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Reviewed by:
____ Doctor
____ Optician
____ Technician
____ Other

You are worth it!

Just fifteen years or so ago, your competition was limited to other dispensaries in your area. But how quickly that has changed. The internet and increased access to everything online has now made your competition global.

The typical dispensary offers the following services free of charge:

* Adjustment
* Cleaning
* Missing screw replacement
* Nose pad replacement
* Restringing a rimless frame
* Bushing replacement on a drilled frame
* Temple tip replacement

Now, consider what is included while performing these services. An unknown client comes to your practice with the age-old fix of duct tape (or something similar) holding their left temple onto the frame. "Can you help me?" they ask. You smile and let them know it is no problem, a screw replacement will fix them up. You go into the back room and spend several minutes looking for the appropriate screw to reattach their temple. Because you are thorough in your job, you notice the frame is out of alignment and you adjust back to square. After a quick check of the remaining screws to make sure they are tight, you head back out to the waiting patron. "Your frame was out of adjustment" you say as you walk back out to the client who is now sitting at your dispensing table. In the background, Mr. and Mrs. Jones have arrived and are patiently waiting to pick-up their three pairs of glasses. Mrs. Jones chose sunglasses this year as well, and now there is nowhere to sit.

The next five minutes you adjust and re-adjust until the client feels they are "just right". You spritz the eyewear with Hilco cleaner and wipe with a couple Kimwipes until clean and hand to the client. "Please consider us the next you purchase eyewear" you smile and say as they leave with the glasses they purchased on the internet and you just repaired. In the meantime, another patient has arrived.

In addition to the material cost of repairing the glasses, the screwdrivers, cleaners, wipes, frame warmers, etc. are all also used. These items are paid for by purchases of your loyal patients, the same loyal customers kept waiting while you serviced a person who choose to purchase their eyewear elsewhere.

Your time is also a factor. The time spent training someone as an eyecare professional is valuable as well as the hours of continuing education received after the initial training period. Our industry is rapidly changing and keeping up with the newest technology available for your patients can be overwhelming. Your position as an eyecare professional is valuable and should be recognized as such. Plus, one also has to question the possible consequence of a loyal customer forced to wait as a result of someone who came to you off the street for a repair.

Imagine purchasing a pair of slacks on the internet. Upon receiving, the length is longer than you expected and they require hemming. You go to your local tailor and the slacks are hemmed to your appropriate length. Now imagine the tailor telling you there is no charge attached and they went ahead and laundered the slacks as well. It just wouldn't happen. So how did we get to where we are at; offering services and materials at no charge?

Years ago, repairs originated from your patients or someone from which you might have the opportunity to obtain future business. But it may be time to take a good look at the services you provide "free of charge" and revaluate how you will handle these situations in the future. The cost of doing business is only going to increase and your pool of potential competitors has just increased.

Your dispensary will stand out is by providing excellent customer service and being experts in your field. Future maintenance and repair for your paying customers eyewear should be something you include in your presentation when you are working with your patients. It is an added value for purchasing eyewear from you. Do not apologize for attaching a fee to your materials and expertise. You *are* worth it and perhaps next time they will think twice before surfing the "net".