



# Good for the Planet, Good for Business

**CooperVision's leadership in sustainability inspires practitioners to make changes in their practices and new connections with patients.**

In big ways and small, eye care professionals have the power to change lives. From providing routine vision correction to the early detection of serious ocular disease, the role of practitioners can be vital for their patients. Beyond providing exceptional eye care, practices often look for ways to differentiate themselves and deepen the connection with their patients. One such opportunity is through the effort to protect the environment.

In 2019, CooperVision invited 20 eye care professionals to the "clariti® 1 day experience," a three-day event at its manufacturing facility in Costa Rica at which they learned about the company's commitment to minimizing its environmental impact and operating more sustainably.

Three optometrists who attended the event share insights they brought back home, the changes they were inspired to make in their practices, and the ways sustainability has opened the door for new conversations with their patients.

## How did the "clariti® 1 day experience" open your eyes to the importance of sustainability in eye care?

**Cymbor:** I've always cared about the environment. As a kid, I was the one trying to save trees, and as an adult, I've done as much as anyone in terms of recycling and composting. But these efforts were mostly in my home life. My time with CooperVision in Costa Rica opened my eyes to what I could be doing at work.

**Spittle:** I went into the event with the opposite perspective; my feelings were that sustainability didn't really matter. But I realized—assuming all other things are

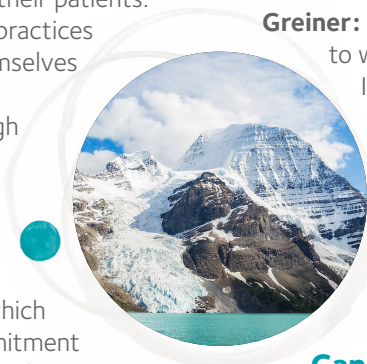
equal—people will choose to do business with companies that align with their values. Sustainability is a way I can set myself apart from the practice down the street.

**Greiner:** Before the "clariti® 1 day experience," I was naïve to what companies like CooperVision are doing. I didn't know the process of manufacturing contact lenses could be as sustainable as it is. Seeing firsthand the environmentally conscious design of the facility, how they even go so far as to recycle rainwater—and how it's not just in manufacturing, but it's the model of the entire company—was impressive.

## Can you describe the changes you've made in your practice as the result of the "clariti® 1 day experience?"

**Spittle:** We started with simple yet impactful changes—replacing paper towels with energy-efficient hand dryers in the bathrooms, and we added bins at the front of our office for patients to drop off contact lenses for recycling. Then, we made the decision to add solar panels on the roof of our building. It was a sizeable investment but it will pay for itself. In less than six months, the panels have saved nearly 70,000 pounds of carbon monoxide emissions from entering the environment, which is equivalent to planting more than 500 trees. The installation has also saved us thousands of dollars in electricity.

**Cymbor:** We had been recycling contact lenses at only our main location, but after I returned from Costa Rica, we expanded it to include all five offices. In addition, we started a composting initiative at our main office. And we are overall more conscious of sustainability in our decisions. For example, we only utilized compostable products at our summer picnic.



**Greiner:** We were already doing contact lens and general recycling through our office, but we kicked it up afterward. Our biggest change was in talking to patients about it.

## How do you talk to patients about your practice's sustainability efforts? Do you discuss with them the ways they can also contribute?

**Cymbor:** We post frequently on our social media about the various things we're doing. When patients are in the office, we don't typically have time to discuss sustainability in general, but we do talk about it with a lot of our 1-day contact lens patients. Sometimes a patient will bring up how 1-day lenses seem to generate a lot more plastic waste than a monthly lens. I tell them about the "clariti® 1 day experience" and all of the ways CooperVision conserves and recycles in their manufacturing in Costa Rica. I point out that through purchasing this lens, they're supporting a company that understands sustainability. It's a lens they can feel good about wearing.

**Greiner:** I tell my patients that of all the options for 1-day lenses, clariti® 1 day is more near and dear to me because of their sustainability efforts. Since they buy 365 pairs each year, CooperVision makes them as sustainably as possible. And to top it all off, the cost of clariti® 1 day is comparable to a hydrogel lens, so I'm giving them a significantly better product at a similar price.<sup>1</sup> It's really a no-brainer.

**Spittle:** As optometrists, we have so much to talk to our patients about—and not enough time to do it. But we fit in quick mentions of sustainability here and there. For example, when they are opening trial lenses, we'll ask them not to throw the packaging or lenses in the trash because we recycle them. We also plan to add "powered by solar" language on patient forms and signage. In marketing our sustainability practices, the goal is to change the depth of the relationship with our patients.

## What have been the benefits to the sustainable improvements you've made in your practices?

**Greiner:** You always want to have things for your staff and patients to rally around. You collect donations and you coordinate volunteer opportunities, but those things come and go. Sustainability is a constant; it's an effort that is only growing stronger year after year.

**Cymbor:** It has become part of our practice's identity. Coming back from Costa Rica, my goal was to share

that experience. In doing so, it surprised me to learn that sustainability already mattered to so many on our team—I just never knew it. The "clariti® 1 day experience" rekindled that passion in me, and my renewed enthusiasm rekindled that passion in others.

**Spittle:** For us, the most tangible benefit has been the energy savings. Beyond that, it's altruistic to be part of this bigger effort to do something good. Our staff is happy about our shift toward sustainability and is proud to be part of it.

## What would you tell your peers about sustainability in practice?

**Spittle:** Start somewhere—something is better than nothing. Operating more sustainably is good for your business. Your efforts will resonate very strongly with some of your patients, and those people are enthusiastic and will tell others about your practice.

**Cymbor:** Based on what I'm seeing both nationally and locally, the interest in sustainability is there. Now is the time to get on board; it'll only bring good things to your practice. Your patients are going to recognize and appreciate you for it.<sup>2</sup> And at some point, if you're not riding this wave, the wave will ride you. I'm grateful for companies like CooperVision who are leading the way to show us how we can all do the work to help protect the environment.

**Greiner:** I agree that this is the way of the future, and if we're not looking forward, we're going to get ourselves in trouble. Most optometrists are striving to get as many patients in 1-day lenses as possible, and we need to think about the environmental factor. Collectively, you have the power to influence thousands of people in these decisions each year. You can make a huge impact.

CooperVision continues to improve and innovate its clariti® 1 day lenses. Their exceptional performance and excellent everyday value<sup>3</sup> make them the ideal entry-level 1-day contact lens for new-to-1-day wearers. The sustainability of CooperVision clariti® 1 day provides a unique opportunity to provide added value to patients, opening the door for additional touchpoints to build a stronger relationship between practitioner and patient.

For more information, visit [clariti.CooperVision.com](http://clariti.CooperVision.com)

*Sustainability is a way I can set myself apart from the practice down the street.*

Katie Greiner, OD – Northeast Ohio Eye Surgeons



**MICHAEL CYMBOR, OD**  
Nittany Eye Associates,  
State College, Pennsylvania



**KATIE GREINER, OD**  
Northeast Ohio Eye  
Surgeons, Kent, Ohio



**BRIAN SPITTLE, OD**  
The EyePlace,  
Midlothian, Virginia

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