



*Vision Source*  
SIGNATURE EYE CARE™

# TRUSTED COLLEAGUE

## Chris Vincent, OD, FAAO

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### Service is the attraction for this growing, young practice

At his four-year-old practice in Austin, Texas, efficiency is a top concern for Chris Vincent, OD, FAAO. "I don't have a very large staff, so we all have to be very good at what we do." During their staff meetings, they talk about what's going well and what obstacles or hindrances there are. "We all brainstorm the problem. We sit down and figure out how we can approach this differently, and we'll try that for a few weeks and we'll re-evaluate."

The staff has become adept at this kind of collaboration, in part, because they do it every day in their closing huddle. Rather than hold a huddle at the beginning of the day, Dr. Vincent and his staff meet briefly at the end of each day. He has found that it is an efficient way to deal with issues that arose during that day. It also allows his staff members to gain immediate reinforcement for a problem they handled well; get a grievance off their chest quickly so it doesn't fester, on those rare occasions where an encounter just didn't go as planned; or just share a great experience that they may have had or compliments they received either about themselves or each other.

Finding the right mix of staff members is always important, but it's particularly important in a small practice where each staff member carries a large share of the load. Dr. Vincent says that had been a little tricky to start. He adds that he now has a great team. It all starts with his all-star patient care specialist who holds the office together and keeps everything running smoothly. He feels fortunate to have a great optician who can explain patient insurance benefits and programs as well as product benefits to patients. "Everyone who works here takes great pride in what we do. So it's important that everyone participates in big decisions. I want staff members to be self-sufficient and empowered to make decisions."

Yet because the practice is still small enough and Dr. Vincent himself has done the role of every employee in the past few years, he's still very much in tune with every aspect of office operations. "It all boils down to service. If we can't provide the best service, it won't matter that we carry the best products. If the service isn't there, patients won't be back."

That's where the afternoon huddle has helped, too. "It's a chance to evaluate our individual performance. We had an incident very recently where a patient wasn't completely pleased. Rather than keeping it to himself, the patient mentioned his concern to the optician. The optician explained that he had never looked at it from that perspective and was then able to address the issue. The patient and his wife left very happy and were appreciative of the great service they had received," says Dr. Vincent. In the afternoon huddle, the optician was able to share that story, make all the practice staff aware of it and received immediate reinforcement for addressing the situation. Those kinds of experiences empower other staff members to manage similar situations.

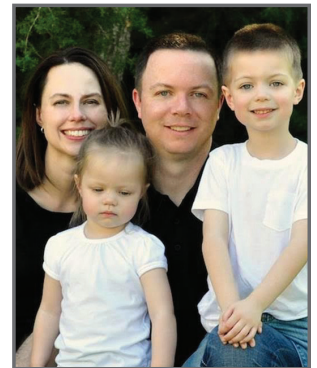
That focus on service has netted the practice many referrals. "We often have a family member come in and sort of 'test' our office. It's gratifying when that person schedules an appointment for the rest of the family before he or she leaves. That gives me the reassurance that we're doing something right."

The patient intake forms confirm that. The form asks "Who may we thank for referring you?" The staff tracks those names, and at the end of each month, Dr. Vincent and the staff mail a handwritten thank-you note. "I've had people specifically mention during their annual exam how much they appreciate getting those notes."

Dr. Vincent opened his practice as a Vision Source® practice. Prior to moving to Austin, he had worked at Highlands Ranch Vision Center, a Vision Source® practice in Colorado. "After working in Colorado for about nine years, my wife and I traveled to Austin and we fell in love with the city. We had no ties to the area at all, so I tell people that I didn't just start cold – I started frozen. We had no family, no friends and a patient base that was too far away to follow me." Even so, the family relocated, with a 3-year-old son and a 5-week-old baby girl. His wife, Kat, an accountant, oversaw the construction of the practice, dealt with the contractors, and set up the office, as Dr. Vincent worked part time and fill-in days where he could until the office opened.

He knew from the Colorado experience how supportive the Vision Source® network was to its members. Prior to opening his new practice, Dr. Vincent knew that he wanted to be part of the Vision Source® network in Texas. Austin administrator Laurie Sorrenson, OD, FAAO, provided a warm welcome. "I was in contact with her even before we moved. Whenever I had a question, she was always right there with advice."

Dr. Vincent is eager for his staff to join him this year at The Exchange® in San Antonio, an event that he is certain will impress them with the strength and energy of the Vision Source® network.



Dr. Vincent and family.  
From the left, Kat, Lizzie,  
Dr. Vincent and Jake



Dr. Vincent and the staff at  
Avery Ranch Eye Care.