



Retail Business in Optical Field Perks up

Retail business in the optical field grew 3.5 per cent in the second quarter of the fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period last year. The turnover in the field reached 81.4 million euros. However, sales in the first half-year period decreased by 2.6 per cent and expectations for the future are cautious. Sunglasses and contact lenses constituted the bright spots in the field as the turnover for them grew strongly.

The turnover in spectacle sales also increased. Sales reached nearly 60 million euros. The growth from last year is slightly less than two per cent. Sales in spectacle lenses and frames accounts for nearly 80 per cent of the retail sales in the optical field. The turnover for sales in quality sunglasses grew as much as 26 per cent reaching more than six million euros. Likewise, the sales in contact lenses reached nearly six million euros. The turnover for contact lenses grew more than five per cent compared to the corresponding period last year.

Panu Tast, managing director of the Finnish Association of Vision and Eyecare, says, "The favourable development in the sales of spectacles was geared by the increase in the average price of single focal lenses and spectacle frames". He adds, "Consumers purchased higher quality single focal lenses and brand-name frames."

The market share of online businesses and businesses not belonging to a chain has slightly increased for the first time in years. The biggest winner in the first part of the year is Silmäasema, the market share of which increased 1.2 percentage units and is 25.7 % at the moment. Specsavers increased its market share to 13.3, a 0.8 percentage unit in growth. Synsam's share increased by 0.6 percentage units and is currently at 6.4 per cent. The share of market leader, Instru optiikka, is 34.2 per cent.

Head of Country Operations **Erkki Tala** of Specsavers says, "The first part of the year has been marked by consumer cautiousness, and a quick change in direction does not seem evident".

He continues, "During the second quarter, sales in spectacles that are more expensive on average supported the slight growth in turnover in the field. At the same time, however, sales volumes decreased, which slightly weakens the expectations for the autumn. However, high-quality, extensive eyecare services support the activities in optical businesses in the various economic cycles".

There are nearly 700 optical businesses in Finland, and 600 of these businesses offer eye doctor services. Tast notes, "It's worthwhile maintaining an extensive network of basic services in the health care and social welfare reform. In this way, we can guarantee the quality and availability of services for vision and eye health care in Finland".

Enquiries:

Managing Director Panu Tast, Finnish Association of Vision and Eyecare NÄE ry, tel.: + 358 (0)40 542 2227, panu.tast@naery.fi
Country Manager Erkki Tala, Specsavers Finland Oy, tel.: +358 (0)40 574 1192, erkki.tala@specsavers.com

The GfK research institute provides field-related statistics which are based directly on the data related to the use of the cash register system. Specific market shares are based on the figures optical businesses report to the Finnish Association of Vision and Eyecare (NÄE ry).

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The Finnish Association of Vision and Eyecare (NÄE ry) was established in the spring of 2016, when optical businesses and private eyecare clinics, as well as the importers and wholesalers that serve them, joined forces. NÄE ry is responsible for advocating field-related business, health care, education and communication, and engages in research and offers training. The member businesses make up more than 80 % of the turnover in the field. In addition to businesses, the association comprises educational institutions that train professionals in vision and eye health as well as the organisations representing those institutions. NÄE ry belongs to the Finnish Commerce Federation and the Federation of Finnish Enterprises.