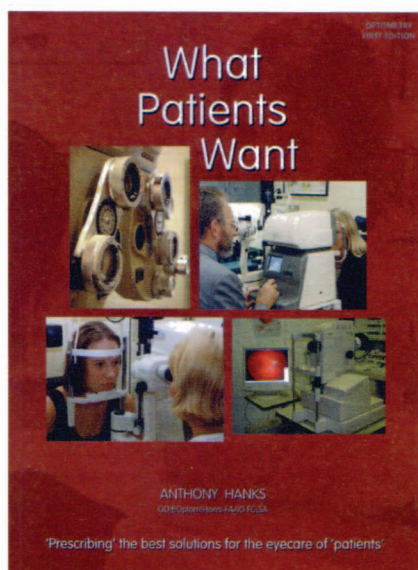


optometry book review



The answer to the million dollar question facing eye care professionals everyday – What Do Patients Want? – could now be within reach. **WRITER Carolyn Koens**

In the follow up to optometrist Dr. Tony Hanks' first book on staff training, *The Optometry Team*, his newly released successor, *What Patients Want*, does away with past assumptions and traditions relating to patients' needs and wants.

Utilising the results of an international eye care consumer survey conducted on four continents and involving almost 2,000 subjects, the book sets out to provide invaluable guidance in the retraining of practitioners' thought processes and techniques when dealing with their patients.

Well recognised and respected in the profession and his community, Dr. Hanks asks consumers for their opinions on exactly what it is they are seeking from their eye care providers, so that optometrists learn to "'prescribe' for their patients rather than just leaving them to browse and shop," he says.

Based on the data collated from the subjects' interests, needs and lifestyles; combined with Dr. Hanks' real life patient experiences, communication techniques, and practical suggestions, the book is a resource 'bible' of knowledge and solutions beneficial to any practice.

"Dr. Hanks asks consumers for their opinions on exactly what it is they are seeking from their eye care providers, so that optometrists learn to "'prescribe' for their patients rather than just leaving them to browse and shop..."

According to Dr. Hanks, "Assumptions are always a popular basis for conclusions, but these can be made far more confidently when the assumptions are replaced with valid and reliable data."

While implementing the ideas the book describes may require some adaption depending on each practice's individual circumstances, it offers a stimulus to improve every staff member's personal and practical skill set and development.

The book's easily digestible, bite sized chunks of information are interspersed with a myriad of easy to comprehend colour graphics, tables, charts, quotes and photo images, all used to illustrate the survey's findings. Dr. Hanks covers how practitioners can apply these results to their practice growth, through improving each step of The Patient Cycle from initial contact right through to delivery and follow up. This is accompanied with a growth plan worksheet, detailing how to plan and implement such strategies.

He also tracks the results of several large recall surveys, reporting what types of recalls are the most effective, the benefits of multiple recalls, age and gender demographic differences, and how the level of these responses compare to that of other professions such as dentistry, endodontics and mammography.

"A common reaction of this book is for experienced practitioners to say, "I wish I had this book 20 years ago." This is now literally true," said Dr. Hanks. "You have easy access to experience, knowledge and resources. You will have no control over what other people do, but you do have control over what you do."

Dr. Hanks said it is also in the interest of patients for their optometrist's practice to be successful in contributing to the community in which it operates.

"One of the most important factors in achieving success is loyal returning patients – this in turn points to the importance of effective recalls," he said.

Carolyn Koens is a freelance writer for *mivision*

Reprinted from *mivision*, April 2011

For more information, or to order a copy, google "Hanks What Patients Want"