

# Review of Optometric Business

www.reviewob.com Printed on July 12, 2023

## The Free Contact Lens Platform Boosting Our Direct-to-Patient CL Orders 30%

By Hunter Hammond

<https://www.reviewob.com/how-to-sell-more-contact-lenses/>

July 11, 2023

Categories: Contact Lenses, Practice Management

Tags: abb, ABB OPTICAL GROUP, ABB Optical Group2023, Abby, article, contact lens ordering, contact lens ordering technology, contact lens sales, featured, Hammond Hunter



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Hammond, far left, with staff teammates and **Abby**, a member of the team who powers contact lens ordering for the practice, acting as an additional employee.

When you make it a breeze for patients to order contact lenses from you, rather than from an online retailer, contact lens sales soar.

In our practice, implementing **Abby**, a free contact-lens ordering platform from **ABB Optical Group**, changed the trajectory of our contact lens sales by significantly increasing our profitability and boosting our direct-to-patient contact lens orders by nearly 30 percent.

### The Abby Platform Provides Efficiencies for Both Patients & Practice Staff

We have been using Abby since September 2022. We were looking for a patient-facing platform that didn't require a connection to an EHR and was not restricted to a single brand like platforms we have used in the past.

We explored other websites, but those websites' idea of "free shipping" was raising the box price to account for the cost of shipping, and was, therefore, not actually "free." I casually mentioned this to our ABB sales consultant and asked what Abby was about because I had seen it featured on the ABB website and the platform offers free shipping. She was so informative, and the enthusiasm and confidence she had in Abby rubbed off on our staff. Abby was a free shipping platform unlike others I had considered. The Abby team and our ABB sales consultant made the implementation process an effortless and enjoyable experience from the start and we were up and running before we knew it.

Immediately, patients started taking advantage of the free direct-to-patient shipping rather than having their order sent to the office. Direct shipping is not only more convenient for patients, but for our staff as well. No more unboxing orders, sorting them with invoices and orders, notifying patients, then leaving them on a shelf while we wait for the patient to pick up their order.

At the end of 2021, approximately 40 percent of our orders were direct-to-patient orders (DTP). At the end of 2022 it increased to 55.1 percent DTP with half of those orders placed in Q4 alone. By the end of Q1 of 2023, about 67 percent of our orders were DTP and the number continues to grow.

### **Patients Love the Introduction to the “Newest Member of Our Team”**

Patients enjoy the way we present Abby to them, and by present, I mean introduce her as the newest member of our team. Patients get a kick out of it – they really like how connected we are to this story of Abby being a member of our team. Patients also like having control over their ordering process and being able to see the progress of their order.

When we hand a patient their contact lens prescription, we also give them an infographic index card (provided by Abby) and verbally introduce them to Abby. They will need to know this information whether they order the same day, or in the future.

We have learned to refer to Abby as part of the patient experience. Abby is not a website, she is not a platform, she is not somebody we “partner” with. She is a part of our team and is involved in the care of our patients. “This is Abby, she will help you order your contacts,” we tell patients. “Abby will send you an e-mail with your tracking information. If you ever need to call her, here is her number.”

We do *not* say, “If you want to order your contacts, you can go here, and it should have all your information.” Rather, we say “When you are ready to place an order, Abby is on standby with all the information you need. She has your prescriptions on file and will pop up in your e-mail inbox.”

### **Realizing Significant Staff Time Savings**

The amount of time our staff saves, thanks to Abby, is virtually priceless. Abby came at a time when we were experiencing a staff shortage and needed every resource available to focus on patients in our clinic. Decreasing the amount of incoming orders leads to an increase in our ability to use our staff where needed in the moment. The time that was once spent unboxing orders can now be spent providing the highest quality care possible.

Staff love how the ordering is a step-by-step process, leaving less room for error. And we love that the patient receives tracking information from Abby automatically.

### **Abby Keeps Both Us & Our Patients on Track**

We make every effort to place an order right after the patient’s exam. However, Abby has our back even after the patient leaves our office. By actively reaching out to the patient in e-mails and text messages, Abby lets our patients know she is there to place their orders/reorders. One of our favorite ways she does this is by alerting them before it is time to reorder. That means we can

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**[The Contact Lens Ordering Platform Boosting Patient Convenience & Practice Profitability](#)**

**[The CL Ordering Platform that Acts Like an Additional Staff Member](#)**

**[The Insurance Verification Technology Generating \\$50,000+ Monthly in CL & Eyewear Orders](#)**

recapture the patients who did not buy an annual supply, and even better, no more SOS calls from patients on their last pair of contacts! Abby even lets them know when they are past due, or when their Rx has expired. We set up their account including their prescription(s), which is less work for the patient. That is where Abby stands out compared to waiting for patients to come to us.

### **Taking Patient Service to the Next Level**

Having Abby on our team extends a level of care beyond what we can provide in-person. We want patients to know we are always available and do not forget about them once they leave. Abby is a great way to stay connected to our patients and say “Hey! We are here when you need us.” Even beyond business hours.

One of the biggest benefits of Abby is that it’s connected to ABB Optical Group. So, all of our reports reflect the same data whether the orders are placed on Abby or through ABB. The pricing we have with ABB carries over to Abby. This made it a seamless transition for our staff.



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To learn more about the Abby Platform visit [www.helloabby.com](http://www.helloabby.com).