



Vision Source[®] TRUSTED COLLEAGUE

Vincente Calderón, OD

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Born Entrepreneurs Carve a Reputation for Progressive Practice

While Vicente Calderón, OD, was in optometry school, his older brother Mario Calderón was making a name for himself in the entertainment industry. He had his own Spanish-language TV show locally, and he acted in some commercials, some of which aired nationally. Then nearly three years ago, the older brother decided he'd keep his investment money in the family and helped his brother start an optometric practice in the Bronx. Now Mario Calderón serves as the administrator and partner in the practice – and some patients recognize him from his TV work.

People watching the brothers grow up probably aren't at all surprised; they were born businessmen. As a youngster, Dr. Calderón bought little makeup compacts from vendors at the Javits Center in New York City for about a quarter each and sold them at about a dollar to the girls in his high school. Mario Calderón purchased a button-making machine and sold custom buttons to convention-goers.

Today, the practice is the only Vision Source[®] practice in the Bronx. But that's not their only differentiator. Theirs is the only practice in that part of the city with Optos technology, and it's almost completely paperless. There's not a file cabinet to be seen. Patients who come in are handed a bottle of water and an iPad to complete their history and paperwork as they sit on one of the comfortable couches.

As patients are brought to the exam or pretesting room, they're essentially taken on a tour of the facility. "This is our eyewear gallery," they're told by the staff member escorting them. "Patients are given as experience as they walk through, hearing about the contact lens area or peeking in through the six-foot window into the finishing lab. We also explain the testing and screening technology, making sure that patients know we have the latest innovations in equipment and products."

The practice has a high-tech feel to it. "There is no paper in the exam room. There's just an iPad and a projector for a 42-inch flat-screen display," Dr. Calderón says. Both brothers speak Spanish, as does the entire staff. Their father grew up in Ecuador and their mother's family was from Puerto Rico, and the Calderón brothers were raised in a bilingual household. "There are huge swaths of New York City where you wouldn't speak English to anyone," he says. Because he knew he wanted to return to the neighborhood, he chose to attend the School of Optometry of the Inter American University of Puerto Rico, perfecting his optometric vocabulary.

In addition to the brick-and-mortar building, Dr. Calderón's practice also include a mobile optometric practice. "We go to home-bound patients' homes and nursing homes. We carry smaller, portable equipment and about 80-to-100 frames," he says. He has contracted with insurance providers that cover the service.

The Calderón brothers were invited to visit the Facebook headquarters campus in California because of the extent to which they use Facebook. They use the service to preappoint patients and more, so the office was selected to do some advanced training on using Facebook for business.

In June 2014, the brothers have also launched a podcast, which can be found on ODEntrepreneur.com, focused on the business of optometry. They're taping their second season of episodes now, and are on the lookout for guests. Their Vision Source[®] colleague Susan Resnick, OD, has been a guest on their show. Thousands of the podcasts have been downloaded through iTunes.

Despite their multiple business interests, the focus is squarely on improving their business by focusing on patients' eye health and the customer experience. "All the doctors who work for us work in a similar way. We believe that by offering the right medical care, we happen to be recommending the right optical products, also. The two are synergistically in alignment," he says. "When I recommend Transitions lenses, it's because patients need sun protection. Maybe the patient is squinting constantly or has a family history of cataracts. Our recommendations are for products that are going to help them in the long-term," he says.

Dr. Calderón's contract with Vision Source[®] started two weeks after he opened the doors to his practice. "We were able to gain huge savings on Optos and OCT technology. That savings alone paid for our membership for about two years," he says. One of their goals this year is to align themselves even more with Vision Source[®] exclusive products, such as Truclear lenses from Essilor.



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(L-R): Mario Calderón and Dr. Vicente Calderón