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NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2012

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Photo A

Photo B

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Time to CELEBRATE:

Vision Expo West and Breton Communications

Event

By Paddy Kamen

There was plenty to celebrate at the annual Vision Expo West in Las Vegas this September. According to most accounts, the show held its own in the face of continued challenges to the American economy. That alone is cause for celebration. And Canadian exhibitors were happy with the business results of the show, as you will read in a moment.

Envision: seeing beyond and our sister publication, *EnVue: voir plus loin*, had something very special to celebrate at this year's VEW as well. "It was the first anniversary of our new publications," says publisher Martine Breton. "The anniversary date fell during VEW and created a great opportunity to bring our advertising clients together for a special champagne and cheese reception on the opening evening of the show."

An enchanting event it was, held in the OPTimum Lounge on the show floor of the famous Sands Expo & Convention Center, which was reserved for the occasion. Conviviality ruled as friendly competitors in the optical industry networked and relaxed after a busy day meeting customers. "A little champagne added to the light spirit of the evening," says Breton. "It was wonderful to get these hard-working people together in one room, catch up with old friends and make new ones."

Representatives of Jobson Medical Information (JMI), publishers of *Vision Monday*, *20/20*, and other information brands in the optical industry, attended the reception to share the excitement generated by the new sales and marketing partnership between Jobson and Breton Communications, the two leading optical publishers in their respective markets. As announced in *Vision Expo Daily* (the VEW news magazine published by *Vision Monday*) on September 7, the two publishing houses have signed an agreement that ensures better services for optical suppliers, retailers and eyecare professionals in both countries.

"As a result of this agreement, Jobson's American clients who want to send email blasts to the Canadian optical sector will go through our Opti-Promo email service," explains Breton. "And likewise, we will use Jobson on behalf of our Canadian clients who are looking for an effective way to approach the U.S. market."

Marc Ferrara, CEO of JMI's Information Services Division, commented on the partnership: "Our strategic relationship with Breton Communications is an important step in providing our clients in the U.S. with access to the Canadian market through Breton's industry-leading email communication service. Now, U.S. ophthalmic companies can reach the full U.S. and Canadian markets through one simple and easy process."

Photo E



Photo A – From left to right: **Félix Sidès**, vice-president of sales, Marchon, and **Glen Eisenberg**, president, Precision Advertising.

Photo B – From left to right: **Greg Beers**, Hilco and **Ted Hahn**, vice-president of sales, DirectLab Network.

Photo C – From left to right: **Martine Breton**, president, Breton Communications, **Ramez Tarazi**, president, Importlux Inc.

Photo D – From left to right: **Iso Sidès**, vice-president of operations, Marchon, **Martial Gagné**, president, Lunetteries New Look and **Félix Sidès**, vice-president of sales, Marchon.

Photo E – From left to right: **Isabelle Tremblay**, marketing coordinator, Transitions Optical, **Martine Breton**, president, Breton Communications, **Grady Lenski**, managing director, Adjacencies, Transitions Optical

Photo F – From left to right: **Michael DeBono**, vice-president of sales, WestGroupe, **Michael Suliteanu**, president, WestGroupe, **Martine Breton**, president, Breton Communications, **Glen Eisenberg**, president, Precision Advertising

Photo G – From left to right: From Local Eye Site, **Brad McCorkle**, president, **Kelli Moss**, sales representative, **Alex Slater**, account manager and **Stephen Squires**, marketing director.

Photo F



Photo G

Suliteanu adds that WestGroupe recently changed its distribution strategy in the U.S. by opening a direct distribution warehouse in Plattsburgh, N.Y. “We hired 25 sales reps for the eastern states, while continuing to work with our longstanding western U.S. distributor. This VEW was our first show selling directly into the U.S. It was a great success and we were pleased to be there.”

The show floor was abuzz with this exciting news, adding even greater energy to the anniversary celebration and complementing the overall high energy of the show, says Breton.

Grady Lenski from Transitions Optical agrees that the show was a blast. “I was excited to attend Vision Expo West this year, as I have been for many years. It’s always a fantastic opportunity to showcase the latest technology and trends in the optical industry,” notes the managing director, Adjacencies. “Although the timing of the show was earlier than it has been in the past, the attendance was good and the energy on the show floor was high.”

Michael Suliteanu, president of WestGroupe, has been attending VEW for 22 years; in the last six, he has been an exhibitor rather than a buyer, showing his breakaway bestselling brands: Kliik Denmark, FYSH UK, and EVATIK. “We had a very good show, despite the fact that attendance seemed a bit lower this year, perhaps because it came on the heels of the Labour Day long weekend.”

Cendrine Obadia, the creative force behind Zig Eyewear’s ZIGGY and Jean Reno collections, managed (almost) to be in two places at once during the show. With both an exhibit booth on the show floor and a suite in the hotel, Cendrine moved between the two with ease. “I saw my established clients in the suite, where it was quieter and more spacious, while keeping the booth as an opportunity to connect with new customers.”

The strategy worked well for Obadia, and the fact that she has new distributors in the U.S. added to her success at the show. “Our distributor and sales reps are doing a great job for us, so we had plenty of appointments.” Obadia’s overall impression of the show is that attendance was down, despite her personal success.

Mehran Baghaie, creative director of Spectacle Eyeworks, had a similar experience: “I did great business, yet it seems the Las Vegas show is having a difficult time capturing as reliable an audience as you find in New York. I would say one of the contributing factors is that buyers are divided between the show floor and the suites, making for a scattered group. And, of course, we cannot forget that the economy is trying to recover.”

Next year, International Vision Expo West will be held October 2-5 in Las Vegas. ■

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