

In today's world an "online branch" is a must even for a highly successful store

March 2020

Consumers typically look first for the opening hours, services and products available in the online profile of a supplier before they go shopping. For that reason, offline purchasing is no longer conceivable without an online presence. Consumers are directed to their local eye care professional (ECP) by a clever use of online marketing and social media in the beginning of the so called "customer journey".



Is an elaborate shop window decoration enough to lure customers into the store? Are all consumers aware of how often an eye test is recommended or what solutions optometry can offer? Online marketing and the intelligent use of social media can help to inform consumers about everything to do with optometry. ZEISS provides ECPs with support along the entire customer journey.

These days, it is a given that a large number of consumers will start searching online at an early stage. Where is the nearest optician? What are the opening times? What brands does it carry? Or perhaps the consumer is first made aware through news and advertising that it is now time for the next eye test or that there are new solutions available for one or the other of their visual challenges.

Today, in the digital age, consumers are already familiar with the subject of optometry long before they enter the shop. The initial part of the customer journey is the first digital encounter. ECPs who are not on board tend to fall through the search grid. Potential customers are lost. All businesses are now well advised to also operate a "branch" online. As a partner to ECPs, ZEISS helps to reach consumers online and to raise awareness of the topic of optometry - and not just in the store but also in the digital world.

What is the customer journey?

The customer journey describes the route a consumer takes in purchasing a product. It starts with an awareness phase and goes far beyond customer loyalty programs. Particularly at the start, the customer journey is based on the motto: There are many roads leading to the ECP. There is generally no universal procedure. The media preferred by a consumer can be highly individual. That makes it all the more important for all businesses to engage with and be active on the most popular platforms. This is the only way to reach potential customers at the very start of their journey nowadays.



**Three digital areas - all linked:
Learn more, search, find an ECP**

"I know what's out there"

Visibility is the key. If a consumer does not know what products or what specific solutions may be available, it is difficult for them to search for them. With the help of personalized ads, ZEISS or the ECP themselves can draw attention to individual solutions via Facebook and Instagram. ZEISS offers support in three ways: ZEISS ads in Facebook and Instagram, ad templates for ECPs and training courses on how to use ads in a particularly effective and sustainable manner. There are 394 million active Facebook users in Europe.¹ Just this figure alone demonstrates the importance of the ECP's presence in social media.

As a customer, ZEISS is in direct, continuous contact with Facebook. ZEISS consequently understands the latest trends and consumer insights and always knows what to look out for. Everyone should be well aware that Facebook has also become a competitive advertising environment. Various companies work towards the greatest degree of visibility in their respective markets. This makes it all the more important to be able to stand out and to know exactly what images, videos and postings are required to reach a specific target group. This is where the ECP can rely on ZEISS expertise and advice.

"I have a problem and I'm looking for a solution"

"Tired eyes", "blurred vision", "dry eyes" - all of these are visual problems that consumers tend to Google - perhaps because they were alerted to them previously by an advertisement. Product searches can also be triggered by ads. The search results: include among other things the [Better Vision portal](#) from ZEISS, which provides comprehensive information on a wide range of consumer issues and reaches more than 1 million users worldwide every month. Or the consumer may search directly for "optician near me" and navigate to the local ECP's Google My Business profile² or website. Data shows that every 20 to 30 seconds "optician near me" is searched via Google in the US alone³. This trend has become more important in the recent years in all countries, where Google can be used. Therefore, search engines obviously play a significant role for consumers before going to a local ECP's store. They are interested in what is on offer, what brands of frames are available and whether they can or must make an appointment.

¹ <https://allfacebook.de/toll/state-of-facebook>

² This is typically the profile of a shop or service provider etc., which appears in Google Maps and includes information such as ratings, opening hours or pictures.

³ Google Ads Keyword Stats 2020-02-24 - 2019-01-24 for term "optician near me" in the US and UK.



And suddenly you see more – even at night and in low light

Better vision for night blindness and poor sight at night thanks to innovative lenses

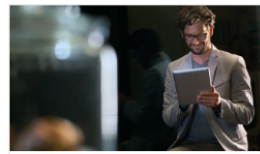
Driving + Mobility Nov 24, 2017
Tags: Distance Glasses and Reading Glasses



Frequently asked questions on ZEISS Digital Lenses

What exactly are ZEISS Digital Lenses?

Driving + Mobility Oct 16, 2017
Tags: Distance Glasses and Reading Glasses, Digital Lenses



Living life to the fullest & stress-free vision:

ZEISS Digital Lenses fill the gap between single vision and progressive lenses!

Driving + Mobility Oct 16, 2017
Tags: Distance Glasses and Reading Glasses, Digital Lenses



Why a second pair of spectacles is worth it

There are many situations that make a second pair of spectacles the most important accessory you can have.

Driving + Mobility Oct 16, 2017
Tags: Distance Glasses and Reading Glasses

[Read more](#)

The ZEISS Better Vision portal offers information on a range of relevant consumer issues.

Google My Business as a digital business card on the web is a minimum for ECPs. Furthermore, personalized online advertising should refer to the ECP's website to bring valuable traffic on his profile with the purpose of getting more consumer in-store. Regarding the website there are two important factors to consider. Firstly, the texts should be search engine optimized. Consequently, when creating the site, the ECP should ask whether, for example, terms are used which a consumer would also use when searching online. But even more important is to pay attention to the overall image of the website. Are the images significant? Do all links work? Can the site also be displayed well on the smartphone - i.e. optimized for mobile use? Is it designed to be easy to use? In the end, a poor website is just as discouraging as an awkward store layout.⁴ ZEISS invests a great deal of effort to fulfil precisely these requirements for its own web presence. For one thing is certain: Whereas ten years ago consumers relied mostly on recommendations from their friends and acquaintances, today they have access to a much larger network in the world of the Internet. An inviting website has meanwhile become part of the standard program for creating a professional appearance, which also conveys a sense of trustworthiness.

"I know where to go"

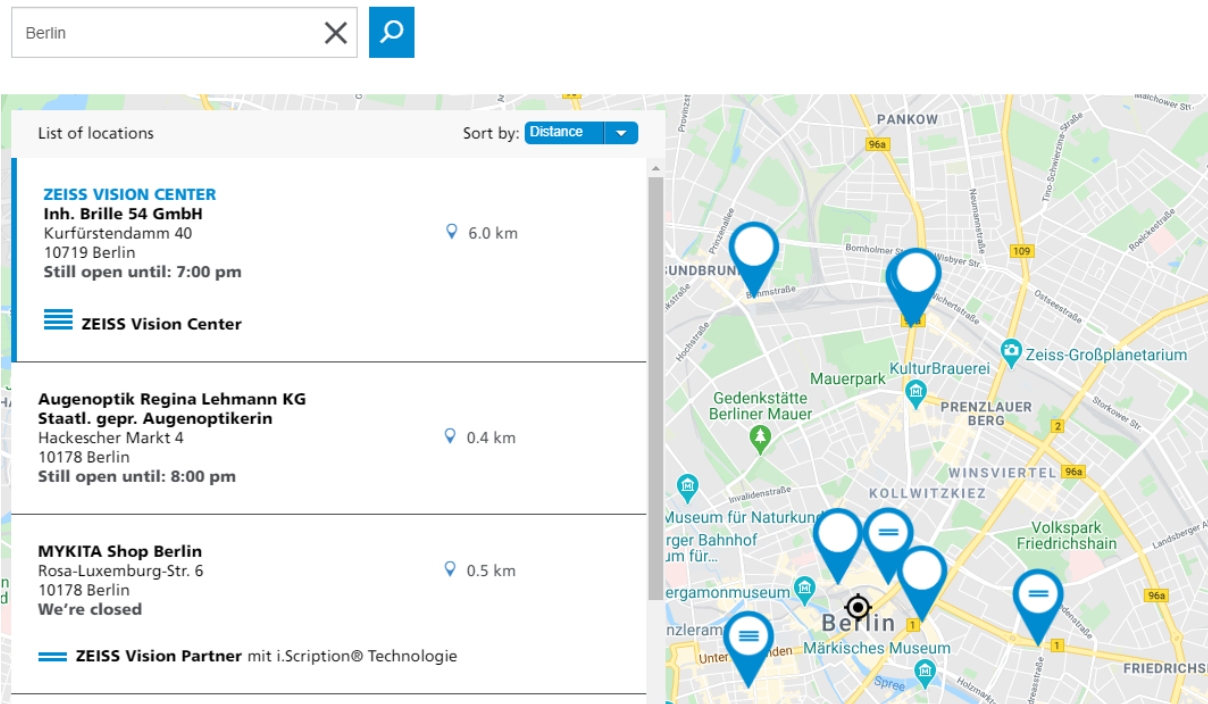
With the growth of Google searches for "opticians near me" it gets more important for ECPs to own an optimized Google My Business profile, so consumer can find, engage and – at the end – visit them. Images, contact details and opening hours are inserted into Google in a very easy and uncomplicated process, and after a short, analogue verification procedure, the store appears in the local search results. Furthermore, today's consumers like to inform themselves online about products and services, for example via Google ratings, which can be viewed in this profile. These ratings, whether positive or negative, offer ECPs the opportunity to enter into a direct exchange with consumers or to identify potential for improvement.

⁴ You can check your website performance with Google's Grow My Store web app for free:
https://growmystore.thinkwithgoogle.com/intl/en_uk



Find an Eye Care Professional near you

ZEISS Partners in Your Area:



Consumers can use the ZEISS Store Locator to find the ZEISS partner ECP in their area.

The ZEISS website also connects ECPs directly with consumers. The so-called [ZEISS Store Locator](#) on the ZEISS website was developed in cooperation with [Google](#). In January 2020, 77,000 search queries were recorded worldwide using the ZEISS Store Locator. It is directly linked to the Google My Business profiles of the ECPs: Some of the advantages of the ZEISS and Google cooperation are a modern appearance, targeted search, cross-platform benefits and the easy use. If a consumer is directed to the ZEISS website by Google or by an advertisement, they can find the nearest ZEISS partner ECP based on their address. The ZEISS Store Locator is connected with the Google My Business profile and therefore automatically shows images and opening hours which are part of that profile. The same happens when consumers have completed their [ZEISS My Vision Profile](#). Ultimately, they receive personal lens recommendations, a QR code on their smartphone that the ECP can scan with the ZEISS VISUCONSULT app in the store and a redirection to the ZEISS Store Locator to find the nearest ZEISS ECP. Everything is linked.



ZEISS My Vision Profile is just one element in a networked world of tools for the customer journey.

Online presence - not an option, but a must

Facebook, Google, own websites, POS materials, apps, newsletters - all of these cannot be considered in isolation from one another. There are many ways on the digital customer journey and often a few twists and turns are made first or there is a back and forth for the first three quarters of the journey before finally entering the store. This is where the customer journey continues offline, for example with the [ZEISS Vision Analysis](#).

So it is clear that customers are not only attracted to the shop window, and not every target group can be reached via an advertisement in the regional press. In today's world, it must be a foregone conclusion for successful ECPs to use digital platforms and social media.⁵ Without a website and a Google My Business profile, your business will simply not be found in search results. Without maintained opening hours, customers would prefer to go to another store. If the offers are not advertised on Facebook and Instagram, the consumers will probably not use them. ZEISS will help to shape the customer journey at all stages so that both consumers and ECPs benefit. The ultimate goal of all activities is always the same: to guide consumers to the store where the experts are waiting.

⁵ According to Facebook, at the start of 2020 there were 2.3 billion people who used a Facebook service (Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.) on a daily basis. | <https://allfacebook.de/toll/state-of-facebook>