

# What You Need To Know About...

## HOUSE BRANDS

By Ann Shanley

For most labs, the idea of starting a house brand program can seem a daunting task. But allowing the fear and objections to deter you from considering a program could be a mistake that is costing you revenue dollars and corporate recognition. The main benefits cited by labs that have forged ahead with a house brand program include the potential to elevate your lab to a trusted status with your customers. Labs that have house brands indicate that their customers come to them for information and opinion regarding products. Having a house brand can eliminate complexity and confusion about existing brands in the market for many eye care professionals. Depending on how your program is structured, it can provide the lab more revenue and profit, increased flexibility and job retention, and can even create a solution to help make higher end products more affordable for a patient with insurance who has to pay additional fees for premium product. Since trial often times drives future patient desire and purchase for premiums or add-ons, it can be to your benefit to offer an affordable solution.

The great thing is that creating a house brand is as simple or complicated as you make it. A house brand can apply to a line of products (progressive lenses, for example), an AR coating or other add-on processes, or any other service you offer. You can offer it as an affordable line that allows your customer to save money, and be more flexible in the prices they pass on to their patients. This could ultimately help them to be more competitive with retail chains and their promotional offerings. The alternative is to offer your house brand as a mid-priced option that delivers superior value and added profits for you. By default, a house brand will offer you more profit in your most premium offerings of AR or even free form lenses because you can eliminate royalties and other fees associated with using a name brand.

You may also be thinking "I already know the benefits, and I like the idea but, I really don't have

the resources or knowledge myself to develop one." Creating a house brand requires very little to get started. You pay more money to upgrade or replace your equipment within any given year because, it is what you need to sustain or grow your business. Labs need to start selling and marketing their labs with the same consideration. It takes less time,

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money or knowledge than you would think and the truth is, you need to start somewhere. The key to success is making sure it is understood, accepted and communicated by employees throughout the company. Everyone needs to be trained and enthusiastic about the house brand.

Start with deciding what you will offer and how you will position it. Once you've decided that, the rest is easy. Whether you decide to trademark your brand or not, the marketing can be achieved with minimal investment initially by adding the new product to your standard price list, sending out a simple flier via mail or in person, or verbally communicate the brand to your customers when they call. Many labs make the mistake of thinking they have to start large. The truth is...the benefits of a house brand will resonate with many of your customers, whether you have 10, 100, or many more.

For more information on developing a house brand program, watch for information coming from Polycore Optical USA, or contact us directly at 1-800-396-1580, [promotions@polycore-usa.com](mailto:promotions@polycore-usa.com), or visit [www.polycore-usa.com](http://www.polycore-usa.com).