



UNITED KINGDOM

Encouraging news – but not for everyone

In encouraging news for the UK Optical Goods Industry, 157 of the top 494 companies in the market are reported to be growing at more than 10 per cent per annum and making healthy profits. However, according to industry analysts Plimsoll, while many of these companies are breaking new ground and leading a sustainable recovery in the market, there are 36 other companies whose headline grabbing sales growth masks something much more sinister.

David Pattison, senior analyst and author of the new Plimsoll Analysis explains, 'Firstly, it makes a nice change to have some positive news to report; 157 growing, increasingly profitable companies have either tapped into new, fast growing revenue streams or are just the best performers in the old ones. Anyone struggling to make the most of the recovery should look at these companies and ask themselves

“what do these guys sell, make or do differently to me?”

However, Pattison warns that there are 36 companies achieving this eye catching sales growth but their profitability tells a very different story. 'Essentially there are two types of growth in the market – good v bad. Thirty-six companies have achieved over 10 per cent sales growth but in doing so have seen their profit margin collapse. They are simply overtrading. Ten of these companies have been loss making for two years – even with double digit sales growth I doubt they will make it to a third.'

On the subject of companies getting it wrong at both ends of the scale, Pattison offers this warning, 'While the market continues to recover and the 157 performers show the way, there are 80 companies facing a very bleak future indeed. Losing sales, profits and probably most

of their remaining options, these companies have been rated as Danger in our report. Time is running out and only a takeover or a rapid turnaround is likely to redeem their situation'.

The new Plimsoll Industry Analysis: Optical Goods will record instantly which companies are prospering in the post recession market place, those taking a big gamble and those heading for trouble. It gives an instant performance rating on the top 494 companies in the market and an overview of which companies are ripe for acquisition and who is set to be buying. Each company is assessed using the Plimsoll Model – a graphical and written analysis that lays bare the facts and gives an instant opinion.

Readers of OPTICAL WORLD are entitled to a £50 discount on this report. Simply call 01642 626400 for further details and quote reference PR/HC40.



UNITED STATES

OLA 2010 to link-up with International Vision Expo

The 2010 Annual Meeting of the Optical Laboratories Association will be held in Las Vegas on October 7-9 located with the exhibits at International Vision Expo West.

'Delegates will have exclusive access to all the features that make the OLA Annual Meeting so valuable to optical labs', said OLA vice president Mike Francesconi, 'and they will also have full access to the exhibit hall at International Vision Expo West. OLA members will have everything they have always had from both of these events, with the added benefit of reduced expenses, travel, and time commitment'.

The OLA and International Vision Expo West have arranged exclusive exhibit hours for OLA delegates, as well as a VIP lounge in the exhibit hall, available to OLA delegates during all the hours that the exhibit hall is open. All of the traditional OLA events – education sessions, networking luncheons, receptions, and awards ceremonies – will be

held in the meeting rooms used by International Vision Expo West.

'The sequence of events during the day has been reversed', said OLA executive director Bob Dziuban, 'with exhibit time in the morning and education in the afternoon, after the networking luncheon. We also planned based on OLA delegates travel preferences'.

'Tradition + Vision = The Future is the theme for the 2010 OLA Annual Meeting', said Francesconi, 'and that reflects both what is going on in the optical lab business as well as the discussions that are underway between OLA and The Vision Council. As the program chairman for 2010, I have been using OLA member's comments and suggestions to prepare an agenda that tackles the important issues and problems facing optical labs. Education will feature in quite a few panel discussions of lab owners and managers sharing their experience with these issues and problems'.



UNITED KINGDOM

Online contact lens ordering brings patient satisfaction

Contact lens manufacturer UltraVision initially launched their online ordering system in 2008, and online orders have accelerated recently, growing by over 500 per cent in the last year alone. The bespoke system allows registered practitioners in the UK and worldwide to place and track their contact lenses orders via the Internet, 24 hours a day.

The online ordering system is directly linked to UltraVision's manufacturing system, enabling orders to be processed automatically into the manufacturing laboratory for a rapid turnaround.

All of UltraVision's disposable lenses are available to order via the website and the majority of their tailor-made lenses can also be ordered online. Only the most complex lenses have to be ordered via email, if sending topography images, or over the telephone.