

## OBM General Meeting #4 (1/14/2021): Networking with ODs!

6:30: Start of meeting and OBM Board Introductions

6:40: Intro from Ron Kemper (University and Student Relations Manager) from VSP (Feel free to email him at [ron.kemper@vsp.com](mailto:ron.kemper@vsp.com))

- Our doctors tonight are VSP Global's Ambassadors!

6:50: We now split into breakout rooms where everyone gets a chance to ask the doctors questions! Background information regarding each doctor can be found on the "Doctor BIOs" sheet.

### **Dr. Lee**

What involvements should students seek out during optometry school?

- Highly recommends going on a VOSH Trip
- Volunteering to step outside of your role as students
- Dabble in research

Why did you decide to do a residency?

- Felt that it elevates your education and career
- Jumpstarts your career faster and gives you great experience through seeing more complex cases
- What are some factors that go into landing your dream residency?
  - good letters of recommendation, be able to effectively walk through a case presented by an interviewer, grades, good clinical rotations, ask a letter writer who is well established with the residency program

How do you market your practice to myopia control patients (her specialty)?

- Strong online presence
- On your website, have a lot of information on myopia control so Google searches can direct potential patients to your website

How do you support organized optometry?

- Through paying her membership dues
- AOA has been instrumental in educating ODs on how to navigate through the pandemic
  - Also regarding how to fight against FTC contacts lens law
  - Important to support your local organized optometry! They are strong advocates for our profession.

### **Dr. Reynolds**

A piece of advice: start laying the groundwork of what you want you to pursue beginning day 1 of when you're in school

- Don't wait until you're graduating. You'll be entering the market with a lot of other new ODs as well.

How has telehealth been working for your practice during the pandemic?

- Feels like doing telehealth during COVID was like building a plane while you're flying it.
- It was new for everyone and so it didn't always work as well.
- It was the strong relationships with the patients that helped the practice overcome this difficult time.

What makes a good OD to you?

- Ability to connect with people
- Think about how you're taking care of someone's family member, and not just a pair of eyeballs
- Understand that your job is to take care of people!

### **Dr. Ruzicka**

What are hiring practices looking for?

- Doctors that can be efficient and handle a heavy patient load
- Getting the results quickly and transitioning onto the next patient efficiently
- Doing well with refractions and keeping patients happy and coming back
- Being able to listen to and solve your patients' problems

Why an MBA?

- Just always been a desire of his
- MBA is not necessary to start your own private practice
- Would like to teach a practice management course at Berkeley Optometry in the future

How to build a patient base from a cold practice?

- He utilized traditional methods like handing out flyers (note that this was in the 1990s)
- Very difficult to start cold
- Takes time to really earn a profit
- Keeping your staff happy may be the hardest part of running a practice

### **Dr. Burke**

What are you looking for in new ODs?

- Very patient centered
- Providers who bring balance to her practice and may have passions/specialties that are different from hers
- Knowledge with social media is a big plus, since social media presence is so strong nowadays
  - Also people who will most likely stick around
    - Ex: those who may have roots in the area

Fun Fact: She took out \$315,000 of loans to start her own practice, on top of her existing 6 figure student loans.

- Optometry specific loans do exist!

### **Dr. Heitmeyer**

What are you looking for in a new OD?

- Good personality, good communication skills
- Someone who can treat the staff well
- Unique skill sets

Does your practice utilize social media?

- They do have an Instagram and Facebook but don't always update them frequently due to how busy their practice is.
- He does believe that someone who is social media savvy can be beneficial to a practice and this could be a good marketing trait to have

How can ODs market their practices better than online retailers?

- Educate your patients on the importance of quality care and products!

8:10:

Congratulations to our raffle winners! Estie, you'll be making everyone smoothies with your prize, right?

8:15:

End of meeting!

Feel free to email the doctors if you have any lingering questions.

Their emails can be found in the "Doctors BIOS" sheet

Next Meeting will be sometime in March... Date TBD!