

Holistic strategy to drive eye health excellence

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In conversation with Vaibhav Saran, Johnson & Johnson Vision's APAC Vice President for Vision Care, Singapore



The pandemic has significantly disrupted the eye health industry, and a new set of challenges emerge on how solutions and services can be effectively delivered. In this interview, Johnson & Johnson Vision shares what these challenges are, why it is crucial for the eye health industry to reevaluate its approach in the new normal, and why data is the key to unlocking innovative and personalised ways of delivering quality eye health solutions to patients in the region.

Why it is crucial for healthcare players, specifically the eye health industry, to reevaluate their strategy in the face of the new normal?

2020 has been one of the most challenging years in recent history. The pandemic had brought on new challenges we need to overcome, but also new opportunities to advance healthcare.

These challenges are even more pertinent for eye health. Currently, untreated vision problems are one of the world's biggest ongoing health crisis. A third of the world's population face one form of visual impairment, and this is expected to increase as we move forward. The pandemic has made it challenging for eye care professionals (ECPs) to provide eye health services, due to social distancing measures and lockdown restrictions.

With these challenges in mind, we need to reevaluate how delivery of care should change. How we work as an industry, patient priorities, even how we engage and interact with partners and patients have all changed drastically. In response, we need to be agile in the way we deliver eye care, so that patients can continue to receive care even amid emerging challenges such as countries facing restrictions and lockdowns. This means fundamental shifts in our strategy and how we approach our operations and partnerships in a COVID-19 world.

A key part of reevaluating strategy is looking at the opportunities presented in the new normal. One of them is the wealth of

data we now have access to thanks to the global digitalisation driven by the pandemic. 2.5 quintillion bytes of data are produced by humans every day. This presents an opportunity for us to drive new ways of thinking, through greater insights that further advance our understanding on prevention measures.

COVID-19 had significant disruptions on the healthcare industry, including eye health. What are some of the ways JJV had to redefine their interactions and ways of working with eyecare professionals, with data playing a critical role?

Prior to the pandemic, we already recognised a need to futureproof the way we work, driven by the core belief that data, partnerships, and talent all need to work in synergy with one another.

Data has great potential to tailor our solutions to better meet the needs of our ECPs and patients, and the pandemic has been an accelerant for that. Leveraging data allows us to make agile, informed decisions and make the most out of any situation. This can be from helping sales representatives have more relevant conversations, identifying patients who are due for an eye exam, to increasing efficiency in supply chain.

Over two years, we have invested time, effort, and resources towards **building a data-backed business**. This includes creating a backend **Vision Data engine**, which improves the agility of accessing large volumes of data to diagnose business problems and provide support, thereby improving overall operational efficiency. Also, we provided frontend training for our employees to effectively use data in their operations.

With the infrastructure in place, we effectively utilise data to continue to improve our critical relationships with our ECPs and create an even more strategic and tailored experience, through tools such as our **customer (or ECP) dashboard** and **Professional Connected Commerce**.

The **customer dashboard** enables us to even better understand our customers' needs – both at the individual customer level and for the overall segments and geographies, by drawing upon data covering over 10,000 customers. By leveraging artificial intelligence and machine learning, the dashboard allows us to easily define new unmet needs, whether these are in certain segments or are faced by individual ECPs, so that we can drive even more customer-centric outcomes. Since its pilot in 2019 in Korea, we reached out to over 2,000 ECPs via the dashboard and we are already seeing a positive impact. We plan to expand the use of the dashboard in Southeast Asia and China.

You had mentioned Professional Connected Commerce as one of the ways JJV has supported its network of eyecare professionals. Could you elaborate further on that, and how it had helped eyecare professionals tackle some of the challenges arising from the pandemic?

Professionally Connected Commerce is all about using data to drive a seamless personalised journey from online consumer to offline ECPs. Powering through each consumer touchpoint, data helps connect the right consumers to the right ECPs, and help ECPs retain their patients. What makes it unique to JJV is that it benefits everyone – ECPs are empowered to stay competitive, and consumers have access to quality eye health experience.

Demonstrating this is our recent direct-to-patient delivery in the Asia Pacific during the pandemic. Our independent ECPs felt the impact of COVID-19, as they faced reduced foot traffic and consumers gravitating towards eCommerce.

To tackle this challenge and ensure that patients' needs continue to be met, we developed a Direct-to-Patient (DTP) home delivery service, across Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Thailand. Through cross-market collaboration and coordination with ECPs, DTP became a seamless patient ordering journey.

In total, 37,000 orders were achieved and delivered, creating a positive impact across 30,000 patients in 7 countries, with the support of 1,500 ECPs. Through Professional Connected Commerce, not only did we further strengthen our relationship with ECPs, we were also able to continue delivering patient-centered care. We see this as where the future of eye health is heading, as the industry continues to adapt to the new pandemic landscape, taking in the learnings from the pandemic and its challenges.

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