REMAKES, WARRANTIES AND COMMON SENSE

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The lens redo/remake can feel like a revolving door, circling around our patient’s and our practice’s lost time and confidence, as well as potentially enormous losses of revenue.

So let’s rewind, start at the beginning, and close this revolving door of a remake. Determine the most common, along with the most unusual causes for a lens redo. Offer solutions that will dramatically decrease the number of lens remakes, and return confidence to our patients, allowing us to also notice an increase in our practice’s revenue.

According to The Vision Council of America, the number one reason for a lens remake is warranty. The average lens buying cycle is one to two years. Offering a free lens warranty, or disclosing the length of the warranty, have extended the buying cycle from 1.9 years to 2.5 years; it also has potential to interrupt the interval between comprehensive eye examinations. These interruptions have an impact on our ability to diagnose and treat potential eye and health conditions that may be detected during a routine eye examination. When left unnoticed, these hidden medical conditions can have devastating results in patient’s overall medical health, by eliminating the chance for early treatment.

Lens manufacturers found it necessary to offer lens warranties when polycarbonate was first introduced in 1980. Polycarbonate had originally been used for canopies covering fighter jets cockpits. In 1970 NASA began to use polycarbonate for the astronaut helmets. It was introduced to consumers in 1980 as a safe, affordable alternative to standard glass or plastic lenses in their eye wear. It did have some problems, the ABBE value was not great, and it scratched easily. The introduction of the lens warranty allowed the eye care professional to suggest new material to patient’s without risk. Similarly it was offered to patients when progressive lenses were introduced. It has since evolved into a more complicated entity of its own, and can overshadow the lenses own merit. The lens warranty was never intended to last beyond the release of new lens materials and styles, it was never designed for prescription mistakes, optician error or patient abuse. Eyewear sales made with lens or frame warranty disclosed have the potential to eliminate a productive sale. Divulging the warranty often leads to a question of quality.
There are NO FREE REDO’S. Every redo will cost the practice in time spent with the optician, and/or time spent with the prescribing doctor. The costs can be astronomical when each phase of lens evaluation is considered. Example: re-check P.D., Seg. Hgt., Lens material change, Vertex distance, Base curve of the lenses, and additional “chair time” with the prescribing doctor.

Remake and warranty policies can also damage a practice’s reputation. Patients will talk to family and friends when they are not satisfied. We are constantly mindful that only the very dissatisfied and satisfied patients have a story to tell.

A goal for every practice is to increase patient referral.

Incorporate a checklist when an eyewear order is placed. The list will serve as a reminder to each team member that our focus is patient satisfaction.

35% of all remakes are due to power change. To avoid power change remakes:
1. Make sure all instruments have been properly calibrated.
2. Understand patient’s lifestyle, make sure the lens and frame style compliment it.
3. Allow the patient to physically put the frame on his/her face.
4. Adjust frames before any measurements are made.
5. Utilize a pupillometer or smart mirror for precise measurements.
6. Be honest with our patient about his/her expected clarity, and confirm when he/she will be wearing the prescription eye wear.

If a patient returns unsatisfied with their new eyewear:
1. Verify the Rx.
2. Re-align the frame, then re-measure and remark, noting the placement of the eyewear (by our patient, not the optician).
3. Be reassuring to the patient.
4. Advise if a learning (not adjusting) period is required.
5. Educate patient about proper holding positions if necessary.
6. Inquire when Rx is being worn (work, computer, reading etc.).

During the pre-examination, technicians listen, and carefully document our patients complaints and concerns. It is important to also note our patient’s expectations, and specifically important disappointments they may have encountered with previous eye care or eyewear. It is important to note if the patient has required lens remakes in the past. Some patients habitually require lens remakes; documentation will allow the doctor and optician a “Heads-Up” that our patient may require additional time and attention.

Throughout the eye examination, it is important for the prescribing doctor to listen while documenting concerns our patient may have, or previously had. Medical conditions that may prevent him/her from a 20/20 corrected visual acuity, should be noted and patients should be made aware at that time, although sometimes patients do not always hear what they do not want to hear, making the documentation vital, should our patient encounter any difficulties with their prescription. When the prescribing doctor makes a recommendation, it is important
to inform the optician, allowing them to discuss the doctor's advice when the frame and lens choices are made. Our patient's value the doctor's advice, it is important for our patient's to observe a consistency between doctors, opticians and team members.

When our patient is presented for frame styling and lens selection, the “hand off” should be made with our patient aware of the communication between the doctor and optician, allowing patients to understand and appreciate that our practice consists of “team players” working together toward common patient care goal.

Many patients may have questions regarding the eye examination, it is beneficial to become familiar with our prescribing doctors eye examinations, allowing us to provide answers to our patients.

Following an honest and productive frame selection, we start the discussion about lenses. This is when our patient's expectations need to be addressed. When are they going to use their eyewear? Describe, in detail, the changes and the affect it will have on visual acuity will help our patients prepare for their new eyewear, removing the chance for a disappointment when their glasses are dispensed.

Our comprehension of patient's prescription, lifestyle, and hobbies will allow us to suggest the appropriate lens. Lens samples will provide our patients with a hands-on opportunity to see the suggested lens style. When frame and lens styles have been selected, expenditures will be discussed. This is the time to be exact and to the point. Help our patient understand the value of each product we are providing.

Buyer's remorse is another cause for remakes. When our patient chooses the perfect frame and lenses, without understanding it's benefits, we stand a chance our patient may return unhappy.

To avoid buyer's remorse we must:
1. Promote an understanding that the eyewear is going to improve and enhance their life.
2. Provide the wow factor; frames have become an accessory, engage our patient with positive feedback, and allow them to take a few frames home.
3. Remain accessible after the sale, provide each patient with your individual business card, if they have any questions, allow them to contact your specifically.
4. No hard sell, we are marketing a medical device that is also fashionable.
5. Provide each patient with a price sheet; be specific when defining each charge

When our patients are confident, we have provided them with the best quality lenses and frames. Their confidence will show itself with repeat orders and countless referrals.
Create confidence when his/her spectacles are dispensed. Continue to provide information concerning their new prescription changes and the visual changes they may notice. When our patients are well informed they feel certain the products we have provided are exactly what they expected.