

20/20 & U Blog Comment on the Time Magazine Article "Eyes on the Price" - 7/4/11

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Submitted by [dcarroll](#) [1] on 08.08.11 - 6:50 am

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In the 20/20&U blog L&T editor, Andy Karp, comments on a recent Time Magazine story that once again questions the cost of eyewear to the consumer, read on for his take and a link to the original Time story... and don't forget to leave your comments below!

Value Goes Beyond Dollars

Andrew Karp

I don't know about you, but I'm getting tired of the consumer press periodically bashing our industry for supposedly charging too much for eyewear. So it was with trepidation that I read an article called "Eyes on the Price," in the July 4 issue of Time magazine. The writer, who actually spoke with 20/20 Editor-in-Chief James Spina while preparing the article, questions why the Lindberg titanium frame and Varilux progressives he recently bought at a "pricey shop in New York City" for about \$1,000 cost three times as much as a flat-screen TV.

Although one can make crude comparisons between any two products, why anyone would compare a mass manufactured, consumer electronics product with a premium, custom-made product is beyond me. The writer does acknowledge some differences between the two, such as the fact that titanium is a "relatively expensive material that designers love." He also notes that the service he received at the eyeglass shop was "superb."

But he fails to consider the degree of personalization that was probably involved in fabricating and dispensing his lenses (which he erroneously refers to as "bifocals?"). In all likelihood, his lenses, unlike his TV, were made to precisely fit his face and his frame. No doubt the superb service was provided by a skilled optician who guided his choice of eyewear and made sure it fit properly so as to maximize its performance.

The writer ends with a backhanded compliment, saying that "eyeglass sellers have done a better job of price maintenance than TV sellers have." While that may be true, the more important point is that those pricey new eyeglasses are providing value that goes beyond a simple dollars to dollars comparison. They are improving the quality of his life. Without them, he might not even be able to see his flat screen TV.

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Time Magazine Article - <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2079577,00.html> [5]

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Kudos to Andy Karp for

Kudos to Andy Karp for speaking his mind...and mine!

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