



BY MITCHELL CASSELE, O.D.

# Positioning Special Effect Lenses

## Tips to help you introduce these revenue-builders at Halloween.

I've worked with special effect contact lenses in motion pictures, T.V. and videos for almost 20 years. These lenses are definite practice-builders; in fact, you should view them as a bonus for increased sales. You can easily increase contact lens revenue in your practice by introducing them in the fall months — especially around Halloween in October.

Novelty lens purchases are dramatically increasing, and positioning your practice to maximize these profits is essential. It's been proven that people are willing to spend money for "zany" designs on contact lenses. All ages and genders are interested, from teenagers to adults. Here's what you can do to get patients interested.

### Draw them in

In our practice, we generate interest in the following ways:

- **Window displays.** Our location is street level in Rockefeller Center, below the NBC studios. We use the front window to attract potential patients with a Halloween display including skeletons, coffins, witches and our own large, custom-framed pictures of unique specialty lenses. It's eye-catching to say the least, and the Halloween theme continues inside our practice, too.

- **Internal office suggestions.** By regular mail or e-mail, we send a

quarterly newsletter with product updates (including Halloween specialty lenses in the fall) and promotions to all patients. We also display counter cards with bizarre contact lenses in chosen areas of the office — at the dispensing tables, for example, or the front desk.

- **Other ideas.** Create a Web site for your office highlighting Halloween and novelty lens information. This has attracted many new patients to our office who ask about not only novelty lenses, but also contact lenses in general. Having some staff members wear the lenses helps reinforce the idea and generate sales as well.

### Keys to success

Once patients are interested in novelty lenses, remember these tips:

- ▶ Know the products and have all trial lenses available.

- ▶ Use trial novelty lenses only after an examination to determine that the patient's eyes are healthy and able to wear contact lenses.

- ▶ Eliminate excessive chair time by selecting a few lenses, and always charge a nominal fee for demonstrating them, even if the patient fails to purchase them.

- ▶ Piggybacking novelty lenses over a potential patient's clear prescription lenses is an easy way for the patient to see what they're like.

- ▶ Discuss all the safety aspects of

contact lenses with the patient, including proper care and handling. Remind him never to swap lenses with a friend.

- ▶ You may be able to derive additional revenue from promotional items, including sunglasses, when the patient purchases novelty contact lenses. For example, offer 20% off sunglasses with the purchase of Halloween lenses. Also discuss colored contact lenses for cosmetic purposes, including transparent or opaque designs.

With these guidelines to help, what's stopping you from trying special lenses this fall? **OM**

DR. CASSELE IS ONE OF THE LEADING PROVIDERS OF PROSTHETIC SOFT CONTACT LENSES AND SPECIAL EFFECT LENSES TO DOCTORS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. HE PRACTICES IN NEW YORK, N.Y. YOU CAN REACH HIM AT (800) 598-2020 OR VISIT WWW.CUSTOMCONTACTS.COM.

### A LOOK INSIDE DR. CASSELE'S PRACTICE:

**Location:** NYC, Rockefeller Center, on street level below NBC studios

**Years in Practice:** 19

**Contact lens fits per month:** 100+

**Number of staff:** 7

**Percentage of revenue from contact lenses:** 40%

**Percent of patients fitted with contact lenses:** 60%

**Do you use direct-from-manufacturer contact lens delivery?** Yes, whenever possible, to avoid excess staff time.

**How often do you see your contact lens patients?** I recommend annual exams.