

Optical Supplier of the Year

International Eyewear has been one of the leading suppliers of eyewear and prescription sunglasses to the profession for the past 20 years. The company prides itself on successfully fulfilling expectations set out in its mission statement: 'Quality, service and fair price'. It seems its efforts have paid dividends as International Eyewear now claims to supply around 90 per cent of independent opticians in UK and Ireland.

It was an easy decision for the company to submit its entry when at the end of 2008 *Optician* officially launched its search for those in the optical sector who exceeded client expectations and could provide demonstrable evidence of high customer satisfaction.

'When we looked at the criteria for the Optical Supplier of the Year award for excellence in service, quality and relationships, we realised that it was in effect the goals of our company,' says Julie Abel, managing director of International Eyewear. 'Our customers have also been extremely complimentary of our range of products, pricing and service. This gave us the confidence that we could win this prestigious award.'

The company's confidence was justified. The judges were impressed with an entry backed by strong customer testimonials and International Eyewear's efficiency in carrying out its day-to-day business also received high praise. Ninety-eight per cent of orders are dispatched the same day.

Another factor that impressed the judges was the emphasis placed on quality and accuracy when processing orders, helping to ensure low return rates and increase client satisfaction. The company was also commended for its point of sale material and for listening to its clients and making changes where necessary.

'Our customers like the way we conduct our business,' says Abel. 'We are forward-thinking, we never follow others and we like to lead. We focus on developing cutting edge product which meets our customers' needs.'

'A lot of companies over-complicate things. We are a common sense company who listen to our customers,

Exceeding client expectations and customer satisfaction are just two of the key qualities demonstrated by International Eyewear, the Optical Supplier of the Year. **Perry Thakrar** reports



Pride in their achievement: Julie Abel and the International Eyewear team with their Awards trophy

react quickly and provide a first-class service within the industry.'

The *Optician* Awards took place on the Saturday night of Optrafair at the National Motorcycle Museum in April. Hollywood glitz, glamour and a red carpet entrance were the order for the evening, which culminated in the presentation of the coveted trophies.

'It was a fabulous high-voltage occasion!' says Abel. 'There was a tremendous atmosphere bringing

together all parts of the profession and industry. Above all, it was the social event of the year for optics – long may it continue.

'It was also a very proud moment in our company's history, it will certainly be a night many of us will never forget,' she adds. 'It was like the Oscars or BAFTA awards – only better!'

'Winning the award has opened many new doors for our sales force and gained us a significant number of new accounts,' she says. 'It is also nice that our loyal customers can recognise they are dealing with one of the leading UK suppliers.'

'What we have learnt from this experience is just how proud our staff and sales force were and are to win this award. Even weeks later our customers are still congratulating us and telling us how pleased they are that we won.'

'International Eyewear started from nothing 20 years ago. The Optical Supplier of the Year award was a crowning moment in our company history which cannot be taken away.' ●



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Sponsored by Sight Care Group

Winner International Eyewear

Shortlisted

Rodenstock UK
Essilor
Optisoft
Focus Optical Laboratories