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## THE FUTURE OF SMART SURFACING

DATA COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION REACH A NEW LEVEL OF EFFICIENCY

A Publication of  
**Frames Data®**

### FEATURES

ELIMINATE WASTE

SPOTLIGHT ON... DIGICON

SPOTLIGHT ON... VEW

# EDITOR'S LETTER



We've all seen the commercials, and we all know the tagline: "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas."

As advertising goes, it's genius. However, it's not always true. Chances are, if you're attending Vision Expo West in Vegas this year, you'll bring back a lot of new information—and, potentially, new innovations—you can use to implement important (and, hopefully, game-changing) changes to your lab.

For us here at LABTALK, our presence at Vision Expo West "stays in Vegas." We are still hosting our annual "Labapalooza" celebration of the lab industry. However, that doesn't mean the event, well, "stays" the same. After honoring the best wholesale laboratory web sites for more

than a decade, this year we will not be doing so.

This is not because there are no worthy, web-savvy labs out there—rather, we hope to introduce a new award recognizing the lab industry for 2018 and beyond. And, we're looking for your input. Are there new aspects of the lab business worthy of attention?

If you have a suggestion for a new LABTALK award for the lab business, please email me at bdunleavy@jobson.com. We're looking for new ideas, and we know our readership has plenty of them.

In the meantime, enjoy Vegas. We hope that the meeting will inspire success for the rest of 2017 and beyond.

—Brian P. Dunleavy

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- SPOTLIGHT ON...LAB DIVISON HALL OF FAME
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## THE FUTURE OF SMART SURFACING

DATA COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION REACH A NEW LEVEL OF EFFICIENCY

By JULIE BOS

**A**t one time, the promise of a “computer in every home” seemed revolutionary and far-fetched. Yet here we are today, surrounded by a multitude of tiny, intelligent computing devices that talk wirelessly among themselves, perform tasks on command and give us data we never had before. Coffeepots that talk to alarm clocks. Thermostats that talk to motion detectors. Sprinklers that talk to moisture sensors. Everything is interconnected—driving new levels of convenience, productivity and even safety.

What's driving this “intelligence revolution”? One thing—information, and the ability to sense it and share it like never before.

This same transformation is happening in optical labs across the nation, as “data” becomes the most critical driver of quality and efficiency in lens surfacing.

### That Was Then, This Is Now

In the early days of lens surfacing, “data” was simply the intelligence of the opticians making glasses. These were the experts in white coats who understood exactly how much stock removal they could take in one pass on a difficult high-prism job. Today, though, basic curves and shapes are being replaced by complex ones—all of which require computerized intelligence that goes beyond even the sharpest or most experienced optician.

Indeed, using superior computing power and data gathering, machines communicate as a single integrated system. Much of the communication revolves around the lab management system (LMS), which feeds data to production machines, telling them what to do with a given job. However, until recently, there was no feedback from the machines back to the LMS. This is now changing with the advent of manufacturing execution systems (MES).

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"With MES solutions, we no longer just feed data into machines; we also get detailed data back from the machines and analyze it," explains Steele Young, VP of Business Development at Satisloh. "This creates a closed loop of processes, based on real-time data from the manufacturing floor. Common in many manufacturing industries today, MES systems help manufacturers understand how plant floor conditions can be optimized to improve production output."

Thanks to the introduction of the MES, it's also a whole new world of data sharing for optical labs.

**In the early days of lens surfacing, "data" was simply the intelligence of the opticians making glasses... Today, though, basic curves and shapes are being replaced by complex ones—all of which require computerized intelligence that goes beyond even the sharpest or most experienced optician.**

"Machines talk to machines, talk to LMS systems, talk to conveyors and even talk to the operators and management team in a way necessary to deliver all the knowledge needed for a truly accurate and efficient production line," said Kurt Atchison, President, Schneider North America. "Customers are rarely looking for individual machines any more. They need integrated systems and all the know-how to drive a better process. Data sharing inside the system now allows the production to almost run itself. As a result, today's operators are not likely to know much about how the optic is generated—they just know how to push the right buttons. Yet with great data-sharing taking place inside the system, the operators get what they expect—better-than-ever quality at the end of the line with minimal know-how through the process."

Here's how two labs have benefited from the novel technology.

### The Future of Data Sharing

**Lab:** VSPOne, Sacramento, Calif.

**Current solution:** Schneider's Modulo Line and Control Center

**Why it's working:** The Schneider Modulo Control Center allows one operator, who the lab designates as the "Line Driver," to view the operating status of 41 machines simultaneously. The Line Driver is able to quickly assess

## SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT: MES SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY—AND TOMORROW

With the continual drive for "smarter" data to optimize optical labs, many equipment manufacturers have stepped up with solutions. Here are two options available:

### Schneider Modulo Line and Control Center

Modulo is a holistic system covering all process steps necessary to produce a lens, including the in-line quality control and production management. The cognitive machines manage the production flow all by themselves and are fully self-sufficient. The result is an unprecedented level of equipment utilization in lens production and unmatched throughput.

The interface to the Modulo world is the Control Center dedicated to the specific needs of the ophthalmic industry that constantly sources, analyses and prepares the machine and process data for their individual use in the lab. It distinguishes between four different roles: The line driver, quality manager, service manager, and lab manager. Each of them is perfectly served with relevant information by the system. More than just a monitoring system, the Control Center provides intelligence that goes beyond, for example, route-cause analyses for lens breakage. Labs and production facilities have the chance to control and intervene in their production line from any location.

Through the intelligent interaction of the machine modules, quality management and Control Center, the Modulo Line not only fulfills all the requirements of Industry 4.0 but even exceeds them. The latest addition to the Modulo world is Schneider's brand new virtual service management system, the Computerized Maintenance Management

machine problems from a central location and alert a technician in the area to precisely service the machine and resolve the issue in question. She has all the data at her fingertips to address production issues and offer solutions to less experienced technicians, ensuring that each and every order is expedited with the highest quality and without delay.

**Improvements noticed:** Before getting the Modulo Line and Control Center, VSPOne used less sophisticated systems that made timely troubleshooting more difficult. Technicians would constantly monitor individual machines to ensure optimal operation and consumable life. With the Modulo system, the lab can monitor more key performance indicators (KPIs) with less staff—including tool life in real-time—without having to shut down the generator. This guarantees the same high quality surface from the first cut to the last, without exceeding the optimal useful life of the cutting tool.

**“With MES solutions, we no longer just feed data into machines; we also get detailed data back from the machines and analyze it. This creates a closed loop of processes, based on real-time data from the manufacturing floor.” -Steele Young, VP of Business Development, Satisloh**

**The future:** VSPOne subscribes to Six Sigma, a disciplined, data-driven approach to eliminate defects in any process, ensuring its labs deliver the highest possible product to its doctor customers and their patients. Systems like this allow the lab to continuously monitor the quality of the work coming off the surfacing line over time and drill down into the data on outliers, in real time. The lab is also able to be more proactive if staff sees KPIs drifting towards the upper end of normal ranges and, if needed, stop production to investigate before rejects are created.

#### Cutting Down on Downtime

**Lab:** Walman Optical, Minneapolis, Minn.

**Current solution:** Satisloh's MES-360 Software

**Why it's working:** Walman uses MES-360 software on its digital generators and polishers to optimize the uptime of the equipment. Staff receive real-time messages from the software that alerts the operator, supervisor and



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maintenance team of any equipment issues. If after a period of time, the machine is still not up, the system escalates the messages to the director of the facility. The MES-360 also sends daily reports of machine status and utilization along with a Pareto analysis of error codes for each machine being monitored. This information is used to prioritize the corrective action taken to improve the uptime of the machine. Using the software from the system, the lab has been able to greatly reduce the incidence of an error that was previously costing it hours of uptime per day.

**Improvements noticed:** Prior to using the MES-360 system, Walman relied on manual data tracking and information from its LMS software to troubleshoot the lab. While valuable, the LMS information came after the fact, and was not in real-time. As a result, issues could go undetected until the LMS reports came out a day later. Now, Walman has seen spoilage reduction by getting machine-specific information in real-time, which enables staff to stop problems quickly. Staff can also solve machine downtime issues quickly, which increase the productivity of the lab.

**“Machines talk to machines, talk to LMS systems, talk to conveyors and even talk to the operators and management team in a way necessary to deliver all the knowledge needed for a truly accurate and efficient production line. Customers are rarely looking for individual machines any more. They need integrated systems and all the know-how to drive a better process.”--Kurt Atchison, President, Schneider North America**

**Looking forward:** One of the real strengths of MES software, Walman staff notes, is the ability to show how the entire lab is functioning—all from one place, in real time. They believe LMS integration is key to filling in all of the data required to do proper analysis of the lab and is necessary to do the consolidated types of reporting that the MES system is capable of generating. In addition, future integration of intelligent conveyor systems would further increase the productivity of our plant's automation systems. ■

## SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT: MES SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY—AND TOMORROW

System (CMMS) Modulo.

CMMS Modulo is intended to fill the gap between the knowledge available and required to perform preventive and reactive maintenance at the best level, thus increasing upkeep and efficiency. The system serves as a source of intelligence on how to do maintenance and troubleshoot, providing maintenance plans, step-by-step guides and parts packages. Schneider offers virtual service assistance using VR-glasses to get a live feed of the system from a remote location and support service technicians to complete the maintenance task. For additional information, visit: [www.schneider-om.com](http://www.schneider-om.com).

### Satisloh MES-360

Satisloh has partnered with MES company, S4P, to produce the MES-360. The MES-360 hub is the central SQL-database, which stores manufacturing and production data for all lab processes. Machines and quality inspection stations are directly connected. All processes are monitored while data is collected, displayed in real-time and tracked referencing each unique job and process step. Because most labs use equipment from more than one manufacturer, MES-360 is an open system that connects to both Satisloh and other machines. It interfaces with most LMS and ERP systems and can be easily installed in any software and product environment.

Available in modules, MES-360 can be customized to fit a lab's specific

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## SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT: MES SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY—AND TOMORROW

manufacturing needs and modules can be added as needed over time. The Machine Monitoring collects machine status data for each piece of equipment and provides productivity reports with machine utilization and lenses produced. The software can send alerts if machines are not producing. The Conveyor Routing intelligently controls conveyor systems, directing jobs to available machines and allowing routing based on specific job parameters (e.g. lens material, base curves, Rx, etc.) to maximize utilization of available equipment, lower tool costs and speed up processing times. The Breakage Tracking module tracks breakage by job and machine, enabling effective troubleshooting of quality issues by tracking problems back to specific machines, lens materials or Rxs. Finally, the

Coating Batch Tracking module and Proactive Scheduling module (for forward-looking management of machine availability, capacity and employees) are also available.

Later this year, Satisloh will release its Proactive Process Control module, which will use statistical process control to improve quality, productivity and cost. Features will include the automatic halt of production in case of quality deviations, predictive maintenance of equipment, big data analysis, and paperless manufacturing. It will also monitor processing temperatures, spindle amperage and quality deviations to enable automated and dynamic decision making. For additional details, visit: [www.satisloh.com](http://www.satisloh.com).

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## FEATURE



# The Digital Imposter

**After penetrating your Web site, a hacker can do business as you**

**By JOE DYSART**

In the latest twist on identity theft, hackers are clandestinely taking over business Web sites—and then brazenly billing the customers who visit those sites as if the sites are their own.

“Someone messing up your Web site is certainly going to give you a bad day,” says Bill Heffner, marketing director, FEA Industries. Adds Jordan Lothes, president, Sutherlin Optical: “When it comes to web security, I think there is always more that can be done.”

While any sort of Web site identity theft is alarming, the version that results in a hacker taking command and control of your web site—and ultimately your business dealings—is especially troubling. Under this

scenario, hackers find a way to break into your web site, and then take over all the interfaces your lab uses to operate that Web site.

Simultaneously, the hacker also gets access your lab’s accounts payable and receivables software, as well as its email correspondence software. With all the tools in hand to do business as you, the hacker can cut deals with your customers via your Web site, instructing them to wire payments for goods and services to a new bank account—one that is owned and operated by the hacker.

After a few quick deals, hacker typically vanish—along with all the cash that has been wired to his or her bank account. Ultimately, the victimized business only finds



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out about the scam weeks or months later, when hordes of angry customers start calling, demanding goods and services that were never delivered.

Perhaps most unsettling about this new spin on cybercrime is that even the most strongly secured web sites—properties that are maintained by technologically sophisticated, multibillion global corporations—are vulnerable. Indeed, IT security researcher Arun Sureshkuma proved that reality with chilling clarity last summer, when he demonstrated how he could hack any Facebook page and take over that page as administrator in less than 10 seconds.

His exercise underscored a hard reality: No business, no matter how seemingly powerful and mighty, is immune to web site identity theft. In fact, more than 75 percent of popular sites on the Web have unpatched vulnerabilities, according to an April 2016 study from Symantec, an IT security firm. And, all told, online fraud (including web site identity theft) is rapidly escalating. Long term, total losses traced to these criminal acts are expected to reach \$25.6 billion by 2020, up \$10.7 billion from 2015, according to a 2016 study by Juniper Research.

Here's what Web security experts say you should do to ensure your business is not perceived by thieves as low-hanging fruit:

## Bullet-Proof Your Dashboard

Your site's dashboard—the place where you enter your web site authoring software with an ID and password to make changes and updates—needs to be super secure.

Start with a super-strong ID and password by creating both at Random.org's Random Password Generator (<https://www.random.org/passwords>). With this tool, you can create passwords and IDs up to 24 characters long that are extremely tough to crack. And you can add two passwords together if you're looking for even greater security.

Meanwhile, be sure to have your web site designer

add a double-authentication requirement for entry into your site's dashboard. You can also harden your web site dashboard by limiting access to pre-determined IP addresses only (every computerized device can be assigned a specific IP address by your site designer for identification purposes).

## Be Careful About What's Accessible

"I don't build or manage any websites that contain data that is personal in nature or secretive to the point that its release could be materially harmful to the client," says Dan Bailey, owner, DanBailey.com ([www.danbailey.com](http://www.danbailey.com)), a web site services and marketing firm for wholesale optical businesses.

## Get a Free Google Webmaster Account

Offering a plethora of free tools for site owners, Google Webmaster (<https://www.google.com/webmasters>) can also often detect when your web site has been hacked and will inform you of the hack via your account, according to says Evy Hanson, owner, Leap Online Marketing (<http://www.leaponlinemarketing.com>), who adds she personally knows of two businesses whose Web sites have been hacked in the past year.

## Secure Your Folders

While all web site files and folders should have proper permissions and ownership, this basic step is often overlooked. Ask your web designer to apply these controls. The move can deny attackers the ability to upload malicious files and execute code that can compromise not only your site, but your server as well.

## Install a Security Plugin

Fortunately for Wordpress users, there are number of free security plugins, including:

- iThemes Security (<https://wordpress.org/plugins/better-wp-security>)

- Bulletproof Security (<https://wordpress.org/plugins/bulletproof-security/>)

Similar software exists for web sites that use other types of content management systems.

Plus, with Wordpress, users can easily update to the latest, most secured version of the platform. Wordpress has “made progress in allowing their installations to update themselves, or to do so with a single click process,” says Patrick C. Ho, CEO, Rochester Optical ([www.rochesteroptical.com](http://www.rochesteroptical.com)). “I hope other web platform vendors follow suit.”

## Use HTTPS Protocol

Technically speaking, HTTPS guarantees to your visitors that they’re talking to the server that’s hosting the Web site they’re trying to reach. And it guarantees that no one can intercept or change content coming from the web site or transactions between the site and site visitor.

“Switching your site to HTTPS is also a very good idea,” says Keith Benjamin, director of marketing and Webmaster at Laramy-K Optical. He adds that HTTPS keeps all your data exchanges encrypted, making it much more difficult for hackers to “peek under the hood.”

## Auto-scan All Devices

For all devices you’re plugging into your business computer network, have your IT department secure your system with software that automatically scans any devices—such as a flash drive, external hard drive, etc.—for malware any time those devices are attached to your network. And, just in case the worst happens, be sure to keep everything backed-up.

“We have an outside source do a quarterly security evaluation—customer information is important to protect,” notes Ryan Markey, CEO, My Friend’s Lab.■

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# Muda: The 7 Deadly Wastes

ELIMINATING COMMON SOURCES OF UNNECESSARY EXCESS

By ROBERT MINARDI

**M**uda is the Japanese word for futility, uselessness or wastefulness. For our purposes, we will define it as any activity or process that doesn't add value to our product. In other words, if a customer wouldn't pay for it, it's Muda. The elimination of Muda is so critical to manufacturing—including spectacle lens processing—it should be considered long before you add equipment or hire a single person.

We'll discuss why this is after we define the seven most widely recognized forms of Muda.

## Transport

One form of Muda involves the excessive movement of product between processes or locations. Causes include:

- Excessive space between equipment
- Line layout that doesn't move product towards the correct destination
- Employees tasked with moving materials when it could be automated

A good indicator your lab may have an issue with this waste is if you look at your lab floor and see employees buzzing around like bees; going this way and that with job trays. Take a critical look at how jobs flow around your lab and determine if you can squeeze some extra productivity out of your line by eliminating excess transportation of materials. Spaghetti Diagrams (SD) work great for this because you can figure out the path jobs take, and then measure the distance traveled. With this data, you can determine how many feet (or miles) your employees travel in a day and work towards reducing it.

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## Inventory

Another form of Muda includes the use of excess raw materials, finished product and work in progress (WIP). Causes include:

- Ordering more lenses or consumables than production demands
- Over-producing work and having to store it till it can be processed

You can address this in your lab by ordering only the raw materials you need based on seasonal production trends and historical data. Excessive inventory uses up valuable work space and makes it difficult to find things.

However, it's important to note that inventory isn't limited to lens blanks or consumables. It also includes overflow from areas on your production floor. Try to deliver work to the next area "just in time" (JIT) for processing as opposed to the traditional batch and que method. Creating a buffer of work to ensure the line runs smooth is okay, but having half-a-day worth of production sitting on a table is a sign there's an imbalance in your process. Excessive inventory needs to be constantly shuffled around, thereby slowing production and increasing the chance of breakage.

**Muda is the Japanese word for futility, uselessness or wastefulness. For our purposes, we will define it as any activity or process that doesn't add value to our product. In other words, if a customer wouldn't pay for it, it's Muda. The elimination of Muda is so critical to manufacturing—including spectacle lens processing—it should be considered long before you add equipment or hire a single person.**

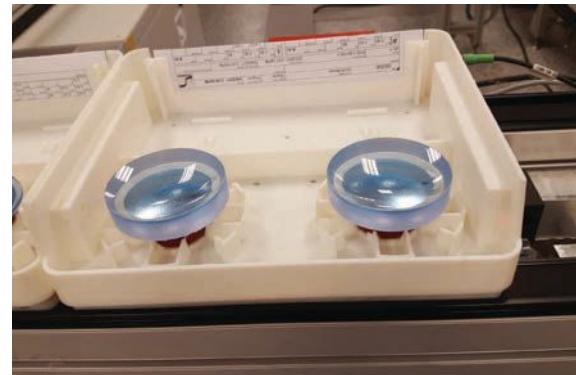
## Waiting

Idle time when product is not making progress

towards completion, or employees waiting for work, is another form of Muda. Causes include:

- Unscheduled or poorly scheduled equipment downtime
- Running out of consumables
- Imbalanced manpower or machinery output causing one area to wait on another

To reduce Muda here, perform preventative maintenance and calibration during non-working hours if possible. Also, identify imbalances in the process steps and try to smooth them out by adjusting equipment speeds or adding/subtracting employee duties. Implement a Kanban inventory replenishment system to ensure your line always has what it needs to run.



*Take a critical look at how jobs flow around your lab and determine if you can squeeze some extra productivity out of your line by eliminating excess transportation of materials.*

## Defects

Product that doesn't meet customer specification can create Muda. Causes include:

- Employee error
- Equipment malfunction

Sometimes it feels like breakage is the bane of our existence in the lab. In the blink of an eye, we can have stacks of it surrounding us. The secret to keeping defects under control is the unrelenting search for what causes them and the diligence to keep them from happening again. When issues arise, find the root cause of the defect and its solution. Then, use

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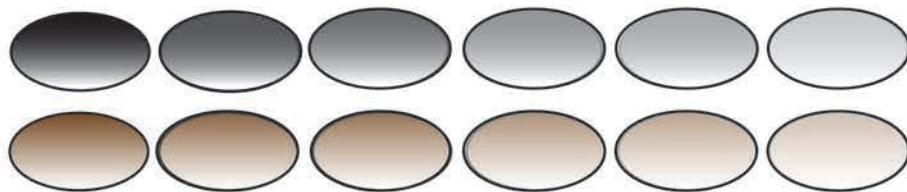
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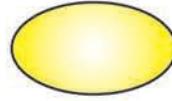
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employee training, Standard Operating Procedures and QA posts to drill the new way of doing things into everyone's technique.

As legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden once said, "If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over?"

## Motion

Unnecessary movement or motion of employees can also create Muda. Causes include:

- Poorly designed work stations that cause employees to reach for tools or walk too far to perform their duties
- Commonly used tools or necessary items not being readily available
- Disorganized line layout or excessive space between job stations

An easy way to spot this is if you see employees very busy, yet producing little work. Every movement an employee makes should result in completing a necessary and valuable task. Also, this Muda is a huge contributor to workman's compensation claims and lost time injuries—much like equipment, people wear out, too. Unfortunately, the technology isn't available to swap out our worn parts. To prevent this waste, create ergonomic work stations that make it easier for someone to do their job, not harder. Some techniques for eliminating wasted motion are to have frequently used tools easily within reach and properly oriented and eliminate over-sized work areas. The goal is to keep employees as stationary as possible while they produce large amounts of work.

## Over-Processing

Processing by man or machine that adds no value to your product is also Muda. Causes include:

- Unneeded levels of quality or providing employees with vague customer requirements
- Use of improper tools to perform a task
- Needlessly handling jobs multiple times

Abiding by ANSI standards and ensuring all employees know exactly what the customer does and doesn't need and/or want can reduce this waste. Remind your staff to perform the minimum amount of work on a job to achieve an acceptable result. Also, design your processes such that a job is handled once and only once per station.

**Sometimes it feels like breakage is the bane of our existence in the lab. In the blink of an eye, we can have stacks of it surrounding us. The secret to keeping defects under control is the unrelenting search for what causes them and the diligence to keep them from happening again. , ,**

## Over-Production

Processing work faster or in a higher quantity than needed leads to Muda. In fact, this is widely considered the worst of all wastes because, if you over-produce, you create all the other wastes as well. This Muda is usually the result of imbalanced output of man or machine, resulting in more work in progress than your facility can handle. It can lead to:

- Masking of quality issues that can go unnoticed until work has finished being processed (Defect Muda)
- Shuffling of work around that can't be processed (Transport and Motion Muda)
- Use of floor space to store unfinished work (Inventory Muda)
- Jobs sitting around waiting to be processed (Waiting Muda)
- Handling of jobs multiple times while shuffling excessive inventory (Over-Processing Muda)

To avoid this Muda, produce only the amount of work needed to feed the next area. Even if this means slowing equipment down. While this may

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seem counter-intuitive, if you push work into an area that can't process it, not only are you not producing more work, you're slowing down the work you can process. The most common reason I've heard for over-producing and stock piling work is "What if we have equipment issues?" I would answer that question with a question. Why reduce your productivity year-round to be prepared for something that only happens every now and then?

**“ Abiding by ANSI standards and ensuring all employees know exactly what the customer does and doesn't need and/or want can reduce this waste. Remind your staff to perform the minimum amount of work on a job to achieve an acceptable result. ”**

## Conclusion

The elimination of Muda, at its core, is about constantly critiquing your processes and methods. Always ask:

- “Can we do it better?”
- “Can we do it smarter?”
- “Can we make it easier?”

Having your waste under control is crucial because if you don't and you try to solve your production issues with more manpower or machinery you create more waste. For example, let's say you have a poorly designed

workstation that makes one employee work too hard to accomplish a task. If you add another employee into the same type workstation, you now have two employees working too hard; effectively doubling waste.

Another example would be to pose the following question: "You have a line of edgers producing more work than your inserters can handle, how fast can you actually process work?" If your answer is, "Only as fast as the inserters can process it," you'd be incorrect. It's actually slower. The extra handling, shuffling and storage of the excess work produced by the edgers will slow down the inserters tremendously. Now, would adding an edger solve this problem or make it worse? Technically, you'd be creating more work, but the overall throughput of work would drop.

Yes, by adding more people or equipment, you'll see short-term gains simply because there's more overall work being done. But in the long run, if left uncontrolled, Muda will over-take any perceived benefit and affect your production, breakage, profits and sanity.■

*Robert Minardi, ABOC, has been in manufacturing for almost 25 years. He's a certified Lean Six Sigma Black Belt with a background in quality control.*

**“ Having your waste under control is crucial because if you don't and you try to solve your production issues with more manpower or machinery you create more waste. ”**



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# TECHTALK

After talking with lab owners and managers, we found that they want even **MORE** technical information than before, not less. So *LabTalk* is giving you, *TechTalk*, technical information that labs can use.

**FOR THIS INSTALLMENT OF TECHTALK, WE ASKED INDUSTRY LEADERS TO TELL US WHAT THEY SEE AS THE “NEXT FRONTIER” FOR AUTOMATION AND INTEGRATION WITH LAB MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE AND WHAT NEW “DATA POINTS” THEY EXPECT NEW TECHNOLOGY WILL BE ABLE TO COLLECT AND COMMUNICATE TO USERS IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HERE ARE THEIR RESPONSES:**

## COLLABORATIVE ROBOTS IN THE LAB



**J. ARMANDO GONZALEZ**  
*Optical Strategic Business Unit Manager, FlexLink Systems*

Robotic technology has advanced at a fast and furious pace. No longer are robots these large bright yellow steel animals that sit on top of a tower surrounded by cages. These days, robots come in all shapes and sizes—portable, easy to use and collaborative.

Let's look at how the term collaborate can be defined: The action of working with someone to produce or create something. In an optical lab, teams collaborate to produce the highest-quality lenses for their customers. Teams accomplish this in spite of the significant physical labor involved, which is often mundane and repetitive. Often these tasks lead to costly errors, mishandling of the lens and even breakage. This is why robotic automation can be such a viable and smart solution for labs.

Collaborative Robots used to work around laboratory workers have been designed to be intrinsically safe. Eliminating the need for heavy guarding or safety structures allows labs to maximize their floor space while at the same time freeing up workers to perform higher-value tasks.

Optical labs have much to gain from the benefits of using Collaborative Robots, and it won't be long till the technology is embraced throughout the industry.

## INTEGRATING SOFTWARE AND CONVEYORS TO MAXIMIZE EFFICIENCY



**ROBERT SHANBAUM**  
President, Ocuco  
USA/Innovations LMS

Near-complete visibility and control of the manufacturing process, together with production scheduling, will enable labs to further improve their efficiency.

Enhanced data collection and analysis is the first step in achieving this. Real-time and graphical displays of data showing the current lab situation enhances management visibility and control over the manufacturing process, reducing bottlenecks and enabling fast, data-led decisions.

One particular piece of data that all labs should collect and track is their operators' productivity. The ability to set hourly targets ensures your staff stay productive and can highlight bottlenecks.

The Innovations Workflow Monitor links operator productivity to equipment performance and job flows, giving users an advanced real time productivity tracking dashboard showing the efficiency of the whole process along with historic data trending comparisons. It works with both traditional and automated production lines.

The Production Scheduler builds upon this, scheduling all orders through the lab—in effect, taking order tracking into the future, by deciding where each order will be, and at what time, as it transits through the lab, which enables us to make a reasonably accurate estimate of delivery time that responds dynamically to changes in the lab. An interface to conveyor systems allows the Innovations Workflow Monitor to route the orders to their scheduled locations automatically.

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# SPOTLIGHT ON...



Kevin Cross (far right), Vice President Sales North America, Schneider Optical Machines, welcomes his brother Keith Cross, Director of Sales, Optical Monomers and Coatings, the Americas, ANZ and Global Rx Technologies; guest speaker Peter Vaas; and Steve Baker, President, Korrect Optical, to DigiCon 2017.

## SCHNEIDER'S DIGICON 2017 FEATURES TECH TOPICS... AND BASEBALL

FRISCO, Texas—Digicon 2017, the technical conference sponsored by Schneider Optical Machines, drew a select group of optical laboratory managers, lab owners, lens company executives and eyecare professionals who attended lectures and demonstrations of the company's latest lens processing technologies. The meeting, held here on May 11 and 12, drew 165 customers, a 20 percent increase from the previous Digicon meeting in 2013, according to Schneider.

The two-day conference featured workshops presented by Schneider executives and technical experts from the headquarters of its parent company, Schneider GmbH, in Fronhausen, Germany. The workshop topics ranged from

the latest enhancements to Modulo, Schneider's modular lens processing system, to the company's new automated deblocking and cleaning technology, alloy-free blocking, four-axis edging and coating systems.

Attendees also enjoyed a keynote presentation by Peter Vaas, a former college and professional football coach, who talked about the importance of teamwork and attitude in driving success during the meeting.

The theme of DigiCon 2017 was "Keep your eye on the ball," and attendees had an opportunity to take batting practice at Dr. Pepper Ballpark, home of the minor league baseball team, the Frisco RoughRiders, on the second night of the event.—Andrew Karp

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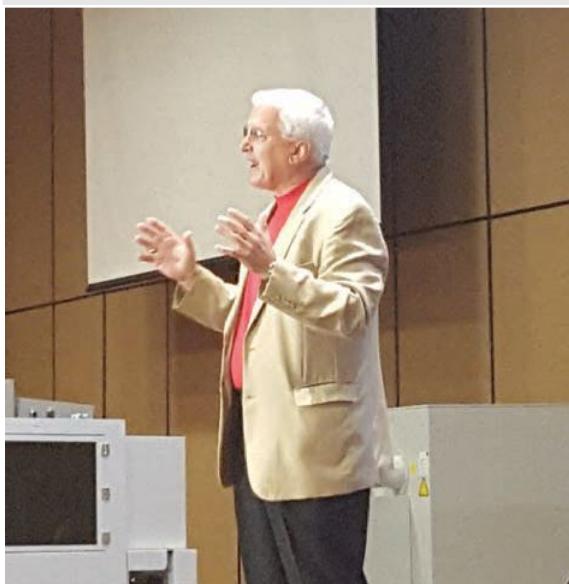
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# SPOTLIGHT ON...



The theme of DigiCon 2017 was "Keep your eye on the ball," and attendees had an opportunity to take batting practice at Dr. Pepper Ballpark, home of the minor league baseball team, the Frisco RoughRiders, on the second night of the event. Here, Jason Faibish of Plastic Plus in Toronto, swings for the fences.



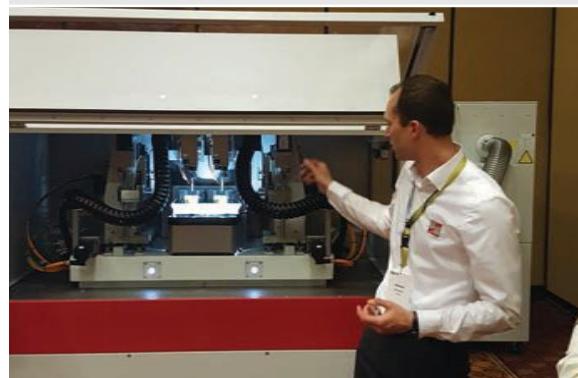
DigiCon 2017 keynote speaker Peter Vaas, a former college and professional football coach, talked about the importance of teamwork and attitude in driving success during the meeting.



Stephan Huttenuis, Vice President Technology, Schneider Optical Machinery, answers questions from lab executives on the company's new CCB Modulo alloy-free blocker during DigiCon 2017



Markus Fuhr, Manager, Coating Technologies, Schneider Optical Machinery, demonstrates the company's new EBC 1400 A-R coating system during DigiCon 2017. The machine can coat up to 320 lenses per hour.



Sebastian Schneider of Schneider Optical Machinery presents the new HSE modulo high-speed, double-spindle edger during DigiCon 2017.



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# SPOTLIGHT ON...



*Marty Bassett, President and CEO of Walman Optical Company*



*Lorinda Fraboni, Walman Optical*

## VISION EXPO WEST PREVIEW VISION COUNCIL LAB DIVISION ANNOUNCES DIRECTORS' CHOICE AWARD RECIPIENT AND 2017 HALL OF FAME CLASS

The Lab Division of The Vision Council has announced the industry veterans who will be recognized during the Directors' Choice Award and 18th Annual Lab Division Hall of Fame celebration on September 13th in conjunction with the Lab Division Meeting and International Vision Expo West.

The Division has named Marty Bassett, President and CEO of Walman Optical Company, as the 2017 recipient of the Directors' Choice Award. Established in 1987 under the

Optical Laboratories Association, now the Lab Division of The Vision Council, this award honors individuals and companies that have made outstanding contributions to the ophthalmic industry. Now in its 31st year, the award is still recognized as one of the most prestigious in the industry.

"Marty's achievements go well beyond his role as CEO of Walman," said Drake McLean, Lab Division Chair. "His passion for giving back to the industry led him to be the



*William H. Heffner, III, FEA Industries, Inc.*



*Drake McLean, Dietz-McLean Optical*



*Joe Vitale, Essilor of America, Inc.*



*James Goerges, Precision Tool Technologies, Inc.*



*John Art, Interstate Optical*

first Chairman of The Vision Council to come from the Lab Division. In addition to his professional and industry efforts, Marty gives back through service on the Board of Children's Healthcare, and was inducted into the Lab Division Hall of Fame in 2012. He represents all of the qualities we hope to see in recipients of the Directors' Choice Award, and we are honored to have him as the 2017 recipient."

Bassett will be recognized alongside this year's Lab Division Hall of Fame inductees at the Hall of Fame banquet, held during The Vision Council's Lab Division meeting at International Vision Expo West. This year's Lab Division Hall of Fame inductees will be:

- John Art, Interstate Optical
- Lorinda Fraboni, Walman Optical
- James Goerges, Precision Tool Technologies, Inc.
- William H. Heffner, III, FEA Industries, Inc.
- Lawrence Lahr, Eye-Kraft Optical, Inc.
- Mark Mattison-Shupnick, Sola, Jobson, MMS Consulting

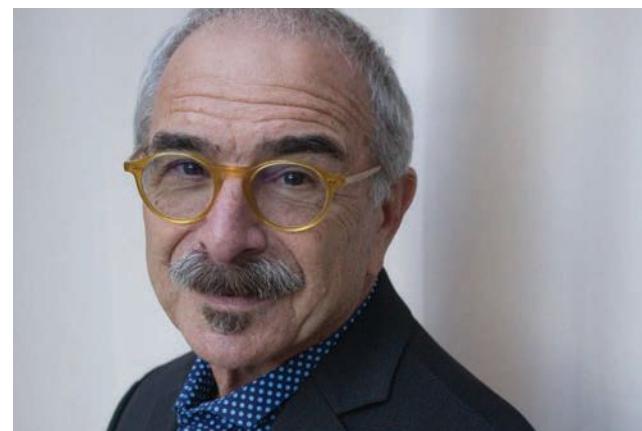
- Drake McLean, Dietz-McLean Optical
- Joe Vitale, Essilor of America, Inc.

Nominations for candidates for the Hall of Fame are submitted by members of The Vision Council. The selection of the individuals for the Lab Division Hall of Fame is made by an anonymous committee of industry veterans. Consideration is given for contributions to the optical laboratory industry, Lab Division of The Vision Council, the candidate's individual accomplishments, personal character, reputation, and length of time active in the industry.

"The rich history of the optical industry is celebrated through the annual induction of individuals into the Lab Division Hall of Fame," said Ashley Mills, CEO of The Vision Council. "Individuals selected for membership to the Hall of Fame are those who have influenced or contributed to the advancement of the optical laboratory industry, and on behalf of The Vision Council, it is my sincere pleasure to honor the 2017 inductees who have had a direct hand in helping to move our industry forward."



*Lawrence Lahr, Eye-Kraft Optical, Inc.*



*Mark Mattison-Shupnick, Sola, Jobson, MMS Consulting*

# LABTECH

## VISION EASE Expands Photochromic Lens Line with Multifocals

VISION EASE has introduced two new designs in its photochromic lens line: D35 bifocal and 7x28 trifocal lenses designed to enhance indoor and outdoor vision with faster fadeback and activation. The new D35 bifocals and 7x28 trifocals, available in gray, meet the company's high standard for photochromic performance. Indoors, they are 2.5 percent clearer and offer 44 percent faster fadeback compared to competitor products, while blocking 43 percent of blue light.

As the wearer moves outside, the lenses offer 27 percent faster activation and are 7.3 percent darker, while blocking 91 percent of outdoor blue light. Additional VISION EASE photochromic lenses include SFSV, D28 bifocal and Novel progressive designs.

For more information, visit [www.visionease.com](http://www.visionease.com).



## Shamir Launches Blue Zero, Moves to 100 Percent Freeform



Shamir Insight, Inc. manufacturer of premium Freeform® progressive and single vision lenses, announces the release of their blue light blocking lens, Shamir Blue Zero™. Shamir Blue Zero™ absorbs HEV blue light, offering premium protection for patient's visual health. This revolutionary lens provides a protective solution for most Shamir Freeform® designs, making it ideal for everyday progressive, single vision and work solutions.

Shamir continues their dedication to providing the marketplace with the most advanced technologies, premium materials and treatments. Shamir Blue Zero™ was developed in response to a growing demand of needed protection from potentially harmful artificial light that falls within the 415-455nm range of the light spectrum.

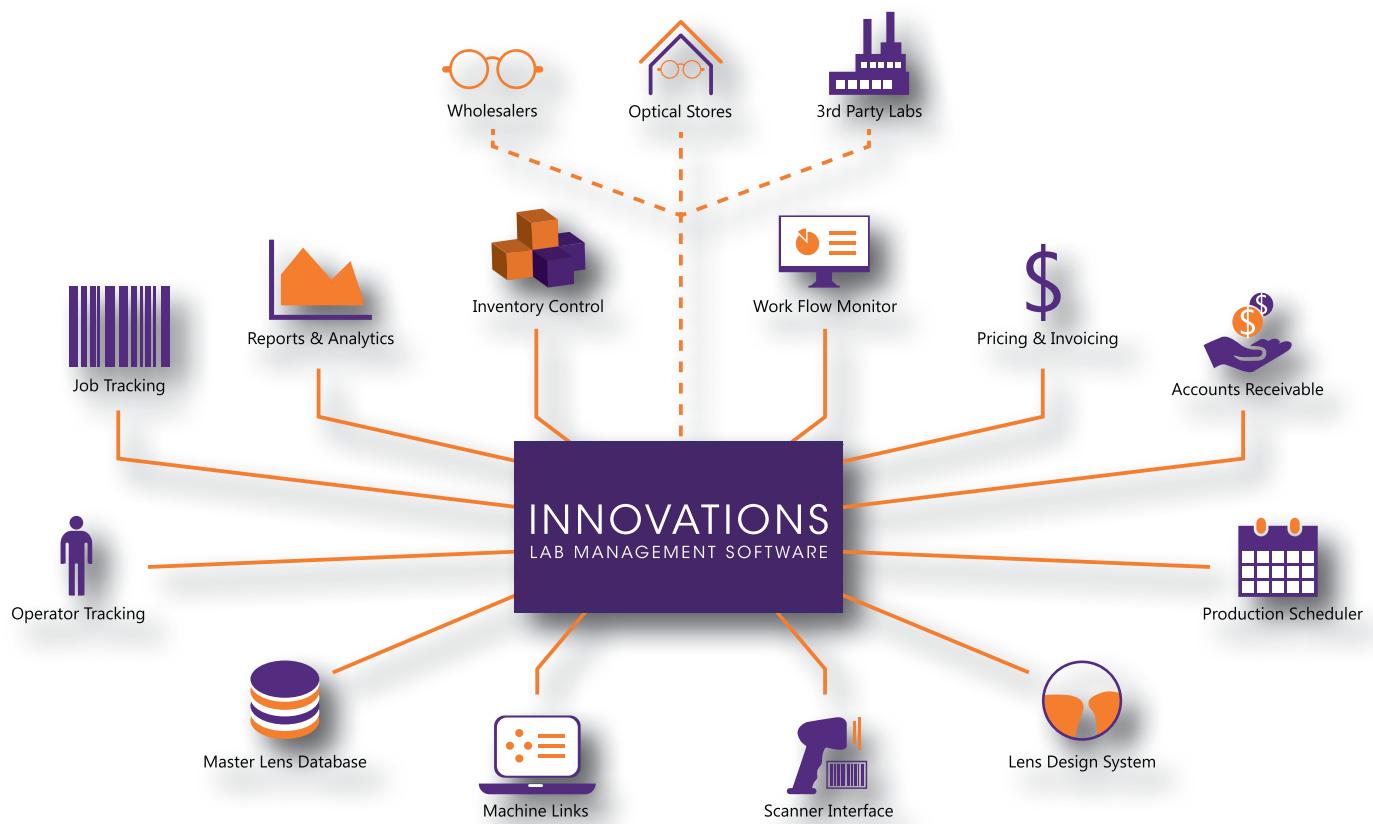
Blue light is found in everyday life, with exposure outside as well as inside through artificial light and digital devices. Overexposure to HEV light can lead to tired eyes, dry eyes, eye strain, insufficient visual contrast and headaches. At worst, it increases the risk of macular degeneration and retinal disease. With continual exposure throughout the day most people experience a hard time falling asleep and daily fatigue.

"With the ever-increasing amount of time people are spending on their phones, tablets, computers and

# INNOVATIONS

## LAB MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

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# LABTECH

TV it was vital that we met the needs of these patients and offered a protective solution. Shamir Blue Zero™ allows for ultimate protection indoors from blue light while maintaining nearly clear, lens clarity. We are excited about the opportunity to provide eye care practitioners with this level of protection to their patients. Just as sunglasses are important outdoors, Shamir Blue Zero™ is as necessary indoors and the marketplace is realizing that." Mark Becker, VP of Marketing and Strategic Partnerships.

Meanwhile, Shamir is taking a "forward-facing measure," removing all molded product offerings and announcing the move to 100 percent digital, Freeform® lenses. No longer feeling it's appropriate to support old technology, moving forward, Shamir will only offer semi-finished single-vision lenses, focusing solely on advanced Freeform® designs.

"Eliminating molded products from our offering was an easy decision for us. Labs and Eye Care Practitioners share our vision in providing patients top-tier solutions that include better customization, overall clearer fields of vision and less quality issues. Semi-finished PAL's limit us to standard designs for every patient, and as a company we've set higher standards for ourselves. Our goal is to provide the most advanced customized solutions and removing ourselves from molded products allows us to do exactly that. As our technology and lens solutions advance it makes perfect sense to discontinue designs that are not the best solutions for patients." Raanan Naftalovich, CEO, Shamir Insight.

Shamir says it believes strongly in their decision as technology is leading the world. The introduction of the revolutionary Spark Mi™ measuring device is just another example of that. Customization is key and digital is the only way to provide that unique customization to each individual patient. From measurements with the Spark Mi™ to individualized lens designs, Shamir wants to provide the most technologically advanced personal experience to patients. It will not be long before other companies follow in their footsteps realizing the importance of focusing on the way of the future.

## VISION EASE Releases New Occupational Lens Line



Designed to improve near and intermediate visual comfort for lens wearers, VISION EASE announces its new line of occupational lenses. These digital backside lenses are designed with office ergonomics in mind, for optimal viewing zones during specific tasks.

"Both at work and at home, people often spend many hours each day focused on screens and nearby objects," said David Hoagland, Senior Product Manager at VISION EASE. "VISION EASE's new occupational designs have been

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created with maximum comfort in mind for those extended, up-close activities. With these lenses, eye care professionals and retailers can offer their patients a solution specific to their needs, whether that's working on a computer or interacting with a larger office environment."

The lens line includes three styles: VISION EASE Computer, VISION EASE Desk and VISION EASE Office. Each design is uniquely suited for different uses in office settings. VISION EASE Computer lenses are designed to maximize the wearer's viewing zone for tasks closer than 6 feet\*, such as reading, working with objects in their hands, or focusing on devices and computers.

Meanwhile, VISION EASE Desk lenses are intended to provide a versatile option for wearers who need roomy near and intermediate zones up to 12 feet to view screens and engage with others near their desks, while Office lenses are designed offer improved vision over general-purpose progressives for viewing ranges up to 20 feet. These lenses enhance near and intermediate vision as a wearer moves from meetings to computer throughout the day.

For more information,  
visit [www.visionease.com](http://www.visionease.com).

### VIEW Announces Google Programming Partnership

International Vision Expo West has announced exclusive events for eyecare providers featuring a series of digital marketing talks from Google Campaign Strategist Brandon Lawlor and Premier Partner Marketing4ECPs. The free 20-minute sessions—in a dedicated Google Partners Lounge (LP10113) on the show floor—will demonstrate how to best use Google digital products to grow business. Courses will include:

- The Digital Opportunity for Your Eyecare Business
- Search Marketing
- The Unfair Advantage of YouTube
- Re-Engage Your Patients/Customers with Re-Marketing

The event is sponsored by Essilor with media partners PentaVision and Optical Prism.

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# LABNOTES

## John Young, COLTS Lab Founder, Dies at 76

John M. Young, founder of COLTS Laboratories, passed away July 2 at age 76.

Young was born May 31, 1941. An engineer and optician, he was active in many disciplines of the optical industry including engineering, research and development, and quality, and held patents for the design of optical lenses, devices and FDA drop ball testing protocol.

Young lectured for several decades to advance education in the optical industry, authored more than 100 published articles and papers, and was a member of 16 national and international standards committees and association committees. He chaired committees for both ANSI ([www.ansi.org](http://www.ansi.org)) and ISO ([www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)).

Young's career and dedication to the optical industry began in 1969 when he began his tenure at American Optical. He worked in research and development at AO and received several patents. He also ran the company's in-house testing lab. In 1983, to mark AO's 150th anniversary, Young founded the Optical Heritage Museum in Southbridge, Mass. and served as its original curator.

In 1990, Young took the position of director of quality at Essilor where he oversaw quality for North American operations. He was later promoted to vice president of new product development. He represented Essilor on numerous standards and technical committees worldwide. He oversaw Essilor College, continuing education for opticians on the subject of optics.

In 1997, Young started COLTS Laboratories, an independent ophthalmic testing lab in Oldsmar, Fla. He continued developing industry tests at COLTS, and the company, now under the direction of Young's daughter, Kimberly Hutton, remains dedicated to overall quality in the optical industry.

Young received many optical industry honors, including the 1992 Man of the Year Award from the National Academy of Opticianry and the first President's Award from the Opticians Association of America in 1994 for his dedication to the advancement of education. He was presented with the "Lifetime Achievement Award" by the American Optometric Association, Schools and Colleges in 2005. In 2002, the AR Council recognized him for his visionary leadership and support. In 2016, he was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the Vision Council's Lab Division.

Young is survived by his wife of 41 years Patricia Young, his daughter Kimberly Hutton, sister Donna Young, grandson Samuel Hutton and granddaughter Kylie Hutton.

Donations in Young's name can be made to the Shriners <http://www.shrinershq.org/>), an organization to which he belonged.



## Digital Eye Lab Recognized as VSP's Unity Independent Lab of the Year

Digital Eye Lab (DEL), a division of ABB OPTICAL GROUP, has been named VSP® Optics Group's Unity Independent Lab of the Year for 2016.

DEL earned the award, which is presented annually to an independent optical laboratory that demonstrates exceptional quality of work, exceeds Unity sales targets and provides superior customer service, in its first full year as a Unity enabled laboratory. DEL first began manufacturing Unity lenses in mid-2015.

"This is an honor for the DEL team, particularly since we received this award in our first year," said DEL Managing Director Scott Pearl. "We look forward to supporting the continued growth of the Unity brand by providing world class service and quality to our IECP customers."

In recognition of the honor, VSP Optics Group donated \$2,500 on behalf of DEL to the Arc of Westchester Foundation. The organization supports children, teens, and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities by providing programs to foster independence, productivity, and participation in community life. Arc of Westchester recently honored DEL with its New Business Partner Award for hiring employees through the organization and for promoting a diverse workplace.

"We are so thankful to the entire Digital Eye Lab team for their ongoing support of Arc of Westchester," said Maria Varga, Arc's Careers Supports Coordinator, who extended her gratitude on behalf of Arc for the donation during a joint VSP-DEL celebration at the lab earlier this month.

Known as a technological pioneer throughout its 10-year history as the country's first fully automated optical lab dedicated solely to digital lens fabrication, Digital Eye Lab just recently launched fabrication of VSP's new Unity Via progressive lenses.

Unity Via's intelligent technology brings a new approach to fitting and delivers precise vision correction with exceptional ergonomic comfort. Crafted with the most sophisticated lens design software in the optical industry, Unity Via is easy to fit and offers patients a truly customized lens. Rather than forcing the eye to adjust to the lens, the new lens designs follow the natural path of the eye for a comfortable fit. With a few simple measurements, eye care professionals can be confident that whatever their patients' visual needs are, Unity Via will provide them with accurate and effortless vision. The portfolio includes five new progressive lens options in the F, N, and O categories, including designs for frames with high-wrap, and for patients who use mobile devices for more than four hours per day.

"We understand the importance of investing in innovative technology and the impact it has on our customers and their business," said Nan Meehan, Vice President of Eyewear for ABB OPTICAL GROUP. "As the Unity brand evolves, we are confident that a growing number of IECP customers will recognize the benefit of providing Unity's high performance customized digital lens solutions to their patients."



# Overheard at Transitions Academy

## *Sharing Best Practices With Your Customers*

By ROSE HARRIS , ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS, TRANSITIONS OPTICAL

**N**ow that summer months has passed, it's the perfect time to recall what you learned during this year's Transitions Academy and share it with your customers. This year was filled with educational courses and opportunities for eyecare professionals to share their "best practices." Let's reflect on the content that was presented during Academy, and look at how you can leverage it to generate success for your lab and your customers.

The Science, Art, and Life of a Transitions Lens course discussed how creating satisfied wearers who are loyal is essential to not only Transitions business, but yours as well. During the course, Sarah Barrows shared that more than 8 out of 10 wearers are satisfied with Transitions lenses – so much so, that 94% said they will purchase them again at their next visit to their optometrist/optician. With such a high satisfaction and repurchase rate, Transitions lenses are an ideal choice for your lab and your customers' businesses.

During the Harmful Blue Light and Optical Solutions course, Brian Chou, OD, mentioned that most people don't realize that harmful blue light is actually present both indoors and outdoors, and that the sun is the largest singular source of harmful blue light. To help protect patients, Dr. Chou suggested promoting "sun protection" so that UV and blue light aren't un-bundled as separate entities, but lumped together. An example of this would be to say, "Recent evidence shows that excessive harmful blue light exposure may damage your eyes, like UV light, and that is why I am prescribing you Transitions lenses because they help protect your eyes from both." The three Os can deliver this message—it's up to you and your sales/service team to remind them.

In addition to the health benefits of Transitions lenses, the style aspect of lenses was also a topic of interest at Academy. The Finding the Style in Lenses course gave an overview of the latest eyewear trends, as well as how to pair stylish frames with Transitions lenses. During the course, Bill Gerber also discussed how to create a validating environment with in-store merchandising.

One tip was to create a demo station with a Transitions UV Lamp or torches, and enhance the station with eyewear displays. By making eyewear available during the demo, it empowers the patient to visualize themselves using Transitions lenses and increases the sales potential. This is an important message that you can pass along to your customers.

We closed Academy with the presentation of the Innovation Awards, during which we heard inspiring stories from the finalists on their accomplishments. One example of success from this year was Professional VisionCare, an independent practice located in Columbus, Ohio. To get more staff members on board with Transitions lenses, Professional VisionCare worked with their lab, Walman Optical, to conduct a Transitions lens wearer study. All staff members were able to try Transitions lenses and were tested on their knowledge—and biases—about the product. The wearers study helped change many staff members' minds about Transitions lenses and helped them increase sales. What strategies can you and your customers employ to be finalists next year?

If you'd like to share additional best practices from Transitions Academy, the Transitions Connect program is where you can get access to all of the best resources. Presentations, videos, handouts and more are all available for Connect members to access, download and share. Visit [TransitionsConnect.com](http://TransitionsConnect.com) to get connected today.

And, just because Academy is over, doesn't mean the learning has to stop. Consider co-hosting a Peer-to-Peer Dinner. Quality conversations with colleagues are a key source of information and can fuel success. During these interactive small-group sessions a Transitions Pro Forum advisor will lead an open discussion to encourage attendees to share and learn best practices on subjects from increasing capture rate to providing a patient experience that earns repeat business. Talk to your Transitions Account Manager to learn how to cohost an event.

► GO TO [LABTALKONLINE.COM](http://LABTALKONLINE.COM) TO COMMENT ON THIS ARTICLE.

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# Flexlink Collaborative Robot Systems

## *The Cure for Curing Space*

By JASON LONG, OPTICAL SALES ENGINEER, FLEXLINK SYSTEMS

No matter the size of your optical lab, we at FlexLink know that your floor space is of premium value. The way your floor space is used will affect the overall success you will have in achieving your lab's short- and long-term goals, while meeting your customers' expectations. Carefully planning the layout of your equipment and your work flow is a very important process when starting up a new lab or expanding your current production line. Implementing or expanding your alloy curing system should not be overlooked during this planning.

FlexLink offers a Collaborative Curing System that uses cutting-edge technology and includes the safety features of a robot storage system, which can ensure accurate curing times for jobs while saving valuable manufacturing space. A single unit can accommodate approximately 300 jobs per hour and take up significantly less space than the required conveyor needed to accommodate the same throughput.

Optical trays are removed from the main conveyor in-feed line by the collaborative robot gripper specifically designed for handling optical trays. They are then systematically placed into the vertical racking unit for storage. When the required curing time is achieved, the robot removes the tray from the rack location and places it on the out-feed conveyor line that will transport the trays to the generators for processing. Upgrades include incorporating smart routing into the system that can communicate with your Lab Management Software (LMS) to locate and retrieve special jobs. Operators will have easy access to the trays from the backside of the racks should they need to locate a priority or cancelled job quickly.

### CORRECT CURING TIMES

We all know there are many different ways optimal curing times can be achieved. In the past, optical labs would implement hundreds of feet of conveyor or try and manage curing times with optical tray stacker and de-stacker units. While these methods work, they limit a lab's ability to easily manage and access trays. There are also a lot of additional hidden costs associated with these methods that are sometimes overlooked.

One benefit of implementing a collaborative robot system is the elimination of the safety guarding. This

will free up floor space and lower the cost of implementing robotics. For example, older outdated tray-handling equipment and devices must be guarded to keep employees safely away from moving parts that can cause a work place injury. The guarding itself can be expensive, especially when doors, interlocks and special sensors are required. However, with a collaborative robot system, an employee can work alongside and even interact with the automation, accessing and managing optical trays in the system as needed.



### EASY INSTALL

Another benefit is the simplicity of the installation of the Collaborative Curing System. Historically, installation crews needed to be onsite for several days to install long lines of ceiling-supported conveyors that required structural engineering studies and inspections. And, if your lab is in an area that requires seismic testing, this would accrue additional costs for studies as well as special materials to meet the requirements for anchoring the conveyor properly.

However, the Collaborative Curing System can arrive at your lab prebuilt and preprogrammed minimizing the required installation time as well as the down time to your lab's production. Smaller to mid-sized optical labs that are new to automation will appreciate the simple-to-program features and the ability to integrate the system with existing equipment with little to no alteration. Larger, more established labs that are more familiar with automation will benefit greatly by the additional savings they will see in floor space and eliminating unrequired guarding while maintaining or improving safety standards.

For more information, please contact Jason Long at [Jason.Long@flexlink.com](mailto:Jason.Long@flexlink.com)

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