



Independent practitioners will notice a new approach from the UK wing of French lens manufacturer BBGR, which has a raft of new free-form progressive products along with a new marketing identity.

New to the market are four digitally surfaced progressives in Anateo, Evolis DS, StartUp and Singular DS, each with a different target audience and complementing the company's existing lenses. Explaining the mass launch and the new direction of the company is BBGR UK's marketing manager Sara Clowes, a trained chemist, who has worked in marketing for major pharmaceutical firms including Novartis.

Clowes points out that research last year by BBGR among eye care practitioners across Europe showed that BBGR was seen as an elegant but sober brand, with product that was known for sophisticated design and the latest technology. 'People also identified the company as having a human feel and liked this human and service side,' she explains.

Taking that forward, BBGR's new corporate identity promotes a more human touch, echoed in its marketing material, including a new catalogue and a brochure on the progressive lens portfolio. In these BBGR is using specific people of different age groups, from new wearers to confirmed presbyopes, to match the progressive lens types. It also gives a handy breakdown of key wearer benefits of the new lenses.

'A lot of thought has gone into the new direction of the company. The new catalogue is graphically different from those in the past, using the corporate red and bringing out that human aspect to make it more modern and seductive,' says Clowes.

She adds that there have also been big changes in the operations and logistics side, with plans to increase UK manufacturing by the year end. 'We've had a large investment in the Manchester manufacturing plant and are now looking into the feasibility of surfacing 1.6 index product in addition to the existing 1.5, which after testing and validation could be up and running in the final quarter.'

The company is finalising its remote edging and online ordering package, something it has wanted to offer for some time. But it is the free-form progressive portfolio that is the main news.

'The big thing is that lots of practitioners have heard about free-

The human touch

Optician discovers BBGR has new free-form progressive lenses aplenty and new marketing material to assist eye care practitioners



The free-form progressive portfolio is the main news

form and about how it's good to have free-form progressives, but may not be able to give a comprehensive explanation why. With our digital surfaced range the outstanding performance is maintained across the whole surface of the lens because of the dual surface free-form technology.

'Just because something has fantastic technology does not mean it's great to wear. It has to have a great design,' she says, adding that BBGR has combined the two to the benefit of the wearer.

A new option is Anateo PdM for the smaller frame, with the near and intermediate vision repositioned and fields of vision resized without compressing the double-sided design.

Evolis DS, Clowes describes as probably the most exciting launch. 'The original Evolis is an award-winning design and when you put it with free-form it gives existing Evolis wearers, of whom there are thousands in the UK, the opportunity to have even more improvement. The DS can do that. It's better than the last lens and they do not have to change their behaviour when reading or going up and down stairs, for example.'

It's not hard to figure out who StartUp is targeted at – the first-time progressive wearer. 'It's a niche product. A StartUp wearer will go to the optician complaining they can't read as well and a progressive is required. It's the first way in for them to progressives.'

The Singular DS, on the other hand is for young and confirmed presbyopes who want to combine the best technology with a short design that can be used in a trendy frame.

Expansion all round

'Opticians wanted a range of progressives and we are aware that it's confusing, so we have created a range with the choice of traditional technology or digital surfacing technology,' she says.

The company uses a pyramid illustration broken into good, better and best product, with the new free-form lenses making up the upper segments and the traditional technology at the bottom.

At the same time as the progressive range has been expanded, so too has the sales team with a couple of new experienced sales managers taking it up to six, under the guidance of commercial director David Real Firman.

Clowes describes the business to business service angle of BBGR as one of its strengths. 'We have five dedicated customer service staff solely for independents, who work from 8am to 6pm weekdays and 9am to 5pm on Saturdays so eye care practitioners can order at their convenience. Customers can ring after 4pm and they will still be able to speak to customer service staff with technical expertise.'

The company is now targeting independent practices with the aim to grow organically and solidly. 'We don't want a myriad of accounts and not be able to do what we said. So we've taken on the extra sales managers to ensure the whole of the UK is covered.'

Having had four years in the UK to build loyalty among customers, Clowes adds that BBGR is confident in what it can offer. 'We want to attract practices with business savvy and know-how. As well as a great product range,

which is very important, the price and the service has to be right so that the package is irresistible,' she adds.

Looking to the future, Clowes is equally confident that free-form is the way forward. 'Traditional surfacing will eventually go as digital surfacing takes over,' she predicts.