

Take This Class First: Know How to Assess a Frame Line for Quality and Fit Before You Visit Vendors

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Questions to ask:

- Tell us your brand story.
- Who is your intended target end consumer?
- Show me your favorite piece in the current collection. Why?
- Show me your least favorite piece in the current collection. Why?
- How many pieces do successful accounts carry? Why that number?
- What is it like to work with you?
- What is your warranty policy?
- What is your defect rate?
- What would be the advantage of making a decision here, today?

Before asking about price, consider what price you would expect to pay.

- What is the highest priced piece? Why does it merit that price?
- What is the lowest priced piece? Why is it less costly?
- What is the average per piece price in the collection. Does this differ by segment/subcollection?

What to pick up:

- Most ornate pieces: How are the ornate elements applied? Are they glued? Screwed? Hand Set? How is it made? How are lenses mounted?
- Transparent acetates – Look at the depth of the sink in the frame front, look at the hinges, open and close hinges – are they smooth? Do the components shine? How many barrels are in the hinge? How deep into the temple does the core extend? How is the temple attached to the frame? What is the quality of the acetate at the joined spot? Are there any temple caps that may come loose?
- Any “Flex” Metal – What direction does the metal adjust? Will this pose problems for fitting? Are there any special tools re
- An example of a metal – What metal is used? You will pay more for stainless steel, then memory metals or beta titaniums, then titaniums then precious metal coated parts.

With all frames – are there special tools or components required to service this line? Does a lab need to be trained in how to mount lenses in this frame? Is your lab already trained?

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What to look and feel for when touching:

- Hand Feel – Does it feel in your hands – Buttery? Plasticized? Heavy? Light? Like nothing special?
- Smoothness – Are there any catching points that could snag hair or skin? Do the skid test – does the material breathe?
- Adjustability – Can you cold adjust the acetates? Can you manipulate the nose pads? Can you put a permanent adjustment into a memory metal?
- Weaknesses - Where is this frame likely to break?
- Will lenses be difficult to mount?

Every piece you try on (and try on everything!), evaluate the piece for:

- How do the temples skim the head when going on?
- Are there pressure points you feel or is the weight and distributed evenly?
- Does the bridge fit you? Will it fit most? Are the angles of the bridge well rounded to sit comfortably on the nose?
- How high does the frame sit on the face?
- Where do the temples meet the frame?
- Do the colors complement a variety of skin tones? Are they easy or difficult to sell?
- Does the frame have a direction that it pulls the eye of the observer? Is it flattering?

When evaluating the product line:

- Can the line serve more than one need? Is it flexible if the direction we start is not what works for us?
- Is it deep enough that we can be successful? Are there enough really great pieces that we feel we could sell this all day?
- Has the line evolved over time in a direction that is in line with the trends in your demographic?
- Are we excited about it? Why? What makes this easy to sell?

The following page is a place for you to collect data when you visit vendors. Choose your scale and write it up in the upper right-hand corner. Zero to Three is useful for most and gives a “good, better, best” rating. Make sure you give a score for each index. Play with this! If something is amazing and is more important than all other elements, give it a bonus point! In the last column before the total, put any quality of a frame line that is especially important to your office. Do this before you shop!

When you have met with several vendors go back and review your table and create your totals. Only after you have met with vendors, assess if the line would meet your current need. Keeping this data will help you to identify lines you saw while here but perhaps were not what you needed at the moment.

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Rating Scale: 0 (Not acceptable) to _____ (Best)

Frame Line	Frame Materials	Frame Construction	Color	Depth and Flexibility	Ease of Use - Product	Ease of Use - Company	Warranty	Price	Representative	Brand Story	Wildcard:	TOTAL	Notes

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