

Keeping Up Perceptions in Face of Change

by Fred Kahn

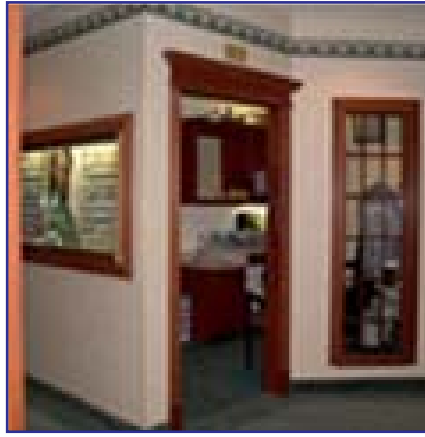
A strong office remains strong for years but the reality is, the effect slowly loses momentum.

Additionally, for the last few years we seem to have been visited by that old oriental curse, "May you live in interesting times." We prefer to see this not as a curse, but a challenge. "You are practicing in changing times."

Some of these changes need group action from the professions. Others can lead to innovation within your practice. Carefully chosen in-practice changes can offer perception opportunities that will benefit your patients and you. You'll find some promising and thus exciting possibilities as you choose your building blocks for meeting today's changes and challenges in your practice.

To get the benefits of the building blocks you choose, they must be presented so they win the right perceptions. The public, particularly patients must recognize that this practice is meeting and exceeding all their expectations. You want the public and patients to perceive the scope and excellence of service available to them in your practice.

Yes, it's true. Perceptions are critically important in the face of change.



Contact lens pod conveniently located near doctor's pods made significant increase in patient service and practice efficiency. (Ratcliff & Ratcliff photo 2001.)

Here are some perception-winning design possibilities for practice innovations:

1. Create an efficient pod per doctor containing internal waiting, multiple exam rooms, its own pre-exam and possibly a private office. This is very effective in multi-doctor practices. In the pod, patients feel important, not lost in a more impersonal setting. They feel that "I'm in my doctor's office, under my doctor's care."
2. Video screens in interior waiting positions and a consulting room to inform and educate patients is a set up that responds to today's well-informed patients, their expectations, and government compliance issues.
3. A separate pod for all contact lens functions including an information station for interested non-patients can work very well. It can win perceptions of a strong contact lens operation and that you do all things well.
4. Install an appropriately equipped lens-application set up in the optical area to help patients benefit from the

remarkable advances in lens performance. While superior performance lenses are prescribed as needed, many other patients who would benefit but don't have a clear clinical need should be able to make an informed choice. Patient delight and increased practice revenue can be expected from a lens application station.

5. Properly equipped and located stations for technicians, a place of their own, can promote staff loyalty. These home stations give techs the opportunity to manage flow and follow up for patient care. Patients are comforted and impressed when staff is readily available to respond to their needs.

6. An eyewear operation that uses flexible display techniques to inform and impress patients.

7. An eyewear delivery operation with adequate capacity for expanded volume and functions.

All seven examples are great ways to improve practice performance. They illustrate perceptual benefits to the practice from operational and physical innovation.

We're saying that apart from the obvious patient/doctor/staff benefits of function, the greater benefit is the perception of excellence. The perception of excellence creates an enthusiasm on the part of the doctors, staff, patients and public that will come back to the practice many times over in performance on every level.

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into the new optical areas respond to the dynamic atmosphere. The optical area can be set up to accommodate the variety of shopping styles that retailers understand so well. Patients who want to browse, to talk about their various vision needs, to see something more upscale, feel free to do so in the new atmosphere we are creating.

High-fashion retailers invented this model of mixing static and free-style display. Since eyewear has become a retail commodity at the mass-merchandise levels like WalMart, Sears, and the optical chains, it makes sense to

understand more appropriate presentations of merchandise. With this in mind, we are designing to give you the best of the retail concepts, in a manner that complements professional eye care.

Larry Funston and Judy Cadle will be presenters at the ASCRS/ASOA Congress on Ophthalmic Practice Management, June 1-5, 2002 in Philadelphia.

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So, what we're saying is, the perfect time to look at practice performance issues is at the start up of the design process. That's when practices have a golden opportunity to tightly coordinate up-to-the-minute office design with the best management techniques out there.

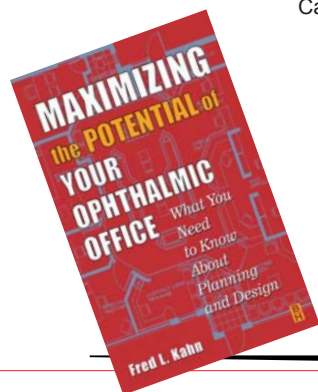
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Good Office Design and Good Management Go Hand in Hand

by Judy Cadle, C.O.E.

Do you ever get the feeling you are creating policy or procedures to suit the design of your office? Or, put another way, that the tail is wagging the dog? Some jobs fall to staff members because of the location of things. For instance, if patient records are downstairs you might hire a high school student to file after school. If the files were upstairs near the business office, staff could pull and file during the day.

As we travel the country visiting offices designed by Larry Funston and talking to doctors who are looking at Larry's designs for the first time, we are impressed with the close relationship between good design and effective office management.

Our interviews emphasize the intended use for space and methods of practice. We talk to doctors and every staff member to understand the demands and preferences for providing eye care services. We get philosophical sometimes. We often find ourselves involved in problem solving through design and more and more often through sharing management techniques. Not surprising, you say. No, of course not, when we're looking at new and expanding practices.

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From Canada call
905.625.8555

What might be surprising to you is the way practice management issues come into play. For instance: exactly how do you want your patient to get from your exam room to the optical area? Will your preference work for every patient, every day?

Here's another example: How can



you have adequate coverage at the front desk and still create the environment needed for accurate data entry and money handling?

We recently worked with a practice to renovate their building. They are working in long narrow space. It is space that has been added onto a few times. The floors were uneven. And the optical department was state-of-the-art twenty years ago.

The redesigned space is more than adequate, intentionally allowing space for growth. Keeping up to his reputation, Larry reallocated

space to create a new flow for patients, giving more useful space to the areas needing it. The new optical has impact, flexibility and strength that surely captures the patient's imagination.

Here's the management deal. There are necessary and obvious changes to make because frame display, storage, and dispensing areas are now very flexible. Those changes are expected. Staff is ready for them.

But, there is a greater change to make in this new space. The entire concept of how the patient will "shop" your optical must be redesigned as well, using good management tools.

It is important to know how people want to shop. There is more than one buyer type. Certainly, if you are serving the general public, you are serving patients who want every price range and every style. Some want to browse and some don't. Some third-party-plan patients will never spend over and above their benefit, but most will.

Optical staff may be challenged by the new flexibility. They may need help in sorting through "the way we've always done it," to visualize new performance standards that can be achieved in the new optical space.

Certainly the ultimate goal shared by Larry and the doctor was to see a healthy return on investment. The space was designed to encourage increased volume and increased per-patient production. The staff will respond to the design, the doctor's goals and leadership through good management.

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Oadbe Takes a New Approach

by Larry Funston

Oadbe is getting favorable response and some notoriety for the retail concepts we have integrated into our newest optical designs. Breaking away from the traditional static display techniques (mass display), opens up possibilities for increased patient satisfaction and practice income.

What we like to see is a healthy balance between static and free-style display. A certain amount of static display creates the opportunity to show a line of frames, or a tray of third-party frames, or a collection for kids, for example. On the other hand, free-style display is wide open to the whims and creativity of your optical staff. Staff tell us they love the flexibility of the new frame rooms. There is the chance to do something seasonal, or something totally unexpected. The frame area remains neat and appealing throughout a busy day because of the freer style of display—no holes on the frame bars.



Display using free-style approach with glass shelves and frame trays shows off upscale frames with elegance. Mix of trays, shelves and frame bars can be changed as displays are changed. Display is on free-standing, lighted furniture with cabinets below.

The nuts and bolts of our newer approach to display is accomplished with tension-wire and stainless-rod systems. We break the concept into three categories.

1. Static Display
Trays and individual frame holders
2. Free-Style Display
Shelves and shadow boxes

3. Graphic/Mirror Display
Vertical panels for mirror and graphics or both

With the flexibility this system allows, you can mix the three components to accommodate shrinking or expanding inventory. Frame inventory should always appear full and inviting. Mixing the methods of display accomplishes this fullness throughout the year, even as your actual count changes. Combining display techniques can make less inventory look like more.

At the same time, we are recommending increased floor space for the optical area, rather than less as you might expect. For that WOW factor, more floor area can lead to grander innovations. You can bring in a Harley or a kayak or mannequins to create exciting life-style displays.

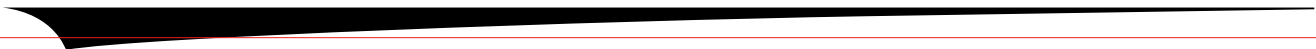
After the seriousness and professionalism of the eye examination, patients coming



Room of static display that has been the standard approach to frame display, can be updated to include the more flexible free-style display.

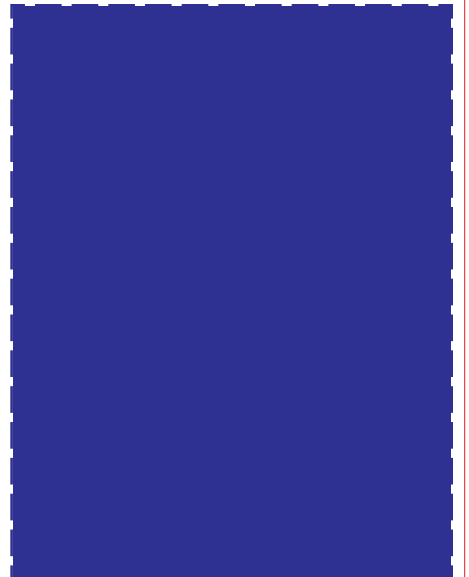
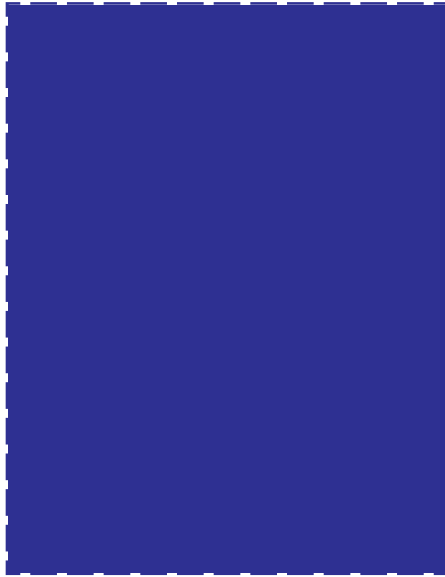


MARSH STORY





More Marsh Story



News in Fixtures



Benchmarks

When planning for parking there are a number of variables to consider. One thing is fairly predictable, though. Whatever the municipality requires will not be enough. As a very broad rule of thumb Oadbe uses 10 spaces per doctor. We increase the number depending on the nature of the practice and other available parking in the area.





By Design

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142 Elm St., Versailles, KY 40383 Winter, 2001

Notes from Larry Funston

We recently returned from the grand opening of Primary Eye Care, Tom Marsh's optometry practice in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. It was a beautiful fall day and a terrific event. Among the guests were some former Oadbe clients from the area, so we had the added pleasure of visiting with Oadbeites and hearing the outcome of our designs. We'll share some of the visit in this newsletter.

Our long-time associate and friend, Fred Kahn, has published his book: *Maximizing the Potential of Your Ophthalmic Office*, published by Butterworth-Heinemann. You may have received a flyer for it. If not and you're interested, look for the order form elsewhere in this newsletter.

We are pleased to announce our association with Judy Cadle. Her extensive background includes marketing and ophthalmic office management. She joined us in February, representing Oadbe in the United States. She is sensitive to and contributes to the relationship between design and management.

In these uncertain times for our nations, I wish you peace and safety.

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Welcome the first Oadbe newsletter. After all the years of designing in the ophthalmic field, we decided the best way to communicate with our friends, clients and Oadbeites was to let you know what are are up to now. Letters to the editor will be gratefully accepted.