



# Robert Bell

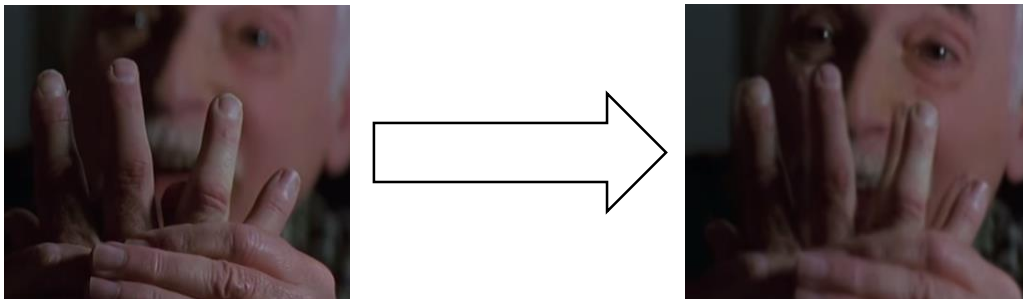
CONFOUNDING PATIENT EXPECTATIONS

October 13, 2014

## Minutes

Robert is an expert in coaching effective selling skills to Eye Care Professionals to help them increase their sales. He wasn't the volunteer kind of guy but one day when he does he is moved by a patient who puts on a pair of readers and starts crying and says "Now I can finally fill out a job application." He is the managing partner of the Visionaries Group that helps eye care professionals "break rules, ignore tradition, and create a better future." During his presentation he told us about resources we should take advantage of, gave us advice about becoming better salesman, not to see some other types of businesses as competition, and don't be afraid of being a salesman and retail.

Robert showed a scene from Patch Adams where Arthur Mendelson asks Hunter Patch Adams how many fingers he sees and when Adams says he sees four, Mendelson tells Adam's to look beyond his fingers. Robert told us to do the same when we are presented with a problem. There are many ways to solve a problem.



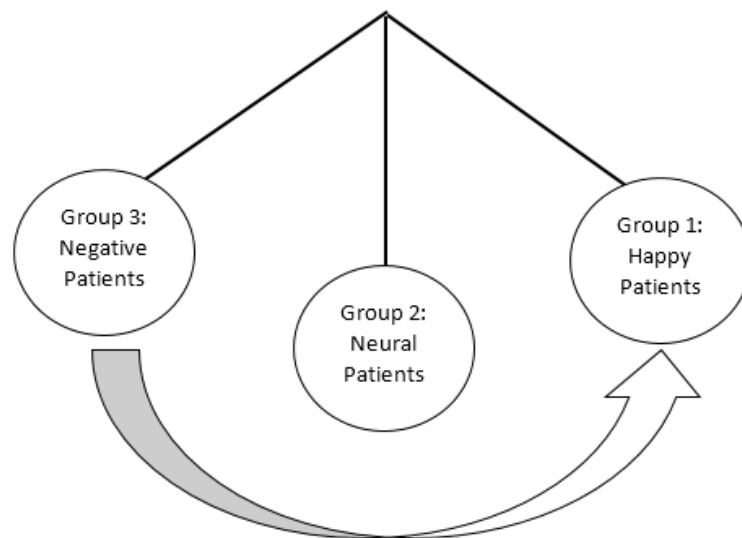
Many patients complain that their glasses are too expensive. Why is this? Our members responded with the following:

- Overhead
- The market is owned by one major company
- Time and effort

Robert shared another story with us about a man who he sat next to on an airplane that also thought his glasses cost too much. He asked him how much ha paid for them and when he got them. The man said he got them for about \$175 two years ago. Then, Robert offered him \$500 for his classes under two conditions. First was that he can't go to any medical professional for any sort of eye problem for a year. The man said "Sure!". The second was that he would not allowed to wear contacts or glasses for a whole year. The man responded "Are you crazy! I am blind without these things!" Then he asks what happens if he loses this pair. Does he have a spare pair if it's so important for him to have these? The man says he doesn't. This story illustrated how Robert Bell likes to make people reach their own conclusions rather than talk AT them. He not only proved to the man that his glasses were worth more than what he spent and probably even convinced him to go buy another pair.

A lot of optometrist do not like to think of themselves as salesman but Robert disagrees. He thinks that we are all salesman. Many of our members looked down on companies like Warby Parker and Luxotica. Many of us cringed when he asked what we thought of retail. He then told us that optometry is one of the only health care professions that has retail attached to it. Retail is not evil. Optometrists should have a basic understanding of what they have in their optical dispensaries. He is by no means telling optometrists to memorize what they have pair by pair but to at least have a general knowledge to help their patients. Another point he brought up was "selling from the chair." It is a very important strategy that many doctors are not doing. He encourages doctors to sell more than just one pair. He encourages optometrists to ask questions to their patients instead of telling them only the benefits of what they have to offer. For example, ask them if the benefits would help better their sight and how it would help better their sight. Let them reach the conclusion themselves. This strategy also helps minimize buyer's remorse later on. He finished this section of his speech by telling us not to look down on companies like Warby Parker and Luxotica. There are 500 other frame companies and if Luxotica went out of business tomorrow, nothing would be different. Instead asking ourselves "How do I compete with them," he encouraged us to ask ourselves "How are they going to compete with me?". This attitude is very important because as an optometrist you can offer more than a website.

His last take home message was "selling is based on motion". There are three types of patients. Group 1 is the happy patient which makes about 10% of your patient base. This group trusts what you have to say and will follow your advice. They are the easiest patients to sell things to. Group 2 is the neutral group. This group makes up about 80% of your patient base. They are the one's sitting on the fence. Group 3 is the negative patient. They make up 10% of your patient base. They are the one's that are unhappy with the system.



We said that Group 1 (the happy patients) are the easiest ones to sell to. Which group is the second easiest? It's not Group 2 (the neutral patients) but its actually Group 3, the negative patients. Why? Because, they are in pain. They are the ones that can be brought to where the positive patients are because they are easier to move. So what do you do? Ask them pain questions.

**Optometrist:** How do you use your glasses? Do you take them off when you read?

**Patient:** Yes, I take them off when I read.

**Optometrist:** How often?

**Patient:** A lot.

**Optometrist:** Does it bother you?

**Patient:** Yes.

**Optometrist:** How much does it bother you?

**Patient:** A lot!

**Optometrist:** Well can I help you with it?

**Patient:** Sure.

**Optometrist:** (PRESENTATION TIME!) What if I told you they have lenses that allow you to see far but also help you see up close without you having to take them off? Would that help you?

**Patient:** Yes!

The presentation should not only talk about the benefits. Let them own their own answer, let them reach their own conclusions instead of lecturing them.

We were very lucky to have Robert Bell come and speak to us. He motivated us to think differently about retail and gave us advice on how to be better salesman. Overall, it was a great learning experience!

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## Useful Resources

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