

Practice Success Story

Optical

The Issue:

Our optical department was growing at a fast pace and estimates for the future showed that if it continued at that rate, we would surpass expectations. Our practice only has one optician and it is not uncommon to see patients standing around waiting on her to finish with other patients. Although she did not complain, the optician was always playing catchup and was stretched to meet patient demand for her time. We also believed that patients were leaving and taking their prescriptions elsewhere.

We began to ask: At what point, do we hire another optician? Where can we get data to help us answer this question? How do we determine if too many patients are taking their prescriptions for glasses and/or contacts elsewhere?

What We Did Next:

To answer our questions, we need the following benchmarks: optical salary expense ratio, net collections per FTE optical staff member, and capture rate. ASOAnalytics has designed an optical survey to provide these benchmarks and give practices direction for measuring and comparing our optical department to other practices each year once enough practices participate. With these numbers in hand, the management team can determine whether another optician is needed as well as how many prescriptions are walking out the door.

Multiple benchmarks indicated we needed another optician. Our optical was far above benchmarks for revenue per FTE optician and far below expected results on the optical staff expense ratio. Additionally, we were lower than expectations on capture rate. These benchmarks give us good direction. They show we needed another optician. Also, the exercise helped us create a financial impact analysis to show our owners and get their approval to hire another optician.

The Result:

We were able to get quick approval to hire a new optician. Our optical has improved its capture rate and is continuing its rapid growth. In fact, when I check the trends in another six months, I wouldn't be surprised if it might be time for another optician.



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