20 Ways To Compete With Online Retailers: Course Length 1 hour

Summary: The course covers reasons why people shop online, eyecare professionals can compete and develop marketing plans to counteract. Competing online provides solutions and ideas, profitable niches, customer service, new products and equipment and why education is more important today due to search engines.

Level= Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, Level I, II, III

Intended Audience – Opticians, Optometrists, Ophthalmologist, optical managers, business owners and all staff

Method- Lecture, open questions.

Learning Outcomes-

1. Provide ways to help optical professional to compete against online optical companies

2. Provide industry trends in online shopping and selling and how it effects the eyecare industry

3. Learn helpful tools to compete

Introduction – Industry Trends - 5 minutes

71% of consumers are going online to shop, whether they purchase or not dependent on you

Market potential is up to 14% of consumers will be purchasing online. - if 14% to purchase quite a financial hit. What are they buying eyewear, sunwear, contact lenses and accessories and nutraceuticals.

Smart phones are making it easier to shop and to browse. Even Smart phones have try on technology, eye exams, virtual dressing rooms.

Try- on Technology is becoming mainstream

Coupons for contact lenses is the usual rather than the usual.

1500 online companies, plus affiliate programs, plus Amazon, eBay etc.. If you plug in online eyewear on google, 33,900,000 results, for online sunglasses, 118,000,000 results.

Get People all the time asking us about taking PD's where to get products and complaining about their eye care docs.

Advantage to shopping Online

Reason why you want to know is because these are your primary objections to overcome.

1. Shopping is 24/7 it is convenient
2. online chat,
3. Free shipping and no sales tax.
4. Discount coupons and giveaways
5. Many have Try on Technology
6. Selection big
7. Return policy is lenient
8. Share with friends at convenient times.
9. Pricing places like Zenni that offer frame and lens for $8.99
10. Many of them have great customer service .
11. Expectations are lower

Step 1 Marketing and sales strategy to compete online 5 Minutes

Learning Objective: Learn About your Choices and how to set up a marketing

plan

1.) Do Nothing

2.) Get mad and complain

3.) Refuse to give out PD and Rx, which you can't do in most states or you can play games with, which makes the consumer angry, cover price tags/style numbers

4.) Rush willy nilly into something

5.) Set up a sales and marketing strategy to compete. Systemic way to overcome primary objections to purchasing online.

Before you go into a Sales Marketing Plan- What is your objective? The reason why I say, don't use open up a Facebook account because everyone one else has one. Keep patients? Find Patients? Build communication? Objective to cut cost? Write down your objectives.

1. Do you ever go online to check out?? Coastal contacts, warby parker…. What do they have to offer? Is the product good or bad?

2. Google trend report, or google insights to find demographic trends?

3. Have talked to your patients?

4. What are your time and resources.

<u>19 Ways to Compete Online 30 minutes</u>

<u>1.) Is Your Office Exciting?</u>

Are you a destination? What does your office look like?

What engaging events do you offer? Wii Parties, Ugly glasses contests, Trunk Shows, Health Events

Challenge to go out and see what other offices look like, Something to talk, Facebook, Twitter about .Events, decor, fun education, trunk shows

2.) Customer Service

Everybody talks about their superior customer service, in fact it is probably one of the most overused words today. Can you be specific? Define your customer service. Are you licensed, do you take classes? Time convenient? Products you offer. Subject of a staff meeting. Come up with 5 things that make your office special and different.

3.) Educate the Consumer

This is something that I have been speaking about for years and years. The consumer is confused. Today due to the Internet, they are now educationally confused. How do you educate the consumer? Are you up to date? Digital Signage, Website, materials, do you send out emails?

Digital Signage- Digital Signage can be used in windows, reception room to educate patients and even in the exam room, it is one of the fastest growing forms of marketing. Perfect balance of entertainment and education. Digital Signage is what we call shameless plugging about your products. It is the best thing you can do for your business. (gas station, bank) don't even realize how much digital signage

Sending out targeted emails- glaucoma, bifocal contact lens, health issues

4.) Educate Yourself Education

Licensed optician, consistent training for all staff is becoming more important today than ever. I could go on a rant here. A consistent staff training program should be part of your marketing and sales plan and budget. Whether it's taking classes at Vision Expo or OptoWest or locally, it has to be done. How else can they keep up on technology. When we little bloggers are getting 3-5 consumers a week asking us for information, because they cannot get it from their providers. Today even Lyle Rubin from Corning told me he gets emails from consumers

asking about SunSensors??

Display awards, display certifications, put on FB, Tweet just took a course

funny story, I was at a trade show, and talking to a dr. who was complaining about how he had to take education. Let me ask you this, how many of you would go to a doctor, pharmacist (optician) that didn't take educational classes? I don't even think that is a bad thing to close the office because you are doing a training session

More important today that the staff be more educated than the consumer

Have certain staff specialize in certain subjects.

5.) Equipment: No body ever thinks it going to happen to them. How many people talk about their equipment? Should not take for granted.

Advantage that a brick and mortar store has is bright shiny new technological equipment. Educational experience for consumers.

- Diagnostic Equipment, Surfacing- lab equipment, EMR, Dispensing
- Try On Technology- Optikam- is the perfect solution. Online retailers are currently using this technology and you can too. Try it on, share it with friends, educate the patient.

In a staff meeting talk about what can we brag about?

6.) Eye and General Health

Nutraceutical – already buying solutions

One thing I can guarantee you, ordering online is not going to help the consumer if they have eye health issues. Let the consumer know how much you care about their eye sight. Offer nutraceuticals, give out information and have the product available to them to make a purchase

Contacts lens duty to warn

7.) Product (Differentiate yourself)

Accessories,, eye exams, retinal screenings, it nutraceuticals, contact lenses, art,

is everything that is in your office including you. What can you offer that an online retailer cannot or doesn't?

8.) Technology

Even though we blog about this stuff, there is so much more we could be blogging about in technology. From emPower lenses, to Free Form to new eyewear hinge design (and yes we get consumers asking us about this) It's 3D, its retinal scanning, it's auto focusing lenses, it's interchangeable lenses . You have to know what is available,

9.) Lenses

Are there any lenses that they can't get online?. Know your lenses, know the difference and experiment. Autofocussing, FreeForm

10.) Fashion.

Many people think that fashion is just a designer name or something a celebrity is wearing. True style is not what you are wearing but how you are wearing it and if it suits you. I don't care what the label says, if it looks bad who cares? That is what can be your expertise. Think full package: Fashion eyewear, fashion contact lenses, accessories

11.) Personal Shopping And Styling

In the old days, there used to be sales people on the floor, they helped you, brought you clothes and if you had a good sales agent, they told you the truth as to what looks good on you. That one on one personal attention is key to personal shopping and styling.

Brag about it, shameless plug your business and personal attention and you are a stylist as well as an eyecare provider. If you think that you have that, online companies also have that, they have chats, they have videos on YouTube, they have all sorts of testimonials. You have to be better and one up

You have to be the experts- back to lifestyle dispensing, colors

Define this we sit you down , we help determine what not only looks good on your based upon colors and face shape, we help with appropriate choices for your lifestyle and or image.

Have events: Sunglass parties, trunk shows

12.) Shop Local Factor

Buy local is a huge consumer trend. People are starting to want to support local business. not just about carbon footprints, its about keeping tax dollars local. support local community and provide jobs. Very Green thing to do.

51% of retailers believe that a buying local is growing trend.

55% of retailers believe that buy local campaigns help small business owners compete.

13.) Website

Website-A current, updated easy to navigate website has become increasing more important for shoppers and therefore it should become increasing more important for eyecare professionals., shopping cart, blog, products
Pictures

Blog gets 55% more hits

Shopping Cart sell 24/7 as well. Visa/ Mc/ PayPal

Book appointments, helath information, product updates etc..

Search engine friendly.

Local Search

14 .) Social Media (need examples ability to reach out and add excitement and news

Its all about search

Blog
Twitter- I can't even tell you how important this is today. I now get my news on Twitter, I find out what is going on and who cares why people will follow you, they just do.
Facebook- Need I say more, it's free- check in option
YouTube
Local Search, Mantra, Merchant Circle,
Groupon- I have 10 friends that are Groupon Fanatics, they go on everyday to see what is new. And they buy.. again, need I say more?
FourSquare- I also follow Nate on Twitter and it's constant about how he gets business from FourSquare
Gowalla
YELP- manage your Yelp don't let it manage you
Online Reputation Management (ORM) more on this in later posts.

14 Form Strategic Alliances

Concept of 1 + 1= 5 medical personal or local business, synergize efforts. Whether with vendors. Their data base and your database to reach to 71% of consumers going online.

Zip Eyewear – sends customer back to you

15.) Give Back = Model

- Warby Parker- Donated over 50,000 pair within first 6 months of business. One for One business model,
- Tortoise and Blonde new company gave over $230,000 to Eye Care 4 Kids in May of 2011
- Moral Eyes- Gave 2400 eyeglasses to New Eyes for the Needy in May of 2011 (One For One Give Back Model)
- Jimmy Fairly- French One For One Give Back Model
- EyeSpex- One for One Business model

- Savvy Specs- Donating 5% to each years profits to various Charities
- Toms Glasses- One for One Give Back model based on Toms Shoes. Launched June of 2011
- Coastal Contacts- One for One Business Model with Change The View and private label eyewear. Donated 2,500 pair of eyeglasses in April of 2011
- Frames for the World- National Vision, donated 10,000 pair of eyeglasses to Mexico

81% of consumers will switch from one brand if there is a cause involved.

62% of Americans felt that a product connection to a cause or charity will effect their buying decisions.

31% Are willing to pay more for a product if the purchase benefited a charity they supported.

16.) Make your own app

Smart Phones- trend, Eye Docs doing their own apps to check in on line, book appointments and have information.

Dr. Awad MD, has an app. Insight Complete Eyecare in Dallas has an app.

17.) Target Marketing≈

- Contact managers, reminders, database mining
- patient emails
- How many of you would rather be contacted by email by dentists….
- Software can do for you; patient communication
- Patient reminders
- Birthdays

Updates on new products, eye health (targeted)
Be the best, be different, be unique, follow fashion and trends

#18 Social Media Coupon

Living Social, Groupon, Daily Deals

#19 Track/Track And Track And Datamine

Using software you can track not only your retail numbers, but what your patients are buying. Datamine to get better Results and patients coming in sooner.

#20 Automate

By Automating processes such as pre-appointing, contact lens reminders, patients are more likely to come back sooner rather than later. Do not leave to chance.

The Future – 10 minutes

Prediction is over 50% of Americans will own Smart Phones by end of 2012, which means more apps and more scanning and more shopping.

Future trends- shop , scan and click technology is being used from grocery stores to retail.

Price comparisons apps- Scan and click is a free app.

Try on Technology- Virtual Fitting Rooms, Sharing with friends, pics

Apps- already there, more and more apps. Become the norm

QR codes- (Quick Response) will become the norm- point your phone and that will all about the company, products etc. Easy to download store address, business cards and any product you need information about.

Closing and Open Discussion: 10 Minutes

Dare to be different, be unique

You have more resources available today to compete online and there is really no excuse, you can grow your business

Do you have to do everything at once? No, but it is now the time, do not pass GO, is to make a plan and start to implement some of the above strategies.