

Don't get stuck in traffic.

Learn what it takes to get your practice built on time, on budget and functioning properly.

Building your new office is the single largest investment you will make for your practice. Naturally, this process can be overwhelming and will lead to numerous questions such as where to start, who to trust, what to do next, etc.

Think about the children's game, RED LIGHT/GREEN LIGHT. The game is simple, run as fast as you can when you hear "GREEN LIGHT", proceed slowly when you hear "YELLOW LIGHT" and stop when you hear "RED LIGHT". The same process applies when working on your new practice. Keep in mind that just like in the game, a GREEN LIGHT doesn't mean you're on the fast track to the end, nor does a RED LIGHT mean you're finished, essentially it's how much time is typically needed to complete the different steps of your journey.

Keep in mind the more information you gather at the beginning the better. More information early on means less change orders and costly delays at the end. This gets you into your new space on time and saves you money. A great resource for getting this information is your peers. It's also wise to seek out companies who understand your needs. There are experienced firms out there, such as The Eye Designs Group, who know your business and would be ideal to have on your team.

Red Light:

Inspections & Permit Issues: These are unavoidable and are part of every project. Working with professionals who understand the local codes and have relationships with local inspectors can give you a leg up on getting through "area specific" codes and guidelines.

Construction/Weather Delays: Delays are part of every project and many are out of your control. It is advisable to extend your timeline with the realistic expectation that delays may occur, which is why we recommend that you target two dates. First, a "Soft Opening" where you can start seeing patients and second, a "Grand Opening" where all of the finish details are completed.

Local Cabinetmaker/Non-commercial Materials: A local cabinetmaker is fine for the general back office cabinetry, but when it comes to your displays, which help you create a productive and memorable customer experience, work with a specialist who understands how to display and merchandise your products to maximize patient revenue. Proper spacing, product positioning, merchandising, lighting, branding and display maintenance all factor into an effective customer experience – the lost sale of not doing it correctly can add up to thousands of dollars in lost revenue



Example of displays by local cabinetmaker.



Example of displays & design by industry specialist the Eye Designs Group.

Also, be sure to work with only commercial grade materials since they are designed to handle the wear of a high volume practice.

Yellow Light:

Wish List: Spend time assembling a list of your wants and needs for your practice. This can be location, design, layout, etc. A great resource for targeting all of your practice needs is a detailed "Space Analysis" that is offered complimentary by certain industry design firms.

Research: As stated previously, information is key. Use time on the front end to research contractors, architects and specialized design firms who know your business. It's important to select the right team. Use caution and understand that most architects may have designed a medical office, but never an optometric practice and are unaware of the nuances critical to your success.

Budget: Prepare a budget for the project. A well planned budget is key in keeping you on track and reaching your goals.

Green Light:

Obtain a Location: Looking for a location can be both frustrating and exciting. If you enter into it with a strong understanding of your needs it will allow you to look at the choices pragmatically and select the one that is best for your bottom line.

Interior Design: If you work with a design professional who is familiar with your business and you enter into this stage of the project already having spent time deciding on your design ideas, it can be exciting and enjoyable. Utilizing a design firm that specializes in optical environments is ideal.

Frame Displays: It's time to trust the professionals to build you the displays that will showcase your products in the best way possible. Just as with interior design, hiring an ophthalmic professional firm will minimize frustration and will achieve the best possible result.

Your office represents your brand so it's important to put your best foot forward. Patients make decisions based on visual input, you don't get a second chance to make a first impression. Knowing when to depend on experts, as well as hiring the right team is key to achieving an outstanding result. Throughout the process there may be frustrating RED and YELLOW LIGHT moments, as well as exciting GREEN LIGHTS. Remember the end goal and stay on track to reach the finish line.

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Dan has over 25 years of experience designing successful optical retail environments nationwide and has contributed to numerous publications and journals.