

Change the future of optometry

Have you ever sat in practice and thought 'I wish I had a gadget or gizmo that would make my job that much easier.' Imagine having a record-keeping system that could record your findings as you spoke them. Imagine a high-resolution imaging system so small it could fit in your pocket. Imagine an electronic system that could accurately and quickly do a cover test in seconds and measure movements to within a prism dioptre of accuracy.

Imagine a contact lens that could be programmed to change power, or colour or send signals remotely to your practice with information about tear constituency or wearing habits. Imagine spectacles for amblyopia treatment that could let you know how compliant the patient was with wearing them. Imagine an instrument that could undertake accurate full threshold fields objectively in under a minute. What about night vision contact lenses? Or an internet/smartphone platform refraction test that actually works? Digital palpation gloves that accurately measure intraocular pressure!

This year Keeler and *Optician* are pleased to launch the Open Innovations Competition for 2012. The aim is to encourage readers to submit their design or proposal for the invention or innovation they feel would make the greatest difference to the practice of optometry and optics in general.

Keeler, as the sole UK-based manufacturer of ophthalmoscopes, slit-lamps and so on, has a strong tradition of research and development bringing new designs and innovations to the market. From the moment Charles D Keeler set up his practice in London in 1917, he and his son Charles H were keen on developing new products, the latter patenting his first instrument in 1926 at the tender age of just 23. From some of the original direct and indirect ophthalmoscopes, through to handheld diagnostic instrument sets, the Pulsair, novel low vision aids, a wireless LED indirect headset ophthalmoscope and the latest in portable slit-lamp camera attachments allowing image capture on a mobile phone, Keeler has always invested in research and development. And now it wants to encourage *Optician* readers to develop an idea

Optician has teamed up with Keeler again to launch a competition to allow you the chance to invent something that could change the face of optometric practice



of their own – and who knows, it might be able to develop, patent and manufacture your idea.

Two categories

There are two categories for readers to enter and from which our judges will select a winner:

● The most imaginative innovation or invention

This is an opportunity to really let your creative juices flow and come up with an idea for an instrument or concept that you feel may have the greatest impact or be the most useful or helpful in the practice of eye care. The idea can be completely outlandish

and judges will be looking to reward imagination and originality even if the original concept might seem completely unrealisable at first. And don't forget, for this category you can be as outrageous as you like – the judges will be impressed by the most imaginative ideas.

● The innovation or invention most likely to succeed commercially

Here the judges will be looking at the feasibility of an idea, in terms of not only how it might be realistically manufactured, but also the potential commercial viability of the product, in the UK and globally. The winner of this category is likely to have submitted a simple business plan or model, perhaps even sales projections, identification of specific markets, and ideas about promotion and marketing.

Prizes

Each category winner will receive a handsome prize worth several hundreds of pounds. More importantly, if an idea is thought practicable, Keeler UK will be able to create professional artwork representation of your idea for you to display in your practice, make up a model prototype, and if the idea really has mileage, help fund the patent and, perhaps actually manufacture your innovation and offer you a royalty deal. If your idea has global appeal then this could be life changing.

The competition is now open, so start dreaming up those ideas. One day your invention might be used by eye care practitioners around the globe. ●

WHAT TO DO

Your entry should include the following:

- A name for your invention/innovation/idea
- A description of the idea, what it does, how it will do it and what use it will be
- Judges will look favourably on those entries that include design sketches and visuals, perhaps even a model
- Graphics may be electronic, hand-drawn sketches or photographs
- Entries may be sent in via email to william.harvey@rbi.co.uk or by post to *Optician/Keeler Open Innovations Competition 2012*, Quadrant House, The Quadrant, Sutton, Surrey, SM2 5AS
- The judging panel will comprise of representatives from academia, clinical practice and industry including Adrain Beasley, director of R&D for Keeler UK
- Entries must be received before May 31 2012