

Vision Monday Leads Spirited Salute to 20 Years of Optical's Most Influential Women

BY VM STAFF

LAS VEGAS—Courage and empowerment fueled the atmosphere at the 20th Anniversary Most Influential Women in Optical luncheon at Vision Expo West on Sept. 16. The event brought together current and past female change makers and influencers who were recognized by their peers for making significant contributions to the optical industry.

Between 2003 and 2022 more than 740 women have been honored for their work in all facets of eyecare. Marge Axelrad, senior VP and editorial director of *Vision Monday* welcomed attendees, noting this event is a true representation of the modern optical industry. "These women have made amazing contributions as their careers have progressed. They represent all sectors of this incredible business we are in. They are shaping the arc of the eyecare field and present so many opportunities for the future. They are creating change and a fresh future for our business."

The event also recognized a number of companies, sponsors and organizations who have also been making strides to create more inclusive and female-driven workplaces. On hand were representatives of the Optical Women's Association, the OD Divas and Global Ophthalmic Women.

Sherianne James, chief marketing officer and senior VP wholesale marketing at EssilorLuxottica North America noted that the face of the optical industry is changing, with 70 percent of new optometry students being female. James said, "This is why this award is so important. To give us a voice and to celebrate each other. When you are being tenacious and pushing through, you are doing it for the ones coming behind you. When you reach the top, send the elevator down and grab up some more and bring them up with you."

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20th Anniversary VM²⁰²² Most Influential Women in Optical

1. Keynote speaker Gina Rudan, director and cultural alchemist at Google X, shared her personal and professional journey with attendees, speaking of courage and creativity in business.
2. VM Influential Women honoree, Dr. Giovanna Olivares, Johnson & Johnson, with keynote speaker Google X's Rudan.
3. Two-time MIW honorees, Essilor Luxottica's Dr. Millicent Knight (I) and Sherianne James, shared their own professional path stories and advice.
4. Close to 200 attendees celebrated VM's 20 Years of past and current Most Influential Women in Optical at the special luncheon event held at Vision Expo West 2022.

Photo Credit: Jann Hendry Photography



1. (L to R) Alice Hsueh, Rose Britton, Pamela Jackson and Dr. Michele Andrews are CooperVision honorees, past and present.

2. (L to R) MIW honorees included Dr. Bethany Fishbein, CEO, The Power Practice, with Dr. Contact Lens' founders Drs. Brianna Rhue and Jenn Tabiza.

3. (L to R) MIW honorees Beverly Bianes, OD; EssilorLuxottica's Dr. Millicent Knight; EssilorLuxottica's Bidisha Rudra; and Brilliant Eyes' Dr. Janelle Davidson.

4. Shopko Optical's Kirk Lauterback celebrates with Shopko's Dr. Angelina Popovic.

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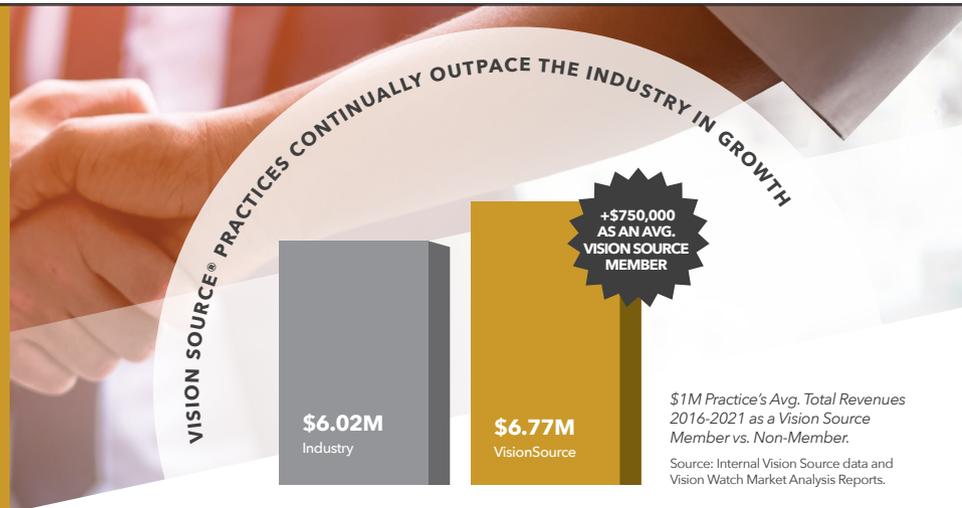
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20th Anniversary Most Influential Women in Optical Luncheon



1. Zeiss Vision's Andrew Hyncik with 2022 honoree Zeiss' Summer Bouchedid.

2. (L to R) Walman's Sue Barry, EssilorLuxottica's Deb Bulken and Tamara Sanders.

3. (L to R) National Vision's Reade Fahs enjoys a chat with Brilliant Eyes' Dr. Janelle Davidson and Jimmie Davidson.

4. (L to R) Abby Gluck, For Eyes Optical with her mom, Eyewear Designs' Andrea Gluck and AEG Vision's Meera Dua.

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20th Anniversary Most Influential Women in Optical Luncheon



1. (L to R) Honorees representing the Optical Women's Association (OWA) included VisionWeb's Janelle Pauli; VSP Optics' Robyn Crimmins; MyEyeDr.'s Dr. Lorie Lippiatt; and Eyefinity's Kelly Balaam.

2. Among those standing with past VM Influential Women honorees are MyEyeDr.'s Sue Downes and Christina Perraud with Visions & Beyond's Jean Scott.

3. (L to R) A group of honorees from EssilorLuxottica included Becky Palm, Tamara Sanders, Bidisha Rudra, Vision Source's Tami Franklin and Vision Source's Donna Mikulecky.

4. VM's Marge Axelrad (c) chats with VM Influential Women honorees, Dr. Jennifer Tsai (l), Line of Sight and Dr. Jennifer Chinn, Chinn's Vision Care.

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MODO

20th Anniversary Most Influential Women in Optical Luncheon



1. Past-years honorees Cha-Ling Delgado (l) and Sharon Blankenship (r) flank their EssilorLuxottica colleague, 2022 honoree, Abby Kinder.

2. OWA board member, Jan Cory (l) with Safilo's Karen Brush.

3. VM's Marge Axelrad (c) connects with honorees, Vontelle's Tracy Green (l) and Nancey Harris.

4. A big team from Safilo's North America business. (L to R) Francesco Rinaldi Ceroni, Eric Blanchette, Karen Brush, Group CEO Angelo Trocchia, Victoria Hallberg, Diana Downs, Elena Amadini, Eden Wexler and Reagan Colpitts.



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20th Anniversary Most Influential Women in Optical Luncheon

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Dr. Millicent Knight, SVP of Customer Development, told the audience, “While I was busy running my own practice and caring for my patients, I also became the youngest optometrist and only black female in history on the board of trustees at the Illinois College of Optometry and served on the state board on Illinois. When my local hospital refused to grant me privileges on the basis that no rules existed for optometrists, I went ahead and wrote the rules myself and they are still used to this day.”

She added, “I recognize that when practitioners and industry work together, we can do so much more in advancing patient care, which is why we are all here. When you are leaning in to create space for yourself and your female colleagues to be heard, remember that you are not alone, this can be done, and your work will shape the future of this industry.”

The event was capped off by a special presentation by keynote speaker Gina Rudan, director and cultural alchemist at Google X. She shared her personal and professional journey with attendees, noting it is important to take note of the women in your life who have demonstrated fierce courage and use that as a model for personal and professional growth.

“You have to look at what shows up in your personal life that’s holding you back and what is amplifying you forward,” she said, noting that failure should never be seen as a negative but a chance to continue to grow and learn. “You have to keep experimenting and finding what’s new.”

Sponsors of the Most Influential Women 20th Anniversary event include: **Visionary:** Johnson & Johnson Vision, EssilorLuxottica; **Partner:** Safilo, The Vision Council, Vision Expo, VSP Vision; **Supporting:** Modo, Mondottica, OWA, PECAA, Vision Source, Walman Optical and Zeiss. ■



1. Keynote speaker Gina Rudan, Google X's Cultural Alchemist, Director Innovation Lab.

2. (L to R) EssilorLuxottica's Holly Gillentine, Sherianne James and Dr. Millicent Knight.

3. (L to R) Hoya Vision Care's Eduardo Martins and Cherie Gifford with New England College of Optometry's Howard Purcell, OD.

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- 1. IDOC's Shannon Morales (l) and Bridgett O'Brien.
- 2. (L to R) Quantum Innovation's Michele Laird, Krista Davis and Tammy Kester.
- 3. Safilo Group CEO, Angelo Trocchia (l), joined the new commercial head of Safilo's N.A. business, Francesco Rinaldi Ceroni.
- 4. On hand is now-retired, former Luxottica trainer and educator Gail Israel Goldbaum.

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Optical Women's Association

For more information on the OWA and/or to become a member please visit our website at www.opticalwomen.com

Our thanks to Vision Monday for providing this space for OWA's message.

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1. (L to R) Jobson's Linda Conlin and Deb Kotob, Pro-to-Pro, with Costco's Marisol Rodriguez and *20/20 Magazine's* Christine Yeh.

2. (L to R) From Johnson & Johnson Vision, Brooke Chapman-Tripp, Lindsay Amaro and Kim Sanford.

3. (L to R) Lisa Johnson OD, CooperVision Specialty Eyecare with Dr. Melissa Barnett and Dr. Karen Lee, University of Houston.

4. Jean Scott, Visions & Beyond, with Marchon's Thomas Burkhardt.

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