

# Getting a Positive Edge on Business

How in-office finishing helps propel Optical Alternatives into the premium zone



*Dorothy Reynolds, L.O., takes charge of the finishing lab at Optical Alternatives in Fairfield, CT*

**O**ptical Alternatives' motto is "From Prescription to Perfection." Its in-office edging lab helps make the latter part a reality—quickly.

The Fairfield, CT, optical shop has a reputation not just for its medium- to high-end frame selection, but for its dedication to customer service. A big part of that service, says store manager Dorothy Reynolds, L.O., is the quick turnaround made possible by its in-office finishing lab.

Though the shop has always edged, it had a basic system that limited its usefulness. Reynolds was recently able to upgrade to a premium edging system that keeps pace with the shop's inventory and customer needs.

*EB* chatted with Reynolds about why she loves to edge in-house and the impact the lab has had on the shop's revenue, customer service, and growth.

## On Product Control...

"I have never been one who's comfortable with having to send jobs out. There is something so satisfying about being able to see your jobs through, from beginning to end. You present what is best for the patient, you get to do it yourself and control the quality of what gets produced, and you get to present it to the patient."

## On Customer Service...

"We're one of only two or three shops in the area that edge, and the other shops don't stock lenses, so those customers still have to wait. Our patients don't have to. It also makes it easy for people to use their own frame, too. They don't have to leave the



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—DOROTHY REYNOLDS, Optical Alternatives

### OPTICAL ALTERNATIVE LAB INSIGHTS:

**HPE-810 Exxpert** edging system from Coburn Technologies (includes built-in drilling, customizable cutting parameters, custom shape, Chemistrie clip software)

**HAB-8000 Exxpert Auto Blocker** from Coburn Technologies

**Lens Inventory:** SV up to -4.00 and -1.00 cyl

**Number of Jobs Edged In-House:** 100%

frame with me to ship out to a lab. It's also great that we're the only optical in town that's open on Sunday. You know how many people come in on Sunday with broken glasses? A lot."

## On Building Business With Premium Lenses...

"Now that I have a machine that can cut *all* materials, I'm filling anything higher than -2.00 with Trivex. And every lens I stock has AR. So if you want your lenses right away, you have to get AR. If somebody is hemming and hawing about premium options, I can say, 'You know, I can have these ready for you in an hour,' and they are much more apt to pull the trigger."

## On Custom Product....

"There are a lot of instances where a patient loves a (rimless or semi-rimless) frame, but doesn't love the shape or depth of the demo lens. They say, 'I just wish it was little deeper, or rounder, or whatever.' I say, 'I can do that for you.' 

—Susan Tarrant

# Tales From the Edge

Every optician with an in-house lab has a story about it saving a sale, earning a customer for life, or otherwise solving an optical challenge. Here's what Reynolds told us....

- "A customer chose an expensive, high-end rimless frame. His high-plus prescription made the lenses pretty thick. We weren't 100% sure it would even work, but the patient really wanted that frame. We went through some lenses (laughs), but we got it to work and look great! All that work just to have the gentleman break the frames three days later. But, he came back in and bought another pair!"
- "-4.00 PAL wearer comes in on a Sunday with broken glasses, leaving the next day for a business trip. While I couldn't get him progressives that day, I was able to at least cut him some -4.00 SV lenses so he was able to see and function. And then when the PALs came in, we just cut the lenses while he waited here in the shop. He was totally happy—and is now a repeat customer."