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Doctors put a personal stamp on their practices

SUPPLEMENT TO

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Automated Refraction System Accelerates Practice Growth

Since Christine Bartoletti, OD, purchased Vista Eye Care, a Vision Source® practice in Green Valley, Arizona, in 2007, she has moved twice because the practice has simply outgrown its space. There are several factors that Dr. Bartoletti says have contributed to the growth that has fueled these expansions. In January, Samantha Nagales, OD, became a part-owner in the practice. There are four doctors, who together work the equivalent of three full-time ODs, while the practice is open 50 hours per week. There are always two ODs on, and on Fridays, three ODs are in at the same time. The practice flow system they use is that each doctor has three designated rooms, so with the most recent expansion, they can keep three doctors going at capacity as demand increases.

Five of the nine exam rooms have a TRS-5100, and a Marco autorefractor and autolensmeter are in the pretest room. The technician carries the data card from the pretest room and has the data loaded in the TRS-5100 when the doctor arrives. “Typically, two of us have two rooms with a TRS and one room that is used for workups or other procedures,” she says. “Having the TRS system has cut down so much on the time required to enter data into the phoropter and into the electronic health record. It shortens the time doing the refraction, and the choices are easier for patients, who often get stressed about determining which is clearer.”

She says she estimates it has saved about four minutes per patient. With two doctors working a full day, those minutes allow for extra exam slots each week. “Best of all, at the end, with a push of a button, I can show the patient the comparison between the prescription they came in with and the one we’ve generated,” she says. That process would take so long to do manually that, prior to having the TRS system in the office, she might have made the determination that the change was small enough not to warrant new eyeglasses.

That process definitely helps sell eyeglasses, she says. With the most recent expansion, the practice now offers a dispensary with more than 1,000 frames on display. “Even for patients who have not had a change in the prescription, there’s a good chance that most of them don’t have all the eyewear they need. So we promote primary pairs, sunglasses and computer glasses to all of our patients,” she says.

Beyond patient satisfaction and increased profitability, there’s a third benefit to the Marco TRS-5100 system, says Dr. Bartoletti. “Those systems have saved my back. Before I brought the Marco system, I was having back problems and seeing a chiropractor regularly. I was uncomfortable all the time,” she recalls. The TRS console sits on a table near her chair, and making adjustments requires none of the repetitive motions of adjusting the phoropter. Now, her pain is gone. “For my younger doctors, they’re never going to reach the point that I was approaching, where practicing was painful.”

An ROI Calculation

Four minutes saved per patient per day, in a practice that sees just 16 patients per day, frees up 64 minutes a day or 320 minutes—more than five hours over the course of a five-day workweek. Over the course of a month, that’s 21 hours—or the equivalent of 2.5 days. That could add the potential of seeing an extra 40 patients per month.

An additional 40 patients a month, at a new net collection of an average $400 per patient, would equal $16,000 per month, or $192,000 per year. That’s the revenue side of the equation. There’s also a savings side.

The average practice spends $12,412 in remakes, just a little more than $1,000 a month. Most of these are due to transcription errors, and those are virtually eliminated with the Marco TRS-5100. So the calculation needs to include the $1,000 saved as $1,000 earned. Top that off with the increased sales for existing patients in second-pair sales or upgraded products, and the benefits compound quickly.

Here’s the math:

4 minutes saved per patient X 16 patients per day = 64 minutes per day
X 5 days = 320 minutes saved per week
X 4 weeks = 21 hours (or equivalent of 2.5 days saved per month)

21 hours (divided by) 30 minute exam slot = 40 extra exam slots per month

40 extra exams X $400 revenue per patient = $16,000 additional revenue per month
X 12 = $192,000 additional revenue per year