

I'M JUST SAYING...

By Robert Dalton, CAE, LO, OAC Executive Director

Again, we opticians find ourselves receiving bad press. We can't seem to catch a break. If we are not deemed to be protecting our market from the online players through the court system or preventing the consumer from buying glasses online then we are accused of charging exorbitant prices for our products and services, inflating prices and now giving false or misleading information about Blue Light.

We are most certainly losing the battle in the public forum. That said, I do believe that overall the public trusts their local optician to have their best interest at heart. We need only look at the number of eye care consumers who choose to use the services of Licensed Opticians when purchasing eyewear to prove this point. The consumer these days is so well educated. They come into the shop and are already knowledgeable on products and even their own eye conditions. They have "GOOGLE" searched all and everything to do with them and their needs.

Eventually though we will have to address the *possible* erosion of trust between us and the general public. How many times will we allow ourselves to be painted with one brush. The brush of politics and litigation between players of industry and regulation or the brush of gorilla journalism that seeks out the rare few circumstances where perhaps the interaction of the optician is not optimal. We have to get ahead of this stuff. **We need to get a new brush and paint ourselves as EDUCATED and KNOWLEDGABLE and OBJECTIVE. We need to have, and present, a 360-degree perspective on all issues, products and services.**



The OAC released a statement to Market Place which of course they never used as it was not controversial ...[read here](#). Our role is to support all opticians in Canada, we are not here to throw anyone under the bus. We won't be cornered into commenting on what an optician believes as professional judgement or not. We support the right of the Opticians to exert Professional judgment at their discretion. That said perhaps there is a lesson here for the OAC. Are we supporting the opticians in all aspects of learning? Are we presenting a 360 perspective on the content we use at all lectures and events? Does our Library house opinions from all points of view? (by the way as an aside the OAC has compiled a document that has most of the pro blue light research if any MEMBER wants a copy). It is difficult to find speakers willing to go public and denounce well established research – without being paid or offered a TV deal- but the OAC does intend to do a better job of presenting all sides even if one side is rather small and only a few studies (don't get me started).



The point here is, what will separate you as an optician that can be trusted is your education. Education that doesn't end when we attain licensure. Why only get the minimum credits per year. We should be getting the maximum. All OAC members will have access to the OAC library for 2020. **Unlimited education.** We are and have already added new modules and VIDEO. The OAC has many other programs to enhance your skills for a very reasonable fee. Try the [OAC-M course](#) for some additional learning. How about taking the refraction course? Did you know that that counts as CE? The OAC will be doing more charity events in 2020

and including opticians in our interaction with the public, we have to continue to work on the trust bond and positive energy. We are awesome and we need to show it. Help us please – [join the OAC](#) in 2020. **I'm just saying...**