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BUSINESS

Ultimate Partners 2024: A Special 20/20 and Vision Monday Section Celebrates Readers' Nominations of Outstanding Business Support Partners

By Staff
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The Ultimate Partners initiative was originally conceived in 2021 to pay tribute to businesses who stepped up to help their clients navigate the challenging circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thankfully, today, the world and the optical industry are in a much better place. But the need to have solid relationships with your partners is still a key ingredient for running a successful optical business.

To identify this year's "class" of Ultimate Partners, Jobson asked the readers of 20/20 and Vision Monday to participate in an online survey from Jobson Research. Respondents provided us with details about their most valuable partners by answering these questions: what supplier/business partner stepped up and illuminated new and valuable solutions? Who went above and beyond? Did they reshape a problem into an opportunity?

The two Jobson publications asked readers to provide examples of exceptional collaboration such as:

- Visual merchandising
- Retail event support
- Launch support focus
- Optical on main/independent retailer focus
- Sustainability focus
- Extraordinary customer service support
- Creative solutions to staffing shortages/personnel support

Your responses define this special supplement in our publications. We hope you enjoy reading about 2024's roster of Ultimate Partners who went the extra mile for their optical business colleagues, proving that with collaboration and support they can propel one another to new heights of success.

–The Editors of Vision Monday and 20/20

Congratulations to our 2024 Ultimate Partners as chosen by our readers:

- Alcon
- Bausch + Lomb
- Charmant Group
- ClearVision Optical
- Design Eyewear Group
- Europa Eyewear
- Hoya Vision Care
- InMode
- L'Amey America
- Marcolin
- Modern Optical International
- Natscent
- OGI Eyewear
- Randolph Engineering
- Silhouette
- Tracey Technologies
- Tura
- Walman Optical
- Zeiss Vision Care

Alcon

Alcon is an eyecare device company with complementary businesses in surgical and vision care. The company, located in Geneva, Switzerland and in Fort Worth, Texas in the U.S., operates in more than 50 countries and serves patients in more than 140 countries. They research, develop, manufacture, distribute, and sell a wide range of eyecare products for eyecare professionals and their patients, including contact lenses. "Tony Monaco (from Alcon) consistently provides us with great care and has helped with marketing," said Eric Rettig, Mountain View Eye, Altoona, Pa. "He knows our practice well and is constantly looking out for our best interests."

www.alcon.com

Bausch + Lomb

Bausch + Lomb is a medical equipment and supplies company that develops and sells products for vision care, consumer health care, surgery and pharmaceuticals. The company has more than 400 products in its portfolio, including contact lenses, lens care products, eyecare products, ophthalmic pharmaceuticals, over-the-counter products, and ophthalmic surgical devices and instruments. Bausch + Lomb has North American operations in Bridgewater N.J. and in Vaughan, Ontario. The company operates in three segments: vision care, surgical and ophthalmic pharmaceuticals. "B+L is always responsive to requests in a timely manner and is ecologically minded through their contact lens and packaging program," said Jonah Berman, OD, FAAO, New York, N.Y. "They consistently provide outstanding consumer products."

www.bausch.com

Charmant Group

With more than 60 years of history, Charmant was founded in Japan in 1956 by Kaoru Horikawa. Now with subsidiaries in the United States, Europe and China, the company is known as a pioneer in processing high-quality titanium eyewear, while staying strong to its original Japanese values. Charmant distributes licensed brands such as Eddie Bauer, ELLE, Isaac Mizrahi New York and Esprit, and in-house brands including Aristar, Charmant Titanium Perfection, Minamoto and Line Art Charmant.
www.charmant.com

ClearVision Optical

Founded in 1949 by Fred Friedfeld, ClearVision Optical celebrates 75 years of designing and distributing eyewear and sunwear. Headquartered in Hauppauge, N.Y., this privately held company distributes its collections throughout North America and 20 other countries around the world. ClearVision has been recognized as a "Best Company to Work for in New York State" for nine years and provides affordable frames in a wide variety of licensed and proprietary brands to its customers.
www.cvoptical.com

Design Eyewear Group

Headquartered in Denmark and with branches in over a dozen countries including the United States, Design Eyewear Group represents a portfolio of nine diverse eyewear brands with a focus on dynamic design, innovation and trend. These nine brands—FACE A FACE, WOOW, Kilsgaard, ProDesign, ALIUM, Inface, Charles Stone New York, William Morris London and Nifties—are all uniquely positioned and target different segments of consumers, giving Design Eyewear Group a wide variety of frame offerings for all partners. Design is the heart of Design Eyewear Group's mission.
www.designeyeweargroup.com/en

Europa Eyewear

Family owned and operated since 1977, independence is a founding principle of Europa Eyewear. The company designs and manufactures some of the industry's most well-known independent eyewear brands including State Optical, American Optical, Scott Harris, Cinzia and more, many of which are handcrafted in Europa's state-of-the-art factory in Vernon Hills, Ill. Established by industry visionaries Alan and Cynthia Shapiro, the company remains staunchly dedicated to independent eyecare professionals and the roles they play in their communities. Customers note the excellent service provided by its sales reps and the personable assistance they offer in recommending and securing the best frame options.
www.europaeye.com

Hoya Vision Care

For over 75 years, Hoya Vision Care has fostered meaningful partnerships with eyecare professionals. As a global leader in the eyeglass lens business with renowned expertise in lens design and freeform surfacing technology, the company has a presence in over 50 countries. A passion for collaboration and innovation are at the heart of Hoya's dedication to its customers, providing them with the products and tools to successfully run their practices, including a robust portfolio of lens options, AR coatings, training and education tools. One customer remarked on Hoya's superior lab customer service: "In an industry where reliability and efficiency are paramount, Hoya labs shine as a beacon of excellence."
www.hoyavision.com

InMode

InMode Ltd., develops, manufactures and markets platforms that harness novel radio-frequency (RF) based technology to enable new emerging minimally-invasive procedures and improve existing surgical procedures. InMode offers a comprehensive line of platforms across several categories of surgical specialty including a new treatment for dry eye that uses an intense pulsed light (IPL) therapy device called OptiLight. IPL delivers gentle pulses of light to the skin around the eyes, which may help reduce inflammation and improve the stability of the eyes' tear film. "The company offers top-notch product training over Zoom and during in-person training sessions," according to Mei Fleming, OD, Lafayette, Calif.
www.inmodemd.com

L'Amy America

Wholly owned by ILG (International Luxury Group), L'Amy America offers a wide selection of frames from globally renowned brands and house brands. Their representatives are extremely dedicated and go above and beyond to provide unparalleled and outstanding customer service. "Brandi Holcomb is such a pleasure to work with," noted one optician. "She is always so helpful and keeps us up-to-date with new products."
www.lamyamerica.com

Marcolin

With 15 branches worldwide and over 150 distribution partners in more than 125 countries, Marcolin has established itself as one of the world's leading eyewear companies since its founding in Veneto, Italy, in 1961. Today, Marcolin designs and manufactures eyewear for some of the world's most recognizable brands, offering a diverse and broad portfolio for consumers. Its design and development teams are based in Italy, the U.S. and Asia, and work closely with teams from licensed brands. A truly global eyewear company with an expansive network, Marcolin is able to meet consumers' needs and desires across the industry.

www.marcolin.com/en

Modern Optical International

Based in suburban Chicago, Modern Optical International is a family-owned business established in 1974. An industry leader in value-oriented eyewear, the company services independent eyecare professionals throughout the U.S. and around the world. Modern Optical provides consistent product delivery and service to its clients. "Unlike many other vendors, the bulk of their line has remained available throughout the years, and reliable products across the spectrum of price points are offered," said Philip Clark, owner of Sundance Optical Clinic in Phoenix. With 18 collections encompassing over 1,100 styles, Modern Optical has a frame to complement any style.

www.modernoptical.com

Natscent

Founded in 2018 and headquartered in Los Angeles, Natscent is a company that specializes in scent marketing, ambient scenting and marketing strategy. They combine luxury, fragrance and technology to create experiences that can enhance mood and atmosphere in homes and businesses. Natscent offers high-end diffusers, essential oil and aroma cartridges and hands-free sanitizers. "The partnership with Natscent has not only enhanced our store environments but also set a new standard in customer experience within the retail optical industry," said Ingrid Dodd, director of digital marketing at Optyx in New York City. "We are profoundly grateful to Daniel, and the entire Natscent team for their outstanding creativity, support and dedication."

www.business.natscent.com

OGI Eyewear

Established in 1997, OGI Eyewear is an independent label with Minnesota values. With frequent frame releases, each OGI brand tells a unique story with handcrafted designs that appeal to consumers with a range of lifestyles. "OGI has proved year after year how committed they are to going above and beyond for all of their clients," said Hailey Goldman from Gunderson Eyecare. "John never fails to provide me with everything needed to succeed with his product."

www.ogieyewear.com

Randolph Engineering

Since 1973, the brand has been independently owned and operated, has produced its frames in the U.S. and has seen three family generations at the helm. Founders Jan Waszkiewicz and Stanley Zaleski started the company after immigrating to the U.S. from Poland; over the course of the past 50 years, Randolph has outfitted U.S. Air Force Fighter Pilots, A-list talent and consumers alike, while still crafting frames on the machines that the founders designed and built in its Massachusetts factory. The company is known for putting personal touches on their shipments and providing service that goes above and beyond.

www.randolphusa.com

Silhouette

Headquartered in Linz, Austria since its inception in 1964, Silhouette Group is a global leader in premium rimless eyewear. This family business, founded by Anneliese and Arnold Schmied, focuses on the highest level of precision and offers innovative and timeless eyewear designs. Its representatives go above and beyond to cater to clients' needs and demographics—providing a vast amount of education on their products, allowing some of their customers to double and triple sales.

www.silhouette.com

Tracey Technologies

Tracey Technologies develops, manufactures and markets vision analysis and diagnostic equipment, including wavefront aberrometers, for ophthalmologists, optometrists and other ECPs. The Houston-based company holds the patent to a technology called ray tracing aberrometry. With ray tracing, the company's Tracey iTrace dynamically measures and analyzes the focusing power of the human eye. One ECP said, "We had a crisis with a refractive surgery patient and Tracey Technologies guided us on how to use their technologies to save the patient's vision. With their help and the use of their product—the Tracey iTrace Wavefront Aberrometer—we turned 'tragic into magic.'"

www.traceytechnologies.com

Tura

Founded in 1938, New York City-based Tura celebrated its 85th anniversary in 2023. The company, which is part of the U.K.-based Inspects Group, employs over 200 people in North America and offers a vast brand portfolio that includes collaborations with designers such as Victor Glemaud and Gwen Stefani among many others, as well as its own Tura eyewear. Frames are designed by the Tura team in New York City and Nuremberg, Germany, and manufactured worldwide, all with one singular quality standard that guarantees consistency across the board. Tura is recognized by consumers for its meticulous design, dedication to fit and broad yet unified portfolio.

www.tura.com

Walman Optical

Walman Optical wholesale labs have been providing quality eyewear and service to thousands of independent eyecare professionals since 1915. Located in Minneapolis, Minn., Walman offers state-of-the-art equipment to bring ECPs advanced technology in digital surfacing, coating technologies and edging accuracy. Their coast-to-coast lab network, made up of 28 labs and three processing centers, provides consistent, reliable, quality eyewear. One customer said, "A Walman rep helped me assess and develop business plans when I was very new in my role. She also reassessed the discounts and pricing we receive, and that has dramatically helped our cost of goods."

www.walmanoptical.com

Zeiss Vision Care

Zeiss Vision Care, part of the larger Zeiss Group, is allocated to the Zeiss Consumer Markets segment. Zeiss Vision Care covers the entire spectrum of a patient's eye health care needs. In addition to developing, producing and distributing high-quality corrective lenses, Zeiss also produces the technology used by eye doctors to test, diagnose and treat eye conditions. One optician noted, "Zeiss' Greg Sheets is an outstanding knowledgeable account manager and is always there to help us succeed any way he possibly can."

www.zeiss.com/vision-care/us/



NEW YORK—Now in its fourth year, Jobson's 2024 Ultimate Partners program gives readers the opportunity to highlight their great business support partners and showcase their support. This spring, via the Ultimate Partners program, *Vision Monday* and *20/20 Magazine* asked their readers from all eyecare professions to share their choices for great business support partners in another challenging business year. Specifically, they were asked to recall when they were facing a critical challenge, in 2023 and into this year, and to salute the business partner who

showed up at the right moment to help solve a problem.

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- Visual merchandising
- Retail event support

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Based on readers' responses, a special advertorial section was created for companies to celebrate their nomination from readers as a great business support partner. Taking part in the section, which is now [posted](#) within the July/August edition of *20/20 Magazine*, are the following companies: Alcon; Bausch + Lomb; Charmant Group; ClearVision Optical; Design Eyewear Group; Europa Eyewear; Hoya Vision Care; InMode; L'Amey America; Marcolin; Modern Optical International; Natscent; OGI Eyewear; Randolph Engineering; Silhouette; Tracey Technologies; Tura; Walman Optical; and Zeiss Vision Care.

Go to VisionMonday.com to [read](#) about 2024's roster of Ultimate Partners who went the extra mile for their optical business colleagues, proving that with collaboration and support they can propel one another to new heights of success.

The Ultimate Partners special section will also be part of the July/August edition of *Vision Monday*. Look for the digital edition, which will go live on VisionMonday.com, on July 29.