

The Terminology We Use

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What we say and the words we choose are an important part of “communication” with our patients.

Remember to be Charming

- ◆ Use friendly phrases which show empathy with patients:
 - “I understand”
 - “Thank You”
 - “It’s a pleasure to see you again”

The Perception You Create

- ◆ Think about the perception created by the words you use?

Many patients have already formed an impression based upon the more commercial advertising of some optical stores. Do we want to reinforce this selling image, or do we want to promote our interest in their eye health and visual welfare?

We can change the perceptions of what we do, but this means that we may need to change some of the words we use in the practice.

- ◆ If we assign low-value terms to the practice of optometry, we degrade

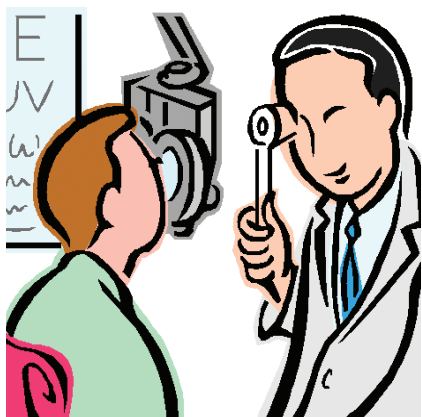


Table:

TERMINOLOGY ALTERNATIVES & THE PERCEPTION THEY MIGHT CREATE

Words Used	Perception?	Suggested Alternative
C.L.”Fitting”	A trained fitter as in a school shoe consultant	“Assessment” or “Examination”
“Trial Lenses”	A trial & error situation, they <i>might</i> be right.	“Demonstration Lenses” or “Diagnostic Lenses”
“Client” or “Customer”	They’ll be trying to <i>sell</i> me something rather than what I <i>need</i> .	“Patient”
“Waiting Room”	I’m on time but I’ll be kept waiting	“Reception Area”
“Job”	A non-technical task	“Spectacles”
“Glasses”	A simpler non-technical implication. (eg Ready-mades are “glasses”).	“Spectacles”

the importance of what we do and diminish its perceived value.

- ◆ The table on this page shows a few examples.
 - As an illustration, the word “fitting” is often associated with the purchase of shoes (and some underwear). This service is usually free; supplied as part of the sale. It is seen as being part of the product, so patients may not expect to pay extra for a contact lens “fitting”?

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This is an excerpt from The Optometry Team, written by optometrist Dr Tony Hanks - now in its’ 4th edition.

The book is available on-line from www.hanksresources.com