

BEING A 'PEOPLE-PERSON' IS HELPING THIS DISPENSER MAKE A DIFFERENCE



DISPENSER DETAILS

Name: Joshua Oronce-Simpson
Position: Owner/optical dispenser
Location: Perth
Years in industry: 11

1. What initially attracted you to a career in optical dispensing, and how did you enter the profession?

I was 19-years-old and had spent my first couple of years out of school working in luxury retail. I decided to leave without a job to go to. With spare time up my sleeve, I walked in to my local optometrist for an eye test. We began discussing my interests, hobbies and the fact that a week earlier I had resigned from my job. They encouraged me to apply for a position in the practice as they thought I would be a great fit. The following week, I started as an assistant and the rest is history.

2. What are your main career highlights?

Attaining my Cert IV in Optical Dispensing in 2015, followed by working at a well-established behavioural optometrist and leading their dispensing team. They have a special interest in paediatric and neurological care which helped cement my understanding of what I had learnt in my Cert IV, but it also allowed me to hone my skills and expose me to things I may not always see in day-to-day practice.

I now work with another pre-eminent practice who's passion is in eyewear and in my spare time, I started my own side business, Spex in the City, where I offer a mobile optical dispensing service and provide one-on-one dispensing to people in their own home or workplace. This was spawned from COVID when people were reluctant to leave home as it allows a hybrid of online and face-to-face dispensing. While still in its infancy, it is gaining traction and has benefitted many people. My clients include those that are less-mobile, struggle to find the time to organise spectacles during traditional hours, or those that enjoy dedicated one-on-one time.

3. What are your strengths as an optical dispenser and what excites you about your job?

I believe that my strengths come from being a people-person; being adaptable to the

person in front of me and managing their expectations. While being technically-minded is essential, being a people-person can make the difference between a good dispenser and a great dispenser. I love to build a strong and genuine rapport and tend to do this by not only getting to know them, but their family members and care givers and I will often give up anecdotes of myself to help strengthen that rapport. Adapting to their personality, and mirroring their body language, tone of voice and enthusiasm also makes it much easier to align with them if any conflict comes up in future. It also helps make you more credible when giving recommendations. Managing expectations is another important skill, especially with lifestyle dispensing and dispensing progressives. I find using metaphors helps (i.e. progressives are like a Swiss army knife, it can do lots of things, but not necessarily lots of things well).

What excites me is using all my skills to make a tangible difference and adding value in peoples lives.

4. If you could go back and provide advice to yourself at the beginning of your optical dispensing career, what would you say?

Take your time, it's OK if you get it wrong – and if you can make an engineer happy with their spectacles, you can pretty much make anyone happy.

5. What do you see as the key opportunities and challenges facing the future of optical dispensing in Australia?

Changing the public's perception of what a dispenser is and what they do. I would be rich if I had a dollar for every time a patient realises that we are much more than a 'sales person'. Organisations such as ODA and ACOD are playing such an important role in helping us regain our credibility and changing public perceptions.

6. How do you ensure your skills and knowledge stay current in such a fast-moving industry?

I try and stay up-to-date with our industry by attending events; most recently SILMO in Singapore, watching webinars (thanks ODA), YouTube videos (Laramy-K offer some great videos), keeping in touch with all reps and customer service teams – they are a wealth of knowledge.

7. Why did you become a member of ODA, and what value do you see in the organisation?

It is wonderful to have a united voice that represents the dispensing community. They have so many resources at their fingertips that makes them indispensable.

8. What would you say to others thinking of joining Optical Dispensers Australia?

If you are looking for a supportive community with a wealth of knowledge, join!



Joshua Oronce-Simpson has started a side business offering a mobile optical dispensing service to people in their own home or workplace.