

When the OAC learned that one of our members, Sean Sylvestre, Founder & CEO of [Mobile Vision Care Clinic Inc.](#), had been selected as one of the 2019 recipients of Canada's Top 40 under 40, a celebration of the top up-and-coming leaders in the country, we could not help but ask him some questions and share it with you. Thank you Sean for inspiring us.

What was your Optical background before you started Mobile Vision Care Service?

"I grew up in the optical business. My father, Marc Sylvestre opened the first independently owned 1 Hour Optical in Winnipeg in 1989. I learned much of what I know from working in the family dispensary."

What made you start your own business?



"The truth is, I had no intention of starting my own business. A couple of years ago a friend of mine who works for the school division came to me asking how low income families in their schools could gain access to prescription eyewear. They had already met with a number of different groups about addressing this problem and the only available solution was to bus students to local clinics, which was not feasible for the schools. Together with this school division,

we developed the outline for a new vision care program which would ensure that students not only received comprehensive eye exams, but were also provided with prescription—n eyeglasses if necessary, regardless of the financial capacity of the family to afford the glasses. Within a short time, we were seeing the immense impact we were having on these students and their families and I was hooked. Now it has become my life's mission to ensure that vision is no longer a barrier to education for Canadian students."

How is Mobile Vision Care Service different from other mobile clinics?

"I think what makes our clinic different is that we have a higher purpose to our organization. For those of you who read the teachings of Simon Sinek's "start with why"; that is how our business started. Unlike most clinics we are not profit centric but rather we are focused on the social good we can provide to those in need. Our program is a social enterprise focused on addressing the gap in access to care. Most of our clients live in poverty and without our program would not be able to access proper vision care."

How do you see the future of the Optical Industry?

“I think that the optical industry is in a constant state of change now. It seems as though in the minds of our patients, our products and services are seen less and less as medical and more and more as retail products and services. As a result, I believe the future of the optical industry is going to focus on ease and convince for the patient. In my opinion those optical providers who have the vision and flexibility to understand what the evolving optical customer wants and expects and has the ability to meet these needs will be well positioned into the future. As a result, I believe we will continue to see new business models and disruptive technologies enter our industry for the foreseeable future. I think this is an exciting time for the optical industry as innovation will be key moving forward.”



What message would you give to students currently enrolled in an Optical Science Program?

“My recommendation would be to make sure you perfect your craft. Spend time on mastering the elements of the job that enhance the customer experience, things like adjustments and specialty fits. Spend less time focusing on commission and product sales, because loyal customers are the most valuable. I believe this is what will set you apart. My second piece of advice is to listen to your customers, they will tell you exactly what they want, then you just need to be nimble enough to adjust to the changing demands of your customers.”