
FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE

*"ESSILOR HAS BEEN CHANGING
THE FACE OF THE EYEWEAR INDUSTRY
FOR DECADES. THE YEAR 2013-2014
HAS SEEN THIS MOVE TO THE NEXT
LEVEL WITH SEVERAL LARGE
ACQUISITIONS AND BRAND CHANGES"*

by SARAH MCGOLDRICK

The acquisitions included all areas of the industry from labs to online. In Canada, Essilor strengthened its distribution network by signing a partnership agreement with Riverside Opticalab based Quebec and Ontario.

Also in Canada, the company acquired Coastal.com, one of the largest online eyewear retailers in the world. The company also acquired Transitions Optical leading many in the industry to wonder what is next for the company which now dominates a huge sector of both manufacturing and distribution.

Change is a constant said Marc Tersigni, President of Essilor Canada, adding the past five years have been about restructuring and regionalizing the business to create a highly effective team focused on providing ECPs and customers

with unmatched resources and service. "We have the best trained customer service team and best practices from around the world."

He said the changes have been the result of a 'doctor driven protocol' which involved working with opticians, optometrists and ophthalmologists (3 O's), looking at how every need can be met from eye exam to dispensing.

Tersigni said even his own position within the company was part of the shift to offering a Canadian perspective on Canadian sales and marketing. Until a few years ago, roles such as his were led by team members from the headquarters in France.

He said the company understood the regional aspect of the industry and now uses this approach to improve product and service to every area of business.

Tersigni said the recent acquisitions and partnerships with further Essilor's goals in this area.

"We are always in partnership mode," he said each partnership creates a new way Essilor can serve the industry. "Riverside was a great way reaching into independents. We really appreciate the fast to-market and fast to-serve component. This fits well along with the Essilor strategy."

The acquisition of Coastal.com left many in the industry wondering if Essilor would simply shut the company down, instead it has embraced the ever evolving and growing online eyewear industry.

"These two organizations work well side-by-side," he said. "We looked at how the industry was evolving and found they were developing business on their own for themselves."

CHANGE IN BUSINESS MEANS CHANGE IN BUSINESS PRACTICES AND ESSILOR HAS GONE GREAT LENGTHS TO OFFER ECPS THE RESOURCES THEY NEED TO DO THEIR JOBS WELL AND SERVICE CLIENTS



He said the use of online and bricks and mortar has allowed for a blend of innovation and traditional service. “The challenge is consumers want to make their own decisions. This is the world of the millennial shopper and they enjoy that online experience,” he said. “The optical industry has to adopt this as well.” The acquisition of Transitions takes Essilor in a different direction, adding new technology utilizing an existing brand and sales model. “PPG and Essilor have had a relationship for more than 10 years,” he said adding this acquisition will allow the company to offer

even more choice for wearers. He said Transitions will continue to operate as an independent organization and vendors should expect to see little change in the overall management of this branch of Essilor. Events such as Transitions Academy will continue as will other Transitions events and promotions. “Not everything is finalized, but they will always be an independent,” he said. Change in business means change in business practices and Essilor has gone great lengths to offer

ECPs the resources they need to do their jobs well and service clients. The Visio Office unit is among the most effective allowing ECPs to take customized measurements for optical lens performance. Tersigni said this type of hardware and software solution will become more embedded in office practices giving clients better results and higher satisfaction rate. Essilor is also looking at the bigger picture when it comes to online retail and healthcare. “There are more than 2.5 billion people who don’t have access to

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care and 60 per cent of these need some form of vision protection,” he said.

He said the internet will allow for mobile diagnosis and treatment in some of the most remote parts of the world. Essilor is sending teams into these under serviced areas to ensure people get the care they need.

"Social media will be a big part of customer engagement"

He added social media will be a big part of customer engagement as more research and buying happens online. He said businesses who do not embrace this type of technology are creating a 'threat to their existence' as more shoppers use these tools to make their decisions and share their results.

“We want ECPs to invest in their practices and we can help them,” he said. “We want to enhance the experience for consumers and reach a new level of customer service.”