Giving Back – “Love Nashville Collection”

Here is brief summary of our program at Vision Source, Brentwood, TN to counter some of the interest in Warby Parker. The whole idea came about one day a year or so ago when I got tired of hearing from our opticians about their having to adjust, tighten, and trouble shoot the Warby Parker frames that were being purchased online. Patients were asking us to figure out what was wrong or to fit the frames to their head when the frame was way too big for them and the only criteria for purchasing them was because their roommate told them they looked good. One of the challenges in our practice is that patients (mostly “millennials”) occasionally want to look elsewhere in search of lower cost, the Warby Parker look/Style, the convenience or experience of online purchasing, and the opportunity to give back. In response, we created the “Love Nashville Collection.”

We promote the Love Nashville Collection in our office when we know a patient may be looking to leave with their script and shop elsewhere. We don’t have a huge display or
signage that promotes our Love Nashville Collection, because we don’t want to cannibalize more profitable sales.

Once we explain the opportunity and let the patient know that we will be giving back to a local Nashville charity, many are willing to take a look and we are often able to save the sale. We have definitely increased our capture rate by keeping the “would be” Warby Parker customers in our optical. We don’t get’em all, but our batting average is much better!

For the most part we have used frames from New York Eye. In particular, the Hemingway collection, as they have a similar look and feel to Warby Parker styles, but they are better quality than a Warby Parker frame (typical cost is roughly $32-33/frame including tax). Because we have in-house finishing capabilities, we order uncut polycarb lenses with AR from Nassau for roughly $5/pair, so we have less than $40 in the frame and lenses. We price a complete pair at $105 and we donate $5 to a local charity in the
Nashville area, allowing for roughly $60 gross profit per pair. Its not huge money, but it’s better than seeing the patient walk out the door. There are other frame lines in the market that we could choose from and increase our net profit, but to date, we have had our best success with the Hemingway’s. We currently make our donation to a different charity each quarter. We could also allow patients to choose between 4 or 5 local charities and then make a donation to each every quarter, but it’s working well the way we manage it now.

A special thanks to Dr. Peter Van Hoven of Vision Source, Brentwood, TN