involves education, marketing and social media support as well as merchandising.”

## Linda Conlin

**PRO TO PRO MANAGING EDITOR**  
20/20 Magazine  
New York, New York

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** “She is influential as a writer, a mentor to writers and an industry spokesperson and ambassador. Her articles and columns in 20/20 magazine are among the most read.”



Over the course of her multifaceted, four-decade optical career, Linda Conlin has been recognized as an ace optician, ophthalmic optics expert, talented educator, and most, recently, insightful writer and editor. “I came out of college at a time of high unemployment, and a position as an optometric assistant was the first job I could get. (I like to say I got into the field for my health—I was starving!) Vision care was the perfect blend of sci-

ence and helping people, and I was hooked.”

After achieving ABO and NCLE certification, Conlin earned her optician license in 1984. Her experience includes working as an optician, manager and district manager at various optical practices. She served as an adjunct instructor for the Goodwin University ophthalmic sciences program and as a member of their advisory board.

In 1999, she began writing and presenting continuing education courses and seminars as an accredited independent lecturer, presenting courses on the national level.

Conlin has served as chair of the Connecticut board of examiners for opticians and as past president of the Connecticut Opticians Association, which honored her with its Optician of the Year award in 1992. She won the National Academy of Opticianry’s Ambassador of the Year Award twice.

**SHE SAYS...** “Helping people with the gift of vision to improve their quality of life is an incredible experience. Constant new developments in this field offer more opportunities to achieve that goal.”

## Kelly Connor

**VICE PRESIDENT, FINANCIAL PLANNING & ANALYSIS**  
IDOC  
Norwalk, Connecticut

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** “Kelly is the consummate mentor, giving selflessly of her time as IDOC has doubled its workforce in the past 18 months and added to the range of its offerings. As VP, she is re-

sponsible for all aspects of finance at IDOC and its data insights group.

She also finds time to coach and teach veterans and new “IDOC-ers” on the ins-and-outs of the organization’s programs.”



Kelly Connor, vice president, financial planning and analysis at IDOC, is relatively new to optical. She joined the group in 2017 after more than 14 years at General Electric. She has expertise in financial planning, financial systems, auditing, M&A, daily operations and process improvement. At GE, she developed an extensive background in data analysis, project management and people management.

Connors held various positions at GE, including Lean Six Sigma to controllership, and she developed an extensive background in data analysis. She’s also a member of Chief, a private network designed for women in executive leadership to strengthen their leadership skills.

In finance and accounting, she noted, success is built around two fundamentals: being on time with closing the books and being accurate. “The excitement comes when you get creative within the space,” Connor said. “When IDOC went remote in 2020, we had to get innovative. I love it when my team gets creative outside of the mechanical monthly closing cycle.”

**SHE SAYS...** “Don’t be afraid to speak

up. There will be uncomfortable conversations you’re going to have to work through. The leadership muscle is strengthened when you embrace fear and work through it. I encourage people to get comfortable being uncomfortable. Change is going to start with your voice.”

## Krista Davis

**ABO-CERTIFIED SPEAKER, CORPORATE TRAINER**  
Quantum Innovations  
Central Point, Ore.

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** “Krista is thought of as an expert in the area of producing exceptional anti-reflective coatings. Her influence is felt in many labs, both small and mega in size.”



Krista Davis, an American Board of Opticianry-certified speaker and corporate trainer at Quantum Innovations in Central Point, Oregon, said there is little more satisfying than sharing her knowledge and love for eyecare with someone and “seeing the fire of intrigue ignite inside of them like it did in me.”

Davis worked as an optician, then decided she wanted to become an OD. She accepted a position as a frame sales representative so she would have more flexibility to focus on school. “As I lived life on the road, I found that I really enjoyed the travel

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## WOMEN WHO ARE TEAM BUILDERS AND DEVELOPERS OF TALENT

and being in a new place every day, so I decided to not go back to school so I could focus on building lasting relationships with the opticians and doctors in the Pacific Northwest.”

After taking a break, during which time she had twin girls, Davis went back to work as a lab representative for Hoya, where she discovered her love for training opticians. Around this time, she co-founded Artistry in Optics, which provides event-style training for opticians and those interested in entering the field.

Her experience in training and knowledge-sharing eventually led her to Quantum Innovations, which wanted to improve its reach to ECPs. At Quantum, Davis coordinates and delivers training to labs and offers ABO training to opticians.

**SHE SAYS...** “Find people you can trust to come alongside you and lift you up so you can reach your full potential. If you find what you are passionate about in the industry, seek it out. Make that your number one goal and make it known.”

### Beatriz Elizabeth Gómez Serna, OD

**UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE LA LAGUNA, TORREÓN COAHUILA MÉXICO**  
Torreón Coahuila, México

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** “There are a few optometrists whose impact on optometry and eyecare goes above and beyond. Ms. Gomez is one of them. When UAL decided to reopen the optometry program, it asked Gomez to take the lead. She took charge, ensuring the aca-

ademic program was right and she made mentoring of her students a priority.”



Beatriz Elizabeth Gómez Serna, OD, is the academic coordinator for the optometry program at Universidad Autónoma de la Laguna, where she reactivated the optometry clinic and oversees the academic program for specialties. “This is my alma mater and it is a great honor to be inspiring new optometrists to follow this wonderful profession,” she said.

Dr. Gómez Serna is inspired to see how the students develop into the future optometrists they will become. She helps her students discover the area of expertise they want to develop and walks with them in this path.

At the age of 15, Gómez Serna had her first eye exam. Her parents took her to Dr. De la O, who is related to her mom. He was the first one who mentioned optometry, which she had in the back of her mind. When she graduated from high school, her campus offered optometry and the president, Don Pedro Rivas, awarded her a scholarship. In return, she had to work at the community clinic assisting her fellow students. That’s where her love of optometry and the optical field blossomed.

**SHE SAYS...** “Love what you do, because your patients will know. Keep yourself always educated and never

waste your time. Enjoy the process you are going through and visualize yourself where you want to be. Remember that you are an inspiration to someone.”

### Pamela Jackson

**SENIOR DIRECTOR, GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS & DIGITAL MARKETING**  
CooperVision  
San Ramon, California

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** “Why do ECPs choose to prescribe a particular contact lens from the myriad choices offered not only in the U.S., but worldwide? Pamela Jackson understands this continually changing dynamic, and converts that knowledge into action, ensuring that ECPs have the tools necessary to make the best possible decision for their patients.”



Pamela Jackson has been in the optical industry for nearly a decade—the entire time spent with CooperVision. “I have spent most of my career in roles that have allowed me to be customer-centric and bring customer-first thinking to the organization and every aspect of my job,” she said. “That has translated to influencing innovation and contributing to product development strategies, brand management, and various functions within the commercial marketing mix.”

Today, Jackson oversees multiple global marketing functions, including marketing communications, digital marketing, public relations, and master brand marketing for CooperVision.

“I have also taken on some passion projects that didn’t necessarily fit within my scope of responsibility,” she noted. “Sustainability is something that I have a passion for, and CooperVision was making some great but largely unrecognized strides in various parts of the world. As a ‘night job,’ I took the lead to learn as much as possible about our work to operate more sustainably, minimize our environmental impact, and develop the messaging strategy and content to share that story with our employees and customers.”

**SHE SAYS...** “I would encourage women to ask themselves what aspects of the industry excite them. Don’t limit your work to what is scoped in your job description. If there are areas of interest or passion, figure out how to carve out time to explore. It might be your night job for a while, but it might very well become your day job in the future.”

### Lauretta Justin, OD

**CEO AND FOUNDER OF OPTOMETRY DIVAS**  
Millennium Eye Center  
Orlando, Fla.

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** “Dr. Lauretta Justin’s motto is ‘Mentor, Empower and Care,’ and she offers eye exams in an underserved community and provides three annual scholarships to seniors. At Optom-

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## WOMEN WHO ARE TEAM BUILDERS AND DEVELOPERS OF TALENT

etry Divas, Dr. Justin focuses on empowering women to succeed in personal and professional life, connecting female optometrists to foster sisterhood and promote each other positively.”



As the executive optometrist at Millennium Eye Center, Dr. Laretta Justin provides holistic eyecare to patients. As CEO and founder of Optometry Divas, she leads ambassadors as they manage their respective chapters.

Dr. Justin has been in the optical industry for 20 years, after graduating from the New England College of Optometry in 2002. Two years after graduation, she founded Millennium Eye Center—a primary care optometry practice in Orlando, Fla.

During the pandemic, Dr. Justin reduced the number of patient visits per day, and reduced the number of doctor hours per day. As a result, she provided better quality care while working less.

“My husband is legally blind from Best’s Disease. Seeing his daily challenges fuels me to help my patients see 20/20,” she said. “At Optometry Divas, I’m inspired by the dedication, integrity, vibrancy, assertiveness and self-awareness of all the divas. They inspire me every day.”

In 2015, she launched the Optometry Divas organization, which has been a great success. “I decided to create a

place where women ODs can empower, connect, and promote each other’s success,” she noted.

**SHE SAYS...** “Before you can be great, you have to be good and before you can be good, you have to start. If you’re waiting until you have everything figured out, you may never start.”

## Abby Kinder

**VP, ECP SALES**

Essilor  
Dayton, Ohio

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** Abby works with ECPs on ways to improve their profitability and revenue by identifying areas of opportunity and growth within their practices. Abby is a leader of her team as well as a leader among her peers. She is seen as a resource and supporter for those inside and outside of the EssilorLuxottica organization.”



Abby Kinder has been in the optical industry for 12 years, joining Essilor of America in 2011 as an inside sales rep. She said she immediately fell in love with the industry because of the purpose and the people. Kinder said she is privileged to lead the Southeast commercial sales team to shape and deliver exceptional service, programs, and

products paired with giving patients the best products.

Kinder ensures that the interests of the industry and those it serves are at the heart of what she does. She supports emerging leaders in the sales organization to strengthen their development. She also mentors new-to-the-industry sales professionals and encourages women to engage in commercial leadership tracks.

She said, “I am greatly inspired by our company mission and on a daily basis I am reminded of how deeply important our mission is to how we approach our work each day.”

Kinder is a three-time recipient of the President’s Club Award but feels her biggest accomplishment is delivering superior results in her job.

**SHE SAYS...** “I am inspired daily by our customers and my team. Everyone is united in purpose to help the world see. I am surrounded by a group of incredibly talented people, not only within my organization but also across the industry, all working in their respective ways to impact our customers and ultimately the patients who benefit most from our innovation in products, programs, and services.”

## Tracey Norte

**SENIOR PRODUCT MANAGER**

Eyewear By ROI  
Phoenix, Arizona

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** “For 33 years,

Tracey has been the liaison between our company and our factory partners serving as senior product director. She has been the inside person known by our customers

worldwide as the one responsible for keeping them in stock. Tracey is recognized as a team builder, who treats her fellow associates, our customers and factory personnel with respect. She is as kind as she is humble.”



Tracey Norte entered the optical industry by chance. After the tour bus company she had been working with had closed, she was introduced to Eyewear By ROI through an agency. She began learning the business from the ground up, first working in customer service and then quickly making her way up through the company to the role of senior product manager.

Her inspiration comes from the many challenges her role presents. She also finds support and guidance through her fellow team members and the company’s founder and CEO John Alofs and former EVP Carl Clingman, who acted as an open and caring sounding board.

Creating a strict set of standards, based on those learned from factories, vendors, and customers, paired with the need to adapt to change has been one of her greatest successes at Eyewear By ROI. This has allowed for clearer communication of expectations while improving open-mindedness and driving company success.

**SHE SAYS...** “Do whatever it takes to do the job well. Don’t complain,

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instead find a solution that makes everyone happy. Think of each person that you deal with as the customer to be satisfied and remember that kindness works both ways.”

## Bridgette O'Brien

**DIRECTOR OF MARKETING**  
IDOC  
Norwalk, Connecticut

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** “Bridgette is a strong mentor at IDOC, both working closely with her peers in senior leadership roles and with our newly expanding marketing department.

Over the past year, we have expanded our small team of three to a team of 10. In our twice-weekly Zoom “all-hands” meetings, we open by allowing IDOC employees to provide “shout-outs” to others—almost every time, Bridgette and her team are “shouted out” for something great they have done.”

Bridgette O'Brien has been working in the optical industry for six years. She quickly began collecting accolades including receiving the Dennis Bassett Legacy Award for exemplifying company culture and positivity from Bausch +



Lomb. She also received the IDOC Leadership Award for building a high-performing marketing team.

O'Brien has made learning a lifelong passion and strives to use her knowledge to help ODs build their dream practice and bring new solutions to the market to help them run their businesses. Ever-changing optical innovations are something that continues to drive her forward professionally, relishing the bright future in independent optometry.

Her own experience as a contact lens wearer has also propelled her to continue to help patients find the best vision solutions. She comes to work every day wanting to make a difference and create new ways to reach doctors and help them grow their business professionally and through self-development.

**SHE SAYS...** “Be your own advocate and your authentic self. Set personal boundaries. Take time for YOU. Use your voice, get your ideas heard and

take risks—don't be afraid of failure. Hard work pays off.”

## Maria Petrucci

**SENIOR DIRECTOR, U.S.  
AND CANADA**  
Hoya Vision Care  
Lewisville, Texas



**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** “Maria is influential as a leader and a mentor. She is a Canadian licensed optician and has been in the industry for over 20 years. As a member of OWA, she is a strong advocate for women in optical and has been an amazing mentor for many women working at Hoya and in the industry. In the past six months, Maria also launched online optical training courses to facilitate growth in the industry.”

Maria Petrucci started in the optical industry more than 30 years ago as an optician. In 2003, she joined the team at Hoya Vision Care taking roles in training and education. During this time she has served on the lab committee with The Vision Council and served as a mentor in the organization's Emerging Optical Leadership program. She also serves as an

ambassador with the Optical Women's Association.

Her mission to help people see better and longer is one of the things that drew Petrucci to the optical field. She continues to find the challenges and opportunities to learn one of the most intriguing parts of working within the optical industry. She understands that the power of mentorship can have a profound effect on skills development and empowering others.

**SHE SAYS...** “I would give this advice to anyone; focus on the skills you have and don't worry about what you think is missing. Always get involved and actively contribute. The accumulation of your experiences from getting involved, working with others, making mistakes and scoring some successes will always be a foundation you can draw upon.”

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2006

## Cathy Ciccolella

**SHE SAYS...** “The thing that makes this job interesting is that there are always new stories to tell. The optical industry is constantly changing and evolving, and it's exhilarating to discover new stories and interpret the information for VM's readers.”

ARCHIVES



## From the Archives of VM's Most Influential Women in Optical



2011

### Malini Krishna

**SHE SAYS...** “Live life by design, not by accident. A lot of people say that success is based on luck, but I have learned that true success comes from hard work and determination.”



2018

### Olivia “Dibby” Bartlett

**SHE SAYS...** “Don’t let fear get in your way, I did not begin my leadership journey until I was 50, mostly due to fear. I finally learned to do things anyway and it changed my life.”



2015

### Jennifer Smith Zolman, OD

**SHE SAYS...** “To see the successes in vision therapy, to see one of my patients ‘see’ depth and 3D for the first time, to see a child find self-esteem after completing vision therapy... that is why I do what I do every day.”



2013

### Alyssa Voorheis

**SHE SAYS...** “My biggest challenge has been overcoming peoples’ perceptions of what they expect me to be. You’re in control of your life. Take that opportunity, take that chance. Raise your hand. Don’t be afraid of failing.”



2020

### Ruth Domber

**SHE SAYS...** “The growth of our business is based on a code of ethics and the knowledge that a handshake is to be honored. From that principle, it’s good to surround oneself with like-minded people.”



2009

### Diana Hall

**SHE SAYS...** “It’s so important for successful women to reach out to other women and help them move up the ladder. Part of that is through talking about all aspects of the business—the good as well as the bad.”

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WOMEN WHO HAVE INITIATED NEW PRODUCTS, PROGRAMS OR IDEAS MARKING SUCCESS

## Janelle Davison, OD

### CEO/FOUNDER

Brilliant Eyes Vision Center  
and Premier Dry Eye Spa  
Smyrna, Georgia

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Dr. Janelle Davison initiated a new optical solution for the eyecare industry, Paradeyem, a software program that allows package bundling for patients with and without insurance. This program takes the guess work out of calculating co-pays and it helps opticals increase their revenue.”



Janelle L. Davison, OD, is the CEO and founder of Brilliant Eyes Vision Center and Premier Dry Eye Spa in Smyrna, Ga. She’s been in the optical industry for more than 20 years, first working as an optometric assistant in the early 2000s. After graduating from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Salus University in 2006, she worked in a corporate setting for a year, and as an independent contractor for three years. In 2010, she started her own practice as a solo practitioner.

Her office specializes in dry eye, optometry aesthetics, scleral contacts, and myopia management. Over the years, she has partnered with CTAE Cobb County Work-Based Learning and

S.C.O.R.E. Inc., a nonprofit (founded by Dr. Jamison and her sister, Joya Lyons, DDS) to expose, empower and encourage minority girls to pursue a career in health care, specifically optometry, ophthalmology and dentistry. Over the past 12 years, over 50 high school minority female students have matriculated through her office.

“The pandemic has taught us that tomorrow is not promised,” Davison said, “During the pandemic, we learned to become more efficient, elevate our customer service and expand our practice services. Every day we use the Paradeyem Optical Solutions tool, [which] has allowed us to see fewer patients and increase our revenue per patient by 30 percent in one year.” She developed Paradeyem with her business partner and husband, Jimmie Davison.

**SHE SAYS...** “It brings me great joy when a patient of color is excited to see me, a black woman as a doctor, business owner and community leader.”

## Carissa Dunphy, ABOC

### FOUNDER

OpticianNow

### OPTICIAN

Monroe Vision Clinic  
Monroe, Washington

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Carissa is influential because of her dedication to bettering the world of optical. She has recently hit 10k followers on her Instagram page, OpticianNow, where she continuously educates opticians. She is a RealDeal writer for *Invision Magazine*, *ROWT*

*Magazine*, *Optical Women’s Association*, and *Women In Optometry*.

Carissa is a wealth of knowledge and deserves to be recognized for her efforts in changing our industry for the better.”



Carissa Dunphy began her optical career in 2008, working at the front desk of a private optometry practice. She then moved into a technician role and gained her ABO certification, and has worked as an optician ever since.

While working as a full-time optician, Dunphy founded OpticianNow.com, a website and social channels that provide resources for opticians. Dunphy explained that she is driven by an inspiration “to stay up to date with product knowledge to best help the needs of any patient that may come into my care. It rings true that the one gem you learn off-hand will provide a solution that makes one patient’s life exponentially better. Professionally I am inspired to educate and share knowledge to better the opticianry profession as a whole.”

Dunphy has made a huge impact on opticians everywhere. She said, “I’d like to think that I have helped people find their path. I’m an advocate for trying different things out to find the right fit.”

**SHE SAYS...** “Don’t let a lack of resources slow you down, go out and find them. Whatever you’re needing, it’s out there for you. Join

online forums or groups, be a part of associations, and help others. In turn you will be helping yourself—a rising tide raises all ships.”

## Alice Hsueh

### SENIOR DIRECTOR, U.S. DAILY DISPOSABLE BRAND MARKETING AND DIGITAL STRATEGY

CooperVision  
San Ramon, California

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Alice Hsueh is a true innovator and leader, driving groundbreaking opportunities in both sustainability and presbyopia—and elevating them not only for CooperVision, but for the contact lens category and eyecare industry as a whole.”



Alice Hsueh, senior director, U.S. daily disposable brand marketing and digital strategy at CooperVision, grew up with very high myopia and astigmatism. Her life was directly affected by eyecare professionals, optical innovations, and the industry, and her interest and passion for the optical field is perpetually renewed by her own personal experiences.

Hsueh joined CooperVision’s global team in 2013 as marketing director of 1-day brands. In 2020, she was promoted to her current role. She earned a master’s degree in business administra-

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## WOMEN WHO HAVE INITIATED NEW PRODUCTS, PROGRAMS OR IDEAS MARKING SUCCESS

tion from Cornell University and a bachelor's degree from Babson College. Prior to joining CooperVision, she held a variety of marketing roles at Johnson & Johnson and worked as a consultant for Accenture. Hsueh has led more than nine product launches, including the most recent, MyDay multifocal from CooperVision.

Hsueh's mentors include Jerry Warner, president of CooperVision, who gave her the opportunity to help CooperVision establish a foothold in the global daily disposable market.

Sustainability is a core value of CooperVision, and Hsueh cited the company's net plastic neutrality initiative, which has removed the equivalent of more than 57 million plastic bottles from the world's oceans. In addition, 87 percent of prospective contact lens wearers agree that wearing Clariti 1 Day is an easy way to have a positive impact on the environment.

**SHE SAYS...** "My advice is when we consider innovations, we must lean into the voice of our customers. By listening closely, we can develop technologies and programs that offer tangible value to our doctors and patients."

### Rachel Oakley

**SEGMENT MARKETING MANAGER,  
SPECIALIST PLASTICS,  
Eastman  
Rotterdam, The Netherlands**

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** Thanks to her dedication and leadership, Rachel led her team to quickly drive wide, and seamless adoption of circular

Renew material—from affordable to luxury eyewear, among smaller independents as well as large multinational companies. She also engaged manufacturers and brands in developing compelling messaging and communication tools to convey a simple yet transparent explanation of molecular recycling technology and its sustainability benefits. Rachel is passionate about making sustainability accessible to all and has been critical in creating a better circle for eyewear."



Rachel Oakley parlayed her business management and marketing experience into her role at Eastman when she joined the company in 2019. One of her main roles is to drive the adoption of sustainable materials into all types of eyewear. In doing so, she has helped introduce Eastman Acetate Renew, a fully sustainable material made from bio- and recycled content, now used by more than a dozen of the biggest names in eyewear.

She has also championed new concepts to create circularity in the eyewear industry, such as the demo lens to Acetate Renew's recycling program that was recently launched with Warby Parker.

Oakley is passionate about helping companies become more sustainable in the optical industry. She takes pride in the small part she is playing in reducing

plastic waste and keeping fossil materials in the ground. Supported by her team, she has helped Eastman and the optical industry overcome the many challenges in bringing sustainable materials to market.

**SHE SAYS...** "I meet women in all sorts of roles from engineering, production, design, product development, brand management, marketing communications, as well as eyecare professionals. I think I would recommend the industry for the diversity of career paths, and the supportive nature of the industry."

### Christina Olney

**VP DIGITAL MARKETING  
MyEyeDr.  
Vienna, Virginia**

**CHOSEN BECAUSE...** "Christina joined MyEyeDr. in November of 2020 to help lead the transformation in marketing at MyEyeDr. She hit the ground running and led the selection and migration of our CRM system to a new platform to allow for more advanced personalization of our patient communications."



When Christina joined MyEyeDr., she had already worked in digital marketing roles in various sectors. In her role at MyEyeDr.

she has helped introduce new patients to the company through paid media and retain existing customers through CRM communications. She has also helped revamp patient communications to give the organization the ability to create more personalized messaging for their patients. She believes having the ability to tailor the right messaging for each patient allows an organization to extend their commitment to personalized care for patients.

Olney has found inspiration from the stories she hears every day from optometrists and in-office teams about the impact they have on their patients' lives, using the results to learn from these great experiences. Her own experience requiring vision correction as a child also had a huge impact on her goal to provide the best vision solutions for patients.

During her time in the optical industry, she has seen all the ways that great vision care can enhance someone's quality of life, from ensuring that children can see clearly and have the opportunity to excel in school to hearing about serious medical conditions that were first identified through vision care.

**SHE SAYS...** "Always take advantage of opportunities to learn about your industry from a different perspective or from colleagues you don't work closely with, even if it's not immediately obvious how it's connected to the immediate task you're working on. Often the best insights and ideas come from having a broader perspective."

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# Test Your Most Influential Women Knowledge

## #1

In the 20 years *VM* has been publishing the Most Influential Women in Optical Report, we have honored more than 700 women.

TRUE  
FALSE

## 20th Anniversary

## VM 2022 Most Influential Women in Optical

## #2

One year, *VM* profiled an optometrist who also happened to be an astronaut.

TRUE  
FALSE

## #4

Above & Beyond was always a category in the Special Report.

TRUE  
FALSE

## #6

No Jobson women have ever been honored in the Most Influential Women in Optical Report.

TRUE  
FALSE

## #8

The first edition of the Most Influential Women in Optical appeared in *20/20 Magazine*.

TRUE  
FALSE

## #3

There were instances where *VM* posthumously honored women in the signature report.

TRUE  
FALSE

## #5

*VM*'s editors select the honorees based on nominations from people in the optical industry.

TRUE  
FALSE

## #7

In 2016, a man was honored in the Special Report.

TRUE  
FALSE

—Mary Kane

### HOW DID YOU DO?

Turn to **page 60** to read if these statements were true or false.



Read previous *Most Influential Women in Optical* Special Reports on [VisionMonday.com](https://www.visionmonday.com).  
See an Alphabetical List of prior years' honorees and a complete PDF of this year's #20YearsofInfluentialWomen feature.

WOMEN WHO HAVE INITIATED NEW PRODUCTS, PROGRAMS OR IDEAS MARKING SUCCESS

## Amanda Rights, OD

**OPTOMETRIST, FOUNDER  
AND CREATIVE DIRECTOR**

SimplifEYE Social, OptomEyesLife  
Boone, North Carolina



CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She’s an innovative trailblazer who helps other optometrists grow and succeed by keeping them at the top of their social game.”

For busy ODs and practice owners, keeping up with social media trends is extremely valuable, but also a huge time drain. Amanda Rights, OD—an

optometrist by trade and creative innovator in her free time—helps solve that challenge.

Dr. Rights started her career as an ophthalmic technician in 2010. In a twist of fate, she later joined the same practice as an associate optometrist in 2017, where she still practices today.

Along the way, she launched another

exciting journey—helping others harness the power of social platforms.

In 2015, she started an Instagram account (@optomeyeslife) and blog to share eye health content. This opened doors for her to share her expertise through workshops, courses and speaking engagements at industry trade shows, as well as become a contributing writer for industry magazines and other media outlets.

From there, her creative journey blossomed even further.

“Through my experience using social media to build a brand, I founded SimplifEYE Social in 2020 to give fellow eyecare professionals the cre-

ative tools and strategies they need to bring their own brand and business into the spotlight online,” she said. “It’s a boutique content marketing company that helps others in the industry eliminate their content creation overwhelm and simplify their social media marketing.”

**SHE SAYS...** “I have dual backgrounds in both art and optometry, which gives me the unique skills, perspective and experience needed to expertly create eye-catching designs and informative content for the eye-care industry. I love that I get to flex my creativity while also incorporating my passion for eyecare and eyewear.” ■

## Answers to Most Influential Women’s Trivia

### #1

**True.** In the 20 years *VM* has been producing the report, from 2003-2022, we have honored over 700 women in optical. Click here <https://bit.ly/3POwomq> to look at past issues of Most Influential Women in Optical.

### #2

**False.** While we have never honored an astronaut, we have honored many women who “fly high” in their respective careers.

### #3

**True.** On occasion, we’ve recognized the pioneering efforts of some, posthumously, who helped grow the optical business and we have also reached out internationally to women who exert influence around the world.

### #4

**False.** Coincidentally, the Above & Beyond category was added in 2020 during the pandemic. The new category honors women who have led the way in giving back to the industry, their patients and their communities.

### #5

**True.** Every year we solicit nominations from the optical industry. This year, *VM* editors sifted through over 330 nominations to find our 46 honorees for 2022.

### #6

**False.** Several Jobson women have been honored in the Special Report including Marge Axelrad, Marjolijn Bijlefeld, Nancy Ness, Christine Yeh and this year’s honoree, Linda Conlin.

### #7

**False.** No man has ever been honored in the Signature Report, although several men have nominated themselves.

### #8

**False.** The Most Influential Women in Optical Report originated with *Vision Monday* in 2003.

—Mary Kane