

Mark J. Forchette

Mr. Forchette discusses the FDA market clearance of OptiMedica Corporation's Catalys laser cataract surgery system and his career in ophthalmology.



Congratulations on receiving 510(k) clearance. What were the emotions at OptiMedica when the good news came?

It was a spectacular moment in our corporate history. We received the clearance a few days before the Christmas holiday, and the timing could not have felt more appropriate. Our company was founded in 2004, and even back then, our founders were already thinking about this technology and the approach that we would take. Receiving the FDA clearance validated the years of hard work and effort of all the people on our team. We are all extremely happy that patients in the United States will now get to experience this amazing technology. I smile every time I think about it.

You spent a great deal of your career in retina, and now you are heading up a company that is fully focused on refractive cataract surgery. What similarities and differences have you observed between the two subspecialties?

Technology always wins, customers deserve to be treated like we want to be treated ourselves, and good data drive sound decisions. Those basic tenets are true in cataract and retina. I suppose one of the key differences is the vast array of automated and handheld instruments that might be utilized in a single vitreoretinal procedure versus a more defined product spectrum in cataract surgery. However, both spaces provide an amazing canvas to allow creation of novel technologies.

Your career has taken you from a small entrepreneurial company in Grieshaber to a large company in Alcon and back to an entrepreneurial venture with OptiMedica. Can you explain the differences and how each experience affected you?

At Grieshaber, I had the honor of developing and growing the US organization of a company that already had a 75-year global tradition of exquisite craftsmanship and excellence. That was a pretty heady responsibility at age 30. The heart of the company was the symbiotic relationship between craftsmen and surgeons that delivered some amazing products and innovations, and it had a significant impact on my enduring thoughts about product development. My experience at Alcon was in a much larger

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organization, and the intricate interaction of thousands of people focused on common goals demonstrated the value of alignment and scale. My experience at OptiMedica feels like the perfect combination of a collaborative entrepreneurial spirit focused on creating novel technologies that transform markets with a culture of execution that is driven to delight customers.

What is the high point of your career?

The first treatment delivered with our commercial Catalys femtosecond laser cataract system was perfect, and it was a day that I will never forget. We worked so hard to take this technology from design to first use, and to finally complete it was awesome. It was important because it was the culmination of years of dedicated work to improve the precision and accuracy of cataract surgery. For me, this really validated my belief that good people focused on doing the right things can truly make a difference, and it is worth taking some big risks to swing hard at a really big goal.

What do you still hope to achieve personally and professionally?

My whole reason for joining OptiMedica was to build a special company in ophthalmology that delivers stunning innovations that benefit patients, inspires people to do their best, and rewards hard work with success and personal satisfaction. We have taken some very solid steps, but there are still many things to complete to properly satisfy this objective. I live my life with the belief that my best day is still in front of me. Personally, I want to figure out a way to appropriately thank my wife for all her support and to help our children achieve their goals. I also look around the world and see plenty of things that I would like to sink my teeth into, but right now, the opportunities that I am fortunate enough to have are perfectly compelling. ■