

Justin Schweitzer, OD, FAAO, takes the job of being an opinion leader seriously. He explains that the role requires hard work and dedication but acknowledges that it brings benefits for him and for the patients he treats.



THIS HONOR BRINGS RESPONSIBILITY

My relationship with industry is relatively young. I practice in an integrated care model along with ophthalmologists who specialize in cataract, cornea, refractive surgery, and glaucoma care, and I concentrate on glaucoma care and surgical comanagement. A few years ago, I had the opportunity to speak on behalf of our practice at several small regional meetings. At that time, I met Scot Morris, OD, and Walter O. Whitley, OD, MBA, who encouraged me to get more involved with speaking, education, and representing industry. They provided guidance and support and essentially became my mentors in this area.

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I TAKE THE ROLE OF OPINION LEADER SERIOUSLY

because being considered an expert in a particular field within one's profession is an honor. It inspires me to stay on the cutting edge with respect to the technologies that I use to help the patients I come in contact with. I would be doing my peers a disservice if I stepped up to the podium and was not on top of the most up-to-date information on the state of the industry.

Along with being well-informed, it is important to be unbiased. Physicians take an oath to do what is right for their patients. Some technologies will be better for certain patients and perhaps other technologies will be better for a different group of patients. If we are biased toward one particular company and using only that company's technology, I do not think we are living up to that aforementioned oath.

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BEING INVOLVED WITH ASSOCIATIONS such as the Optometric Glaucoma Society and with state and national optometric associations has given me opportunities to network with others who are passionate about glaucoma care and about moving our profession forward. Making these connections inspired me to start a group of like-minded young leaders in our profession, the Intrepid Eye Society (IES; www.intrepideyesociety.com). All IES members are passionate about moving optometry

WHAT IS THE INTREPID EYE SOCIETY?

A DIVERSE GROUP OF EMERGING THOUGHT LEADERS IN OPTOMETRY WHO SHARE THE GOAL OF PROMOTING EXCELLENCE AND GROWTH IN THE FIELD. THE INTREPID EYE SOCIETY'S INITIATIVES INCLUDE INNOVATIVE THOUGHT SHARING ON TOPICS RELATED TO FUTURE MEDICAL THERAPEUTICS, DIAGNOSTICS, PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, AND COLLABORATIVE CARE WITH OPHTHALMOLOGY.

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forward, just as the opinion leaders who have been our role models and mentors have done for many years. ■

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- Financial disclosure: Consultant (Alcon, Allergan, Bausch + Lomb, BioTissue, Glaukos, Johnson & Johnson Vision, Mentholatum Company, Reichert, TearScience)



Dr. Schweitzer giving a lecture at a recent society meeting.