

Reviewed by:

\_\_\_\_ Doctor  
\_\_\_\_ Optician  
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## Spring Training for Selling Sunwear

As many readers are aware, the late Michael DiSanto was one of our industry's best-known and most respected optical trainers and educators. Like all good teachers, Mike knew how to capture and hold his students' attention. He did this by skillfully mixing his vast knowledge of ophthalmic optics with common sense advice and humor.

The following essay about selling eyewear was originally written by Mike for L&T. Now that the 2010 baseball season is underway, it is timely to be reprised. Most importantly, though, Mike's time-tested advice for doctors and dispenser is well worth revisiting and remembering.— Andrew Karp

For the professional baseball teams spring training is seven weeks long, but for you the professional sunglass salesperson spring training is only a few hundred words— so here we go.

Sunwear sales routinely “strike out” as a part of the usual eye exam visit. According to industry statistics, at best, sunwear only accounts for 20 percent of all eyeglass sales. Four out of five eyeglass wearers do not own prescription sunwear. Now let's be honest, that's bush league.

**Strike one:** Even the routine eye exam isn't really routine. It happens once every two-and-a-half years.

**Strike two:** Even though your stated mission is to provide your patients with the highest quality optics in pursuit of total eyecare, industry statistics show that the vast majority of patients only own one pair of glasses.

**Strike three:** Most patients come and go through the professional practice without ever discussing sunwear with anyone. Striking out is bad enough, but when you stand there and take three straight pitches without even swinging— that's pathetic.

Practitioners who worry about the profitability of their business have to address the reality that they allow 80 percent of that business to walk out the door. The time to change is now. The pro teams have broken for camp and once again hope springs eternal. Now is the “next year” we were waiting for last year. (I'm an Indian's fan, so trust me I know what I'm talking about.) What will change this year to allow your practice to contend for the world series of successful growth? Now is the time to shuffle the line up, make a few trades and bring up the promising rookies. Under no circumstances can you afford to be shut out by another season of weak sunwear sales.

As your temporary batting coach I would like to share three tips that will help you avoid sunwear strikeouts this season.

**Tip one:** Straight from Kevin Costner's classic baseball movie *Field of Dreams*: “If you build it they will come.” He built it and they all came. In your case, I would recommend that you follow this adage. “If you show it they will know it. If they try it they just might buy it.” When it comes to sunwear you have to talk and demonstrate sunwear for everyone. If you don't, well, we already know that most will leave without it. The main reason sunwear sales are down is because you are not taking enough swings. Never swing and you will never get a hit.

**Tip two:** Play as a team. Professional teams have specialized role players and you should too. To win more than lose, a great team needs good starters, middle relievers and a closer. If anyone fails the whole team fails. In the professional office, reception serves as the starter. They must initiate the process by using lifestyle questionnaires and pamphlets to direct the patient to a wide variety of options. The doctor is the middle reliever that keeps the process going by recommending a few specific options like sunwear. The dispenser is the closer. With an educated and motivated patient they can easily explain, demonstrate and close out the sale. Asking the dispenser to sell sunwear without the help of a starter and reliever is about as effective as asking the closer to overcome a 10 run deficit in the final inning. It doesn't work.

**Tip three:** Unless you are the Yankees of the 50's and 60's, it is not recommended to wait until the end of the game to sell sunwear. A common and fatal error on the part of the dispenser is to expend all their energy with the primary pair. They wait until the end, quote the price of the primary pair— and with the patient's head reeling from the price (it doesn't matter what the price is— they always reel after hearing it)- they ask if the patient would like to double up on the cost by buying a second pair. This almost never works. Begin the sale with your starter suggesting the possibility of the second pair up front.

Next time you have a patient who throws a hanging curveball of an opportunity at you, square up and swing. Instead of the crack of the bat smacking the ball on the sweet spot, you will hear the sweet “ching” in your register of a second pair connection as you drive a pair of sunglasses directly into your bottom-line. The odds of the Indians winning the World Series this year are a disappointing 75 to 1, but your odds of selling sunwear if you follow my tips are more like 1 to 1. That's not a “field of dreams,” but a sure thing.



## You Say You Want a Revolution.

The arrival of the “fab four” from Liverpool triggered the musical revolution of the Sixties, introducing a modern sound and viewpoint that parted ways with the world. In that same spirit of change and innovation, Specialty Lens Corporation releases the HIP (hi-index polarized) program, simplifying the purchase and sale of hi-index polarized lenses.

### Simplified Pricing.

To complement our polarized variety, Specialty Lens has developed an exciting new program to simplify pricing for hi-index polarized sunwear.

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Pay one price for single vision and progressive hi-index polarized lenses.

Offer good until August 31, 2010.

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Whether your patient needs a mid-, high-, or ultra-high- index polarized lens, iRx Xperio offers the world's leading availability of hi-index polarized lens materials, styles and colors.

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LENS STYLE	AR <sup>1</sup>	POWER RANGE	SMOKE	CHOCOLATE	ASH	CARAMEL	FOREST	COPPER	AMBER	RUBY	SUNFLOWER	VIOLET	SUNSET	ROSE	OCEAN	GRASS	
1.56 MID-INDEX	Single Vision	-12.00 to +6.00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <b>\$95*</b> Per pair                 </div>
	iRx Pro™ <sup>2</sup>	-10.00 to +6.00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	iRx Short™ <sup>2</sup>	-4.25 to +6.00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
1.60 HI-INDEX	Single Vision	-12.00 to +6.00	✓	✓	✓	✓											<div style="background-color: #f0e68c; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <b>\$110*</b> Per pair                 </div>
	iRx Pro™ <sup>2</sup>	-10.00 to +6.00	✓	✓	✓	✓											
1.67 HI-INDEX	Single Vision	-12.00 to +6.00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓									<div style="background-color: #ff8c00; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <b>\$125*</b> Per pair                 </div>
	Single Vision Asph	-12.00 to +6.00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓									
	iRx Pro™ <sup>2</sup>	-10.00 to +6.00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓									

1 Compatible with most popular anti-reflective coatings  
2 Minimum fitting height iRx Pro: 18mm, iRx Short: 14mm

\*Prices are for uncut lenses. Add \$15 for finished jobs.

