

# Optical company focuses on customers and employees

by Heidi Riley

Health / Manufacturing

**V**ogue Optical has grown from its original location on Brackley Point Road in Charlottetown to a chain of 58 locations in Atlantic Canada, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. Staff numbers have grown to a total of 300.

Last year, Vogue Optical relocated their manufacturing lab to a state-of-the-art facility located at the Charlottetown Airport Business Park. The new lab manufactures the lenses for all 58 locations of the company.

This family-owned and operated company was started in 1979 by **Wayne Gray**, a licensed optician with a passion for growing his business. “Wayne built this company based on hard work and good relationships with customers and with staff,” says **Juanita Leary**, Director of Operations for Vogue Optical.

## Company encourages a family atmosphere

Juanita started with the company in 1988 when there were just eight stores. As she watched the company grow, she says that they have never lost sight of what is really important. “The company’s success is based on taking care of the customer and the employee,” says Juanita. “Our wages are competitive, and we offer job security, fairness, and we care about each employee personally.”

“Working with this company is not just a job, it’s a lifestyle. We have an open door policy here, and we welcome employees who come to us with their thoughts and ideas.”



Vogue Optical is celebrating 30 years in business. Juanita Leary, Director of Operations, and Cory Gray, Vice President, are proud of their staff and their reputation for good customer service.

## Advancement within the company

“Almost every one of us worked their way up in the company,” says Juanita. “For example, our general manager, **John MacLeod**, started as an optician and progressed to store manager, and then to regional manager before he stepped into his present position. Our marketing/human resource person began at Vogue as a receptionist. We like to promote long-time employees because they already know the people and the ethics

of the company, and their transition to a new position is smoother.


“There is very low turnover at Vogue Optical, and we have been very fortunate to have such wonderful staff,” says Juanita. “When we do hire, we look for people with the right attitude. We can teach the skills needed to do a job, but people bring their attitudes with them. We look for people who are hard working, loyal, and progressive thinkers who share their ideas.”

## Staff

The head office is located at 5 Brackley Point Road. All functions of the company are administered through the office. Sixteen people work at the head office, including Regional Managers, who are responsible for various regions throughout Canada.

About 20 people work at the lens manufacturing lab. The lab is run by the lab manager and the production manager. Technicians manufacture the lenses and insert lenses into the frames.

On PEI, Vogue Optical has two stores in Charlottetown, as well as locations in Summerside, Montague, and Alberton. In total, about 60 Islanders work at those locations. Each location has a manager who is also a licensed optician and contact lens fitter.

 For more information about Vogue Optical, visit [www.vogueoptical.com](http://www.vogueoptical.com)

## What does it take to be a licensed optician?

### Duties:

- follow a prescription written by an optometrist or ophthalmologist to fit eyeglasses and contact lenses
- assist clients to select eyeglasses
- advise on the use and care of contact lenses
- give laboratory technicians the information they need to manufacture lenses and insert them into a frame
- adjust finished eyeglasses to fit the client

### Training:

- a two- or three year college program in ophthalmic dispensing along with an apprenticeship or
- a two-year correspondence course combined with on the job training is required.
- a two-year contact lens technician course may also be required.
- licensing by a regulatory body is required in all provinces

 For more information about opticians, visit [www.opticians.ca](http://www.opticians.ca) or [www.pei.jobfutures.org](http://www.pei.jobfutures.org)