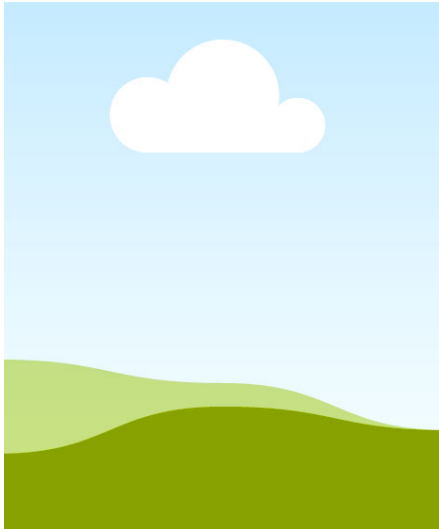




Valerie Manso

ABOC, FNAO, ALB, ACB
President, Manso Management

Add a little bit of body text





Valerie Manso

ABOC, FNAO, ALB, ACB
President, Manso Management

Valerie Manso has been a member of the ophthalmic community since 1973. Valerie is a Certified Optician in the Province of Ontario, Canada; an American Board of Opticians Certified Optician; and is a Fellow of the National Academy of Opticianry.

In addition to working with American Optical, Sola Optical and Vision Service Plan, she has presented thousands of hours in continuing education for Optometrists, Opticians and Paraoptometric Technicians at venues such as Vision Expo East and West, SECO, Heart of America, East West Congress and many more.

Valerie honed her speaking and presentation skills as a member of Toastmasters International since 1997, achieving the designations of Advanced Leader Bronze and Advanced Communicator Bronze. Additionally, she has held the positions of President, Vice President of Education and Vice President of Membership of her local Toastmasters Club.

In 2003 Valerie was acknowledged by our industry when she received recognition as one of the “Most Influential Women in Optical”, in the inaugural year of this award. And, as a founding member of the Optical Women’s Association, an organization with a 25+ year history, Valerie believes self development is a priceless gift.





Barbara Basti

MHA, LDO, Assistant
Professor – Opticianry
Program, Miami Dade College

Barbara Basti is a Professor and Licensed Dispensing Optician dedicated to creating effective learning environments for students. She brings experience in health care management, education, patient care, customer service, and sales, and is recognized for her strong leadership and organizational skills.

Barbara is dedicated to maintaining high standards for performance outcomes, patient care, and best practices. She earned a Master of Healthcare Administration from Florida Atlantic University, where she was a member of the Upsilon Phi Delta Honor Society. She also holds an Associate of Science in Opticianry from Miami Dade College, a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Horticulture from the University of Florida, and an Associate of Arts in Biology from Miami Dade College, graduating with honors at each stage.

Barbara currently serves as an Assistant Professor at Miami Dade College's Opticianry Program – Medical Campus. She teaches courses in geometrical and physical optics, eyewear fabrication, vision care clinic, ophthalmic management, and practicum. Her role combines classroom and lab instruction with clinical training, preparing students to become licensed healthcare professionals and business owners in the optical industry.





George Bourque

ABOM, Owner – Concord Optical

George Bourque is a second-generation optician from Massachusetts with over 25 years of experience. He is the independent owner of Concord Optical, which he runs with his wife, Lisa. They live in West Boylston with their daughter, Savannah, and their dog, Maggie.

George is an instructor at Franklin Cummings Tech in Boston, where he has been teaching since 2007. Known for his fun, thought-provoking, and interactive courses, he is also a regular presenter at both Vision Expo East and West.

He currently serves as a director on the ABO-NCLE board and has held leadership roles including chair of the Opticians Guild of America, director of the Opticians Association of America, and president of the Opticians Association of Massachusetts.

Passionate about family, optics, and football, George says his purpose in life is simple: to help people see.





Susan Klacik

ABO, Territory Sales Manager –
Luzerne Optical

After a humble start as a frame stylist with no prior eye care experience, Susan Klacik fell in love with optics. She borrowed money to buy books and teach herself the trade, and has since gone on to hold positions at nearly every level and in nearly every aspect of the eye care industry.

In her current role as Territory Sales Manager for Luzerne Optical, Susan brings a refreshing, multi-faceted perspective to her clients as a trusted practice consultant and educator.

Susan has served the eye care industry for over 35 years and is recognized by both the ABO and AOA as a valued provider of continuing education. She has presented her lens design and technology courses at three of the nation's optometric universities, and over the years has provided countless hours of continuing education to eye care professionals across the U.S. and Canada.

Regardless of skill level or years of experience, participants in Susan's educational programs always take away something relevant and immediately applicable to their vocation.





Dr. Michelle Hoff

OD, Associate Professor – UC
Berkeley School of Optometry
Founding Partner – Sightline
Ophthalmic Consulting, LLC

Optometric education is both Dr. Hoff's passion and her profession. Being both an optometrist and a master optician gives her a unique perspective when educating, training, and treating visual disorders with ophthalmic solutions.

She became a licensed optician in 1987 and went on to earn three degrees from the University of California, Berkeley: a BA in Marine Biology, a BS in Vision Science, and a Doctor of Optometry.

Dr. Hoff began her career at UC Berkeley School of Optometry in 1990 as a staff optician and later became an associate professor. She has taught ophthalmic optics, clinical examination of the eye, and served as a clinical instructor in several clinics.

She is a founding partner of Sightline Ophthalmic Consulting, LLC, dedicated to helping vision care professionals elevate patient care and business success. She is also the founder and Executive Director of the Mindful Eyes Foundation, which provides eyeglasses and vision care for underserved individuals.

Originally from Iowa, Dr. Hoff has called California home since 1982.





Pete Hanlin

ABOM, Vice President of
Professional Services – Essilor of
America

Pete Hanlin began his career in the ophthalmic industry in 1989. He managed several optometric practices and ophthalmic laboratories prior to joining Essilor of America in 2002, where he currently serves as Vice President of Professional Services.

Pete serves as an industry representative on the ANSI Z80 standards committee and has been a continuing education speaker for over 20 years.

A graduate of Lee University, Pete is designated as a Master Optician by the American Board of Opticianry. He resides in Hickory Creek, Texas, with his wife, Debbie, and their grandson, Ayden.





Kelly Rosemann

ABOC, National Technical Training
Manager – HOYA Vision Care

Kelly Rosemann is an ABO Certified Optician with over 25 years of optical experience and is an ABO Technical Level II approved speaker.

She began her optical career in 1997 as an apprentice optician in St. Louis, MO, and became ABO certified in 1998. Over the years, she has worked in both corporate-owned and independent ECP practices, including a cold-start practice she joined in 2003 and helped grow into a million-dollar business.

After managing that practice for 15 years, Kelly joined Hoya Vision Care in 2018 as a Territory Sales Manager. In 2019, she was voted “Customer Service TSM of the Year” by her peers. She now serves as National Technical Training Manager – ECP in HOYA’s Technical Marketing Department, where she follows her passion for educating and training eye care professionals across the country.





Tommy Neff

ABOC, NCLEC, Assistant Professor
– Opticianry Program,
Hillsborough Community College

Thomas Neff is a graduate of the Hillsborough Community College A.S. in Opticianry Program and a Board Certified Optician in Florida. He also holds advanced certifications from both the ABO and NCLE.

He earned a Bachelor's in Technical Education and Industry Training and a Master's in Career and Technical Education from the University of Central Florida.

Thomas currently serves as an Assistant Professor at Hillsborough Community College's Opticianry Program. He is also a board member of the National Academy of Opticianry and of the newly formed United Opticians of America.





Dianna E. Graves

COMT, BS, AA, Independent
Continuing Education Consultant

Dianna Graves has more than 40 years of experience in ophthalmic technology, education, and clinic leadership. She began her career at Saint-Paul Ramsey Hospital as a Certified Ophthalmic Medical Technologist and went on to serve as Clinical Director of Ophthalmology at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Minneapolis, Program Director for the School of Ophthalmic Medical Technology, and Clinical Supervisor at Regions Hospital.

For over 25 years, Dianna managed and supervised clinical teams at St. Paul Eye Clinic and HealthPartners Eye Clinic. In 2023, she transitioned to her current role as an Independent Continuing Education Consultant, providing training and CE programs across the U.S.

A dynamic and engaging speaker, Dianna has presented at national and regional meetings including SECO, the Wisconsin, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Louisiana Optometric Associations, SEEC, and numerous other state and specialty programs. Her sessions cover a wide range of technician and ophthalmic topics, including patient care, visual fields, triage, systemic disease, and professional development.

Dianna earned her COMT certification in 1984 from the School of Ophthalmic Medical Technology in St. Paul, MN. She also holds a B.S. in Secondary Education and an A.A. in Safety Education from Keene State College





Bernie Stewart

MA, NCLEM, ABOC, FNAO, LDO,
COA, Ophthalmic Educator

Bernie Stewart is an ophthalmic educator with a Master's Degree from Western Washington University. He is an Honored Fellow of the Contact Lens Society of America, an NCLE-Master, ABO Certified, a Fellow of the National Academy of Opticianry, a Licensed Dispensing Optician, and a JCAHPO Certified Ophthalmic Assistant.

Bernie has many years of clinical and teaching experience. His specialty is hands-on instruction in refraction, functional testing, and retinoscopy, along with didactic courses in contact lenses, optics, and study guides. He has taught at medical schools and presented at ophthalmology, optometry, and optician meetings, as well as clinics in 45 states and two foreign countries.

When not teaching, Bernie works for an optical corporation.





John Zimmerman

ABOC- Technical Sales & Training
Specialist – Carl Zeiss Vision

John Zimmerman is a veteran of the optical industry with over 40 years of experience. He began his career in Louisville, Kentucky, as an apprentice optician and became licensed in 1978. After moving to Texas, John continued his dispensing career and served on the board of the Opticians Association for the Southwest U.S.

In 1998, he relocated to Florida to represent a local optical laboratory, where his passion for speaking and training grew through collaborations with Transitions and Essilor lenses. He has spent the past two decades with Carl Zeiss Vision, most recently as Senior Retail Business Development Representative for South Florida and Puerto Rico, and since 2020, as Technical Sales & Training Specialist.

John has been recognized with the Professional Opticians of Florida Vendor of the Year Award (2009, 2011, 2015) and the Carl Zeiss Vision Presidents Challenge Award (2013, 2014, 2015, 2017) for exceeding sales targets.

An ABO Certified Speaker, John provides continuing education hours for opticians through the Professional Opticians of Florida, Optical Seminars, Inc., and Focal Education of Florida. His passion remains sharing knowledge and elevating the profession in the ever-changing optical industry.





Andrew S. Bruce

Andrew S. Bruce, LDO, ABOM, FNAO,
NCLEM, FCLSA - Opticianry
Educator, Consultant, and Author

Andrew Bruce is a Licensed Washington State Dispensing Optician and contact lens fitting specialist with more than 25 years of experience. He holds Masters in both Ophthalmic Optics and Contact Lens Technology, and is a nationally recognized ABO/NCLE advanced-level speaker, COPE-approved speaker, and AOA CPC-approved speaker.

In 2022, Andrew was named a Fellow of the Contact Lens Society of America (CLSA) and has been honored as a Contact Lens Institute Visionary in 2023, 2024, and 2025. He has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals and contributed to textbooks and training programs through the Contact Lens Society of America, the Optical Training Institute, and the National Academy of Opticianry.

Andrew has served on the Washington State Dispensing Optician Examination Committee, ANSI Z80 subcommittees, and the Board of Directors for CLSA. He was recently appointed to the Board of Directors of the National Academy of Opticianry and continues to advise and proctor CLSA's Fellow Examination Committee.

He teaches as an adjunct instructor at Portland Community College and volunteers at the Coffee Creek Women's Correctional Facility Optical Training Program. He also serves on the Board of Directors of The Oregon Vision Coalition, supporting access to comprehensive eye health.

In 2017, Andrew founded ASB Opticianry Education Services, dedicated to providing consulting and training that help professionals achieve ABO/NCLE certification and Washington State licensure.





B.W. Phillips

NCLEM, FCLSA - Specialty Contact
Lens Fitter and Educator

B.W. Phillips, Jr. is a Past President of the Contact Lens Society of America, Past Chairman of the North Carolina State Board of Opticians, and served as Manager of the Duke University Department of Ophthalmology Contact Lens Service for more than 25 years.

He has also worked as an International Education Product Specialist for SynergEyes, a major lens manufacturer. Specializing in keratoconus, post-surgical corneas, traumatic injuries, and pediatric contact lens fitting, he is a frequent lecturer and educator at both national and international meetings.

In 2016, B.W. received his Master in Contact Lens Technology and was appointed by the Opticians Association of America (OAA) to serve on the NCLE Board of Directors. He currently provides specialty fittings for an ophthalmology clinic in Durham, North Carolina.





Mike Gzik

NCLEC, FCLSA - Licensed Optician,
Educator, and Contact Lens Specialist

Mike Gzik is a graduate of Erie Community College in Ophthalmic Dispensing and is a New York State licensed optician and contact lens practitioner. He is a Fellow of the Contact Lens Society of America (CLSA), a JCAHPO Certified Ophthalmic Technician, and NCLE certified.

Mike works in private practice at New York Optometric in Syracuse, NY, and has also served as a consultant and technical trainer for Bausch & Lomb Professional Services. He is an adjunct instructor in contact lens technology at the SUNY Health Science Center, Syracuse Department of Ophthalmology Resident Program, and previously worked as a site coordinator for Taunton Excimer Laser in Syracuse.

He is a past president of the New York Contact Lens Society and has served the CLSA as both director and treasurer. In recognition of his contributions, Mike was named CLSA Member of the Year (2001) and presented the prestigious Theo E. Obrig Lecture (2002) at the CLES meeting.





Linda A. Cole

ABO, NCLE, CPOT - Senior Accounts
Manager – X-Cel Specialty Contacts

Linda Cole is an ABO- and NCLE-certified optician, Certified Paraoptometric Technician, and a nationally recognized speaker with more than 35 years of experience in opticianry and specialty contact lenses.

She began her career in 1986 at Rainbow Optics in Eugene, Oregon, later managing the contact lens department at Family Vision Center for over 25 years. From 2015 to 2016 she served as Supervisor of the Retina Department at Eye Health Northwest. Since 2016, Linda has worked as Senior Accounts Manager for X-Cel Specialty Contacts, where she provides training and education on specialty contact lens fitting to practices across the country.

An accomplished educator, Linda has presented CE for the Oregon Opticians Association, Arizona Association of Dispensing Opticians, Kaiser Permanente, Nova Southeastern College of Optometry, and the Canadian College of Opticians/NACOR. She is also a member and lecturer for the Arizona Association of Dispensing Opticians.

Linda graduated Magna Cum Laude from Bushnell University with a B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies and holds an A.S. in Office Administration from Lane Community College. She was honored as Paraoptometric of the Year (2000) by the Oregon Optometric Physicians Association.





Jane Buckland

NCLEM, FNAO- Contact Lens
Specialist, Consultant, and Educator

Jane has over five decades of experience as a Contact Lens Specialist, consultant, clinician, and optician. She earned her Optometric Sciences degree in 1971 and completed ophthalmic technician training at the University of Florida Department of Ophthalmology.

She holds Master Level Certification from the NCLE, is a Fellow Ambassador of the National Academy of Opticianry, and an Honored Fellow of the Contact Lens Society of America (CLSA), where she also served as Director and Fellow Exam Committee member. She is a past President of the Pacific Coast Contact Lens Society.

Jane has worked as a corporate consultant for specialty contact lens manufacturers, served as guest faculty for the Baylor, Tulane-Ellender, and Emory Medical Contact Lens programs, and lectured widely as an NCLE certification speaker for SECO, Vision Expo, CLSA, CLAO, NAO, and numerous state associations.

She has presented thousands of accredited hours throughout the U.S. and Canada, authored multiple publications on contact lens design and technology, and was among the original NCLE exam item writers. Jane also presented the NCLE Review Course at Opti-Fair (Vision Expo) for 15 consecutive years.

She is currently the sole proprietor of Space Coast Contact Lens Consultants in Vero Beach, Florida.





Phernell Walker

ABO, NCLE, CPOT - Director of
Optometric Relations – VSP Ventures

Anyone who meets Phernell Walker knows that optics is his passion. A Master in Ophthalmic Optics (ABOM), he is one of only a few hundred professionals to achieve this distinction.

Phernell is a Past Adjunct Professor at Pacific University College of Optometry and a nationally recognized speaker known for his engaging teaching style. He is the author of Pure Optics, a textbook created to help students prepare for the ABO exams.

Currently, Phernell serves as Director of Optometric Relations at VSP Ventures. He holds an MBA, a BS in Business, and an AS in Ophthalmic Optics, and is certified by both the American Board of Opticianry (ABOC) and the National Contact Lens Examiners (NCLEC).





Charlie Saccarelli

ABOM, FNAO - President/Owner –
Chadwick Optical & Helix Precision
Machine

Charlie Saccarelli is a Master in Ophthalmic Optics (ABOM), Fellow of the National Academy of Opticianry (FNAO), and President/Owner of Chadwick Optical (since 2013) and Helix Precision Machine (since 2021).

He serves as Vice Chair of the Vision Council Low Vision Division, is a Board Member and Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee for the Optician's Association of Pennsylvania, and is a member of the International Optician's Association.

Charlie is widely published, with articles in 20/20 Magazine, including Why You Don't Want to Have Homonymous Hemianopsia and The Use of Peripheral Prisms for Homonymous Hemianopsia (2018).

He is a frequent lecturer on peripheral prism technology, yoked prisms, and low vision solutions, presenting across North America and internationally. His talks include sessions at Vision Expo East & West, SECO, Opticians Association of Canada, Ontario Optician's Association, Fedopto (Colombia), and numerous universities and CE programs.

Charlie continues to pioneer solutions for patients with visual field loss, combining his expertise in optics and precision manufacturing to advance low vision care.





Matthew Balester

Education & Technical Specialist –
Shamir

Matt Balester began his optical career in 1979 at his family's wholesale laboratory, Balester Optical Company in Northeast Pennsylvania, working in every area from lens washer to Quality Control Manager. In 1994, he moved chairside as a dispensing optician in Lancaster, PA, gaining hands-on experience across both corporate dispensaries and private practices.

He returned to the lab side in 2001 with a practical dispensing perspective, and in 2009 joined Shamir as a Technical Specialist, installing software in wholesale labs nationwide and training teams in freeform technology. In 2016, Matt transitioned full-time to Shamir's Education Department, where he presents nationwide workshops and seminars on Shamir lens technology, dispensing techniques, customer interaction, and practice management.





Tina Lahti

ABOC, ABO Approved Speaker, VP of
Sales & Marketing – IOT North
America, Nationally Recognized
Author/Speaker

Tina Lahti has been an ABO Certified Optician since 1991 and an ABO Approved Speaker since 1998. She joined IOT North America in 2016 and currently serves as Vice President of Sales and Marketing.

A nationally recognized speaker and author, Tina is a contributing editor to Jobson's Pro to Pro and the author of several ABO-approved courses. She was named one of the most influential women in optical by Vision Monday.

Her prior experience includes 19 years at Vision-Ease Lens in roles ranging from account representative to national accounts, as well as 10 years as a dispensing optician and store manager for LensCrafters and Vision World.

Tina holds a B.S. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology.





Todd Lassone

Vision Care Solutions Manager –
Essilor Laboratories of America

Todd Lassone has over 25 years of experience in the optical industry and has worked in a variety of settings, including high-end freestanding optical, MD and OD practices, and low vision care. With the encouragement of his master optician mentor, he moved into the manufacturing side of the industry, beginning with Rodenstock, where he gained 18 years of experience representing multiple companies.

Todd is celebrating his 10th year with Essilor, where he currently serves as Vision Care Solutions Manager and covers the western region of the U.S. as a Growth Consultant and Managed Vision Care Specialist





Ric Peralta

ABOC, HFOAA - Optician,
Consultant, and Vision Source
Resource Facilitator

Ric Peralta has worked in and around the optical industry since 1990, devoting more than three decades to providing exceptional patient care and educating optical professionals on best practices.

He was among the first field trainers for what would become Eyefinity and honed his customer service skills during nearly a decade in Beverly Hills, receiving training from the Ritz-Carlton Hotels on world-class service. Over the past 15 years, Ric has worn close to 200 progressive designs, expanding his expertise to improve patient fitting experiences.

In 2023, Ric was honored as the Transitions Healthy Sight Ambassador and is a past recipient of the Transitions Innovation Award. He continues to expand his influence as a Vision Source Facilitator, consultant, public speaker, and through his patient education blog and social media presence in the optical community.





Kathy Shiller

Technical Education Specialist –
ZEISS Vision

Kathy Shiller has over 35 years of experience in the optical industry and is a Certified Optician by the American Board of Opticianry. For the past two years, she has served as a Technical Education Specialist for ZEISS Vision in the U.S.

In her role at ZEISS, Kathy works closely with the marketing, training, and education teams to introduce new products and innovations to eye care professionals. Her career has been dedicated to advancing knowledge, elevating patient care, and supporting the professional growth of opticians across the industry.





Chris Millett

Managing Director of Global Sales –
Modern Optical

Chris Millet is a second-generation optical professional with over 30 years of experience in eyewear, ophthalmic lenses, contact lenses, and lab services.

He served as COO of PECAA for five years, where he worked closely with independent eye care owners and vendor partners to better understand the challenges facing independent practices. Today, Chris is the Managing Director of Global Sales for Modern Optical, a family-owned frame company serving the value and managed care segments.

Chris and his wife Meghan have been married for 27 years and have three children. He resides in Vancouver, WA, where he enjoys hiking, fishing, exploring the outdoors, and experiencing new areas and cultures.





Kevin Walker

ABOC, NCLEC, COEE- Vocational
Optician – eyeVOC

Kevin Walker is a Licensed Optician (AZ, NY, OH) with dual state licensure, ABO certification, and NCLE certification. He holds an Ophthalmic Dispensing degree from SUNY New York, is an ABO Certified Technical Trainer, and a Certified Office Ergonomics Evaluator (COEE).

Kevin has worked in a variety of private practices, including optometry, ophthalmology, pediatrics, and his own business, as well as in retail optical settings. He is the founder of eyeVOC, where he works as a Vocational Optician, training, consulting, speaking, and developing specialized training programs for the optical community.

He resides in Ohio with his wife and daughter and enjoys traveling, exploring new eateries, and playing hockey.





Matthew O'Gara

Technical Trainer – Silhouette Group

Matthew O'Gara is a dedicated Technical Trainer at Silhouette Group with more than 20 years of experience in the optical industry. He specializes in product mounting, adjustments, and sales strategies, and has successfully enrolled over 1,000 professionals into the Silhouette Group Academy, helping to drive engagement and knowledge acquisition.

Through hands-on coaching and personalized training sessions, Matthew addresses technical challenges while enhancing team performance. His expertise also includes developing impactful training content and fostering collaboration across the optical community.





Robert Spirito

MBA, ABOM, NCLEC - Vice
President, Head of Marketing – ZEISS
Vision U.S.A.

Robert Spirito has over 35 years of experience in the optical industry and has spent the last 16 years with ZEISS Vision U.S.A., where he currently serves as Vice President, Head of Marketing.

He holds an MBA and is a Master Optician (ABOM) certified by the American Board of Opticianry, as well as NCLE certified by the National Contact Lens Examiners. Robert is also licensed as a Kentucky Ophthalmic Dispenser, a Nevada Dispensing Optician, and both a California Registered Spectacle Lens Dispenser and Registered Contact Lens Dispenser.

Since joining ZEISS, Robert has played a key role in bringing numerous innovations to market, including Trivex and 1.74 materials, freeform and conventional lens designs, the ZEISS DuraVision coating family, ZEISS ClearView lenses, and the expansion of stock lens utilization in the U.S.





Velvet Hawkins

BS, ABOC - Technical Sales &
Education Specialist – ZEISS Vision

Velvet Hawkins has dedicated nearly 30 years to ZEISS Vision, serving in a variety of leadership and training roles across the U.S. Her experience includes positions as Business Development Representative, Regional Manager, Managed Care Manager, Retail Representative, Key Account Manager, and Regional Retail Representative, supporting practices, labs, and retail partners nationwide.

She holds a Bachelor of Science, an Associate's degree in Opticianry from Indiana University School of Optometry, and is ABO certified. Velvet also served as President of the Optometric Extension Program (OEP) for seven years, focusing on vision therapy.

Recognized as one of Vision Monday's Most Influential Women in Optical (2018), she is also a Certified Global Marketing Specialist and a ZEISS Cultural Journey Ambassador. Throughout her career, she has earned numerous ZEISS awards and recognitions.

In her current role as Technical Sales and Education Specialist, Velvet provides training for new hires, representatives, and ZEISS accounts, and works closely with sales, marketing, product, and association partners to advance education and awareness of ZEISS innovations.





Dr. Aarlan Aceto

Program Coordinator & Associate
Professor – Ophthalmic Design &
Dispensing, Middlesex Community
College

Dr. Aarlan Aceto is a graduate of both the Ophthalmic Design and Dispensing program at Middlesex Community College (1995) and the New England College of Optometry (2009). He currently serves as Program Coordinator and Associate Professor of the OD&D program at Middlesex.

Dr. Aceto has also served as Externship Director and Assistant Professor, developing and teaching courses in ophthalmic optics, contact lenses, business management, and service learning for MCPHS University and the Midwestern University Chicago College of Optometry.

He is actively involved in professional associations, having contributed to both Organized Opticianry (COA) and Organized Optometry (IOA and CAO). He is the current President of the National Federation of Opticianry Schools (NFOS) and has chaired the Ophthalmic Optics Special Interest Group for the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO).

In addition to his academic and professional leadership, Dr. Aceto has served in community organizations, including as Past President of the Downers Grove, IL Lions Club.





Carrie Wilson

ABOC, NCLEC - President – Optigal Consulting

Carrie Wilson, also known as The Fabulous Optigal, is the President of Optigal Consulting and has over 20 years of experience in the optical industry. Her career has included diverse roles spanning dispensing, manufacturing, private practice, and corporate optical.

She is ABO and NCLE certified and an active member of the Optical Women's Association, the Opticians Association of America, ANSI and its Lens Technical Committee, and the International Standards Organization. She also serves as a board member of the Optical Heritage Museum.

In addition to consulting, Carrie is a professor of optical science and enjoys teaching at all levels. She is a nationally recognized speaker and industry voice, continuing to educate and inspire opticians through her work.





Susan Klacik

Territory Sales Manager – Luzerne
Optical

Susan Klacik began her optical career as a frame stylist with no prior eye care experience. She quickly fell in love with optics, teaching herself through borrowed books, and has since held positions at nearly every level of the industry.

For over 35 years, Susan has served the optical community and is recognized by both the ABO and AOA as a valued provider of continuing education. She has presented her lens design and technology courses at three U.S. optometric universities and has delivered countless hours of CE to professionals across the U.S. and Canada.

In her current role as Territory Sales Manager for Luzerne Optical, Susan brings a refreshing, multi-faceted perspective to her clients as both a trusted consultant and educator. Regardless of skill level or years of experience, participants in her programs always take away something relevant and immediately applicable.





Michael Gatti

ABOC, NCLEC - Senior Manager of
Training & Development – HOYA
Vision Care

Michael Gatti is an ABO- and NCLE-certified optician, an Arizona State Licensed Optician, and a Level II ABO Approved Speaker with 20 years of optical experience.

As a team leader and motivational educator, Michael doubled optical sales during his seven years with one of the largest ophthalmology practices in Arizona. He went on to manage an independent optometric practice before joining HOYA Vision Care as a Territory Sales Manager. Over the past five years, he has advanced through roles as Field Training Manager and Customer Development Manager, and now serves as Senior Manager of Training & Development.

Michael is recognized for his extensive optical and practice-building knowledge, and his youthful enthusiasm has been featured in numerous trade articles. Nothing gives him more satisfaction than helping independent eye care professionals achieve rapid and sustained growth.





Stephanie Kannage

BA - Independent Sales Representative &
National Speaker – Faniel Eyewear

Stephanie Kannage is a nationally recognized ABO Approved Speaker with experience presenting to both large and small organizations. Her lectures cover a wide range of topics including optical business management, dispensary category management, frame styling, team building, personal development, stress management, and effective communication.

She has delivered CE courses for the Opticians Association of America (OAA) in 2021, 2022, and 2023, with engaging sessions such as They Really Can Come True: Manifesting Your Dreams, Hakuna Matata: Living with Stress, Choose Your Words Carefully, Let It Go!, Habits: Can't Live With Them, Can't Live Without Them, Navigating the Thin Line Between Clients and Patients, and You've Got Style!.

Stephanie currently works as an Independent Sales Representative and Sales Manager with Faniel Eyewear while continuing her passion for educating and inspiring optical professionals nationwide.





Karen Michaelson

ABOC - Owner – KARE Consulting, LLC

Karen Michaelson is the owner of KARE Consulting, LLC, where she coaches, consults, and trains eye care professionals and businesses for maximum professional, practice, and personal growth. She is an ABO Technical, NCLE, and COPE Approved Speaker with more than 40 years of experience in the eye care industry.

In 2024, Karen founded the Optical Professionals of Minnesota, an all-inclusive professional group built on education, inclusivity, innovation, networking, and standards of excellence. She currently serves as 2nd Vice President and Chair of the Education and Events Committee. Karen also accepted a board position with Vision of Hope, supporting missions that bring clearer vision to underserved communities.

Karen is active in the American Council of the Blind and the Optical Women's Association, and contributes regularly through writing, mentoring, and volunteering. She lives in Wyoming, MN, with her husband and two cats, and enjoys time with her grown children, two grandchildren, and two "grand pups."

Her personal philosophy is simple: "I love what I do because I do what I love!"





Robin Bursh

ABOC - Training & Education Manager –
Safilo North America

Robin Brush is an ABO Certified Optician and ABO Approved Speaker with 28 years of experience in the optical industry. Her career has been dedicated to education, training, and helping professionals reach their full potential.

Robin began her career as a Key Account Manager at Safilo before moving into her current role as Training and Education Manager, where she develops and delivers educational seminars, webinars, and resources to eye care professionals across North America. Her programs have been featured on mysafilo.com and mysafilocanada.com, and she has presented at major industry events including Vision Expo East and West.

During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, Robin created and led a highly successful global webinar series covering topics such as frame buying, visual merchandising, managing return rates, and inventory analysis. The series was translated into three languages and shared with Safilo customers worldwide, earning widespread recognition.

In 2021, Robin was honored as one of Vision Monday's Most Influential Women in Optical.





Jackie O'Keefe-Lincoln

ABOC - Licensed Optician, Consultant & Educator

Jackie O'Keefe, ABOC, is a Virginia licensed optician with more than 40 years of experience in the optical industry. Since 1981, she has built a career in dispensing, education, consulting, and continuing education. She is an ABO, NCLE, and AOA approved speaker, a course preparer for Quantum Optical, and is sponsored by QLDS America and Mitsui Chemicals.

A second-generation optician, Jackie shares her passion for optics with her sisters, Candace O'Keefe and Laure O'Keefe Pierce. She is a Past President of the Opticians Association of Virginia, a founding member and Past President of the Opticians Association of Maine, and has been active with the International Association of Lions Clubs, Maine's Prevention of Blindness Programs, Inc., and the Suicide Prevention Awareness & Resource Council.

Jackie resides in the Virginia Beach, Virginia area, where she continues to consult, teach, and advocate for the optical profession.





Crystal Anthony

ABOC - Project & Training Manager –
Hilco Vision
President – Illinois Opticians Association

Crystal Anthony is a seasoned professional in the optical industry with over 20 years of experience spanning dispensing, buying, and compliance. She currently serves as Project and Training Manager at Hilco Vision, where she combines her deep industry knowledge with a passion for education and professional development.

An ABO Certified Optician and Level II ABO Approved Speaker, Crystal has trained and presented to audiences of all sizes, making complex concepts approachable and engaging. Her dynamic approach to continuing education reflects her belief in lifelong learning and professional excellence.

In addition to her corporate role, Crystal is the President of the Illinois Opticians Association, where she actively advocates for the advancement of opticians. In recognition of her leadership and impact, she was named one of the 2024 Most Influential Women in Optical.





Judy Quinones

ABOC - Team Lead Optician –
LensCrafters/EssilorLuxottica

Judy Quinones is a licensed optician and ABO Certified Public Speaker with expertise in business operations, teaching, and leadership. Based in Bridgewater, NJ, she leads a high-revenue LensCrafters store under EssilorLuxottica, consistently surpassing performance goals while delivering exceptional customer care.

Skilled in dispensing, lab edging, and frame adjustments, Judy has helped countless clients improve both their vision and confidence. She is also committed to advancing opticianry through apprenticeship programs, educational materials, and speaking engagements at schools and industry events.

Judy is a contributing writer for 20/20 Magazine's Pro to Pro, where she authors CE courses and articles supporting professional growth. She serves on her state optical board and co-chairs the Optical Women's Association's 3Os Subcommittee, focused on growing membership across ophthalmology, optometry, and opticianry.

She holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics, an Associate of Applied Science in Ophthalmics, and executive management certifications. Fluent in English, Spanish, Italian, and French, Judy brings a global perspective to her work. Her passion for both business and opticianry drives her ongoing contributions to education and leadership in the profession.





Julie Ryan

ABOC -

Julie Ryan is an ABO Certified Optician with over 25 years of experience in the optical industry. Since 1997, she has worked across nearly every facet of the field, including independent eye care, wholesale and retail lab operations, retail optical, and private practice. Her expertise spans the entire optical supply chain, from production to patient care.

She has also served as an account executive for an independent luxury eyewear company, developing a deep understanding of high-end brands and the needs of discerning clients.

An active leader in the optical community, Julie currently serves on the Executive Board of the Opticians Association of Oregon as 2nd Vice President, after previously serving as Secretary. In these roles, she has supported education initiatives, professional growth opportunities, and resource development for the optical community.

Outside of her professional life, Julie enjoys exploring the Pacific Northwest with her husband and their dogs, embracing the region's natural beauty.





Steve Alexander

Head of Growth – Anagram

Steve Alexander has been in the eye care industry for more than 20 years and has held a wide range of roles including optician, ophthalmic technician, lab technician, practice manager, regional manager, operations consultant, and CE certified speaker in both private and corporate eye care settings.

For the past decade, Steve has worked as a consultant, helping practices gain a deeper understanding of their patients, the ecosystems in which they operate, and how to build practices they can be proud of. Since 2021, he has served as Head of Growth at Anagram, an industry-leading technology platform focused on driving change in eye care by increasing price transparency, expanding private-pay business, and improving the lives of both patients and providers.





Scott Parsons

ABOC - Regional Manager – Safilo North America

Scott Parsons has been in the optical industry for 35 years, including more than three decades with Safilo North America. He began as a field representative covering Northern California, Southern Oregon, and Northern Nevada with both Safilo and L’Amy, and for the past five years has served as Regional Manager, leading a team of 12 representatives across Northern and Central California and Northern Nevada.

An ABO Certified Speaker for the past three years, Scott presents ABO-approved workshops at the basic level on topics including merchandising, office management, and sales techniques.

Scott has been married to his high school sweetheart for 40 years, and together they have three grown children and three grandchildren. Outside of optical, he enjoys traveling the West, photography, painting, and exploring new food experiences.

Guided by the philosophy that “our role is to help people see as best as they possibly can,” Scott approaches every aspect of his work with service, planning, and purpose.





Nathan Hill

Midwest Representative – Oliver Peoples &
Starck
CEO – Hill Optical Consultants

Nathan Hill is a second-generation optician with 21 years of experience in the optical industry. He discovered his passion for optics at the age of 14 and has since built a career specializing in finishing labs, business development, and luxury eyewear.

He represents Oliver Peoples and Starck as their Midwest representative and is the CEO of Hill Optical Consultants, a company focused on guiding and shaping business development strategies for the optical industry.

Nathan also serves as a Member at Large for the Illinois Opticians Association, where he contributes to advancing the profession of opticianry. He remains steadfast in his commitment to making a positive and lasting impact on the optical industry.





David Buchanan

ABOC - Director of Sales – Carl Zeiss
Vision, Inc.

David Buchanan is a professional sales leader and coach with 29 years of experience in the optical industry, including 16 years with Bausch & Lomb and the past 13 years with Carl Zeiss Vision.

He has led numerous sales and technical training teams, helping to enhance opticians' product knowledge and professional skills. David is also an experienced speaker, presenting on industry insights, product and sales training, and CRM selling tools.

In his current role as Director of Sales at Carl Zeiss Vision, David continues to guide teams and educate eye care professionals across the country.





Bill Gerber

ABO, NCLE, COPE - Founder & CEO –
Omg! Optical Marketing Group &
Contentlinq

Bill Gerber is the Founder and CEO of Omg! Optical Marketing Group and Contentlinq, companies dedicated to creating highly engaging eyecare spaces that deliver extraordinary customer experiences. His work can be found in more than 10,000 optometry practices and optical stores worldwide, shaping the ethos of modern optical design.

Recognized as the eyecare industry's leading expert in design and customer experience, Bill is also an ABO, NCLE, and COPE accredited speaker. He has presented across the country as an award-winning speaker, emcee, and author, while also serving as a strategic advisor to many leading companies in the field. He currently serves on The Vision Council and has supported organizations including OneSight, Essilor Vision Foundation, Eyeroch, New Eyes for the Needy, and Prevent Blindness America.

Bill's writing and thought leadership have been published in 20/20 Magazine, Vision Monday, Invision, Optometric Management, Eyecare Business, VM+SD, Architectural Record, and Architectural Digest, among others.

Beyond his professional expertise, Bill is an avid yogi, hiker, skier, writer, artist, designer, philanthropist, and musician. His latest project, Sherpa, is a multi-channel optical sales and purchasing engagement platform designed to create next-level retail experiences.





Louis Loaiza

ABOC

Bio coming soon.





Joe Sable

ABOC - Vice President & General Manager,
Core Products Division – Advancing
EyeCare

Joe Sable has worked in the eyecare industry for more than a dozen years, beginning his career with Essilor as a brand representative for Wisconsin. Eight years ago, he transitioned into the instruments side of the business, first in management with Walman Instruments, then as Regional Vice President at Lombart Instrument, and now as Vice President & General Manager of the Core Products Division at Advancing EyeCare.

Joe is ABO Certified and a Credentialed Speaker for Technical Presentations with the American Board of Opticianry, delivering programs that help eyecare professionals deepen their technical knowledge and practical expertise.





Danielle Crull

ABOM - Owner – A Child's Eyes,
Mechanicsburg, PA

Danielle Crull is a Master in Ophthalmic Optics (ABOM) with 37 years of experience in the optical industry and 23 years as the owner of A Child's Eyes, a pediatric specialty office in Mechanicsburg, PA.

She is the author of two children's books, Apple Patty Patches (explaining amblyopia to children) and Banana Bobby Gets Bifocals (a training book for bifocals). Danielle also founded Truffles the Kitty, an organization dedicated to raising awareness of children's vision needs and empowering kids on their journey to visual health.

Danielle has authored numerous CE courses and articles for Invision, Eyecare Business, and 20/20 Magazine. As a trainer and mentor, she has guided more than 50 opticians to achieve their ABO certification.

Passionate about pediatric vision, Danielle continues to educate, write, and advocate for the unique needs of children in eyecare.





Michael Robinson

LDO, ABOC, ABO-AC, NCLEC, CPO -
Lens Representative – EssilorLuxottica
ABO Technical Level III Certified Speaker

With over 14 years of experience in opticianry, Michael Robinson is a dynamic blend of passion, expertise, and commitment to advancing the profession. A Licensed Dispensing Optician in Georgia, he also holds certifications as an ABO Certified Optician (ABOC), Advanced Certified Optician (ABO-AC), NCLE Certified Contact Lens Technician (NCLEC), and Certified Paraoptometric (CPO). He is an ABO Technical Level III Certified Speaker, delivering education on both foundational optics and advanced lens technology.

Michael began his career as a part-time associate with NVI-Walmart and quickly moved into management and training roles. As Director of Optical at a private practice, he developed staff training programs and built collaborative teams centered on education and exceptional patient care. Today, as a Lens Representative with EssilorLuxottica, he travels the country working with opticians across practice types, sharing his belief that “patients should know as much about their glasses as we do.”

A dedicated mentor, Michael leads a weekly ABO Advanced Study Group, which has helped numerous professionals achieve their Advanced Certification. He encourages opticians to pursue the ABO-AC, noting that while it may not guarantee a raise, it can open unexpected doors for growth—just as it did for him.





Jody Parmer

ABO - Lead Presenter – Younger Optics

Jody Parmer is an ABO-accredited speaker with 20 years of experience in the optical industry. Her diverse professional background includes work in optometric practices, optical laboratories, frame companies, and lens manufacturers.

As Head of Younger Optics' Brand Ambassador Team, Jody has pioneered an “edu-social” approach to ECP outreach and training, revolutionizing how the company builds relationships with eye-care professionals. In 2024 alone, she trained more than 1,000 eye-care professionals and hosted regional events across the country.

Jody is a dynamic training innovator and serves as the lead presenter for business development initiatives at Younger Optics.





Jacob Behrhorst

ABO - Midwest Representative –
Independent Lens Lab

Jacob Behrhorst has more than 20 years of experience in the optical industry. He began his career working in optometric practices as both a technical and dispensing optician before advancing to practice management, where he oversaw a six-doctor clinic.

He went on to represent Marchon Eyewear for five years and in 2020 transitioned to the lens side of the business. He now serves as the Midwest representative for an independent lens lab, covering four and a half states.

An ABO-certified optician and approved speaker, Jacob collaborates with state associations to create engaging educational programs that meet the evolving needs of opticians. His sessions are designed to make complex concepts approachable and practical for everyday use in the field.

Outside of work, Jacob enjoys traveling, camping, fishing, golfing, and restoring classic cars with his wife and four children.





Zach Kastner

ABO-AC - Owner – Shorewood Opticians,
Milwaukee, WI

Zach Kastner is an Advanced Certified Optician (ABO-AC), spectacle maker, and owner of Shorewood Opticians in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is also the president and a founding member of the Opticians Association of Wisconsin, where he is recognized for his leadership and dedication to advancing opticianry.

Since beginning his career in 2015 at LensCrafters, Zach has built a reputation for technical expertise and commitment to patient care. After serving as an optician and office manager at Drs. Roy and Associates, he acquired Shorewood Opticians in 2021. Today, he specializes in solving complex visual needs, including high prescriptions, prism corrections, and custom optical solutions using advanced lens technologies.

In addition to his work with lenses, Zach is one of the few modern spectacle makers, handcrafting frames from cellulose acetate in his office. He is also an ABO-approved speaker, developing continuing education courses that combine technical training, professional development, and advocacy for independent eyewear and practices.





Amie Madden

ABO - Northeast Region Optical Trainer –
Silhouette

Amie Madden is an ABO Certified Optician and the Northeast Region Optical Trainer for Silhouette. Her path into optics began after a successful 15-year career as a performing artist with the New York City Opera.

She launched her optical career with MOSCOT in New York City, where she advanced from sales to retail manager before pursuing formal education in Ophthalmic Dispensing. Amie earned her Associate's Degree from the New York City College of Technology (CUNY) and went on to work as a dispensing optician and frame buyer for several practices in the NYC area. Most recently, she served as Retail Optical Manager and Licensed Optician at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary at Mount Sinai.

Beyond her professional work, Amie enjoys spending time with her grown children and hiking with their dog.





John Bruening

LDO - Geauga Vision Group, CEO

John Bruening is a licensed spectacle and contact lens optician in the state of Ohio and a graduate of the Ophthalmic Dispensing program at Hillsborough Community College in Tampa, Florida.

He is currently President of the Opticians Association of Ohio (OAO) and previously served as Vice President of the Opticians Association of America (OAA). John also serves on the Government Affairs Committee of the United Opticians Association (UOA) and is a member of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) Leadership Council.

With extensive experience across the optical industry, John consults with optical, optometry, and ophthalmology practices nationwide. He is the owner of Bootstrapeye.com, a B2B frame sourcing platform, and serves as CEO of Geauga Vision Group.

His areas of focus include independent practice development, professional advocacy, business strategy, and advancing the role of the optician through leadership and education.





Pamela B. Fritz

President – Ophthalmology Resources, LLC

Pamela B. Fritz is the President of Ophthalmology Resources, LLC, a consulting firm specializing in practice management for independent ophthalmologists, optometrists, and opticians. She has consulted with hundreds of practices nationwide, with expertise in Medicare credentialing, post-operative cataract eyewear, compliance, billing, and reimbursements.

Pamela serves as the only optical industry representative on the Provider Outreach & Education Panel for Noridian, the Medicare DME contractor for the Northeast and Western United States. She is a nationally recognized lecturer with ABO-approved courses and has presented at AAO, ASCRS/ASOA, Vision Expo, and numerous state associations.

A founder and former Executive Director of the American Association of Dispensing Ophthalmologists (AADO), Pamela was named one of the “50 Most Influential Women in the Optical Industry” and received the AAO Achievement Award for distinguished service.

Contact: pfmdresources1@gmail.com





Kimberly Charlton

President – Ophthalmology Resources, LLC

Pamela B. Fritz is the President of Ophthalmology Resources, LLC, a consulting firm specializing in practice management for independent ophthalmologists, optometrists, and opticians. She has consulted with hundreds of practices nationwide, with expertise in Medicare credentialing, post-operative cataract eyewear, compliance, billing, and reimbursements.

Pamela serves as the only optical industry representative on the Provider Outreach & Education Panel for Noridian, the Medicare DME contractor for the Northeast and Western United States. She is a nationally recognized lecturer with ABO-approved courses and has presented at AAO, ASCRS/ASOA, Vision Expo, and numerous state associations.

A founder and former Executive Director of the American Association of Dispensing Ophthalmologists (AADO), Pamela was named one of the “50 Most Influential Women in the Optical Industry” and received the AAO Achievement Award for distinguished service.

Contact: pfmdresources1@gmail.com





Tina Lopez

ABO-AC, NVLEC, LDO - Director of
Professional Services for Costco Wholesale's
optical division

Tina Lopez, ABO-AC, NCLEC, LDO, is a multi-state licensed optician with more than 36 years in the eye care industry.

As Director of Professional Services for Costco Wholesale's optical division, she supports professional relations and operational initiatives for optical teams and independent optometrists nationwide.

Recognized for her approachable and engaging presentation methods, Tina is a seasoned educator and leader in the optical field. By combining clinical knowledge with behavioral insights and hands-on strategies, she works to improve the quality of patient-focused care.

As a certified yoga teacher and wellness speaker, Tina also focuses on human connection and mindful leadership, promoting empowerment and well-being in professional and personal settings.

Contact: xtina.lopez@outlook.com





Mariechris "Kiara" Resplandor

LDO, ABOC
Optics Business Consultant – VSP Vision
ABO Level II Speaker

Mariechris "Kiara" Resplandor is a Licensed Dispensing Optician, ABO Certified Optician, and ABO Level II Speaker with more than a decade of experience in optical leadership, business consulting, training, and education. As an Optics Business Consultant with VSP Vision, she partners with practices throughout Northern California to improve optical performance, patient care, and business growth.

Kiara is a lead presenter for VSP Optics' The Dispensing Advantage webinar series, where she educates eye care professionals on consultative dispensing, premium lens technology, and optical profitability. In 2020, she founded Elevate Opticians, a mentorship program that has helped 24 opticians earn ABO certification.

She serves as 2nd Vice President of the Golden State Opticians Association and volunteers with VSP Vision Eyes of Hope®, Lions Clubs International, and Lions InSight of California and Nevada. Through education, mentorship, and service, Kiara is dedicated to strengthening the optical profession and expanding access to quality vision care.

Contact: mariechriskiara.resplandor@vsp.com

