



Celebrating
WOMEN
CANADIAN OPTICAL

Energy, Vision, Leadership:
Five Amazing Women

Cover Story

By Paddy Kamen

Last March, *Envision: seeing beyond* magazine sent out a call for nominations of women who are leaders in various sectors of our industry. The response was terrific and the honorees were notified in early June.

Each of their stories is truly inspiring. We congratulate these fine women on being nominated by their peers. And the honorees are...

Category:
Entrepreneur

Wendy Buchanan

Listening to our instincts about where we can best serve others while realizing our potential is something that many of us aspire to. Wendy Buchanan has lived this process and her successful career path proves the wisdom of her approach.

“The clients and I have a really good time and we both get excited when we make changes. It’s a positive and fun experience.”

Wendy started out as dental technician – not a great choice for someone with her love of social interaction and an entrepreneurial streak. Then a friend who knew a successful optician suggested it might be a good career for her. “I spoke to him and he offered me a job in his lab. I worked there on the weekends while doing my dental assistant job; then he moved me into the store part time. I enjoyed the challenges in the optical field so I obtained my opticianry diploma from Georgian College.”



Good move but that wasn’t all. Buchanan eventually tired of retail. “I couldn’t see myself doing that for another 20 years, so I trained to be an image consultant and began my own business. Clients asked me to help them choose eyewear and over time, I realized I could be an image consultant for eyewear alone, running a mobile eyewear boutique. When I left my retail job in 1998, I had no clients so I began networking through the fashion industry, starting out with a dozen frames on consignment.”

Buchanan simply loves the job she created for herself, going out to meet with clients in their homes and offices. “It’s about matching the eyewear to the individual’s face shape, personality, wardrobe and career. My clients come to me for every season and for specific events, such as weddings. I provide the personalized, individual touch that people can’t get in a store and many clients buy two or three pairs at a time.”

Having the flexibility to make her own schedule suits Buchanan to a ‘T’; she can take time off during the day for special school events with her children and makes a point of a weekly golf game with

friends during the summer. She also enjoys the freedom to make her own business decisions as well as individual decisions that are best for her clients. “I’m not bound by bureaucracy, politics, procedures or store policies. If an opportunity comes up, I base my decisions on how I feel. I don’t need to analyze the pros and cons just to please someone else.”

Fun is also key to Buchanan’s success. “The clients and I have a really good time and we both get excited when we make changes. It’s a positive and fun experience.”

In 2007 Buchanan started training other people to help their clients choose eyewear. She created and sells BeSpectacular™, a training system that helps fashion consultants and eyecare professionals take the guesswork out of choosing the perfect frame.

What is the biggest contributor to Buchanan’s success as an entrepreneur? It’s simple, she explains: “The biggest thing for me is to pay attention to how I feel about things, trust my instincts and base my decisions on them.”