



MAKING AN

INFORMED CHOICE

CHOOSING AN INDEPENDENT
OPTOMETRY PRACTICE

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Helen Corson

I have worn glasses since I was 9 when I started to become short sighted and struggled to see the blackboard in school.

As I got older, I could never find frames that fitted me or gave the outward projection I wished to show the world – I felt that I radiated geek when what I wanted, was to look the height of style and sophistication! My eyewear did not reflect my personality and this made me unhappy.

When I bought Jackson, I vowed to establish the practice as the go to place for eyewear that is stylish, comfortable and anything but DULL.

A place where customers could come to find something that sang to their soul and left them feeling excited about wearing glasses.

If you hate glasses or have never been able to find the perfect pair, Jacksons Opticians is the place for you. We source frames from all over the world to find quality niche eyewear that will fit you perfectly and make you feel fantastic. We are glasses wearers ourselves so we feel your pain!

INTRODUCTION

choosing an optometry practice -

a seemingly straightforward process, holds nuanced implications for those seeking not only stylish eyewear but a comprehensive eye care experience.

In the United Kingdom, the choice between independent optometry practices and chain retailers represents a decision that transcends the mere acquisition of glasses. This exploration examines why selecting eyewear and eyecare from an independent optometry practice is not just a preference, but an investment in personal service, expertise, unique product selection and outstanding eye care. Despite the potential higher cost associated with independent practices, the discerning consumer may find the added value justifiable.

CHAPTER I

The Pinnacle of Personalised Service

Tailored Eyewear Selection

The hallmark of independent optometry practices lies in commitment to understanding the unique lifestyle considerations of each customer.

Through in-depth consultations, they seek to transcend the transactional nature of the eyewear acquisition, striving to align the chosen eyewear not just with visual requirements but with individuals' personality, preferences, and daily activities.

This tailored approach ensures that eyewear not only corrects vision but becomes an integral part of the wearer's identity.

At Jacksons we like to get to know our patients and understand what they are seeking from their new eyewear. Have they experienced problems in the past? How do they feel about wearing glasses? Do they have any specific concerns?

We allow 45 minutes for a styling consultation to work through the recommendations of their eye examination and see how these can be incorporated into new eyewear. Sometimes it can take longer, particularly if there are multiple pairs to choose! If this happens, we will book a follow up appointment so there is no sense of pressure or rush.

We always encourage customers to bring any family member or friend who is key in the decision-making process, but where this is not possible, we are happy to help with taking pictures.



CHAPTER I

Human Interaction in a Digital Landscape

In an era dominated by automated transactions, independent optometry practices emphasize the human touch.

Face-to-face consultations afford the opportunity to build relationships, delving beyond clinical aspects to address concerns, preferences, and style aspirations.

This relational approach transforms the eyewear journey into a collaborative and holistic experience, fostering trust and ensuring that customers feel heard and understood.

Conversely, chain retailers, driven by high-volume, transactional models, often prioritize efficiency over personalized service. The sheer volume of people processed may result in less individualized attention, leaving customers feeling like mere entries in a system, rather than individuals with distinct eyewear needs.

At Jacksons we believe in relationships and work hard at building them. Many of our patients have been with us since the time of the late Mr Jackson!

Our dispensing process allows us to work with our patients for their best visual outcome in the selection of both their frames and lenses.



CHAPTER II

Expertise and Specialisation – Navigating the Complexity of Optometric Practice

Depth of Knowledge in Independent Optometry Practices

Independent optometry practices are characterized by the depth of knowledge and expertise maintained by their qualified professionals. Optometrists and dispensing staff undergo continuous training, ensuring they remain at the forefront of advancements in eye care.

This specialised knowledge empowers these practitioners to offer comprehensive services that go beyond routine eye exams, extending to custom fittings, adjustments, and specialized solutions for complex vision issues.

At Jacksons, we pride ourselves on being one of the best equipped optometry practices in Cheshire. Our Optical Coherence Topographer (OCT)

and Optos widefield laser retinal scanner, allow us to offer our patients extended eye health examinations to detect sign of eye disease as soon as possible.

Our Essilor VisiOffice X enables us to take individualised measurements to produce bespoke prescription lenses for our patients – a service which is not widely available on the High Street.

We believe strongly in the concepts of CANI – Constant and Never-ending Improvement, and reflective training. We strive to ever improve our customer experience by engaging external trainers to improve our skills and knowledge base, but also by owning any issues that do arise and implementing strategies to prevent reoccurrence.

CHAPTER III

Curating a Diverse and Exclusive Product Selection

Independent optometry practices pride themselves on curating a diverse and unique eyewear collection. This goes beyond mere functionality. Eyewear must fit and be comfortable but beyond this it must express individuality.

Exclusive designer frames, niche brands, and handmade options populate their inventory, providing customers with a broader range of choices that cater to varied tastes and styles.



Diversity in Eyewear Selection

At Jacksons we know scour the worlds frame collections to bring our customers something a little different. We pride ourselves on having a frame for every face - we purchase our stock thinking about real people and real prescriptions.

We strive to offer our patients a selection of frames which fit and are beautiful. From rimless to heavyweight acetate, delicate rose gold to matt black, we have it all.

The Allure of Exclusive Options

Discovering the perfect pair of glasses goes hand in hand with the allure of exclusivity. Unearthing hidden gems and selecting frames that deviate from mainstream choices becomes part of the personalized eyewear journey.

Customers appreciate the ability to express their personality through eyewear that stands out, reflecting the distinctive character of independent optometry practices.

Diversity in Eyewear Selection

At Jacksons, many of our frames are part of production runs limited to fewer than 500 frames worldwide. It is therefore unlikely to find your friend wearing the same!

Some of our collections can be bespoke allowing us to adjust both size and colour to deliver exactly what our customers want.

Mainstream Challenges for Chain Retailers

While chain retailers aim for accessibility and familiarity, their need to cater to mass audiences may result in a more standardized selection that caters to popular trends but overlooks the diversity of individual tastes. The balance between quantity and exclusivity becomes a strategic challenge for chain retailers, potentially limiting their ability to offer unique eyewear options.

At Jacksons, we do not pretend to be the right practice for everyone. We serve customers who want personal service, outstanding eyecare and quality frames with a touch of individuality. We do stock some more sober and conservative frame options but also carry a selection of more individual style and colour options for customers looking for something more unique. From black to electric blue, burgundy to fluorescent pink, tortoiseshell to mustard yellow..... many of our patients are pleasantly surprised by how well these bolder frame colours can work. On many occasions, a frame put on “just to humour us” has become the final choice!

CHAPTER IV

The Essence of Durability and Comfort A Commitment to Quality

A Commitment to Quality

Independent optometry practices are underpinned by an unwavering commitment to quality. This commitment begins with the meticulous selection of high-quality materials for frames, ensuring durability and comfort. Beyond aesthetics, this dedication extends to using the worlds leading lens designs teamed with options for advanced coatings, anti-glare treatments, and innovative materials that enhance the overall eyewear experience.

Bespoke lens measurements

At Jacksons, we understand that true visual comfort is about more than just the spectacle prescription. We like, where possible, to supply our customers with bespoke lenses which are generated specifically for them and their specific frame choice.

We use our Essilor Visiooffice X to measure parameters such as head tilt, eye movement versus head movement

when reading, text position when reading, where a mobile phone is held (its different to where you would hold a book) and dominant eye. These measurements, together with the spectacle prescription are used to manufacture a unique lens to give the best possible visual solution.

Balancing Cost-Effectiveness in Chain Retailers

In the pursuit of affordability and mass production, chain retailers may face challenges in maintaining the same level of quality. Striking a delicate balance between cost-effectiveness and quality can result in compromises on materials and craftsmanship. While this approach may enhance accessibility, it may come at the expense of the durability and comfort offered by independent optometry practices.

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CHAPTER V

Fostering Community Connections

Integral Components of Local Communities

Independent practices, unlike chain retailers with their corporate structure, are part of the local community, contributing to the unique character and charm that defines a neighbourhood. Supporting these local businesses extends beyond transactions; it becomes an investment in a vibrant local economy.

Many operate as family-owned establishments, further reinforcing their ties to the community. The familial dynamics create an environment where customers feel like part of an extended family. This personal connection transcends standard transactions, contributing to an overall experience that recognizes the importance of community support in maintaining and improving eye health.

At Jacksons we like to get to know our patients as people not just as customers and love it when someone bobs in to say hello! just because they were passing.

The practice was founded in 1888. Started by Mr Turner in Crewe, his daughter went on to marry his associate Mr SW Jackson.

They in turn had a son, Cameron who relocated the practice to Nantwich. Sadly, Cameron Jackson passed away in 2007 but it is only recently that the last of his staff retired from the business.

Impersonal Dynamics in Chain Retailers

In contrast, chain retailers may face challenges in nurturing the same level of community ties. The sheer scale of these operations can make it challenging to establish the familial connections that are often present in independent practices.

The balance between corporate interests and local community engagement may be tilted more toward the former, potentially impacting the depth of relationships built with individual customers.

CHAPTER VI

Continuing Care - Beyond the Initial Transaction

Building Long-Term Relationships and Customer Satisfaction

The holistic approach to eye care extends beyond the initial transaction. Independent optometry practices understand the importance of building long-term relationships with their customers.

Follow-up services, ranging from adjustments to addressing visual concerns, become integral to this relationship-building process. The commitment to continued care positions these practices as partners in maintaining optimal eye health throughout a customer's life, ensuring not only satisfaction with the initial purchase but ongoing support.

At Jacksons we encourage our customers to complain! If there is anything that they are concerned about relating to their choice of eyewear or the quality of their vision, we want

to know about it. We want people to be happy with their choice, so we keep in touch with them until their concern has been satisfactorily resolved.

Sometimes this means things need to be changed. Our “60 day love your eyewear guarantee” gives our customers confidence that where they are unhappy with their choice, for whatever reason, we will look after them.



Comprehensive Commitment to Customer Satisfaction

Independent optometry practices excel in providing ongoing support, fostering a customer experience that transcends the confines of a single transaction. The personalization and attention to detail in these follow-up services contribute to a holistic eyewear journey, one where customers feel valued, understood, and cared for beyond the initial purchase.

In contrast, chain retailers may find it challenging to replicate this level of personalized care across their broad customer base.

At Jacksons we know understand how spectacle frames need ongoing attention. Frame fit is for comfort and optimal vision. Just as cars require servicing to keep them running efficiently, so does eyewear, We encourage customers to book in for a complementary “eyewear service” every six months or so to ensure that all is well. Sometimes consumables like nose pads need replacement and we carry a large selection in stock to effect on-the-spot replacement most cases.



CONCLUSION

A Strategic Investment in Comprehensive Eye Care

In this thorough exploration of the advantages of purchasing eyewear from independent optometry practices in the UK, the discerning consumer finds compelling reasons to justify the potential higher cost. The personalised service, expertise, unique product selection, quality, and continuing care provided by independent practices contribute not only to a superior eyewear purchase experience but also to the customers ocular health. The decision to choose an independent optometry practice is not merely a matter of preference; it is a strategic investment in a comprehensive eye care journey that encompasses both style and health. By understanding the nuanced differences between the two options, educated consumers can make an informed choice for their eyewear and eyecare journey.



What people are saying about us



As a small independent optician, I found the staff very professional the whole experience was excellent from the eye test to the choice of glasses A much better experience and care than the bigger high street chains. I would highly recommend Jackson's Optician
Simon Hall.



Having struggled with varifocals from large high street chains in the past I now visit Jacksons for a more bespoke, personalised service which is exactly what I get. Very friendly with a high level of service
Ashley Weaver.



Staff are wonderful. Very helpful in helping me choose a lovely frame, a very daunting task for a contact lens wearer. Always on hand if I have a problem, always great service. Thanks everyone
Christine Povey.

Very professional and friendly. Excellent service
Mike Hoppo



An excellent, professional and efficient service, while at the same time being personal, thorough and unhurried.
Peter Shea

A lovely atmosphere and so helpful too. Very friendly, patient, supportive and understanding. Thank you.
Margaret Sutton.



Thoroughly recommend this opticians. I recently suffered a partial detachment of the retina which was diagnosed by Helen. She immediately made me an appointment at Leighton Hospital at Crewe. I have also recently purchased my first set of distance glasses from them and am pleased with the professional and friendly service.
Mike Butler.



Can't thank the staff at Jackson opticians enough. My new glasses are light weight, no pressure on my nose and ears at all! Love them.
Nicola Breadon

This, in my opinion, is an excellent optician with first class service and very friendly and experienced staff. I would highly recommend this optician to anyone who cares to ask.
Peter Wright.