



Vision Source[®] TRUSTED COLLEAGUE

Travis Taylor, OD

taylordvision@gmail.com

The Care and Feeding of a Practice

Older practice required some TLC and modernization

When Travis Taylor, OD, bought his practice, Family Focus Vision Source[®] in Salem, Ore., in 2012, it was like buying an old house with good bones, but little else. He recalls, "I had to change a lot. It was a pretty classic presentation, actually. The former doctor was coasting toward retirement."

The retiring doctor had made some investments in recent years. The practice had an OCT and visual field and even an electronic medical record system. It had been a Vision Source[®] practice – a membership that Dr. Taylor inherited and ultimately decided to keep. "Because I had been in the Navy, I didn't really understand the environment that existed in independent optometry. I've learned so much from the Vision Source[®] meetings. It's my first time managing a practice, but my colleagues have been doing it for years." In that way, he says, the mentoring he received from Vision Source[®] colleagues was akin to the help he was given by Navy ODs when he first joined.



Modernizing the practice required cosmetic and equipment upgrades, as well as procedural changes. The former doctor saw patients just 4 days a week; Dr. Taylor immediately began offering appointments 5 days a week. He branched out into social media, and immediately the practice began drawing a young patient base. "He had no online reviews, and now I'm the No. 1 reviewed OD in Salem."

The office space was nice, but cluttered and outdated. "There was carpeting on the counter islands," Dr. Taylor says. The purchase was finalized on a Tuesday, and for 5 crazed days he worked at stripping out the old and putting in the new so that he could reopen on Monday. "We did not sleep," he quips. But the result is an office that gets rave reviews for its unique touches, like a freestanding wall in the front area used as a frame display. That display added slots for about 300 more frames, bringing his collection up to about 1,000 frames on display. "People walk in, and they feel like they're somewhere special."

"The one thing that people notice the most is the most expensive addition – the automated Marco refraction system. In the Navy, all of the clinics had automated refracting," he recalls. To use a manual system today feels outdated. And there's value beyond impressing patients. "What I like best is that with the click of a button, I can show patients the prescription that they came in with and compare it to the new prescription. Now they don't ask anymore whether they need new eyeglasses. They can see the change and they can decide." In addition, the refraction system has eliminated all transcription errors.



Another big change to the practice came in terms of staffing. "Your office is your business, and you have to get the right people on the bus in the right seats to drive success," he says. So he told the 3 existing employees that they needed to reapply for their jobs – and if they were the best suited individuals, they'd be rehired. As it turned out, none stayed. "I turned everything upside down. I did everything differently. My staff now knows that my philosophy is that if we're not changing, we're standing still. Not everyone can work in that environment," he says. But, he adds that the staff he has today is phenomenal, supportive, and invested in the practice's success. In addition to a full-time staff of 3, Dr. Taylor has also outsourced his billing to Optometric Billing Solutions. That move allows

his current staff to focus on patients who are in the office, without having to dedicate time to keeping up in the frequently changing landscape of medical billing and coding.

While much of the heavy lifting is over and Dr. Taylor has made his imprint on the practice, it's unlikely he'll rest long. After all, if he isn't changing, he's standing still.