



Alain Mikli



Alexandre Asseraf



Christine Lolzy



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Elie Vannier

replaced once a year. To underline the difference he told of a customer who had had one pair of sunglasses for 40 years: "But that's terrible for business!"

What does the retailer need? Vannier: "We need just what a cow needs: fresh grass and water. That means we retailers need a new product that is better and cheaper than the one from last year." But then he immediately corrected this statement which only could have been made by a short sighted retailer. For a good salesman wants products which are more expensive than those from last year while looking the same.

To prove his point, he drew on the example of the Swiss office equipment manufacturer, USM, whose furniture is bought by architects and designers. They have been making the same items of furniture for nearly 50 years without any appreciable changes. The same products in the same colours – only the price increases year by year. And he added: "What a wonderful business!"

Passion for this wonderful business came over in the talk by Christine Lolzy, as she presented Solaris as her baby. She has been working now for nine years in responsible positions at GrandVision, whereby it is not of primary importance whether money is being earned with Solaris' business plan or not.

The facts: 40 branches of which four are in the Middle East. Average sales per branch are around € 1 million, equivalent to a turnover of € 20,000 per square metre. The stock is turned over about four times a year. 1,000 sunglasses per branch, of 50 different brands, divided into seven segments. The segments are: Fashion + Designer; Classic + Protection; Sports + Technical; Urban; Low cost; Children's; Luxury. 10 percent of all sunglasses sold are own brands, which documents the mission to sell at reasonable prices.

The concept: Exclusively fashion sunglasses. Shop design is kept simple but effective at prime sites. Offer the widest possible, ultimate fashion range to the customer. Unhurried self-selection, but with a well trained specialist on hand if help is required. Customer and guarantee card.

Bringing statistics to life

In the last few years, Mark Mackenzie from Strategy with Vision (SWV) has carved out a unique position for himself as the specialist for market surveys. Anyone in need of market figures turns to Mark. At Cambio he tried to answer the question, how many sunglasses are bought in Europe, where and by whom and what proportion of these sunglasses have corrective lenses.

In Europe (without the new EU member states), in 2004, a total of 88.8 million pairs of sunglasses were sold including 7.8 million pairs with corrective lenses, equivalent to 8.8 percent. The highest sales of sunglasses (15.5 million pairs) were in Italy. However, only

4.5 percent of these were corrective sunglasses – easily the lowest proportion.

France, on the other hand, has the highest percentage of correctives: 2.3 million pairs, compared to 9.6 million pairs with plane lenses. The reason for this high percentage is relatively easy to explain: In France most franchise chains offer a second pair of spectacles at a very reasonable price. Thus Optic 2000 advertises two titanium frames from their own collection with Essilor Airwear (single vision with tint and antireflection) for € 199.

In Germany, opticians stock the cheapest sunglasses at an average price of € 15.07 and resell them to the customer for € 45.20 on average. Things are different in Italy where the average retail price is € 84.15, the sunglasses having bought in for around € 18.05.

Eat more Curly Kale

While Emeritus Prof. Dr. Siegfried Hünig's main specialisation may be organic chemistry, as a sufferer he is certainly well qualified to talk about the chemical reactions caused by the effect of UV light on the retina, which ultimately can lead to age related degeneration of the macula. The causes lie in today's greatly increased life expectancy, more time spent outside and the higher blue content in the white lighting common in offices and supermarkets today. For this reason even untinted spectacle lenses should have UV protection up to 400 nm, which technically is not a problem today. In his paper, "Vision impairment in old age: prevention and alleviation", written with the advice of Prof. Albert Augustin and published under <http://klinikum-karlsruhe.de/fileadmin/files/makulahuenig.pdf>. Prof. Hünig writes that Lutein, as an antioxidant, is important to break down the free radicals in the eye. The highest amount of Lutein (at 21 mg per 100 g) is to be found in curly kale. The paper even includes recipes at the end!

In his talk, Alexandre Asseraf, member of the MaFo editorial board, formulated criteria for choosing sunglasses. He tried to establish criteria to find out how far the range of sunglasses available differs from the wishes of the customers. And he asked the provocative question: "Do we actually offer our customers what they want?" In this he drew on the study by the ESA, in which the wearers of sunglasses surveyed stated that they paid more attention to protection offered against dangerous UV light than to the price. Thus in future, it is important for ESA to develop tools to assist its members in selling qualitatively high grade sunglasses.

Looking across the big pond

Henry Lane, Vice President of the Sunglass Association of America (SAA), showed a baffling array of charts to shed light on the American market, which must have drawn tears to the eyes of those