

Shining a New Light on Photochromics

**Are you taking
advantage
of the new
technology?**

By Julie Bos

As a real estate agent, Steven practically lives in his car—driving potential buyers to and from specific properties, showing houses, and soliciting new listings in certain neighborhoods.

However, he's often frustrated by how many times a day he must change his prescription glasses.

When it's overcast outside, he uses his polarized lenses to protect his eyes from glare, but these sunglasses often seem too dark. When he's in direct sunlight, he chooses his photochromic lenses that automatically darken to provide the maximum protection from sunlight, but they don't block glare since they're not polarized. And when driving in sunny conditions, he trades his photochromic lenses—which don't darken behind the car windshield—for traditional sunglasses that help block the bright sunshine and blinding reflective glare, but they remain a single dark color, regardless of the light conditions.

Thankfully, Steven's plight can be resolved with a brand new lens technology—one that represents a very exciting development in the photochromic market—a lens called Drivewear® from Younger Optics.

Just released last September, Drivewear represents a landmark milestone in the photochromic category. Many labs, however, are just beginning to understand its innovative benefits. Consider the following frequently asked questions to boost your knowledge of Drivewear lenses—and how they can lead to more business for you.

Q. Why is Drivewear so innovative?

A. After years of development, Drivewear is the first polarized photochromic lens to darken behind the windshield of a car. This new lens category successfully combines two advanced technologies—Transitions Photochromic Technology and NuPolar polarization technology. Drivewear is currently available in single-vision, as well as progressive lenses.

Q. How does the lens technology work?

A. Drivewear lenses utilize NuPolar polarized

Rx technology to provide drivers with protection from blinding glare. At the same time, its advanced dyes, which are activated by Transitions, respond to visible (ambient) light in addition to ultraviolet (UV) light. This enables Drivewear lenses to adapt to varying lighting conditions and improve visual acuity for drivers even behind the windshield of a car.

Low Light Use—
In low light (overcast conditions, the lenses take on a green/yellow color that provides high contrast, minimizes glare and maximizes the amount of useful light reaching the eye.

Driving in Daylight—
In bright daylight, behind the windshield of a car, Drivewear lenses change to a copper color, which reduces glare and excess visual light, and highlights reds and greens to maintain good traffic signal recognition.

Bright Outdoor Use—Finally, in bright outdoor conditions, the lenses become a dark, reddish-brown color, providing maximum comfort in high light conditions by filtering excess light so the eye doesn't become saturated. Plus, because Drivewear lenses are activated by Transitions, your

customers will have the security of knowing their glasses block 100 percent of UVA and UVB rays.

Q. What has been the reaction from patients and ECPs?

A. According to Hal Walker, co-owner of Superior Optical Labs, Ocean Springs, Miss., "Customers and ECPs both are very excited about this new product—not just about the lens itself,

but also about the advanced technology that marries a photochromic lens with a polarized lens. Many of the older dispensers say, 'wow, it's about time' and 'we've been waiting for this forever.'"

Walker added, "There are a lot of people with blue eyes like me, and that makes us extremely sensitive to reflective glare. I like the concept of a traditional photochromic lens, but because I'm so sensitive to glare, I had to go from my Transitions lens to a polarized lens every time I went outside, even on a cloudy day. Now, with the Drivewear lens offering built-in polarization, it opens up a whole new world for me. Essentially, my Drivewear lens becomes a one-pair sunshade for me—and

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probably for a lot of other people for whom a photochromic lens is simply not enough."

John Art, president of Interstate Optical in Mansfield, Ohio, agrees that Drivewear lenses are already a big hit. "There is definitely a lot of interest in Drivewear—making it a big topic of conversation with our customers," he said. "They like the marriage of the two technologies, and the fact that the lens is positioned as a driving lens helps separate it from all the other lens products out there. It's a very exciting new product."

Q. How can my lab promote Drivewear lenses effectively?

A. Since the release of Drivewear lenses in September, many labs are making a big marketing push for photochromics.

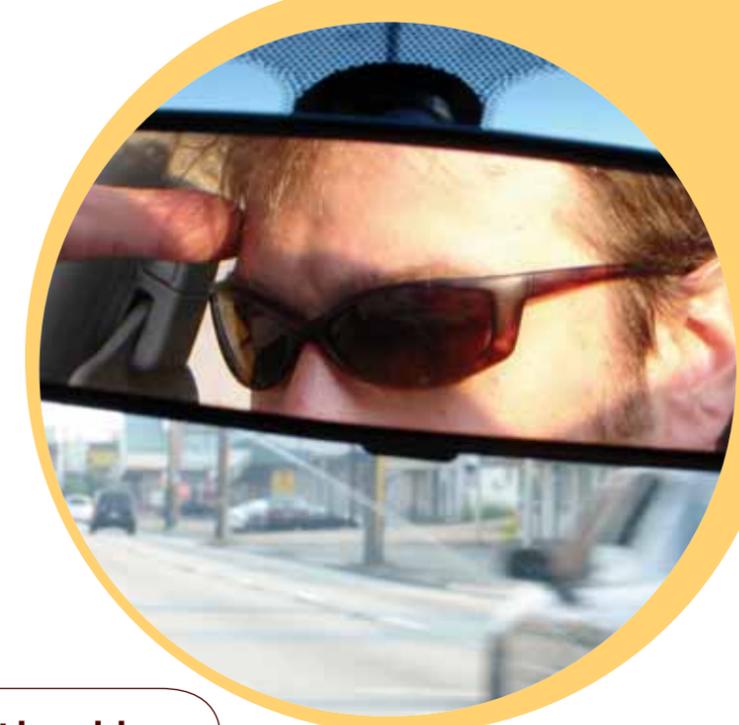
Superior Optical Labs, for example, began a big push for Transitions, offering deals on other types of lenses as add-ons. Plus, this company will continue to offer "value" lens packages that include frames, lenses and an AR coating at a discount that increases ECP's profit margins.

If your lab wants to boost sales of photochromic lenses—and Drivewear lenses in particular—you'll need to start with some education.

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Consider these resources:

- Start with the Drivewear Web site—www.drivewearlens.com—designed to educate labs, ECPs and consumers alike.
- Use Younger Optics' promotional tools, including a three-lens key chain that demonstrates the three functions of Drivewear.
- Watch for Younger Optics' next national tour, which provides a seminar-style education forum, dinner, and the chance to earn an hour of continuing education credit. For a list of upcoming tour cities and details, visit www.drivewearseminars.com.



IS THE PHOTOCROMICS NICHE GROWING?

New data from the Vision Council of America reveals that while overall lens sales remain relatively flat, sales of photochromic lenses are witnessing impressive growth—demonstrating a 12.8 percent increase in 2006 versus the same time period in 2005.

Optical Industry	Jan.-June 2005	Jan.-June 2006	Percent of Growth
Total Number of Lenses Sold	33.6 million	34.7 million	3.2%
Photochromic Lenses	5.2 million	6.0 million	12.8%
Photochromic Market Share	15.5%	17.3%	

WHO'S A CANDIDATE FOR DRIVEWEAR?

Literally, everyone of driving age is a candidate for Drivewear lenses, but the ones who can benefit the most include:

- Commuters, especially if their drive times are in the early morning and late afternoons when the sun is low on the horizon.
- Professional drivers (e.g., taxi drivers, truck drivers, salespeople, bus drivers, police)
- Elderly—Older drivers often have slower reaction times than younger drivers, and need every advantage they can get.
- Busy parents—Whether driving to the store, soccer practice or school, parents need every advantage to protect themselves and their precious cargo.