

BUILDING A LEGACY

Michael Blackwood, Southeast Regional Sales Manager for ABB Optical Group and 2025 Regions Sales Manager of the Year winner, brings a mix of industry experience and a practical, metrics-driven approach to conversations with long-established multigenerational practices.



Michael Blackwood

With three decades of experience in the industry, and 11 years with ABB, he appreciates the way that independent eye care professionals work hard to cultivate continuous improvement and build their legacy. That's particularly true for multigenerational practices where the owner wants to ensure a strong transition to his or her children or other family members.

One message keeps coming through: these independent owners aren't coasting toward retirement. They're still growing, often well above regional and market averages. That consistent outperformance is the first thing Blackwood takes away from his business discussions.

Regular check-ins

He frames ABB's role the way a financial planner might frame a portfolio. Instead of a once-a-year check-in, he sits down quarterly—often over Business Reviews—with practice leaders and their ABB account teams. Those meetings are focused, deliberate reviews of the metrics that matter: sales trends, business trends and forward-looking indicators that show where the practice is heading. Blackwood says the tone of these meetings is practical and collaborative. "We're not just thanking them for their business. We're asking, 'How are you trending, and where do you want to go next?'"

The analytics ABB brings to the table provides practices with clarity on several critical fronts. Blackwood cites daily disposable contact lens growth and ship-to-patient trends. These metrics are tracked not only in comparison with previous performance but also compared to

the top 500 practices. He says that share-vendor reports and margin analyses reveal whether a top-selling lens is also the most profitable choice. ABB compiles the top-10 selling lenses and highlights opportunities in showing doctors or staff

on strategy and patient care rather than administrative hiccups.

Blackwood also sees a recurring mindset among the owners he works with. Rather than winding down as they think about succession, many are actively seeking ways

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members how a higher-margin first option still meets the patients' clinical needs and expectations. Those recommendations aren't about steering toward a brand, he says. They're about aligning product choice with both patient outcomes and sustainable business performance.

Operational efficiencies

The operational efficiencies ABB provides are equally important. By acting as a single distributor that works with every major manufacturer, ABB removes the need for practices to manage multiple vendor relationships and separate ordering systems. That consolidation reduces staff workload, cuts administrative errors and centralizes billing and reporting. Blackwood notes that when staff spend less time on procurement logistics, practices can reallocate resources toward revenue-generating clinical work—and owners can concentrate

to advance the practice's capabilities and value. That forward focus—matched with ABB's regular Business Reviews, the Digital Price Monitor and trend benchmarking—becomes a leading indicator of future success. For multigenerational practices preparing to pass a business to the next generation, these tools help ensure the legacy is not only preserved but strengthened. Better data, smarter product mix decisions and streamlined operations translate into a healthier business to hand off.

Ultimately, Blackwood describes ABB's value as twofold. The company delivers unbiased, data-driven advice and practical efficiencies that free clinics to do what they do best. For independent, family-run practices aiming to build long-term legacies, that combination provides the structure to grow above the market, protect margins and focus on patient-centered innovation rather than administrative friction. **PA**



The National Sales Meeting generates energy and enthusiasm among ABB Optical Group team members to serve accounts better.