

Problem Solved: Coming Through for a Customer in an Emergency

R&D Optical, a full-service prescription lab in Cincinnati, Ohio that is considered by state authorities to be an essential health care service, has continued to operate throughout the coronavirus pandemic, despite a significant slowdown in business during the pandemic's early days.

"I've been here every day during the pandemic, along with a small emergency crew to get out the few jobs that we got in," said Ronald Cooke, Jr., R&D's president and CEO. That has made a huge difference for some of its accounts. As Cooke explained, "We had one particular customer who normally would edge their own lenses. But their lab guy wasn't there and their lab was closed. So they sent all their jobs to us, including a number that were for children."

Roberta Thompson, manager of Bloom Family Eye Surgeons in Dayton, Ohio, picks up the story. "We are a small family office and have an onsite lab, and in addition we utilize commercial labs for eyewear needs that we can't fabricate in our office. When COVID-19 hit our world, Bloom Family Eye Surgeons was completely turned upside down, as was everyone else's. For safety concerns we went from a staff of 28 to a staff of five. We had no way to fabricate lens during this time, however, the need was still there. Patients still needed to see.

"I knew that if our small business was so severely impacted by this pandemic that all



small businesses had to be in the same position we were," Thompson continued. "I had met Ronald a few months before COVID-19, so I called R&D Optical and asked if they would be willing to help us, I explained our position and without hesitation they offered to help us in any way they could.

"It was kind of a 'we are in this together' feeling. They edged and fabricated any orders I sent them, they communicated if there were any issues, and I can honestly say there were none, they made all our jobs usually the day they received them, and they got them sent back out to me the next day."

Cooke credited his staff's expertise and

the lab's Mei EZFit NoBlock edger—"It's just a beast," he marveled—with being able to "bust out" the jobs quickly.

Thompson summed up her experience with R&D Optical, saying: "Because of their customer service, their willingness to help us without hesitation, their overall communication and the feeling they give off as a small, honest business, they have forever earned our business. Although we are now back to normal staffing, I will continue to send them anything our lab cannot do, versus sending to a large commercial company because of the way they have helped us during a national emergency." ■