
Your Complete Checklist for a Cold Start Optometry Practice

Foundation, financing, and launch steps specific to
building an optometry practice from scratch.

Dental & Medical Counsel, P.C.

Healthcare and Dental Attorneys, Walnut Creek, CA
dmcounsel.com, 925-999-8200

Opening a private optometry practice cold, meaning without an existing patient base, is one of the biggest decisions of an optometrist's career. It requires a clear mission, the right financing, and a location backed by real analysis rather than instinct. This checklist walks through what to consider at each stage of a cold start.

PART 01

Decide a Cold Start Is Right for You

A cold start means building an optometry practice from scratch, without acquiring an existing patient base.

- ☐ Clarify your mission and core values before you begin
- ☐ Prepare a written mission statement covering your goals for the practice
- ☐ Be honest that a cold start requires long hours, especially in the beginning
- ☐ Weigh a cold start against purchasing an existing practice for your specific goals
- ☐ Confirm you are ready for the personal and professional commitment a cold start demands

SCHEDULE YOUR COMPLIMENTARY CONSULTATION

Thinking Through a Cold Start?

Let's talk through your timeline and financing before you commit to a location.

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PART 02

Build Your Foundation

- ☐ Join an optometry association for start up guidance, mentorship, and cost saving resources
- ☐ Prepare a comprehensive business plan before approaching lenders
- ☐ Assemble your team of advisors, including an attorney and accountant
- ☐ Decide whether to lease or own your practice space
- ☐ Design your office to be a comfortable, welcoming place for patients

PART 03

Choose and Vet Your Location

- ☐ Complete a geospatial analysis of the market area before signing a lease
- ☐ Confirm the location supports the patient volume your practice will need
- ☐ Understand what it will generally cost to build out and open in that location

- ☐ Review zoning and lease terms with your attorney before committing
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Evaluating a Location or Lease?

We review commercial leases and site considerations before you sign, so there are no surprises after.

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PART 04

Secure Your Financing

- ☐ Look for optometry specific lenders who may fund the full cost of a cold start practice
 - ☐ Understand typical repayment terms, often ten to twelve years with graduated payments
 - ☐ Ask whether you need to be licensed as an optometrist for a set period before funding is approved
 - ☐ Explore SBA loans for startup businesses, including their low interest options
 - ☐ Use SBA resources for help with your business plan, business name, and insurance needs
 - ☐ Compare requirements across several banks, since smaller banks are often more flexible
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PART 05

Handle Formation and Compliance

- ☐ Form the appropriate optometry corporation for your new practice
 - ☐ Choose and clear a practice name before you build your brand around it
 - ☐ Confirm you have obtained the proper business, retail, tax, and federal and state ID numbers
 - ☐ Put the right business insurance in place before opening day
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PART 06

Market Your Launch

- ☐ Build a strong local presence: sponsor community events, join the Chamber of Commerce
 - ☐ Support local causes and attend community events to build visibility early
 - ☐ Offer patients online tools for scheduling and secure messaging
 - ☐ Plan for revenue to build gradually while the community gets to know you
 - ☐ Lean on experienced professionals throughout so early missteps do not derail your launch
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Ready to Start Your Practice?

Our optometry attorneys have helped hundreds of optometrists launch practices from the ground up. Schedule a complimentary consultation to talk through your plans.

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Dental & Medical Counsel, P.C., 1904 Olympic Blvd, Suite 240, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

This checklist is provided by Dental & Medical Counsel, P.C. for general informational purposes only and does not constitute legal, financial, or tax advice. Every cold start is different, so speak with a qualified optometry attorney before making decisions about your specific practice launch.



About Ali Oromchian

Founding Attorney, Dental & Medical Counsel, P.C.

Ali Oromchian, JD, LL.M. is the founding attorney of Dental & Medical Counsel, P.C. and one of the nation's leading legal authorities on topics relevant to dentists, doctors, optometrists, and veterinarians. Since its creation, DMC has been regarded as one of the pre-eminent health care law firms devoted exclusively to healthcare professionals.

His clients seek his advice on dental and medical practice transitions, the creation of corporations and partnerships, associate contracts, estate planning, employment law matters, office leasing, and state board defense.

Ali is a frequent speaker on employment law, practice transitions, negotiation strategies, contracts, and estate planning throughout North America, having spoken for the American Dental Association, California Dental Association, Hawaii Dental Association, American Association of Orthodontics, California Society of Pediatric Dentistry, NVision, Vision Source, and countless other state and local dental, medical, and optometric societies.

He is a graduate of the University of California at Davis, where he received a Bachelor of Arts with Honors in Political Science and Rhetoric and Communications, and of the University of California, Davis School of Law, where he received his Juris Doctor. He went on to earn an LL.M. with Honors from The George Washington University Law School. Ali is a member of the California Bar and the Bar of the District of Columbia.