



THE MAGIC MIXING FORMULA: OptiFair *Does it Again*

Event

By Paddy Kamen

Who knew that it was possible for everyone to enjoy a continuing education (CE) and trade show event that serves both optometrists and opticians? Ali Khan thought it just might work, back in the days when the two professions seldom interacted. Now, 20 years later, the Optifair model, delivered twice yearly by Khan's Academy of Ophthalmic Education (AOE), has proven itself a resounding success.

The most recent conference and show took place Oct. 19, 2014 at the Embassy Grand Convention Centre in Brampton, ON. The formula worked its usual magic, with optometrists and opticians showing up on the trade show floor at staggered times, with 30-minute interludes in between. This format serves exhibitors well by controlling the flow of traffic to their booths. The interlude promotes cross talk between the professions, which Khan says was more evident last year because of the regulatory changes in Ontario that now allow opticians to work for optometrists without losing their licences. "The professions are now more interested in connecting and exploring how they can work together," he points out. "These changes have broken down barriers for both groups and Optifair provides a great networking forum for them."

responding with fresh and relevant topics, delivered by top notch international speakers. Optifair is also on track with the latest technologies for the CE experience. The April 2014 conference featured a special two-hour grand rounds session for optometrists, with a panel of six ophthalmic doctors representing different specialties, who were presented with challenging cases. Delegates asked questions from the floor via their smartphones, rendering the need to stand up at a mike and ask questions obsolete. "They just loved it and participation was so good that the panel couldn't even get to all the questions," notes Khan. "With changes to their scope of practice, one of the key needs of optometrists is to discuss dispensing of medication and this session really helped."

The AOE also offers CE opportunities combined with travel and recreation. A 2014 summer cruise from Venice to Istanbul was a great success. The next such event takes place next summer at Deerhurst Resort in Muskoka. To learn more, visit: www.aoece.com. ■

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One of the reasons for the success of Optifair is the high quality of the CE. Khan and his team continually keep abreast of the issues, listening to the education needs of the professions and

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