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**FRAME
TECHNOLOGY
MAKES THE
SALE**

**CUSTOM
LENSES HIT
PATIENT HOT
BUTTONS**

**IT'S EASY
BEING GREEN**

NOUVEAU'S

REALTREE

CAMO COMES TO EYEWEAR

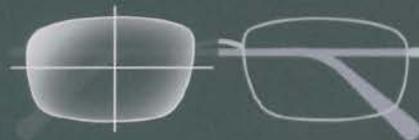
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FRAMES

Using Frame Technology to Make the Sale

By Francis Gimbel, Jr., ABOC-AC Explaining frame technology and frame detail options may help convert 'shoppers' into 'buyers.'

Earning optical patients and continuing to have them purchase at your optical shop requires a good amount of finesse. What once was a simple task of selecting eyewear has evolved to a marketplace where optical consumers have unprecedented options to buy from local competitors and big box stores, and even to order new prescription eyeglasses online. Savvy opticians have taken this opportunity to become better educated about the products they sell to distinguish themselves from the herd and signify that they are frame experts.

TECHNOLOGY AS A TOOL

While there are many approaches to guiding patients to choose a particular frame, the lure of technology is a strong one for both women and men. Once you get past the fashion aspect of a frame, what remains is its technology—how

it's made, what mechanical and engineering attributes it has, how durable it will be, etc. Buyers want to know about these things because they reinforce the price that is being asked for the product.

Without solid technological aspects of a frame, its value is minimal to a potential buyer, even if it is the most attractive frame you've

EDUCATION IS KEY Not every frame is created equal. What makes one different from another is how it's produced, what it's made of, and believe it or not, the marketing used to reach new potential consumers. Set aside an hour a week, or even just an hour a month to discuss new frames and frame technology with your staff. Knowledge is power, and sharing new information with them can help them pass along a consistent message to your patients.

To highlight the value of your frame inventory, you'll need to understand the different materials frames are made from, like the Bauer in Ogi's Innotec collection which features stainless steel and TR-90.

ever carried. Use this power to capture the attention—and the dollars—of your patients by highlighting and discussing the technology features of your frames. Don't be fooled into thinking this is only something men are interested in. Women also want to know their eyewear is technologically advanced and since they buy more eyewear than men, attracting their attention via techno innovations is a good business decision.

FRAME MATERIALS

To highlight the value of your frame inventory, you'll need to understand the different materials

frames are made from as well as the pros and cons of each material and share this information with your patients. Standard frames made from simple and inexpensive materials can quickly break down and erode over time. Metal frames, for example, are commonly made of nickel-based alloys that can corrode and are not hypoallergenic, whereas standard plastic frames can quickly lose pliability over time, become brittle, and break.

When buying frames, ask your reps what the frame is made of, how it will wear over time, the selling points, and what the warranty is if a replacement is needed. Our practice meets with frame companies quarterly and we obtain as much information from the reps as possible.

The objective is to learn how we can convey this information at the dispensing table. By simply becoming knowledgeable about frame materials, we have positioned our location as a one-stop shop of frame masters.

LIGHT WEIGHT

There is a large segment of eyeglass

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Frames are now made of carbon fiber, titanium, and other lightweight materials that can add value to the frame sales conversation (WestGroupe's Exotic Style No. 9098 in titanium).

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wearers who may have been wearing eyeglasses for many years, have heavier prescriptions, and are constantly after thinner, lighter, and more comfortable eyewear. Over the years we have witnessed thinner and lighter lenses, and can also apply the same rationale to frames.

As manufacturers continue to reinvent themselves, they push the boundaries on how light a frame is, how it's designed, and even calculate things like specific gravity. Frames are now made of carbon fiber, titanium, and other lightweight materials that can add value to the frame sales

conversation. Before the frame search begins with your patients, learn about what's important to them and their next frame. Ask questions about weight and comfort and provide details of each frame as they are trying them on. Many times in our practice, a patient will come in and specifically ask for the thinnest lenses paired with the lat-



Capture the attention of your patients by discussing a frame's technology features such as the flexible temples on L'Amey's Columbia Wheeler Mountain.

est and greatest lightweight frames. We have a section of our optical floor dedicated to the lightest frames available and we work with patients there fairly often.

HINGE CONSTRUCTION

Sometimes gadgets and flair help to sell frames. In the frame world where nearly everything has been done before, there is a large population of eyeglass wearers who just want to stick out a little from the crowd and look for frames that have unique construction. Hinges are a good aspect to emphasize because they are such an important aspect of the frame's durability.

When looking at frames to buy,

try selecting a few lines that shy away from the traditional screw and spring-hinge designs and find a few that have unique hinge designs, even some that are hingeless (see "Patients and ECPs Win with Screwless Technology," p. 28). These are technological wonders that you can display, highlight, and showcase. Our location carries numerous brands that are compression fit and are screw-free. We use this as a talking point to promote the fact that they're maintenance-free since there is no pesky screw in the temple to work itself out.

GOING ECO

Reduce, reuse, and recycle is a phrase that can be seen on many products these days. There is a large population of shoppers who make final buying decisions because they can be recycled and are eco-friendly. Frame manufacturers have noticed this and are now offering frames lines so if you carry them, you can boast that you have eco-friendly products. Think this isn't powerful stuff? Consider the case where a patient is down to two frames, both equally glamor-

ous and similar in price. Having an extra piece of information such as "this model here is biodegradable" or "was recycled from plastic soda bottles" may just be the deciding clincher on that next frame sale you make.

MAGNETIC CLIP ONS

Versatility can be tough to ignore when shopping for that next pair of eyeglasses and having a pair that can double as prescription sunglasses is quite a value to mention. When discussing frames, ask your patients if they would be interested in a pair with a magnetic clip-on, and if so, show them your clip-on inventory. Some companies even offer clips that can be customized to match the patient's frame, which is as personalized and high-tech as you can get.

While it may be more advantageous for us to sell them two pairs of eyeglasses, one sun and one clear, your patients may not want that option. A conversation like this could earn you a lifetime patient by simply conveying "this frame here is two pairs in one."

The technological aspects of frames can be mighty allies when you're recommending frames to patients. Use its power for all it's worth. [vcpn](http://vcpn.com)

Francis Gimbel, Jr., is a licensed optician and owner of Gimbel Eye Associates in Wayne, PA.

"Once you get past the fashion aspect of a frame, what remains is its technology."



Having a pair that can double as prescription sunglasses, like Revolution's Style No. Rev763, is quite a value to mention to your patients.