

PASSIONATE
OUTSTANDING
INCREDBLE
INTEGRITY
SAVVY
EFFICIENT
VISION
CAREER
MOTIVATED
INITIATIVE
PROACTIVE
PROFESSIONAL
DRIVEN
DISTINGUISHED

#WOMEN OF INFLUENCE

ENTREPRENEURS
DIVERSE
EXPERIENCED
POSITIVE
DEDICATED
EXECUTIVES
STRONG
PERSISTENT
DETERMINED
EXCEPTIONAL
CONSCIENTIOUS
ACCOMPLISHED
ASSERTIVE
ROLE MODELS
HARDWORKING
DIPLOMATIC
PRODUCTIVE



NEW YORK—2017 marks the 15th year of *Vision Monday's* special signature report on Most Influential Women in Optical. Since 2003, we've been honoring women in optical, pulling from the worlds of vision care, retailing, manufacturing, distribution, dispensing and designing. This makes for a long and impressive list of honorees. (Go to VisionMonday.com for the complete alphabetical list).

We thought it was time to crunch some numbers so we sifted through our archives and came up with the following fun facts spanning 15 years of profiling, honoring and celebrating #WomenOfInfluence:

- Through 2017, *Vision Monday* has given out 625 honors to 589 women from 9 different countries.
- Out of the 589 women we have honored, 32 women have been honored twice (and two were honored three times).
- Honorees have hailed from the U.S., France, Italy, Mexico Antigua, Australia, Canada, Puerto Rico and Canada.
- The VM Staff has poured through the thousands of nominations we've

received from readers over the past 15 years, winnowing the list down to 30 to 40 honorees each year.

- In 2007, we started allowing nominations for women who had already been honored in the past, because some women in optical really knock our socks off.
- In 2008, we shook things up a bit and created different categories in order to better honor women. Instead of differentiating women based on their sector of the industry (retail, dispensing, suppliers, media, etc.), we chose groupings that would show *how* they impress us with in their respective fields and came up with the following categories: Executive Suite, Rising Stars, Mentors and Innovators.

As in previous years, VM's Influential Women for 2017 were chosen from a large pool of nominees named by you, our readers, and in the following pages we profile their accomplishments. We hope you appreciate their stories of success as much as we enjoyed getting to know and write about these #WomenOfInfluence.

—The Editors

Carol Alexander, OD, FAAO

DIRECTOR, PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS, VISION CARE

Johnson & Johnson Vision
Jacksonville, Florida

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She is a tireless advocate for optometry. With her background as a practicing optometrist and incredible professionalism there is no one better to represent our profession. There is no half way with Carol—she is all in.”



At Johnson & Johnson Vision (JJV), Dr. Carol Alexander’s primary responsibility is to coach speaker’s teams to deliver meaningful conversation to colleagues and to help them illustrate success with Acuvue Brand Contact Lenses.

Dr. Alexander represents JJV in state legislatures in about 15 states where she’s offered testimony in support of bills important to the vision care community. She currently represents JJV in the Coalition for Patient Vision Care Safety and participates in various Congressional briefings and meetings with policy makers.

Prior to attending optometry school, she studied optical technology at Columbus Technical and was an instructor at Owens Technical College. She started working at a local practice and eventually earned her optometry degree from The Ohio State University College of Optometry. She went on to private practice for several years before taking on the role of director, professional affairs at J&J/Vistakon in 1997.

Alexander is active in the Ohio Optometric Association where she was their Young Optometrist of the Year in 1992, she advanced to become its president and later a trustee. She was also a national AOA Young Optometrist of the Year.

Alexander noted, “Opportunities abound for

leadership roles for women, and all it takes is a willingness to step beyond your day job into positions of leadership to make a difference. I believe that we practice in a future we help to create.”

SHE SAYS... “Get involved in all aspects of your chosen profession. Bring your valuable insights to the conversations that shape the future. Put patient health and safety at the forefront of all you do and you can’t lose.”

Leslie C.M. Amodei

VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL PRODUCT MARKETING

Optos
Marlborough, Massachusetts

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She is a dynamo who supports the company’s organic growth and acquisition strategy and directs global launch activities.”



In 2010, Leslie Amodei joined Optos, a leading provider of retinal imaging devices to ECPs. With over 25 years of global medical device sales and marketing experience, she has successfully advanced the company’s global leadership in ultra-widefield retinal imaging through strategic initiatives, differentiated capabilities and strong product positioning. A key initiative, explained Amodei, is developing strategic alliances with key provider groups to convey how Optos’ imaging devices enable them to prevent vision loss by uncovering critical information in the peripheral retina, improving both clinical outcomes and practice efficiency.

With a degree in psychobiology and advanced studies in marketing, Amodei found the optical field a perfect fit professionally because it focuses on both science and people. The founder of Optos, she noted, developed a way to produce ultra-widefield retinal images to find precursors to sight threatening conditions earlier and treat them soon-

er. “I’m proud to sell a product that helps eyecare professionals save sight,” said Amodei.

Amodei credits her success at Optos to her colleagues, who she described as “the greatest marketing team in the industry. They know our goals, make positive contributions and give 120 percent effort every day.” Her advice to women entering the industry is threefold: One, always ask yourself if your attitude is worth catching; two, set clear and achievable goals; and three, make sure you like the people you work with.

SHE SAYS... “I get inspired by the people I work with; I’ve been fortunate to work with really bright people and have learned so much from all of them.”

Emily Ashworth

CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER

ABB Optical Group
Coral Springs, Florida

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Emily Ashworth is responsible for driving online business and leading the ongoing development of the company’s exceptional e-commerce platform. She is involved in strategic decisions, growth opportunities, mergers and acquisitions, expansions, day-to-day operations and customer interactions involving IT.”



When a company grows quickly, often the systems, processes and infrastructure needed to support and sustain this growth come later. So when ABB Optical doubled in size between 2013 and 2014, the challenge for IT was to develop the systems and processes to support this growth. “The excitement and energy associated with [such] growth often propels heroics and adrenaline, but doesn’t typically put in place the necessary foundation,” explained Emily Ashworth, who joined ABB as the growth wave began three years ago.

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Ashworth addressed the challenge by implementing her vision of what is necessary to create a collaborative and cohesive work environment. She brought the entire IT organization together in one space—a bright, open-work environment with writeable walls, collaborative desk design and standing meeting tables. Seating was set up to intersperse people and skills strategically to increase collaboration and productivity.

This led to “a one-team atmosphere as well as an incredibly efficient work space,” Ashworth said. “At any time, you can see the walls covered with all sorts of diagrams, sketches, brainstorming and other creative efforts.”

Ashworth previously worked in a potpourri of industries, including distribution, utilities and construction.

Her responsibilities at ABB cover all information technology (IT) functions, from information security and application development to infrastructure and operations, project management and e-commerce. Keeping up with the IT needs that support ABB’s growth stands out as one of her greatest challenges. The key, she said, is to balance priorities and resources.

SHE SAYS... “Women are [better] represented than they were a decade ago in optical, but still under-represented in leadership, ownership and operational positions. There continues to be opportunity for the addition of women leaders in these areas.”

Amanda Davis

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Brien Holden Vision Institute
PUBLIC HEALTH CHAIRPERSON

International Agency For Prevention Of Blindness
 Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She makes a significant impact on vision correction and eye treatment needs for indigenous communities in Australia and developing communities around the world, including China, India and Pakistan, and many countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific.”



Amanda Davis took over the reins as chief operating officer of the Brien Holden Vision Institute, Public Health in 2006. She drove the agenda to host the 1st World Congress on Refractive Error (WCRE) in 2007 in Durban, South Africa, the first time the international eyecare community came together to address the needs of hundreds of millions of people globally who are unnecessarily blind or vision impaired because they don’t have access to an eye examination and pair of spectacles.

The 2nd WCRE went ahead under Davis’ guidance in 2010. The organization has flourished with her at the helm, and in total since 1998, delivering optometric services to more than three million people in need through programs in more than 50 countries; established over 400 vision centers or sites for eyecare worldwide; training almost 140,000 eyecare personnel around the world and supporting 13 optometry schools in 10 countries with over 60 emergent globally. It also now employs close to 100 staff members across 12 offices globally.

“One thing I believe in strongly is making sure children get access to eyecare, particularly girls,” Davis said. She encourages the optical industry’s support of “Our Children’s Vision,” an international campaign supported by The Brien Holden Institute and other organizations.

SHE SAYS... “What inspires me are people that care about those who are less fortunate than themselves and will drive to ensure those most marginalized are given opportunities to succeed in life.”

Lisa Fawcett

VICE PRESIDENT GLOBAL STRATEGY & LIFE CYCLE MANAGEMENT

CooperVision
 Victor, New York

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Lisa has worked to identify the products and capabilities

CooperVision needs to advance market position, and performed make/buy/partner analyses to identify investment priorities. She also developed a product lifecycle and technology development roadmap for future investments linked to market-driven customer needs.”



Lisa Fawcett was introduced to eyecare before reaching her teenage years. “I started wearing contact lenses when I was 12 years old—it was life changing,” she said. “I felt more comfortable

‘in my own skin’ wearing contact lenses. Being able to provide devices that allow people to feel more like themselves while helping them see better is very gratifying.”

Today, after 20-plus years of professional experience, Fawcett is a key executive at CooperVision, where she leads a five-year strategic planning process that includes the identification of new product launch opportunities, market expansion opportunities and new areas of innovation. She also led global ideation process that resulted in the 10-year product pipeline, which aligned CooperVision’s commercial, R&D and operations organizations; and brought specificity and focus to key strategic objectives driving long-term growth.

At CooperVision, she also drove a company-wide master brand initiative that aligned the entire organization under a single, differentiated corporate brand promise, one set of powerful core values, and a bold, global visual identity.

Fawcett attributes her success, in part, to being able to combine in her professional endeavors the quest for the new and innovative, balanced with fact-based decision-making and a strong dose of resilience.

She advises women, regardless of their field, to learn as much as they can about their chosen profession, take note of trends inside and outside the industry, and take the time to dig into the details of the items that matter.

SHE SAYS... “Innovation comes from observing and

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considering the world beyond your day-to-day activities. You can still be diligent and fact-based, but you should also be open-minded so new ideas can seep in, roll around and grow.”

Cheryl Massa

VICE PRESIDENT, OPERATIONS

Davinci Equity Group
Saginaw, Michigan

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She leads by example. Her exceptional abilities, knowledge and leadership have taken the operations of our company to a new level.”



Cheryl Massa’s career trajectory reflects the range of opportunities for women in optical. Massa started working in an optical lab while in college running lab equipment. This led to positions in lab management, frame purchasing and retail management, and to her current role as head of operations for Davinci Equity Group, a multi-store optical retail chain. Looking back over her 30-year career, Massa said, “I am grateful to so many people who have inspired me and had faith in me along the way.”

Massa’s philosophy on how to succeed in the optical business is simple: “Treat your patients and co-workers the way you would treat your family, with respect and kindness.” This resonates in her personal management style. “I listen and care about our patients and employees. I encourage, empower, support and believe in every single one of our teams. We have amazing people who genuinely care about our patients and each other,” Massa noted.

Massa believes that opportunities for women in optical are expanding as women have become more confident in their roles. “I have seen more women empower other women,” she said, adding, “I love sharing knowledge with women who have

the desire to learn and cultivate.” Her advice to women seeking a career in optical is to be “positive and learn something new every day. Have faith in yourself and never give up.”

SHE SAYS... “What inspires me is people with a positive attitude ... who believe patient care will always remain the key to a successful business.”

Ashley Mills

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Vision Council
Alexandria, Virginia

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Ashley’s influence on the industry cannot be overstated. She directs the efforts made on Capitol Hill to protect the industry, as well as those efforts that build the business, from Think About Your Eyes to leading the partnership of the Vision Expo shows.”



With a deep background in communications, Ashley Mills was first introduced to the optical industry in 2003 when she joined The Vision Council’s show team handling marketing for International Vision Expo. Having previously worked in consumer marketing at global PR firms, Mills said, “I could not believe my good fortune to find a consumer-facing industry that was equal parts health care and fashion.”

In 2006, Mills left The Vision Council to consult “but always hoped to return.” Prior to rejoining The Vision Council team in January 2016, she held communications roles at the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation and The Council on Foundations.

As CEO for The Vision Council, Mills is deeply immersed in the organization’s mission “to position members for success by promoting growth in the vision care industry. We work to ensure that we are supporting that mission and are ultimately providing value for the membership. We’ve created a values

team and worked to craft core values for our organization that guide how we hire, make decisions, serve our mission and support each other,” she said.

“Despite the fact that we are all competitors in some way shape or form, I still think there is so much we can do together as partners. I’m so encouraged by our participation in the Think About Your Eyes initiative. There is no greater example of finding common ground and working together to have significant collective impact.”

SHE SAYS... “My son and daughter inspire me. I honestly believe that their minds and dreams are free from any notion that there is any difference between what a boy or a girl can achieve in life.”

Heidi Q.T. Pham-Murphy, OD

PRESIDENT/OWNER

Visions Optometry
VICE PRESIDENT
Eye Designs Optometry
Sacramento, California

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She provides clinical leadership and has an exceptional way of connecting with her patients, team and organization.”



In her optometric practice, Heidi Q.T. Pham-Murphy, OD, strives to make the patient experience “very personal.” This includes not only the delivery of vision products and services, but the friendliness of the staff, the office environment, the clarity of eyecare messages and the competence of vision solutions and treatments. “The entire experience is what creates who we are and our ability to deliver our brand to our patients each day is so vital to our success,” she said.

In providing clinical care, Pham-Murphy draws on “my ability to ‘see’ through the eyes of my patients

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and to understand how they experience the world, so that I can educate them in terms that resonate.” Communication, caring and empathy are the qualities she shares with patients and with the 60-member team behind Visions Optometry and Eye Designs Optometry, which she manages with her optometrist husband.

Pham-Murphy credits the support she gets from her staff and family members which enables her to be a full-time mom and industry leader. A VSP network member, Pham-Murphy has been a spokesperson for VSP and Johnson & Johnson, and has shared her eyecare expertise on TV and radio interviews.

She is also clinic director for the Special Olympics-Lions Club International Opening Eyes program in her region. “Communication through education is what I enjoy. I want to make a difference each day and with each interaction that I have with my patients and others.”

SHE SAYS... “A child’s world is as big as his or her vision can reach.”

Karen Roberts

VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

Carl Zeiss Vision International
Lonsdale, South Australia

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She is a dynamic, inspiring leader, striving to create win-wins for consumers, customers and co-workers while achieving company objectives.”



The optical industry has been Karen Roberts’ passport to the world. During her 32-year career in optical, she has lived and worked in Australia, Asia, Europe and the U.S. In 2005, Roberts joined Carl Zeiss to manage the company’s international business unit responsible for commercializing freeform and AR coating technologies.

In this role, she works closely with corporate and local commercial teams on developing new

business initiatives and after-sales technical and business support capabilities. She also manages associated intellectual property strategies and led the patent litigation efforts that enforced Zeiss free-form patents.

Driving her passion for optical, she said, is her love of new technologies and the innovative solutions they enable. “My personal philosophy is to focus on understanding our customer’s needs,” Roberts explained. “Zeiss has wonderful products and technologies, giving us the flexibility to deliver solutions to suit each customer’s requirements. I’ve also been lucky to work with an amazingly competent team of people who are equally passionate about the business and excited about embracing and driving change.”

Roberts serves on the executive board of The Vision Council and chairs its Lens Division.

She sees influential women advancing in all facets of the optical business, bringing with them a strong emphasis on listening, empathy and team building, which is so critical to business success.

SHE SAYS... “I am inspired by how diverse and interesting the optical business is and amazed at how rapidly it is evolving with new technologies and a passion to help people see.”

Andrea P. Thau, OD, FAAO, FCOVD, DPNAP

OWNER

Dr. Thau and Associates
New York, New York

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “As a clinical professor at SUNY Optometry, she has mentored and influenced students over a 32-year period, in the areas of leadership and clinical pediatric care. A founding member of the InfantSEE committee, Dr. Thau helped to launch the national public health program which has had a profoundly positive impact on pediatric patient care.”



Dr. Andrea Thau has been practicing optometry for some 33 years and her ties to her alma mater, SUNY State College of Optometry, and her dedication to the American Optometric

Association (AOA) run deep. At SUNY, she has held titles of day chief, assistant professor and associate clinical professor emerita. At the AOA, she has held posts as trustee, secretary-treasurer, vice president, and most recently was the second woman president of the organization for 2016-2017.

For 32 years, Dr. Thau has trained generations of students with a special emphasis on pediatrics and developmental vision. And for the last 30 years, she has owned and operated a four-woman doctor practice on Park Avenue in Manhattan.

“As one of the founders of InfantSEE and as a lecturer who teaches other ODs how to examine infants, I take some credit in the over 100,000 babies that have been examined. There are thousands of lives that have been changed and many whose lives have been saved,” she said.

As for the AOA and state associations “they are the unified organizations that connect us to each other, to practice success, to the officials who make health care laws and to the public at large. Together, we fight for the profession and our patients and it is critical that all doctors join us.”

Dr. Thau considers herself a people lover and a natural leader. “My kindergarten report card put it best, ‘she is a great leader but knows when to follow.’”

SHE SAYS... “I have been inspired to pay it forward to thank the volunteers (including my father) who came before us and advocated for the advancement of our profession. We were put on this world to make it a better place. We need to use our talents to help advance the profession so that we can better care for our patients.”

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Vidya Baliga

VISION DIRECTOR

DentaQuest
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She leads DentaQuest’s managed vision care product with a can do and empowerment attitude.”



In 2011, Vidya Baliga accepted the challenge of growing the eyecare business for DentaQuest, a leader in dental managed care programs that introduced its vision product two years earlier. As vision director of EyeQuest, she has cultivated a hands-on approach to working with clients, developing flexible, entrepreneurial programs that best meet their comprehensive health care needs. Under Baliga’s leadership, she and her team have increased vision membership tenfold in just five years.

“I am passionate about our vision program and I drive myself and my team to deliver excellence to our vision members, providers and clients so we can promote our vision programs on par with our dental programs,” said Baliga. As head of vision operations, she expanded the staff to strategically meet the needs of the growing eyecare client base, and introduced automated processes to increase operational efficiency.

Baliga attributes her success to her ability to see the big picture and to constantly look for new ways to do things. “My team and DentaQuest’s values inspire me to push myself to continuously improve our programs and deliver excellence for our members, providers and clients,” she noted.

Having embraced change in her career and personal life, emigrating from India, Baliga advises women to “chart your own course and be the change you wish to see. Hard work, passion and foresight, and the ability to work well with colleagues, team members and leaders will be rewarded.”

SHE SAYS... “What inspires and motivates me is my dad’s mantra: “Change is the only constant in life.”

Hillary Bliss

DIRECTOR, CUSTOMER INTELLIGENCE

National Vision Inc.
Duluth, Georgia

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She is the go-to person leading National Vision’s CRM efforts to increase customer retention and build customer loyalty.”



Hillary Bliss is a self-described data nerd. Her expertise lies in gathering and analyzing data on consumer behavior that helps to formulate business strategies. At National Vision, she manages the company’s marketing analytics and CRM platform, which drives marketing programs like direct mail and online promotions.

“I’ve worked closely with our brand managers to turn around some very challenging markets and I’m excited to see our efforts resulting in more sales, which means more happy customers,” said Bliss.

Bliss enjoys seeing how her “customer intelligence” translates into programs that improve customer service and communications. “I’m fascinated with measuring and understanding the trends in purchasing cycles, product purchase patterns and consumer behavior that can help us better understand and serve our customers,” she explained.

The greatest challenge ahead, in her view, is keeping up with technology and optical industry changes that impact the way customers interact with brands, service providers and optical retailers. “We need to continue to grow and be there how and when customers want to interact with us.”

Bliss sees women continuing to drive insightful, thoughtful growth in how the optical industry serves its customers. “I think women will continue to push optical companies to be more convenient and relevant

in our messaging and execution, which will result in a better experience for customers.”

SHE SAYS... “As a quantitative person, Einstein’s quote inspires me: ‘Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.’”

Tiffanie Burkhalter

OMNI-CHANNEL VICE PRESIDENT E-COMMERCE SOLUTIONS

VSP Global
Rancho Cordova, California

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She is an excellent student and teacher. She constantly asks questions, is quick to help others and leads a diverse team of people from marketing to finance to technical support. She has the admiration of her team, her peers, vendors and all who come into contact with her.”



Tiffanie Burkhalter has followed a simple philosophy throughout her career—“I didn’t always know what I wanted to do, but I knew the kind of woman I wanted to be,” as noted by fashion designer Diane Von Furstenberg—and it has led to both professional and personal success for her.

Burkhalter was introduced to the optical field in 2011 upon joining the VSP Global finance team. She spent several years supporting the financial aspects of VSP Global’s special projects and M&A activities, leading up to helping launch the Omni channel line of business in 2014. She had previously worked for Ernst & Young.

At VSP, the company mission and not-for-profit structure are particularly appealing to her because “success is measured by more than shareholder returns” and this type of structure allows VSP to make decisions with both short- and long-range outcomes in mind, she said.

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Her passion for the optical industry reached a new level once she joined The Vision Council's Emerging Optical Leader program in 2016.

In January 2017, Burkhalter was named Omni Channel VP e-Commerce Solutions and took on responsibility for defining and overseeing the company's online retail presence, which includes Eyeconic, among other areas. Additionally, she's part of VSP's Global Business Controlling Office.

SHE SAYS... "I am someone who sees possibilities in both people and business. With people, I focus on potential and am motivated by helping others see who they are becoming. In business, I am passionate about identifying opportunities and working with teams to develop meaningful solutions."

Cha-Ling Delgado

DIRECTOR OF KEY ACCOUNTS

Luxottica North America
 Port Washington, New York

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Cha-Ling is influential because she mentors all of those around her. She takes initiative to complete tasks that benefit the entire team. She is motivational and helps others grow."



Cha-Ling Delgado has been in the optical industry since 2010, working for Luxottica first as Los Angeles-based key accounts manager. In 2015, Delgado was promoted to director, key accounts U.S. and added key accounts Canada in 2016. "As a premier manufacturer and supplier of eyewear, I am lucky to have landed at Luxottica to start my career in the optical industry," she said.

Some of her personal highlights with the company include being awarded "Key Accounts Manager of the Year" in 2012 and 2014 and being a member of the inaugural group of President's Circle recipients with recognition from 2012 to 2014.

Delgado believes the optical industry provides a wealth of career options. Career advice she'd give to women entering the field would be to find your passion. "It's up to us to push ourselves to learn and become experts in whichever field we decide to focus on," she said.

Along with this mindset, Delgado believes in constantly challenging yourself to learn and grow. "It is also essential to pass along these best practices to help develop the next group of women, who are entering the optical industry, to be successful as well."

She added, "Although most people would consider sales and account management to be an individual endeavor, team synergy and support among your peers are key elements in building engagement within an organization. It is rewarding for me to be in a position that helps make a difference in the career development of my team members."

SHE SAYS... "Adding value is a key motto in which I work and live by. No matter what I do in my career and life, it is important for me to bring value to an organization and to the people I work and spend time with."

Jaclyn Frumkin

VP BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Eye Q Eyewear
 St. Petersburg, Florida

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "In just a few years, Jackie has become a highly visible executive in the frame end of the industry. She is recognized by customers and competitors as strategic, credible, honest, capable and dependable. She has an intense curiosity about the business, both its past and any changes coming in the near future."



Jaclyn Frumkin credits her dad, a longtime executive in the industry, for introducing her to the optical business. "You could go as far as saying that optical is in my blood.

I have loved eyewear since the minute I started wearing it," she said.

In her second job after college (more about her first job shortly), Frumkin moved to St. Petersburg, Fla., and began her career in optical. She's now been in the business for about six years and is a key executive with Eye Q Eyewear, a small, family-run organization specializing in quality frames at affordable prices.

Frumkin spends much of her time traveling to visit key customers and suppliers, and also working to develop new products. She's also attuned to the importance of establishing a plan, setting expectations, breaking down projects and measuring the results—a philosophy that she's learned from mentor and friend Steve Horowitz of De Rigo REM.

"These are all things that I am consistently working on, and things that I try to inspire others to work on," Frumkin said. "How do we define success if we don't have a benchmark for it?"

What about that first job? After graduating from the University of Wisconsin, Frumkin worked as a brand ambassador/hotdogger and driver for the Oscar Mayer Wienermobile. This experience, she said, "continues to be my best fun fact and coolest job ever."

SHE SAYS... "I love getting to be part of a family business and working with my dad and brother, but sometimes it's challenging to draw a line and not bore the rest of the family with discussions of frames while we're eating dinner."

Jessica Goebert

SENIOR PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING MANAGER

De Rigo REM
 Sun Valley, California

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "She has built a remarkable network from her years at both Luxottica and at De Rigo REM, with the capacity to reach every corner of the fashion media world. She has helped build the reputation of these brands, collectively lifting the com-

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pany's reputation. She has done so through her diligence, intellect and personality."



Though Jessica Goebert has been in the optical industry for only four years, her resume boasts credits such as dressing Michelle Obama and Octavia Spencer for the White House State Dinner and the Oscars (respectively) while she worked for Tadashi Shoji.

While at Luxottica, Goebert oversaw public relations for the wholesale business in North America as the senior PR manager. She was also nominated for a BeLux Award in North America for excellence in press coverage achieved for the relaunch of Giorgio Armani.

Now, in between event management duties, Goebert oversees all PR and social media in the U.S for De Rigo REM's brands as well as the digital and print advertising aspects of the company and she is the main point of contact for internal communications. Goebert is thankful to her mother for teaching her about working hard, being kind and the importance of not losing sight of her dreams.

SHE SAYS... "This speaks to every avenue of the optical industry: From the factory floor to the retail and online experience for the end consumer, women are and will continue to be an integral part of the supply chain. Years ago, they were more behind the scenes and I think we will continue to see more and more women stepping up in major leadership roles."

Kristin S. O'Brien, OD

OPTOMETRIST/CO-OWNER

Vision Source of Green Valley Ranch
Denver, Colorado

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "In addition to seeing patients at the practice she founded, Dr. O'Brien serves nationally on The Vision Council Attendees Advisory Board, Young Professionals Advisory Committee, and Al-

lertan Jumpstart Ambassador Program."



Dr. Kristin O'Brien knew she wanted to be in the optical field from a young age. After being relegated to work in her optometrist's office as punishment for lying about needing glasses while in the third grade, Dr. O'Brien fell in love with the work and knew she wanted to be an optometrist back then.

She later went on to get her doctor of optometry degree from the Michigan College of Optometry and has training in working with mentally or physically disabled patients, pediatrics, low vision as well as specialty contact lenses.

Dr. O'Brien has participated in optometric missions to Guyana and Mexico to provide eyecare to the underprivileged. She leads the Vision Source Mentor OD program with the goal of providing resources to students most interested in private practice. Dr. O'Brien has made it her mission to encourage students to practice in the mode they desire most.

SHE SAYS... "What's best for the patient is best for business. I subscribe to providing the highest quality care to my patients which requires the latest technology equipment in office as well as advanced ophthalmic options in the optical."

Laurel O'Connor

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Think About Your Eyes
Alexandria, Virginia

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Laurel stepped into a role that did not exist and started the public relations efforts of Think About Your Eyes from the ground up. Through her work in the campaign, Think About Your Eyes has reached an audience of 452 million, with a social media audience of more than 50,000."



Laurel O'Connor's background in the PR agency field provided her with a solid foundation for her current position at Think About Your Eyes, overseeing all public relations and social media efforts

for the campaign. When she joined the organization in 2015, the national public awareness initiative was focused on educating consumers about the importance of vision health and annual comprehensive eye exams, mainly through advertising efforts. "Coming from a background of working with a variety of consumer-facing brands, I've seen different communication tactics at work and bring that fresh perspective to Think About Your Eyes."

Through O'Connor's efforts, the campaign's Facebook audience has grown from around 6,000 likes to over 50,000, with posts reaching more than 100,000 people. "For the past two years, we've created videos that show people what different situations are like with vision impairment. Capturing their honest reactions and highlighting how vital our sight is to our everyday life has really shown that our message is relevant to everyone," she said.

O'Connor considers the Think About Your Eyes initiative a "game-changer for the vision industry. Encouraging someone to take control of their vision health and protect their sight is both vital and empowering," she said.

SHE SAYS... "At the end of the day, we are enabling people to live their best lives. I know the hindrances vision impairment can have on even the simplest things. Helping people live with vision impairment, and protect and maintain the vision they have, is a priceless gift we can give."

Christina Perraud

DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND INVENTORY MyEyeDr.

Vienna, Virginia

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Christina Perraud joined
More →

MyEyeDr. in 2013 as the director of purchasing and planning for 50-plus locations. As MyEyeDr. has grown, her role has quadrupled and Christina now oversees all frame buying and product acquisition for what is now 320-plus locations. Her leadership and oversight ensures the frame distribution center supplies all offices with the ideal assortment to exceed patient expectations.”



Christina Perraud joined MyEyeDr. in 2013, and in 2015 she was promoted to director of inventory planning. Earlier, she held positions at Bloomingdales and Gate Gourmet in retail and inventory/supply chain management, which provided an opportunity to be customer-facing and operational. “This created the perfect foundation to transition into my current position, allowing me to better understand the full life cycle of our products, from buying to distribution to patient satisfaction,” she said.

In her role at MyEyeDr., product strategy is her primary focus. “We want to be sure that selection by office ranges from designer to performance brands, [and] pricing for everyone’s budget and style that ranges from classic to fashion forward.” This becomes even more important as MyEyeDr. moves into new markets and tries to match the assortment to each new stores’ demographics.

The challenges of her role as a buyer are tied closely to the company’s overall success: preparing and executing for the unknown, and predicting and forecasting sales for a company that is experiencing very rapid growth.

“My major accomplishment has been facilitating the development of my department to successfully manage the addition of over 250 new locations in less than four years,” she said. “In April 2016, we relocated our distribution center from Vienna, Va., to Greensboro, N.C., all while growing by 100 locations and overhauling our supply chain processes.”

SHE SAYS... “I had a door opened to me by Sue

Downes, CEO of MyEyeDr. Having a mentor like Sue, who has built MyEyeDr. from one location to over 320 today has been incredible. She shares her knowledge and insights, contributing to my professional and personal development.”

Sheree Rajan

SENIOR DIRECTOR, MARKETING INITIATIVES
 Essilor of America
 Dallas, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She is a go-to person within marketing, leading the Essilor Experts program and changing the way Essilor delivers key support to independent ECPs.”



Sheree Rajan has achieved an impressive track record of marketing “firsts” in her 10 years with Essilor of America. As senior director of Marketing Initiatives, she recently launched the Essilor Experts initiative, an innovative approach to helping independent ECPs assist patients in selecting the best lenses for their vision needs and personal style. Nearly 1,700 ECPs have participated since its start in 2016.

Prior to this position, Rajan led Essilor’s Crizal brand to double-digit growth, launching Crizal Previa and the UV product portfolio, and introducing Crizal’s first consumer advertising campaign.

Rajan credits her achievements to her positive attitude, passion, perseverance and a commitment to teaching and coaching others. She said, “My successes have come from my ability to effectively leverage and apply my strengths, but more importantly, my willingness to invest in and build a strong team to help deliver those results.”

Helping others is a strong motivator for Rajan, whether it’s helping customers, consumers or colleagues. “I work for an industry and for a company that makes a true impact on improving peoples’ lives by helping them to see well.”

Her advice to women entering the optical indus-

try is: “Don’t hesitate to ask for a seat at the table. Come prepared with a fact-based point of view and be prepared to stand by your convictions.”

SHE SAYS... “I am inspired by Ralph Waldo Emerson’s words that ‘the task ahead of you is never as great as the power within you.’”

Lindsey Ruhe

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS
MANAGER

The Vision Council
 Alexandria, Virginia

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Lindsey’s commitment to The Vision Council members is phenomenal. She is always available to help and give advice if needed, going above and beyond her responsibility. Through her extensive media outreach activities, she reinforced and reshaped the importance of protecting the eyes from hazardous UV rays and how digital eye strain affects one’s eyes and body.”



Though Lindsey Ruhe didn’t know the vastness of the eyewear industry when she first started five years ago, she has managed to integrate the necessity of eyewear without compromising its fashionable aspects.

She is the brains behind The Vision Council’s Eyecessorize campaign, which garnered 8 billion media impressions in 2015 and 2016; the National Sunglasses Day/UV campaign, which made its way to former Vice President Joe Biden’s Instagram page in 2016; and the digital eye strain campaign which welcomed over 3,000 people at the official health lounge at South by Southwest (SXSW).

In her role at The Vision Council, Ruhe derives inspiration from her team of six staffers, The Vision Council’s members who are passionate about their products, and the impact of the Council’s cam-

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RISING STARS

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

paigns. Ruhe believes that every project offers room for individual as well as professional growth.

SHE SAYS... "I always do my best to bring a positive 'we can do this' attitude to every project I am working on, no matter how much of a challenge the project may be."

Amanda Sabin

CORE COMMUNITY MANAGER

Costa Sunglasses
Daytona Beach, Florida

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Influencing others is what Amanda does each and every day. Thanks to her hard work and ability to connect with others, Amanda finds out what causes different communities have heart for and brings that knowledge back to the Costa team."



Not many people can say that their first job was their dream job, but for Amanda Sabin that was the case.

Sabin's worked for Costa for seven years, starting out managing their Pro Staff and conservation initiatives and then transitioning into a role as offshore community leader. She was recently promoted to core community manager and now leads a team of leaders in each of the major fishing disciplines.

"I've been fishing my entire life and have a deep understanding and connection to the angling community. It's what I'm most passionate about and I bring that passion to work with me every day. I'm a fierce conservationist and love that Costa values preserving our resources so much that it's woven into every fiber of what we do as a company."

One of her major accomplishments was lobbying for a big change in the Gulf of Mexico related to raising the minimum lengths of marlin in tourna-

ment regulations. The change that Sabin helped to bring about was a "huge win for billfish conservation and a commendable accomplishment for all Gulf of Mexico anglers."

SHE SAYS... "If a woman can find her niche or passion point in this industry there is no stopping her."

Shauna Thornhill, OD

OWNER

Amarillo Vision Specialists
Amarillo, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Shauna's story is inspiring for many reasons, one of which is how she has managed to overcome the circumstances of her childhood to become the success that she is today. Everything she does in her practice is born out of her desire to

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DE RIGO REM CONGRATULATES

JESSICA GOEBERT
Sr PR & Marketing Manager
De Rigo Rem

For Being Honored As One Of
Vision Monday's 2017 Most
Influential Women In Optical

Thank you Jessica for your exceptional talent, tremendous drive and dedication to De Rigo Rem and the entire optical industry.

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WE SHARE THE VISION

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give back to others, supporting the people of Amarillo the way they supported her.”



Shauna Thornhill, OD, has a favorite quote, from Nelson Mandela: “It always seems impossible, until it’s done.” The quote, which Thornhill has shared with her children, is on the wall in her office. “I get up

every morning thinking about how I can play a part in making their world better. This drives me not only to try and succeed financially, but to be the kind of person that would make them proud,” she said.

Growing up in poverty, Thornhill said she always wanted a career that included caring for others. She zeroed in on optometry after working at Walmart Vision Center during college. “I knew I would be able to interact with people on a daily basis, and make a difference in their lives,” she said.

Thornhill is a CooperVision 2017 Best Practices Award Winner, and the 2006 Student Research

Award Winner for the AOA: Contact Lens and Cornea Section. She was the 2016 Walmart Divisional Doctor of the Year, and a Regional and District Doctor of the Year for 2014 and 2015.

SHE SAYS... “Know your value and speak up about it! Try to develop a network of women, and be a support system for each other.”

Sarah Wells

REGIONAL VP OF OPERATIONS

Eyecare Partners/Clarkson Eyecare Ballwin, Missouri

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Sarah embodies the professional attitude and mission statement of the corporation, which begins with “We help people...” and are always at the core of her motivation. I see only bigger and better things from her in the future—her attitude inspires us all.”



Sarah Wells has spent her entire 17-year optical career at Clarkson Eyecare. She started out in a single office, learning the basics of optical care. After graduating from Truman State University with a BA in Communication, she managed several locations, worked in a Clarkson LASIK surgery office and sold proprietary practice management software to optical providers. Over time, she became a district manager and advanced into her current role as regional VP of operations.

Today, Wells oversees daily operations for 75 offices in three states, including Clarkson Eyecare Optometric offices in Missouri, Illinois and Florida, Clarkson Eyecare LASIK and Panhandle Vision Institute in Pensacola, Fla. “Other than the operational, financial and business day-to-day responsibilities, the most exciting part of my job is supporting our acquisition and due diligence process, and being able to welcome more doctors to our team,” she said.

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VM 2017
**MOST INFLUENTIAL
 WOMEN**
 IN OPTICAL

Congratulations



to Jaclyn for being honored as one of this year’s

Influential Women in Optical.

You have helped make Eye Q a fashion leader in the value frame segment of our industry.

Thanks for all of your contributions!

RISING STARS

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

"Working with very established and excellent optometrists helped instill in me a strong work ethic, with a commitment to providing service at a very high standard. I carry that commitment with me today in everything I do. To understand the details behind what creates an exceptional office employee and doctor experience is fundamental to running exceptional office operations.

SHE SAYS... "Many professional women I've met thrive on challenges, and this is a multi-faceted, high-challenge industry in which women have been blossoming for years. This is truly evident today with the considerable number of women in leadership positions leading remarkable optical companies."

H. Lindsay Wright, OD

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Armed Forces Optometric Society
 Louisville, Colorado

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "She is on the front line for shaping the policies of optometry at a federal level."



Dr. Lindsay Wright's childhood experience with vision therapy influenced her career choice. "At a young age, I was diagnosed with convergence insufficiency and started vision therapy," she recalled. "I saw first-hand what a difference an optometrist can make in a young child's life and wanted to have that impact on others."

Today, Dr. Wright is responsible for overseeing the administration, programs and strategic plan of The Armed Forces Optometric Society (AFOS), the affiliate of the American Optometric Association (AOA) that represents all federal service optometrists including those in active duty and reserve military (Air Force, Army and Navy), Veterans Affairs, Indian Health Service and Public Health Service.

Her other key duties include advocacy, membership, planning of continuing education events and sponsorship. "Not only am I advocating for and serving optometrists, but optometrists in the service of our country. It is truly a rewarding and fulfilling role," she noted.

In addition to her role with the AFOS, Dr. Wright operates a practice in Louisville, Colorado, a rural community north of Denver that was previously without an optometrist. "I believed that starting a new practice in a previously unserved area was one way that I could expand the health care opportunities to the residents of that community."

SHE SAYS... "What inspires me are people who will stop at nothing to make a positive difference in other people's lives. Optometrists are doing this every day as they take care of their patients and change lives of those they encounter."

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Jobson is proud to congratulate our own

Jane George

— INNOVATOR —

on being recognized as one of
Vision Monday's Most Influential Women in Optical

Thank you for your dedication and contribution to Frames Data and the Jobson Optical Group. We applaud you on this well-deserved accomplishment.

Frames Data

Jobson
 Optical Group

Linda Atwood

CO-OWNER

Eyecoach Lab and Training Center
 Mesa, Arizona

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Linda co-created Eyecoach Lab & Training Center because of a dream of hers to give back to her optical community. At Eyecoach she has different classes to meet the need of just about any situation."



Linda Atwood came into the optical industry 43 years ago in what she thought would be a temporary job as a receptionist. Her main goal at the time was to save enough money to go to college, but after learning about opticianry and how opticians help people better their lives, she was hooked. Her employer noticed her love for

teaching others and gave her the opportunity to create a training program for the practice.

Forty-three years later, Atwood co-owns Eyecoach Lab and Training Center, a finish lab and active training center. The company has trained and assisted nearly 300 people to become certified and state-licensed practice consultants and has also assisted doctors with systems to help them grow their practices and maintain patient care.

Atwood cares about every person she works with and wants them to be as successful as she has been and to be passionate about what they do. She believes in partnering for success through education and inspiration.

SHE SAYS... "The last 10 years have seen more and more women obtaining roles in management, ownership and technical research. These are roles that previously were dominated by men. Especially on the lab side we are seeing more and more leadership roles filled by women."

Robyn Crimmins

SENIOR DIRECTOR, MARKETING & COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS

VSP Optics Group
 Rancho Cordova, California

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "She is a true example of what women in leadership should look like. She is warm, smart, supportive and leads by example."



Robyn Crimmins joined VSP in 2006 and has held a range of positions including director, VSP Global marketing and director, business development. During her 11 years, she's worked on marketing and brand initiatives for all of VSP Global's lines of business including VSP Vision Care, VSP Optics Group, Marchon and Eyefinity, and she has led mar-

Congratulations

on being recognized as one of

VM's 2017 Most Influential Women

Thank you Jennifer for your excellence of sales leadership, Tura appreciates your passion & tireless efforts.

Tura extends their appreciation to all of this year's Most Influential Women for their ongoing industry contributions.

keting programs for all three VSP audiences including members/consumers, doctors and clients.

In her current role, Crimmins sets marketing, branding and communications strategy for VSP's proprietary lens and lens enhancements products and laboratory services. She leads a team to develop commercial and sales programs for Unity, TechShield, SunSync and Ethos proprietary lens products, the VSPOne laboratory network, which includes 15 optical laboratories across the U.S., and the uUniversity online education platform. She's also a part of the VSP Optics Group Commercial Strategy Leadership team.

She said, "I've been incredibly fortunate to have a network of generous mentors and colleagues. Their belief in me inspires me to pay it forward by mentoring young women today. I also count myself lucky, as I have a fantastically supportive family and husband who encourage and nurture my career aspirations every single day."

Crimmins added, "As a member of the board of

the Optical Women's Association (OWA), I am passionate about furthering the leadership role of women in the optical industry."

SHE SAYS... "Take risks and try new things. Ask to be put on that project team that interests you, and maybe even scares you a little bit. Remember that failure can be a gift, because there's so much to learn in the process. Don't sit still."

Nancy Dewald

NATIONAL MANAGER OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Eye Recommend
 Calgary, Alberta

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Nancy is an inspiration. She inspires everyone, in her own unique ways, to thrive and succeed. She is more than happy to be a shoulder, a voice, a confidant, a friend."



Nancy Dewald started in the optical field 20 years ago when she was hired as a manager for Luxotica retail. In her 10 years at the company, Dewald worked in various departments, including serving as a regional and performance trainer for the company's training department, as eyecare director for their Canadian market, and as regional manager, before joining the Eye Recommend team in 2013.

As the national regional manager of training and development, Dewald believes that leaders require expertise and insights from others in order to be successful and cannot be afraid to surround themselves with people who are smarter.

In her role at Eye Recommend, Dewald is already seeing an increase in young women ODs who are taking steps to become partners and are starting their own practices. She believes women will continue to expand their horizons beyond the roles of ODs and identify niche opportunities in areas such as vision therapy and dry eye.

CooperVision® congratulates

Lisa Fawcett

Vice President, Global Strategy & Life Cycle Management
 CooperVision

for being honored as one of Vision Monday's **Most Influential Women in Optical** - Executive Suite category.

We thank Lisa for making a significant difference within both CooperVision and the optical industry through her **strong leadership, immense commitment** and **innovative ideas**.

Congratulations to Lisa and all of the **Most Influential Women in Optical** honored in 2017.



MENTORS

WOMEN WHO ARE TEAM BUILDERS AND DEVELOPERS OF TALENT

SHE SAYS... “In all I do, I try to leave people in a better place than before I have encountered or worked with them. Sometimes it is giving them hard to hear feedback, a sincere compliment, training or simply someone to listen to them. The simple things can make a huge difference.”

Liz Friedfeld

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

ClearVision Optical
Hauppauge, New York

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Liz literally grew up in the optical industry, as a second generation member of the Friedfeld family. She is a strong internal role model, as a working mom, a savvy businesswoman and a leader.”



Liz Friedfeld got her start in optical at the age of nine helping out with the family business. “After a 20-year hiatus, I happily found my way home,” she said.

“When my father passed away, Dr. Neil Gailmard offered very comforting words that our parents live on through our values and our children,” and those values that her parents instilled inspires Friedfeld each day.

When it comes to her personal philosophy about optical, she believes that to be successful, many ECPs must evolve to present a new consumer experience, while connecting with a younger audience that behaves differently from previous generations.

While one of her greatest challenge presents itself in finding that balance among family, work and personal development, Friedfeld considers one of her biggest strengths to be her optimism as well as her “desire to help others, treating everyone as a close friend with whom you want to know more.”

She believes women starting out should not only take risks and learn from others and their own failures but also have a sense of curiosity and be comfortable being uncomfortable.

SHE SAYS... “I take great pride being part of the legacy my parents and brothers created, sharing ClearVision’s culture which has made it one of the best companies to work for.”

Jennifer Jackson

SENIOR REGIONAL SALES MANAGER

Tura Inc.
New York, New York

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She has sharp, incisive analytical skills, a clear focus on goals, and a very fair, reasonable approach to the stickiest sales situations. She inspires loyalty, trust and a desire to excel because she is honest, fair and truly committed to her team.”



Jennifer Jackson has been in the optical industry for over 20 years and was also a 2013 Most Influential Women in Optical in the Mentors category.

In her current role at Tura Inc., Jackson oversees a direct reporting group of sales consultants and develops members of the leadership team. “I have two district managers and a regional manager that I coach, develop and mentor. It is rewarding to share in their success. Over the years, I have managed individuals that have gone on to be promoted in their current organizations and new companies as well,” Jackson said.

She values the importance of leveraging people’s strengths to help them work on their opportunities and counts one of her strengths as people and team development. “I excel in these areas because I am great at assessing people and helping them be the best they can be.”

For other women starting out in optical, Jackson’s advice to them would be to find a mentor to help navigate the industry.

SHE SAYS... “As in any business, I believe in the Golden Rule. Treat others as you want to be treated.”

Respect, honesty and genuine concern for people’s well-being will always make you successful.”

Heather McHale

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL HUMAN RESOURCES

Marchon Eyewear Inc.
Melville, New York

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Heather has been instrumental in upgrading and developing Marchon’s and VSP International’s talent pool. She is a trusted advisor to individuals from all levels and regions that rely on her.”



After spending years in investment banking and consumer products, Heather McHale found her passion in the optical industry. She joined the Marchon team in 2009 with no intention of going back to a full-time career.

“I’d taken a break from the work force for a few years to focus on my then three small children and a daughter who was newly diagnosed with autism. I never thought I’d ever be able to figure out how to balance it all. Marchon changed that very quickly.”

What McHale believes makes optical the perfect place for women is the ability to combine fashion, innovation, technology, manufacturing and health care.

Through her work leading the human resources team for all five lines of VSP Global businesses internationally covering the company’s interest in over 100 countries, McHale said that her biggest contributions come in the variety of ways she’s able to proactively influence the culture and capabilities of the organization.

McHale believes her strength is her passion for continuous improvement. “Every day we are all going to make multiple mistakes—some big some small, but those failures cannot be what define us. It can’t be what crushes our spirit or stops us from trying again. Failures are how we learn.”

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SHE SAYS... "My personal philosophy for everything is that tomorrow can always be better than today and each of us has the power to make it so. Take the risk and move out of your comfort zone."

Deborah Rich

VICE PRESIDENT OF KEY ACCOUNTS

Marchon Eyewear
 Marin County, California

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "With over 30 years' experience in the optical industry, Deb has been influencing both customers and team members throughout her career in sales. The respect for Deb comes from her unstinting quest for every experience to be first class and to lead her team by example."



Deborah Rich entered the optical industry when she was 20 years old. She joined Marchon in 1990 as a sales representative. Since then, she has conducted trainings and held the role of brand specialist before becoming responsible for the key accounts in the U.S. for the company.

Rich's love for the optical industry is evident in her accomplishments. She has been in Marchon's President's Club for years, and she has received many awards from Marchon including Rookie of the Year, Top Performance in Sales and the Lone Ranger Award.

Rich believes that "strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle," and has been fortunate to have leaders in her career who have supported her through the ups and downs. At work, Rich attributes the success of her five-year-old department to her great team.

SHE SAYS... "When I first started in this industry, there were very few women. This has changed over time and I believe that women will continue to lead this industry, as they remember to just 'Lean In' as Sheryl Sandberg says."

Ann Small

DIRECTOR OF SALES OPERATIONS, INDEPENDENT DISTRIBUTOR DIVISION

Essilor of America
 Dallas, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "She is a pioneer and an advocate for independent labs. She consistently works to develop new processes and materials to ensure their continued success."



Ann Small has been with Essilor for 11 years, dating to May 2006 when she joined the company as director of finance for the Independent Distributor Division (IDD). After five years in finance, she moved to sales operations because of her desire to work more closely with the sales force and Essilor's independent lab customers.

She says this move was, at the time, considered a career risk, but it has ultimately paid off with a more rewarding and challenging role with the company.

Among her responsibilities are ensuring the IDD sales force has actionable sales and product information to best serve customers and to act as a liaison between independent lab customers and the various Essilor departments with whom they interact.

Small became interested in optical at an early age. As an "early myope," she tried her first pair of contact lenses at age 8 but was never really happy with them. "I ultimately gave up on at the age of 19 and immediately became transfixed by the world of spectacle lenses, frequently spending money on the highest-end frames and lenses. When I saw the job posting at Essilor, I knew it was my ideal job," she said.

At Essilor, Small believes her key attribute and strength is "being able to make order out of chaos. I excel at what I do because I believe in and I am committed to Essilor's core mission of improving lives by improving sight."

SHE SAYS... "It sounds cliché, but nevertheless true:

don't be afraid to take risks and do what is right for you. Of course, sometimes risks don't pay off, but there is value in those experiences as well."

Laurie Sorrenson, OD, FAAO

FOUNDER

Lakeline Vision Source
 Austin, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE... "Laurie is a successful doctor with a passion for sharing the secrets of her success in an incredibly selfless and tireless manner. She now serves as director for practice management for Vision Source, providing practice management training for doctors and staff through Insight, the online community of Vision Source."



Creating a "wow" experience for her patients is of paramount importance to Laurie Sorrenson, OD. That begins with having a positive impact on everyone she interacts with. "Act Like Somebody."

This is what my mom used to say to me every day," said Dr. Sorrenson. I always took this to mean make a difference each day by Acting Like Somebody."

Dr. Sorrenson has taken her philosophy of making a difference to serve as a positive influence for up-and-coming ODs. In addition to serving as an adjunct professor at her alma mater, University of Houston College of Optometry, where she teaches practice management to fourth-year students, Dr. Sorrenson was honored as the school's 2002 Distinguished Alumna, and with its Bill Pittman Leadership Award in 2006. Dr. Sorrenson also was named Young Optometrist of the Year and Optometrist of the Year by the Texas Optometric Association, and received its 2017 Distinguished Service Award.

SHE SAYS... "I try to help students and other doctors create better work experiences and patient experiences so that they can love optometry as much as I do."

Diana Canto-Sims, OD

FOUNDER & CEO, LA VIDA EYEWEAR

Co-Founder, Buena Vista Optical
 Chicago, Illinois

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She founded a company that creates eyewear designed specifically for Latinas and she leads a diversity inspired optometric practice.”



Recognizing that many fashion frames did not properly fit her Latina customers, Diana Canto-Sims followed her entrepreneurial instincts and created La Vida Eyewear, positioned as “the only eyewear in the world designed for Latinos by a Latina.”

Designing eyewear that does not compromise fit for fashion is one of her most rewarding accomplishments, said Canto-Sims, whose designs offer fit that is both functional and fashionable.

Canto-Sims was first inspired to help other people see clearly at the age of 10, when her myopia was corrected. As an optometrist and business owner, she listened to her patients as they struggled with the same eyewear frustrations, and the idea of developing eyeglasses for Latinas was born.

Canto-Sims is a strong advocate of the importance of vision to learning. “Our greatest challenge is dealing with the stigma of wearing glasses in the Latino community. If a child cannot see, he or she cannot learn. Educating parents about the importance of vision and learning is essential in our practice.”

Canto-Sims is on the Transitions Optical Diversity advisory board and is a Transitions change agent, sharing multicultural experiences to help patients exceed their visual expectations and to protect eyes from harmful UV rays and blue light.

SHE SAYS... “My mission is to populate the world with beautiful people wearing gorgeous eyewear that actually fits.”

Julie Collins

GLOBAL HEAD, ECOMMERCE

Alcon
 Fort Worth, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Julie Collins is a customer and digital-first leader, responsible for catapulting Alcon into a new frontier for their business. She’s a visionary. She sees business challenges and seizes them as opportunities.”



Julie Collins serves on the executive team of Alcon, a subsidiary of Novartis, as the global head of eCommerce, leading this across its Surgical and Vision Care Divisions.

Collins brought 25+ years of experience in strategic planning, global and digital marketing and technology platforms to Alcon. She’s brought together cross-functional teams in the development and launch of revenue-generating digital platforms, such as eCommerce, CRM, B2B, mobile and global web ecosystems. Currently, Collins is spearheading the launch of myalcon Store, the first cloud-based eCommerce system in all of Alcon and Novartis.

She said, “In my career, I’ve always liked to build and share things—I was on the team at IBM that launched the personal computer, I’ve launched a myriad of new products across categories, and built early editions of websites before we even knew what websites could do.

“I got involved in optical when I was approached about a role at CIBA Vision to build new marketing capabilities for contact lenses and lens care. I met the teams, used the products and was hooked. I think that spending your career thinking about how to help people see better is a great life.

SHE SAYS... “My philosophy is ‘Launch, Learn and Pivot.’ Digital is moving so quickly, with so many new and powerful ideas coming to market. The essence is to get smart and compelling ideas up and going, and then build on them over time. Embrace the ride. In our new digital universe, there is very little roadmap.”

Jane George

PRODUCT MANAGER

Frames Data Inc., Jobson Optical Group
 New York, New York

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “As an industry veteran who has worked with Frames Data from multiple perspectives over her career, she is well positioned to manage and develop the Frames Data product line as it moves along the continuum from print to cloud based products for retailers that increase meaningful patient dialogue, patient experience and retail sales.”



Jane George likes to think that she didn’t find optical but it found her, some 29 years ago. Fresh out of college, she connected with a recruiter who was looking to fill an entry level marketing job for “Starline Optical” in New Jersey. She remembers, “I got the job and was hooked! Starline of course soon became Safilo. Interestingly, my very first project as marketing coordinator was to manage Safilo’s listings in Frames Data. Funny how life comes full circle.”

Following her start at Safilo, George moved to the lens side of things with Diamonex Lenses, and on then to Frames Data as a regional sales manager. She left the industry for eight years only to return “home” to Frames Data as a project manager in 2015.

Today, her primary responsibilities include expanding industry partnerships and third-party integrations, developing a closer relationship with subscribers to better enhance user experience, and developing cloud-based tools for retailers that provide measurable practice benefits.

George considers herself to be “creative, tenacious and goal oriented—I love to see a good plan come together.” All good qualities which came in handy for her most recent project—the launch of a

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Frames Data product specifically for Canada complete with Canadian product lines and pricing.

SHE SAYS... “Growing up, my mom and my aunt were my family unit. They were supportive, open minded, and truly loving individuals who made sure I was exposed to friends and business associates who became role models and mentors for me. They let me know it was okay to have confidence and goals. It continues to be my foundation.”

Alysia Gradney

SENIOR DIRECTOR, DIGITAL MARKETING & PR
 Vision Source
 Kingwood, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Alysia created a social media training platform and social media team to educate Vision Source members on best practices. Through the execution of data-

driven initiatives, Alysia grew Vision Source brand visibility by 50.23 percent in 2016.”



Alysia Gradney recalls struggling academically through middle school. “The moment I put on my first pair of glasses is a memory I will never forget. The world was much clearer, brighter, and accessible. I am inspired by this memory and my ability to help create similar moments for women, men and children.”

With 12 years of professional marketing and project management experience, Gradney describes herself as “equal parts left and right brain, I love to color and do math. Through marketing, I use my love of math to collect and analyze data to color marketing initiatives and strategies. I turn data into digestible and usable content to further brand development and achieve overall business objectives.”

At Vision Source she leads the development of digital strategies by leveraging multiple media channels, including PPC, SEO, display, distribution, syndication, mobile and social. She also manages all consumer facing digital assets which includes VisionSource.com, all social channels and the management of over 1,900 Vision Source member websites.

Gradney cites her aunt, Sonia ‘Sunny’ Franklin, as a longtime mentor. “She has shown me the power of perseverance and hard work.” And, Gradney suggests, “If you’re interested in growing within the optical industry build a network of supportive women around you.”

SHE SAYS... “In the next few years, I think women will

influence change in the delivery of eyecare products and services by finding new ways to engage women ages 25 to 45. I see a future that blends beauty with eyecare while promoting eye health for the whole family.”

Melissa Hunfalvy, PhD

CO-FOUNDER & CHIEF SCIENCE OFFICER
 RightEye
 Bethesda, Maryland

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Her expertise solves scientific questions using technology to better understand human behavior.”



Melissa Hunfalvy is the driving force behind all of RightEye’s leading-edge eye-tracking technology products including RightEye Neuro Vision Tests, RightEye Performance Vision, RightEye GeoPref Autism Test and RightEye Vision Training Games.

She is also spearheading the launch of a test designed to identify early signs of Parkinson’s disease. Taken together, Dr. Hunfalvy’s work at RightEye is making health and vision care more accessible, affordable and effective, generating better outcomes, lower costs and improved health.

She is responsible for all new and existing product development efforts at RightEye, and she also leads RightEye’s research branch. In this role, she has created all of RightEye’s products used to examine athletic performance, autism spectrum disorder, vision disorders, neurological disorders and reading disorders. She has also developed therapies and training programs based on eye-tracking assessments.

Hunfalvy, who holds a Master’s in clinical psychology and counseling, and a PhD in kinesiology, is unique in that her background, both as a scientific researcher, and previously, as professional tennis player and coach, enables her to build products based on scientific rigor that are practical and easy to understand by the end user.

Her expertise helps solve scientific questions

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using technology to better understand human behavior. She has published many works from peer-reviewed science to practical applications to technology articles and book chapters. She has presented at over 50 conferences.

SHE SAYS... “The most important thing for someone starting out in our industry is to respect other people’s talents, realize where your skill set is and be able to collaborate with others.”

Kristen McLaughlin

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING

Silhouette Optical
 Green Island, New York

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “She works tirelessly to promote the Silhouette brand and to support her sales force and team.”



Kristen McLaughlin entered the optical industry 17 years ago, following jobs in the beauty and retail industries. “It happened by chance,” she recalled. “A friend passed on the opportunity to interview with Silhouette. As soon as I met Arnold Schmied (Silhouette’s president at the time and the son of the company’s founder) and he shared the Silhouette Journal and company philosophy, I was hooked on the thought of working for this incredibly special eyewear manufacturer.”

McLaughlin works with the Silhouette design team in Austria to create eyewear styles that will suit the American market. She is responsible for marketing and communication of the company’s three brands: Silhouette, neubau and adidas, and creates content for its trade and consumer communications.

Additionally, McLaughlin is responsible for U.S. product positioning and communication, developing merchandising plans, and managing the marketing budget and planning. “I am passionate about great product and design,” she said. “I love telling the story to engage others. I find ways to connect

the story and product to people, individually. Personalization is of utmost importance. Products with a special story take precedence.”

McLaughlin believes female consumers are more open to new experiences. “We’ll see new experiences delivered with more meaningful touch points in all areas of retail, both in-store and online,” she said.

SHE SAYS... “Eyewear is the most influential accessory one could wear. Choose it wisely. This also stands true for choosing the product you represent. You must believe in your product. This is a signature piece that sends a message about who you are.”

Bridgitte Shen Lee, OD

CEO

Vision Optique
 Houston, Texas

CHOSEN BECAUSE... “Bridgitte is considered one of the leading thought leaders in the \$41 billion eyecare industry on ocular health, dry eye, specialty contact lenses and women’s health issues.”



Bridgitte Shen Lee, OD, immigrated to Dallas, Texas from Beijing at age 14. Both of her parents graduated from China’s prestigious Peking Union Medical College (PUMC), which set her on a

course to become a health care practitioner. “My upbringing in medical academia helped to shape my own career in helping others with their sight,” she said.

Shen Lee and her business partner, Brad Owens, OD, opened Vision Optique in 1999, one year after they graduated from the University of Houston College of Optometry. “The location we chose is in a highly competitive area in Houston, even more so 18 years later,” she said. “We differentiate ourselves by focusing on patient relationships and educating our patients on the latest innovations”

The focus is on providing personalized care. “Almost two decades of treating patients with kindness and honesty, and giving back to the communities that support us, has helped us to build a strong foundation of loyal friends and patients,” Shen Lee said.

Shen Lee has created one of the strongest personal brands in eyecare by both leveraging her social media presence as a “Dry Eye Specialist” and networking with a variety of patients, colleagues and industry partners.

In addition to Vision Optique, she is the founder of iTravelCE, and serves on the advisory boards of Essilor, Luxottica, Bausch + Lomb and Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, among other companies.

SHE SAYS... “It’s important to have women both owning practices, as well as sitting on industry boards, and in leadership positions in eyecare companies.” ■

Methodology for Most Influential Women in Optical

This year’s request for nominations was structured like the 2016 Report in that we continued to expand the scope of women recognized in the report, who make leadership contributions throughout the ECP, retail, supplier, lab, managed care and association landscapes. Readers were asked to make up to three nominations per the following categories: Executive Suite, Rising Stars, Mentors and Innovators.

The “Influential Women” process is not designed to be a vote or a ranking. Nominations were reviewed and categorized by Vision Monday’s editors. The “Chosen Because...” selections are drawn from the nominations submitted for each candidate. Honorees are organized alphabetically by category.

To view past year’s Special Reports about Influential Women in Optical, go to VisionMonday.com and click on VM Reports.