

# The Elusive *20/20* Second Pair

A Practical Guide to Selling Multiple Pairs



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# The Elusive Second Pair 20/20

## INTRODUCTION

Most Eye Care Professionals are aware that dispensing multiple pairs of glasses to the same patient is important. Having the right glasses for every situation is critical to a patient's eye health and comfort. Dispensing multiple pairs also improves office revenue and office dynamics.

The opportunities for multiple pair dispensing are richer today than ever before. Opticians are equipped with an almost endless array of frame and lens choices and new technology is opening up a wide array of new specialty glasses. So, the potential for improved patient care and satisfaction is the best that it has ever been in the history of eyewear.

Yet even with today's seemingly endless set of options, research suggests that only about 20% of patients actually own more than one pair of prescription eyeglasses. So why aren't we as successful as we'd like to be at dispensing multiple pairs? Four main items come to mind. Does your office have:

1. Well-educated opticians regarding products and sales techniques so patients understand and can compare their options?
2. An overall plan and a set of specific sales goals?
3. A process for multiple-pair dispensing?
4. A perspective to improve the perceptions of the value of glasses to patients?

*The Elusive Second Pair*, sponsored by Essilor of America, provides you with solutions, suggestions and samples of things you can do to increase your effectiveness at *meeting patient needs* through multiple pair eyewear sales. Where applicable we have included tools or templates that help address roadblocks to success.

## WHY FOCUS ON MULTIPLE PAIR DISPENSING?

Multiple-pair dispensing is critical for superior patient care and practice profit and stability.

## SUPERIOR PATIENT CARE

Naturally, one of the key responsibilities of eye care professionals is to diagnose and treat vision problems. Patients expect a visit to their eye care professional to result in:

**1. The Sharpest Vision Possible** in all situations whether watching a movie, driving a car, reading or working at the computer.

**2. Superior Eye Health, Protection and Prevention.** Patients do and should expect their glasses to improve their eye health and provide reasonable protection given their lifestyle. For example, a patient working in a factory requires a unique pair of highly impact-resistant safety glasses along with their normal everyday eyewear. And everyone should have 100% UVA and UVB protection for their eyes any time they are outdoors.

**3. Comfort.** A patient's glasses should not only be comfortable to wear but also comfortable for the eyes. For example, bifocals generally provide wide near and distance vision but no intermediate vision.

As the patient progresses in presbyopia this will cause increasing discomfort if they

spend much time doing things that require intermediate vision, such as working on a computer. Comfort is key.

**4. Fashions and Style.** Even though glasses are a medical device, they also make a statement about one's fashion preferences. Patients expect their glasses to represent their style and make them look good no matter where they are.

Multiple-pair dispensing is an important part of providing these four expectations to your patients.

## PRACTICE PROFITABILITY AND STABILITY

Improved profit and practice stability requires an increase in capture rate and an increase in sales per patient. By using new technologies and multiple pair dispensing the office can address the pressures of man-

aged care and/or lower reimbursement rates, competition, increased operating expenses, or lower profitability in contact lens sales.

The first step in successfully managing the practice is to make sure that the appointment book is filled, that every slot that should have a patient does. Next, know the capture rate of your practice, i.e., how many patients move from the exam room to the dispensary. If patients never visit the dispensary, its full

potential is diminished. Understand and chart the finances of the office so that

### If the capture rate is below 60%

Determine why they're leaving and consider:

#### DOCTOR

- Escort the patient to the dispensary
- Communicate optical needs on the prescription
- Discuss new lens technology (just an overview, not the details)
- Mention new frame styles or frame lines

#### OPTICIAN

- Increase lens and frame product knowledge through classes and continuing education
- Take a critical look at optical—is it inviting, is there a good mix of frame styles, colors and powerful brands
- Do you have all the tools you need





every employee understands their effect on the business. Then make sure everyone has a daily goal that they can reach then, they will know what to work for each day

A Profit and Loss statement is one of the ways that a business measures its success i.e., the effect of every person in the office every day. Consider adding your numbers into the example shown above; it can

highlight areas for attention and will become part of the plan created later in the guide.

Enter exams for the month and patients that purchased, and then calculate capture rate. Divide patients that bought by the total glasses sold for a Multiple Pair ratio. Next list the average sell price and the average cost of goods (the total paid for frames and lenses). Divide costs by total sell price for percent material costs. Good benchmarks are 65% or more for capture, and 30% or less for materials costs. (Set better than average benchmarks and plan to get there.)

The profits pay fixed office costs like employees' salaries, taxes and benefits and the lights, heat, rent, equipment, insurance, etc. to keep the office open, probably about 40%. The rest pays marketing and administrative costs.

In this example, fixed costs are about \$90 of the profits every time a pair of glasses is sold.

If the patient is already at the dispensing table (think \$90) and a 2nd or 3rd pair of glasses is purchased, it's almost as if the first pair of glasses has paid for you, the rent and the lights.

	Example	Your Numbers	
Exams/doctor	200		Avg exams/day X days worked in month
Purchases	126		Patients that purchased
Capture rate	63%		Purchases/Exams (%)
Glasses sold	137		Total glasses sold
Multiple pair ratio	8.7%		Total glasses sold/purchasers (%)
Average sell price	\$325		Total \$/pairs sold
Average Cost of Goods Sold (COGS)	\$97.50		Total frame and lens costs/total glasses sold
Percent material costs	30%		Percent spent to buy or make eyewear

Where does that extra profit go? It helps fund remodels, new tools, trips for staff training and rewards, raises and bonuses. Managed care also impacts profits depending on the percent of managed care patients and each patient's benefits. The managed care tradeoff is an increased potential patient pool but with lower potential profit. That's another reason why dispensing multiple pairs is so important. In multiple pairs, the first pair is insurance covered, typically every pair of eyewear purchased after is privately paid and at full profit. Multiple pairs are essential to grow an office.

The point here is that implementing

programs like multiple pair sales requires planning—it's always good but it can be made even better with numbers that measure success. Understand how the sale each day for each person affects the business that month, that quarter and that year.

So how is it done and what does it mean for the office?

## MULTIPLE PAIR SUCCESS - DISPENSING Can One Pair of Glasses Do Everything?

One pair of eyeglasses equals compromise. One pair of glasses cannot be all things to all people and the reasons are pretty straightforward.

Research suggests that **patients can understand the need for multiple pairs when the benefits are explained to them.** In a recent research study, when consumers were detailed the benefits of polarized lenses and asked if they were interested in purchasing a pair, the majority said "yes." Yet only about 20% of patients have more than one pair of prescription eyeglasses.

Why is there such a difference between purchase intent and actual purchases? One reason is clear. **Most patients are never told about their options or given the opportunity to buy them.** This represents a huge opportunity. This is why it is

## New! Perfect for the 100 Yard Dash

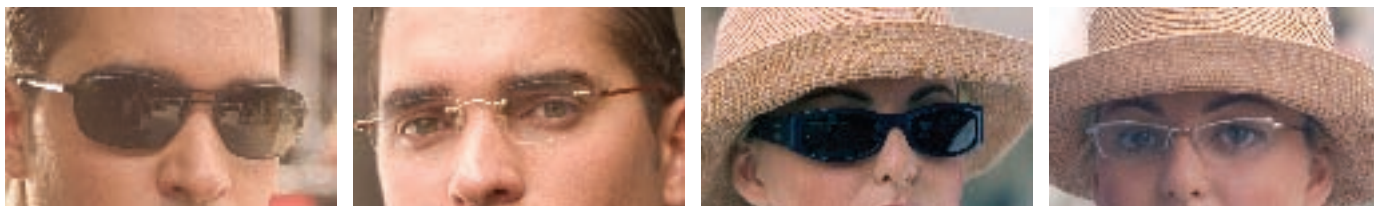
Multiple paired patients enjoy more hassle-free eye "wear."

Eyewear for every need means that whether it's the part of the day when that patient is an athlete, accountant, ballroom dancer or plumber, they can concentrate on their performance—rather than try to manage with glasses that don't make the task easy—and look good too.

Don't forget the patient without a prescription. Even the person that the doctor has told "...good news, there is no prescription correction needed..." benefits from the right eyewear for every situation.

Don't let them out the door until the advantages of professional sunwear are explained and the importance of impact and UV protection is detailed.





critical for offices to create and implement a plan around multiple pair dispensing.

Everyone in the office should understand when general-purpose eyewear falls short of providing ideal vision (or when one size doesn't fit all). Use this knowledge to better educate patients about their eyewear purchases, both the benefits and shortcomings. The chart below summarizes these compromises.

## CREATE A PLAN

To be successful dispensing multiple pairs, a plan and consistent follow through are essential. Here are the critical components for increased dispensing and sales of multiple pairs.

### Set Goals

Goal setting is a critical part of the plan. This means both business and individual

goals. For example, for the business side, the simplified P&L is a good start. Set goals for the dispensing portion and the sales portion separately though they are related. For dispensing that's exams per doctor, capture rate, multiple pair ratio, product knowledge and scripting. For sales include ASP (average sales price), COGS (cost of goods sold) and percent material costs (get copies of lab invoices

COMPROMISES IN EYEWEAR			
	SV	Bifocals	Progressives
Clear Distance	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clear mid range	No for presbyopes	Only adds < +1.75	Yes
Clear near	Yes (non-presbyope) reading glasses (presbyopes)	Yes	Yes
Comfortable mid range vision	Usually, in non-presbyopes	Only adds < 1.75	Only for adds < +1.75 with lots of computer work
Comfortable Near	Yes (non-presbyope), reading glasses (presbyopes)	Yes	Depends on amount of reading required
Fashionable and stylish	Yes, also frame dependent	Maybe not	Yes, also frame dependent
Read in bed	Yes (non-presbyope)		Easier in short corridor lenses
Reduce reflections	Required AR lenses	Require AR lenses	Require AR lenses
Reduce disabling glare	Only if tint, photochromic or polarized	Only if tint, photochromic or polarized	Only if tint, photochromic or polarized
Eliminate blinding glare	Only if polarized	Only if polarized	Only if polarized
Paint a ceiling, work under a carlift	Usually, in non-presbyopes	Only adds <1.75	Only adds <1.75
Putt effectively	Has the vision depends on skill	Segment is in the way	Near is in the way



and frame costs for COGS numbers). This means that an analysis of the practice is required. Practice management software often can provide these reports; contact your software representative if the reports aren't yet being accessed. Otherwise, go back and measure the last 3 months. Establish this as a baseline. In an office meeting determine what are reasonable goals for the next three months.

Benchmarks are 65% capture rate, 30% materials costs and a 20% multiple pairs ratio as benchmarks. Determine area(s) of focus and set targets.

#### **Engage the team**

Once targets and overall business goals are set, engage the team with individual goals. They are the assignment of reporting responsibilities, personal education, actions for reception, pre-testing, exam and dispensing. Individual goal setting will assist with making the plan work since it addresses the areas where attention is required to meet the plan over the next three months. For example, if a real opportunity such as prescription sunwear exists but the staff doesn't understand the importance of polarized lenses, immediate training and proof of competence is essential. So for each individual, develop 3-6 goals per review period (1, 3 and 6 months) that complement business goals. All staff must understand the compromises of general-purpose eyewear and the advantages of specific multiple pair options. If possible, have a reward system for those who accomplish their individual goals, as well as the team as a whole. What gets measured, gets done.

#### **Organize the office & establish a process**

Next, take a step back to get an overview of the patient path through the office. At each touchpoint, integrate something related to multiple pairs. This way the process leverages the entire patient experience.

Consider reading material, signage and POP in reception, questions asked in reception and data collected during pre-testing. Develop methods to record this info and use it in the exam room and during the pass-off to the optician. Draw a big map of the process and list all the pieces that must be available to better accomplish the goals.

#### **Track and review progress regularly**

Goals must be tracked and reviewed regularly. Once monthly, by owner and as part of an office meeting, review the numbers. For each category, list the successes, issues and actions required for improvement. (Remember to praise publicly and counsel privately). Focusing on the positives encourages others to perform better and be part of the team's success. Be sure to also look at the trends for the previous 3 and 6 months. Eventually a look at the previous 12 months is good as well as a direct comparison with the same month a year ago. Excel has a graphing function and it can add trend lines automatically. Learning Excel and graphing data is a good goal for a designated staff member.

#### **Make adjustments**

Every month list successes and issues. Develop 1-2 action items to address each issue. It may mean training or re-training, lab considerations, new POP, etc. The key to continuous improvement is realistic reviews and considered adjustments.

## **BECOME FAMILIAR WITH MULTIPLE PAIRS**

Now that everyone is clear on the plan and the compromises a patient faces with one general purpose pair of glasses, it's time to focus on multiple pair options. As we mentioned before, technology and advances in lens and frame design have opened up the possibilities when it comes to multiple pairs. The chart on page 7

provides a brief summary of some of the most common multiple pairs. You and your staff should become comfortable with each category, who the best target patient is for each and what the benefits are to those patients.

It's easier for staff to sell products when they wear what they sell. This might also be the best time to review what you and your staff are wearing. How many pairs do each of you own and use? If it's less than two, let us suggest making an investment in eyewear. Everyone in the office should have at least a pair of sunglasses (plano if they don't wear spectacles).

How many pairs of glasses should every patient have? Two? Three? The answer is "it depends on the needs of the patient." For instance they might need a pair of computer lenses to address symptoms of Computer Vision Syndrome, a pair of progressive lenses when they aren't spending as much time directly in front of the computer and a pair of single vision readers when lying in bed reading. They may want several pair to give them a different look, a pair or two of sunglass lenses, polarized for driving, a pair for on the lake, a fashionable flash mirror pair for around town, the list goes on and on....but you get the idea. Don't stop with just two, find out what your patient needs and make suggestions, being sure to let them know the benefits of having multiple pairs.

It is safe to say that everyone should at least have a pair of polarized sunglasses in addition to their primary pair. Everyone needs protection from the harmful affects of the sun's UV rays. And polarized sunglasses significantly improve vision and comfort outdoors. Other than sunwear, it depends on the specific needs of the individual patient.

Category	Who's the Target	What Do They Get?
<b>Sunwear</b> —General Purpose	Patients with a variety of sun needs, no one task is more important than another	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ophthalmic materials for superior vision in the brightest sun</li> <li>• Protection from UV</li> <li>• Comfort in the bright sun</li> <li>• Great looks and style</li> </ul>
<b>Sports</b> —some examples what can you add?	Cyclists—road and mountain biking	All the above plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good wind, dust and bug protection; at any speed, any eye issue is dangerous</li> <li>• Colors like red, cranberry and brown help enhance contrast for gravel, ruts and when riding in overcast conditions</li> <li>• Many prefer dark grey for those intensely sunny days</li> <li>• Wrap styles with compensated prescriptions that work and look better—"they just look fast"</li> <li>• Lenses that are extra impact resistant for safety</li> </ul>
	Golf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special multifocals—see to putt and keep score also</li> <li>• Lens colors that can make the ball more visible against a variety of backgrounds</li> <li>• Great fashions</li> </ul>
	Motorcyclists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly impact and protective eyewear</li> <li>• Lenses that change density for the right light on any ride</li> <li>• Wrap capable</li> <li>• Polarized to reduce glare on the roadways</li> <li>• Style to match their style</li> </ul>
<b>Computer (Midrange and near)</b>	Anyone that spends more than 2 hours a day at the computer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear, superior vision at the desk for reading and mid-range, out to about 4 feet</li> <li>• Wider areas to clear vision than other lens types</li> <li>• Superior comfort. Reduced eyestrain, back and neck aches</li> <li>• Improved productivity and accuracy</li> </ul>
<b>Home Hobbies</b>	Scrapbooking, Sewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear, crisp vision all sll distances</li> <li>• Comfortable vision whenever needed</li> </ul>
	Wood Turning, Lathing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eye protection</li> <li>• Good vision at all needed distances</li> </ul>
<b>Occupation</b> — some examples, what can you add?	Car, airline mechanic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eye protection</li> <li>• Clear vision above as well as below for the presbyope</li> <li>• Superior scratch resistance</li> <li>• Comfort and safety all day on the job</li> <li>• New styles and fashions</li> </ul>
	Truck driver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisp day and nighttime vision for the faster reaction times = increased safety</li> <li>• Superior comfort from the color and lens density chosen</li> <li>• Polarized lenses to eliminate the hazard of blinding glare</li> <li>• Lenses of variable tint for in- and outdoors, a polarized clip for driving</li> <li>• Eye protection for hazardous loading and unloading, adding chains for snow and ice</li> </ul>
<b>Plano Sunwear</b>	Contact lens wearers, refractive surgery patients, non prescription patients from eye health exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fashion and style, frame color and texture, looks</li> <li>• UV protection</li> <li>• Glare reduction, elimination, most comfortable vision outdoors</li> <li>• Brand names</li> </ul>

## IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

Implementing a few simple protocols can significantly improve your office's success with multiple pair dispensing. Think of it as a two-part system. Part one is the signage and non-verbal messages patients are exposed to in the office. Part two are the explicit verbal recommendations made by the doctor and staff. And let us be clear, real success comes when

the entire staff is engaged, knowledgeable, and understands their role in the multiple pair dispensing process.

The foundation of any multiple pair dispensing strategy begins with the signage and point-of-purchase displays. Here are some recommendations of what you can do to improve the multiple pair friendliness of your office:

### Reception/waiting area

- Replace non-relevant reading material with condition and product education
- Consider installing a video education system such as iPort media or other high quality interactive media. These programs offer education in a format that is very engaging.





### Exam rooms

Hang educational posters that discuss various optical needs such as:

- The harmful effects of UV on the eyes
- Computer Vision Syndrome, the symptoms
- Statistics of eye injuries in the work place and at home and the need for safety eyewear

### Dispensing area

- Keep demonstration tools and education prompts on the dispensing table within view or easily accessible to the optician.

Many labs and manufacturers, such as Essilor, offer a variety of POP materials, to support their customer's multiple pair dispensing efforts. Contact your lab or manufacturer representative to see if what they offer matches the POP needs of your office.

## SET THE STAGE

At every touchpoint become a consultant and advisor. Connect with the patient by building rapport, listen to their wants and needs and get enough information to teach them about their opportunities.

**Build Rapport** – Smile, be friendly and interested. It should be exciting to make eyewear for this patient (even if they are the biggest grump today). Put yourself in the patient's shoes (eyes), this helps to understand real need and wants.

### Determine the Need?

Determine the need by asking questions.

- "What do you like best about your glasses? Actually, I'm more interested in what you like the least." This uncovers issues about their vision in all the situations that they need good vision.
- "What do you use for sun protection?" Tells you whether they have prescription sunglasses or not.
- "How many hours during the day/night do you use a computer?" Opens the door for a discussion about special uses of the eyes and how to make every task more comfortable.
- "Tell me about your hobbies?" It could be golf, fishing, basketball, hiking, cycling, boating, sewing, etc.
- "Are you sensitive to light?" Creates an opportunity for variable tint lenses.
- "What's your occupation?" Simply gets to the point – it describes how they use their eyes at work.
- "Do you have trouble reading?" gets to the heart of where and when, in bed, for example, or for long periods of pleasure reading.
- "Do you have trouble reading signs or with oncoming headlights at night while driving?" Allows a discussion about AR lenses and special night driving prescriptions.

Think full time, distance, and intermediate or reading only, safety, sun, early morning fishing, etc. The possibilities are endless; be sure they also resonate with the area in which the office is located i.e., near the beach, in the mountains or in the city.

to the exam." When they say that they don't have prescription sunglasses, describe how terrific a selection or mention the newest brands carried and how knowledgeable the doctor and optician are about the importance of good sunwear.

When they arrive for their appointment and are being checked in ask if they are

### Ask Questions and Listen

– To describe options and opportunities, gather information by asking questions. Don't be too anxious to answer and make recommendations.

Get enough information to make valuable recommendations. Understand job, driving, walking, exercise, hobby, TV, movie, reading, outdoors and other vision experiences important to the patient first. Many offices use lifestyle questionnaires and/or as we described, an Rx with check-offs for doctor recommendations.

It's important to integrate the multiple-pair discussion throughout the patient experience. Here's some ways this can be done:

## RECEPTION

Multiple pair dispensing starts with reception. When making appointments be sure that patients are asked to "bring their sunwear and all other glasses with them

### For Reception:

"Be sure to bring your prescription sunglasses with you for your appointment."

"Do you plan to buy sunglasses today?"

"Here's a booklet on sunglasses and how they can make you see clearly and comfortably in even the brightest sun."

interested in learning about any particular kind of eyewear. With this information, the patient can be given educational material on prescription polarized sunglasses with the forms they are asked to fill out. It makes better use of the time they will spend in reception. Awareness of options allows for a better exam because the patient will be reminded to discuss their eyewear needs.

## PRE-TESTING

As the technician completes pre-testing, the dialogue continues about them and their vision. It's a good time to list complaints in the chart. For example, "I have to raise my head when working at my computer to see it clearly," or "it seems that I'm really sensitive to the sun these days."

### For the Doctor

"Good sunglasses during the day, in the right color and darkness, will help you be more comfortable outdoors and can improve vision at night."

"What you're indicating we call computer vision syndrome, easily fixed with a pair of our specially designed computer vision glasses."

"A pair of reading glasses in addition to your progressive lenses will make it easy to read in bed and more comfortable for longer periods of time."

## EXAM

Within the exam room, the opportunity to recommend and prescribe is unique and could ensure that the patient receives just the right lens for the complaint. If the goal is for patients to understand the



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opportunities and benefits—the power of the white coat is key. From Dr. Peter Shaw-McMinn and his CE on Differentiation, “Be sure the doctor is also discussing new products and technologies during the refraction since the doctor’s opinion is key to the patient believing these products are consistent with their eye health and eyecare needs.”

For example, the doctor might say...

“After examining the growth you pointed out on the surface of your eye I see that it is a pingueculae. Because it is caused and irritated by wind, dust and UV, I recommend 100% UV absorbing sunwear that fits close and provides excellent coverage.”

## THE TRANSFER

Next, the transfer to the optician passes power from the doctor to the optician to reinforce the recommendations from the eye exam. After all, compliance with the prescription only happens when the patient receives the recommended glasses in the variety of forms suggested. Consider adding the variety of eyewear opportunities to the Rx pad. The optician can easily review and discuss the doctor’s

### For the Transfer

“Let me introduce you to Mary, she’s an expert optician and will fully describe the two pairs of glasses I recommended and their costs.

“Mary, Ms. Diaz needs her first add. I recommend pair of progressives for general purpose and polarized progressive sunglasses because she sails. I think these would really make her most comfortable”

recommendations without the patient feeling like Optical is just a sales department. When you get a prescription for two medications, you don’t typically decide to just fill one, when both will

## How Do the Experts Do It?

We surveyed a number of doctors and opticians, just like you, who are successfully fitting patients with more than one pair of glasses. Here’s what they said:

**Is there a certain type of patient to target?** That was what was so exciting—there’s no way to predict it...the most important part is not to let any intuition become a judgment about what they like or afford. Mid to High income is certainly a factor but again – don’t pre-judge. Younger patients may be more influenced by brand and fashion, presbyopes influenced by the vision needs to make work or recreation easier and more fun. Fashion forward, women children and active sportsmen are likely.

**Does the patient that buys have a certain attitude?** Intrinsically they are interested in what eyewear can do for them in either style or function. They also find the conversation of value because questions specific to needs, issues and wants were addressed. They thought that the experience was fun (imagine that).

**For the 2 or more pair sale, was that the patient’s plan from the start?** Good news—it was evenly divided. Some wanted eyeglasses that were different; others had done web research or just knew that there was a solution to their ‘problem’. The rest made the decision on the spot or bought again when they returned to pick up the first pair of glasses purchased.

**Is there a usual multiple pair mix?** No, the answers varied but prescription sunwear was the most often listed as added. The mixtures at one end were 3 different (very different) designer’s frames with SV lenses, the middle 4 pair, progressives clear, progressives polarized sun, SV TV/Night driving and a computer pair. Another reported the patient wanted 2 but bought 6, and at the other end they purchased 10 pairs of plano sunglasses (no you can’t have her name).

**Were lenses or frames the driver?** Lenses, frames, frames, lenses, etc.—no clear winner here—again question patients and listen to their answers doors open. The frame is easier for the patient to initially understand but as you get into lenses, the discussion shifts.

**How much was the sale?** Just some numbers: >\$700, \$1000, \$1200, \$1600, \$1830, and \$2100

**Are you located in an affluent area?** Responses were from all around the country and patient income reported was mixed.

**What was the deposit?** Most said half, the rest “paid in full” and remarked that the patient that pays in full shows trust and that they “really wanted” that eyewear.

**How do you start the conversation?** “Do you have a good back up pair?” “What do you use for sunglasses?” “Are these your street glasses?” “It’s more important than ever to protect your eyes from UV, do you have prescription sunglasses?” “I start right away to find their needs and wants.” “Show me your sunglasses.”

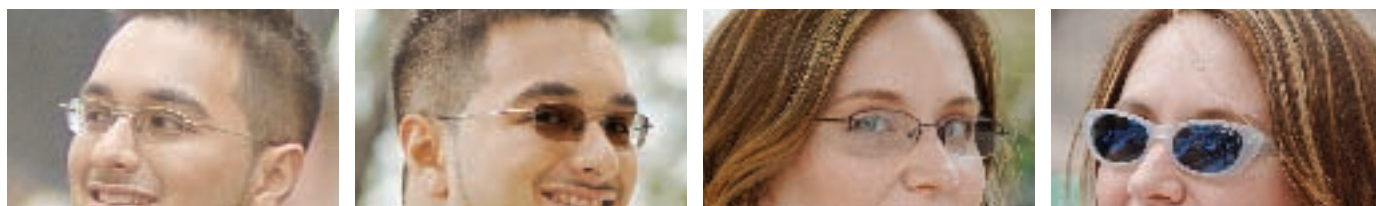
**Is there a special inventory to entice patients?** Yes, anything that was purchased particularly right or the last of collections or where there is a need to decrease inventory (see next question). Some suggested that a budget line is used when budget is a concern.

**Is there a 2nd pair discount?** Most said yes and they ranged from 15-25%. One gives 25% if the patient also buys AR lenses. Another offers 50% promotionally and advertises through direct and email. Another said this, “Don’t be focused on the 2nd pair discount, instead focus on multiple pairs as a better way to serve the patient and use discounts for the patient’s family members and friends.”

**When do you know you’ve been successful?** When they return at times other than when they “need” to (new Rx, annual check) to see new styles, discuss wants or just to say how happy or excited they are with their new glasses.

**Who in the office is the best at multiple pair sales?** “The optician that always talks about the opportunities outsells the rest.” “Ask the questions that allow the patient to come to the conclusion that they need multiple pairs.”

**What’s the one attribute an optician must have to sell multiple pairs to the same patient?** “Can’t think of eyewear as something a patient doesn’t want so present the most options.” “Interested in the well-being of the family” “Confidence and product knowledge.” “Demonstrations.” “Ask, then listen.” “Fun frames.” “Pushy, but not too pushy.”



make you feel better soon. The same mentality applies to eyeglasses. If the doctor recommends two pair, more than likely the patient will strongly consider it, if not immediately, within the next few months.

## FITTING

There are two starting approaches—leading with lenses or leading with frames. Both work—it depends which resonates more with the patient. Many successful multiple pair sales use both as influencers at various times during the process of choosing eyewear. Most ECP's say that the patient understands frame style differences and often says, "I wish I could have more than one"—the lenses can quickly make the glasses have very different functionality.

Every patient needs a table of options. Show them the possibilities and they will ask questions. Educate briefly about the choices and develop a plan of eyewear that meets all their needs. Total the costs and review with the patient. Ask for a deposit (50% or all) and complete the order. Say thanks and keep them informed about progress until delivery.

Consider using a worksheet to list the patient's daily experiences and their comments about their current eyewear and what interests them. See the sample below – it includes occupation, hobbies and recreation for Ms. Diaz who is a pretty active presbyope. See the recommendations and how those can be combined into three pairs of glasses as recommendations. A worksheet like this introduces a systematic way to evaluate patients for their eyewear.

Be sure not to prejudice patients. It's impossible to know whether a patient will

be interested in prescription sunglasses, golf glasses or computer lenses from their clothes, car or the purse they carry. Offer options and let patients make their own decisions. It's also important to not let one's own ability to afford many pairs of glasses affect whether you talk to patients about more than one. Again, provide options and opportunities and patients will make up their own minds as to what they want.

## DISPENSING

When the patient picks up their glasses, review the recommendations made during the visit for fitting and ordering. Often when patients have had time to think about the recommendations they have received, they are more inclined to purchase them during pick up.

In addition, don't forget that this is a critical opportunity to re-educate the patient and nurture the seeds planted

Eyewear		Mary Diaz		7/20/06	
Plan		(Prescription)		Rx	
				R	L
				3.00	-2.50
				0.50	-0.75
				BC	1.5
				2.00	1.00
Daily Experiences		Description		Needs, Wants, Issues	
Job		Middle school teacher		Works indoors and outdoors during recess and lunch	
Driving		To/from work		Bothered by early morning sun	
Walking		To/from work		Bothered by early morning sun	
Exercise		Jogs		Slips down to swim class	
Brands Interest		Prada & Rudy Rignier wrap frame		This is one fashionable spot!	
Hobby		reading		Getting harder to be comfortable	
TV		not much		Crisp vision	
Movies		love 'em		First pair will work great here - let me tell you about AR lenses	
Computer		of course, everyday, night		Getting harder to be comfortable tired eyes	
Recreation, Sports		Golfing		Hole in aviator to sunny days	
Hobby		fishing, gardening		Love to dig and chop	

In this example, Ms. Diaz would benefit from a pair of general-purpose photochromic AR progressives, a pair of polarized polycarbonate progressives with AR for high performance vision and a pair of computer lenses for computer and reading.





during their initial visit. Budget may hinder the purchase but a good discussion about prescription polarized sunglasses or neck saving computer glasses will increase the likelihood of success when budget may allow. “Let me give you this brochure that describes Computer Vision Syndrome and the special computer glasses that we discussed. Call me when you are ready to order them or if you have any questions.

Then when you follow up with the patient by phone in 2 to 3 weeks to see how they are doing with their new glasses, you can review once again multiple pair recommendations they received during their exam.

#### **Make adjustments**

Make adjustments as necessary however, not too often since most plans and trainings need time to sink in and learn the real adjustments if any needed. Do fix what isn't working however, use the individuals that are most affected to help with the solution. They usually know the problem the best and know how to best fix it. If the problem is an individual, their manager must get involved and take responsibility.

Sales goals and results are pretty straight forward—good luck.

## **MULTIPLE PAIR SUCCESS—SELLING**

### **Selling Goals**

For multiple pair success set clear sales goals; some easily accomplished, others a stretch. Goals should include the changes agreed for ASP, COGS and percent material costs. From the practice P&L, record averages and review the trends. Then finalize a series of goals. Examples are increased ASP, number of discussions about prescription sunwear or computer lenses, multiple pair ratio, number of polarized lenses demonstrated vs. sold, etc.

The critical part is that a set of goals are set for everyone in the office affecting the sale.

Remember, starting benchmarks are 65% capture rate, 30% materials costs and a 20% multiple pair ratio. As your averages increase, they become your new benchmark.

## **PRICING AND OBJECTIONS**

No discussion of multiple pairs is complete without one about “How much of a discount for 2nd pairs?” The purpose of promotional discounts is to encourage customers to visit a store and find items that they want and buy. You see them often, buy one get one, 25%-70% off, limited time only, etc.

In optical, 2nd pair discounts, for many, addresses the basic discomfort of selling more than one pair. If you believe that at least two pair (clear and sun) serves the patient best then make that 2nd pair advantage known immediately and ensure that the patient understands the cost.

Choose whether multiple pair discounts are general practice or whether to offer them promotionally. The problem with promotional efforts in an independent office is that patients' visits are tied to the appointment schedule and they may not be in the office buying glasses when the promotion is running. So many implement a 15-25% discount to cover all multiple pair sales. That means that the price reduction is visible in the dispensary and each optician mentions it at the beginning of the process of choosing frames and lenses. Also, consider a tent card or small sign in the frame board that suggests that patients receive 20% off (or whatever the discount) any 2nd or 3rd pair of eyewear purchased when purchasing or picking up their primary pair. This helps if the optician fails to talk about the opportunities of multiple pairs.

From the section “How Do the Experts Do It?” most offer a multiple pair dis-

count. True multiple pair sales mean that promotional discounts are not used or needed. After all, compare the average number of 2nd pair sales reported, about 20%, and the fact that almost all offices offer a discount. So to just offer a discount suggests that it's not working. After all, the industry is less than successful. Moreover, discounts reduce the intended revenue impact of the additional sale.

On the other hand, a good solid stock market return on investment is 10% growth year on year so in this lies the idea of an opportunity. The money sunk in frame inventory that has been “sitting on the frame board” could be more creatively used and, deliver a better-than-stock-market return if more deeply discounted for multiple pair opportunities. Again though, the discount without a plan, process and review doesn't work so add it to the plan.

For example, cull the inventory and use them as an incentive for multiple pairs. Offer significant reductions (30-60%) in price as a multiple pairs promotion. Patients, of course, would appreciate the opportunity, and lens pricing remains the same. If a promotion, schedule mailing postcards to your patients to let them know about the sale.

One office successfully adds some condition to a 2nd or 3rd pair discount like, “included when AR is ordered,” which offsets the discount and, more importantly, benefits the wearer.

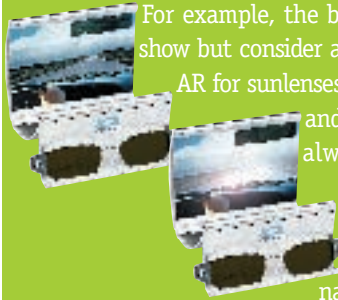
If the patient is unsure of buying the second pair during the original consult, some offices put aside the frame being considered until the day that they come to pick up the glasses ordered.

And, since some patients need time to think about prescription sunglasses and computer glasses, consider allowing purchases from this inventory up to 60 days after their glasses were picked up. One way to reinforce this are ‘preferred discount coupons.’ If the



## SELL OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Sunwear



For example, the benefits of AR lenses are easy to show but consider also having samples of Crizal Sun, AR for sunlenses. Once patients actually purchase and wear AR lenses, they typically always purchase AR lenses in the future. Trial is very important to continued success. The benefits of backside AR virtually eliminate the visibility of annoying back surface reflections on dark lenses. Also have the polarized lens demonstrator ready to show how polarized lenses improve comfort and can make driving, especially in the morning and at dusk, safer by eliminating blinding glare that hides important things on the road.

Demonstrate the differences of color so patients understand the way they see in addition to the way that they look. Use sample planos as well as finished sunglasses from the frame displays to take patients outdoors to try tints versus polarized, grey versus brown.

Define the costs as you go and the total so there is no surprise. Adjust choices of lens materials to allow patients multiple pairs if the thinness requirement can be relaxed for a frame whose eye-wire thickness size allows a less costly material.

### Lens Samples

A good source of samples is your laboratory. Order sample lenses edged as rights, sized about 54mm and with AR. Edged lenses are more real when demonstrating them to patients and the AR demonstrates lens clarity. To get some clever animations, use a flat screen or monitor and go to [www.crizal.com](http://www.crizal.com) to use the Crizal Theatre.

### Computer Lenses

Using samples made up in frames and consumer brochures, describe and demonstrate how “computer glasses” provide clear vision for the width of the computer monitor and how vision is also clear for reading. Explain how the lenses can be ordered to provide clear mid-range and near vision to include people on the other side of the desk.

From [www.prio.com](http://www.prio.com): Almost everyone uses a computer. According to the 2003 US Census Report, 175 million people use a computer every day, including 60 million children. While computers enable us to be more efficient and more productive, this can come at a price: Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS). Typical symptoms include, eyestrain, headaches, slow focusing, tired, burning eyes, neck and shoulder pain and/or blurred vision at distance.

One solution is PRIO Computer Lenses and Browser Lenses, new technology designed for computer use. Overall, PRIO lenses offer significant advantages over older designs such as single vision, bifocals, trifocals, or general purpose progressives. While PRIO lenses are primarily intended for computer use, they work great for anyone requiring clear intermediate and near vision, such as musicians, seamstresses, mechanics, and many others.



Also, have the manufacturer's collateral available to reinforce the advantages of the [roducts to the patient. In this way, you remain the expert and have a variety of tools to demonstrate how well you know your craft and how to best meet the patient's wants and expectations. For more information on Scripting for Success, see [www.2020mag.com](http://www.2020mag.com) and look for the CE with that same title.

20% is the standard 2nd pair discount, the doctor or optician may also have “30% off” coupons for preferred customers for specific lenses. Make up “Computer” or “Polarized” vouchers; it make patients feel more important and they're more likely to order. Call or send them a note reminding them that the discount still applies and will expire on xxxx date.

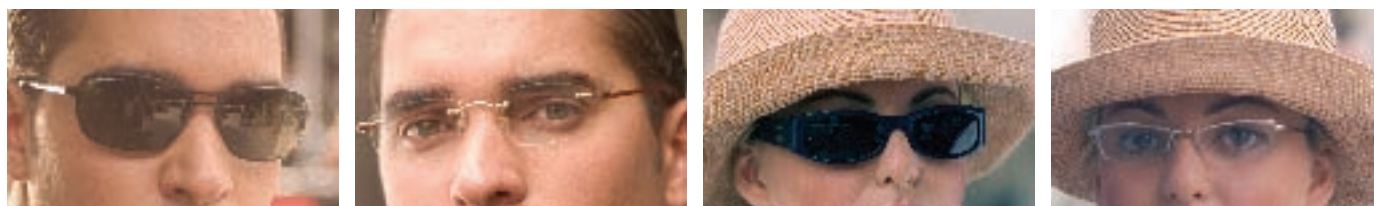
## BUNDLING AND DISCOUNTING

Bundling or packaging a variety of the benefits together with one price removes the clutter that happens when multiple pairs are being discussed. If the optician is using an a la carte menu for all add-ons, the patient may feel overwhelmed.

Consumer behavior suggests that patients will have a better shopping experience and feel better about their purchase if decision making is relatively simple.

Offering patients 3 lens options (packages) rather than overwhelming them with individual options will simplify the sale, save time and improve satisfaction.

For example, one office bundles



together polycarbonate, a premium AR and edge polishing and details the list of benefits for one price. The result is a faster agreement by the patient to that combination so the discussion can move onto using the same bundle with polarized for the sunglasses.

*Focus on what the patient saves on multiple choices, not what it costs them.* In the example below, bundling saves the patient

\$72 on each of the pairs of glasses if they were purchased separately. Bundling is the way that the consumer has come to purchase automobiles, electronics, home service etc. When combined with an incentive of an additional 20%, the cost of the second pair of glasses saves the patient almost another \$100. Again, focus on the savings, not the costs. Use a chart like this with your own numbers with patients. They

want to see how they can get more and save more at the same time.

Also, when considering bundling vs. usual and customary pricing, it's the way one looks at incremental profit vs. profit margin. Margin cannot pay the rent, absolute dollars does. Often, percent margin is used to develop pricing for products. It's better to look at the dollar margin since that ensures that the fixed costs of the office are covered.

## BREAKING UP THE PURCHASES

Remember that many patients have other expenses. Some offices have been successful at extending the discount period beyond the day of the exam. Some extend for 30-60 days after the dispensing date. If you do, talk to the patient at the end of the period and invite them back. Take down all the information during the initial visit including measurements so that the order can be placed over the phone and a credit card used for payment.

## ESTABLISH A MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Implementing programs like multiple pair sales requires planning. Set goals; develop a plan and educate where needed (don't forget to ask suppliers for help).

Pre-dispose patients to purchase multiple pairs by sending product and service messages to them continually, even when they are not in the office. Therefore, all communication should discuss the opportunities for prescription sunwear in addition to new exams and a new pair of clear glasses.

Call your Essilor or ELOA representative for materials and ideas about marketing campaigns using Essilor materials. Also talk with frame representatives. They are your best allies to help educate, plan and execute sales plans.

	Bundled	Usual & Customary	Savings	Advantage/Notes
<b>PRIMARY EYEWEAR</b>				
Frame	\$200	\$200		
Premium	\$475	\$235		
Progressive		\$89		Newest, all distance vision
Polycarbonate		\$109		
Premium AR		\$89		Thin, light, impact, UV
Photochromic		\$25		
UV				Crisp, clear vision Convenience, comfort Health, protection
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$675</b>	<b>\$747</b>	<b>\$72</b>	
<b>SUNGLASSES</b>				
2nd pair, less 20%				
Frame				
Premium	\$200	\$200		
progressive				Newest, all distance vision
Polycarbonate	\$235	\$235		
UV		\$89		Thin, light, impact
Polarized	\$220	\$89		Health, protection
Premium AR		\$25		Glare, comfort, safety
				Clear, no back reflections
-20%		\$89		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$455</b>	<b>\$527</b>	<b>\$72</b>	20% reduction
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>-\$91</b>			
	<b>\$564</b>	<b>\$727</b>	<b>\$91</b>	Saved over the usual and customary fees when ordered together
	<b>\$1,238</b>	<b>\$1,474</b>	<b>\$235</b>	
<b>COMPUTER/ OTHER</b>				
(3rd/4th pair, less 25%)				
Lens				
Material				*Additional pairs enjoy additional savings
Premium AR				
Treatment				





## MINE THE DATA

Practice Management software has a report writer function and that allows every office to find patients that would benefit most from additional kinds of eyewear. Review patient records and send recall cards to patients over +1.75 add with a message about the new computer glasses the office has been so successful using. Targeting patients using information that you already know about them helps open the door. Send an email or post card to all patients that have purchased prescription sunwear about the new frame sizes and collections. For help with direct mail programs go to [www.2020mag.com/CE](http://www.2020mag.com/CE) and look for Making Direct Mail Fit Optical.

## LEVERAGE MANAGED CARE

Up to half the population has some form of vision care insurance, so each office understands what the programs allow. Regardless, always focus on Usual and Customary and the savings that their plan provides. All health insurance plans require patients to pay some "out of pocket" expenses.

The insurance benefit can be presented as a benefit that reduces and makes more vision opportunities possible. Rather than saying, you are allowed X dollars for your glasses, say that your account allows X dollars toward your purchase(s). This seems more like a discount toward their purchase and less of a definite allowance and that's all that they might want or get.

## MAXIMIZE FLEX DOLLARS

The end of October is the time to begin sending emails, cards and advertising locally about Flex Dollars. Many employers' benefits plans offer a Flex program where pre-tax money is placed in a separate

account to be used for medically related items during the year. Therefore, a promotion specifically targeted at a special pair of glasses would work to remind patients to spend flex dollars and more importantly teach them about the varieties of glasses (Rx sun, polarized, computer, hobbies, etc.) that they can get.

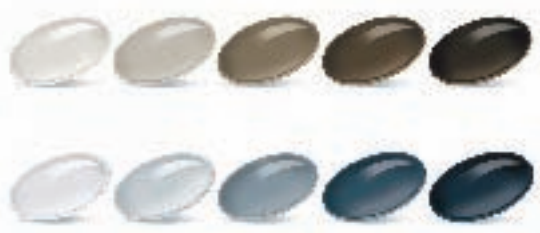
## STAFF INCENTIVES

Always a controversy, rewards for satisfying patient needs are appropriate. That reward can come in the form of a salary increase annually or semi-annually. It may also be a reward to change behavior.

For example, if the office believes that all patients must wear UV protective lenses outdoors regardless of whether they wear a prescription or not, for a period of 90 days add \$2.00 for each clear 100% UV absorptive pair and \$4.00 for sunwear sold to an office fund. This covers all polycarbonate, high index, photochromic and polarized lenses. Therefore, more premium lens materials are discussed, UV concerns are taught and the office functions as a team. All staff has responsibility for the way that the funds are spent: dinner, lunch, office tools, flowers, etc.

If vendors periodically provide frames at no cost then doctor and staff should rotate those freebies – it's better to accumulate those frame freebies during the year and have all staff get frames at the same time. The same is true for lenses from labs and manufacturers. Decide the purpose of the complimentary pair at staff meetings. The vendor wants the office to have product experience and they will be more inclined to offer free fits to the offices that have a plan to evaluate and share product experiences.

For salary review, set goals at least every 6 months. They should require learning new techniques, technology and personal



skills. Choose 3-4 goals twice a year and ensure that they are not a slam-dunk—some should be a stretch and require some hard work. Because multiple pairs impact the revenue of the office so significantly, some of the goals need to be multiple pair related. Monitor progress and ensure that there is consistent review of progress and rewards are delivered on time.

Should you spiff? For some, it's a dirty word, but if used, it should be applied equally throughout the office for goals set by the business or practice owner(s) or business manager. Consider the positioning of the practice and the promise of patient care. If the patient benefits and receives overall better eyewear, a commission for that sale of a new or unusually hard product to sell is in order. It also may get a new dispenser over the discomfort of what may appear to be an overly expensive pair of glasses. The key is that everyone benefits, especially the patient.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Multiple Choices are a critical part of superior patient care and help to ensure patient satisfaction while growing the practice. Today's opportunities for multiple pairs are greater than ever before. There's an almost endless array of frame and lens choices, so the potential for improved patient care and satisfaction is the best that it has ever been in the history of eyewear, all with the opportunity to grow practice revenue and personal skill. Make it your practice. ■



## Introducing the best idea in sunglasses since, well, sunglasses

Introducing Crizal Sun™, the first integrated Anti-Reflective created specifically for Sunwear. New Crizal Sun optimizes vision through every lens by adding the scratch protection and ease of cleaning of Crizal® Alizé® while reducing backside glare. The specialized, integrated technology of Crizal Sun delivers these benefits without front-side color changes or additional light transmission through the lens.

So, for the clearest vision under the sun, be sure to recommend Crizal Sun, the first integrated **ARS** (Anti-Reflective for Sunwear) available anywhere.

*The UV protection of Crizal Sun is dependent on material chosen.*



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