

Smart Mirror System

Reviewers' Comments:

Vicky Nevins's semiannual "trunk show" — author appearances, product demonstrations, fashions — in March 2001 was a huge success, and she thanks one product. That day, 95 percent of the visitors to her Indianapolis-area dispensary who completed a questionnaire said they had come to see the Smart Mirror system.

They sampled it by modeling frames while standing before a monitor and mounted video camera. The camera froze their images and displayed up to four frames simultaneously. The dispenser then helped patients to "virtually" see themselves in lenses with various coatings, tints and thicknesses.

"It was absolutely phenomenal how many people liked it," said Nevins. "Every job order that day included A-R coating and lighter lenses. We would show them their lenses, their prescription, with glare and without. Price was not an issue."

The reviewers said that the system best aids the bottom line because most patients buy the add-ons displayed on screen and are more inclined to buy the

Reviewers: Reviewers: Nancy DiCosmo, Au Courant Opticians, Troy, Mich.; Joel Scalf, Coulter Drive Optical, Amarillo, Tex.; Mary Diefenthaler Nyitray, Optical Arts., Inc., Toledo, Ohio; Judy Holmes, Optometric Eye Care, Lumberton, N.C.; Vicky Nevins, Indiana Eye Clinic, Greenwood, Ind.



frame in the first place when they can really see themselves in it — and, in fact, are far more likely to buy more than one.

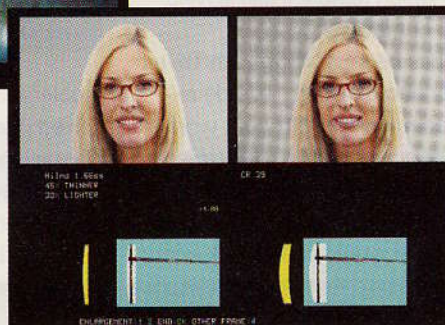
Furthermore, they said, the system amplifies dispensers' explanations about various lenses. The dispenser can now easily demonstrate the difference between lenses with and without A-R coating, or what progressives and polarized lenses look like. "You can pick up a pair of progressive lenses and see if it's adjusted properly," said one. "With Smart Mirror, I can work out the kinks then and there instead of them having to go home and test it.

You're offering the best service, which is why you hope that people are going to a licensed optician."

One reviewer also lauded the system's ability to test for color blindness.

According to Nevins, the purchase of Smart Mirror "has

Reviewers said that lens options such as polarized, tinted (left) and high-index (below) are easy to demonstrate and compare with Smart Mirror.



taken a \$250 average sale and turned it into a \$400 average sale." She added: "It's a no-brainer. I'm here to give the patient the best product, and I'm doing that."

Said another reviewer: "A lot of times it helps make the sale — and multiple sales. About 25 per-

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SMART MIRROR

PRODUCT: Smart Mirror

MANUFACTURER: A.B.S. Smart Mirror, 701 S.W. 27th Avenue, Miami, Fla. 33135; (888) 989-4227 and (305) 644-0222; www.opticvideo.com.

DESCRIPTION: Lens and frame try-on simulator.

KEY FEATURES: Enables viewers to "virtually" model frames, lenses and contact lens colors and styles. System enables patient to be seen from a variety of angles. Coatings and thicknesses are displayed virtually on frames modeled.

LIST PRICE: Approximately \$8,640 on a 48-month leasing plan.

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cent of the people who use it choose multiples [frames] — a huge percentage.”

Reviewers said that financial benefits did not motivate their purchase of Smart Mirror, but that the system has proven its worth both directly and indirectly by boosting their practices' prestige, drawing new customers and re-

curred: When patients are happy, dispensers are happy.

They articulated two lines of thinking regarding the effect of price on the customer's purchase decision: that Smart Mirror enables them to be sure that they are making the right choice, or that prancing for the camera is so intoxicatingly fun as to render them immune to price considerations.

“The system best aids the bottom line because the patients buy the add-ons displayed on screen and are more inclined to buy the frame when they can really see themselves in it.”

taining regular ones. In short, they said, Smart Mirror creates “buzz.” “It's not inexpensive but it's absolutely worth every penny,” said a reviewer. “It's a tool. It's a high-tech gimmick. Someone may walk in for the first time and be totally blown away by the images. It tells them that we're at the top of our game. You have to strive to let your customers know that you're offering the latest in technology.”

Said another: “You're more likely to tell someone about it: ‘That was so cool.’ It'll be a catalyst to getting them intrigued.” Depending on the reviewer, 20 to 95 percent of their customers try on frames with Smart Mirror.

What people get, first and foremost, is an end to having to squint, or rely on a salesperson's opinion, to fathom what a new pair of glasses will look like. Patients can request a printout to take home and review with family and friends. The screen's quadrants help the dispenser to assist the customer in comparing looks and narrowing eyewear choices. Dispensers con-

Another, however, told of a customer who would not pay a dollar more for a new pair of glasses than what his company's health plan covered. The dispenser nodded and suggested inexpensive frames and thick lenses.

“Then I took him over to the Smart Mirror and said, ‘Let me show you something,’” the reviewer said. “I had him put his frame on and [I virtually] put on A-R coating and thinner lenses and said, ‘Here's what you could get.’ And he bought it. Price was no longer an object. That's what happens all the time with Smart Mirror.”



The Smart Mirror System lets patients see how they look with A-R lenses (right) and without.

All reviewers said the machine was simple to use, especially in its prompts for selecting virtual looks from among contact lens colors, manufacturers and offbeat designs. The only problem raised was one reviewer's citing her machine's not turning on one morning. The company paid to have her ship it back and then fixed it, but the machine still failed. Finally, her distributor sent a new one. “The distributor took very good care of me,” she said. Then there's this benefit — to another profession entirely — of an up-close look at oneself on the screen, which was cited by one reviewer: “It's absolutely increased business at plastic surgeons. [Customers] say, ‘Look at those wrinkles! I have to do something about them!’ ”

—By Hillel Kuttler

Manufacturer's Response:

Customers choose Smart Mirror because it is easy to use, requires no computer skills, and offers the most complete software at an affordable price. In the event of an occasional problem, we are almost always able to solve it very quickly by telephone. Also, Smart Mirror has a four-year warranty.

We do not have a frame data base because we don't want our clients to display frames they might not carry, and it's impossible to catalogue every new frame on the market.

Concerning “wrinkles,” our recently updated software helps customers' skin appear smoother and slightly more tanned on screen so they feel more comfortable with their image and are then more likely to purchase eyewear.

SMART MIRROR