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The Vision Council Convened More Than 300 Optical Industry Leaders in Naples, Florida for 2024 Executive Summit

Annual Leadership Event Offered Exclusive Insights on Future Industry Developments, Hosted Executive-Level Networking, and Inducted 2024 Board of Directors

Alexandria, VA – January 25, 2024 – The Vision Council's 2024 Executive Summit commenced on Monday, January 22 with a beachfront welcome reception hosted by Ashley Mills, CEO of The Vision Council, and continued through Wednesday, January 24.

The Executive Summit in Naples, Florida gathered 330 industry professionals on the white sands of the Gulf of Mexico for three action-packed days of networking, leadership development, and critical discussions that will shape the future of the optical industry. The Summit's programming highlights emerging business trends and offers tangible strategies to tackle the evolving challenges of the eyecare and eyewear industry, as well as the economy at large.

"The 2024 Executive Summit has exemplified a vibrant synergy of learning and collaboration, drawing immense industry participation and engagement," said **Ashley Mills, CEO of The Vision Council**. "With nearly 100 first-time attendees, it is evident that the dynamic programming, meaningful networking, and open discussions at the Executive Summit are valued by our industry and members alike. In line with The Vision Council's strategic priorities for 2024, we will continue to foster opportunities for mutual learning, idea exchange, and relationship-building. With this, we are ensuring that all of our members possess the essential tools and resources for success in a rapidly changing business landscape."

Furthermore, during the Annual Business Meeting on Tuesday, January 23, The Vision Council confirmed the 2024 Board of Directors, and approved the following officers to serve an additional term:

- Scott Shapiro, Europa Eyewear, as Chair
- Jamie Rosin, Rosin Eyecare, as Vice Chair
- Karen Roberts, Carl Zeiss Vision, as Immediate Past Chair
- Ross Brownlee, Hilco Vision, as Secretary/Treasurer.

Access the full list of The Vision Council's 2024 Board of Directors list at thevisioncouncil.org/governance.



Program Highlights

Following the Annual Business Meeting, **Caroline Casey, President, International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), and Founder, the Valuable 500**, presented “The Value of Vision,” in which she shared the captivating story behind her discovery of her ocular albinism condition and her journey to bring disability, specifically blindness, to the forefront of the Davos World Economic Forum. Casey also discussed the empowerment and value that the optical industry provides for society as a whole.

Casey was followed by a keynote from **Mike Walsh, CEO, Tomorrow**, who presented “The AI-Powered Organization,” which included discussion of the implications behind the AI revolution, the urgency for businesses to adapt to computational decision-making, and strategies to reimagine optical businesses in an age of consistently advancing technology.

After lunch, **Dr. Alan Amling, Assistant Professor of Practice, University of Tennessee, and CEO, Thrive and Advance LLC**, presented “Playing to Win in the Age of Uncertainty and Overload,” which covered the digital transformation of the supply chain process and how to harness digital disruption for success.

The Tuesday keynotes were followed by a general session panel exploring the emerging landscape of telehealth services and an update from The Vision Council’s research team, including the unveiling of the [2023 Market inSights](#) report.

Attendees then had the opportunity to dive deeper into their areas of interest through topical breakout sessions, committee meetings, and networking activities before gathering for the Chairperson’s Dinner and Party.

The 2024 Executive Summit programming continued on Wednesday, January 24 with an update from The Vision Council’s Government and Regulatory Affairs team on pertinent political developments and the latest initiatives of [VisionPAC](#).

A panel discussion focused on The Vision Council’s Emerging Optical Leaders programming and opportunities explored the value of community, collaboration, and knowledge sharing, as well as the importance of investing in future talent.

Returning from last year’s Executive Summit in Austin, Texas, **Johnny C. Taylor Jr., President & CEO of Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)**, presented “The Future of Work: Leadership’s Role in Averting the Skills Gap Crisis.” Within the context of the optical industry, he explored some of the variables impacting the modern workforce including AI, skills building, diversity, equity and inclusion, and remote vs in-office work.

The Summit’s final keynote presentation brought **Brian Beaulieu, economist and CEO of ITR Economics** back to the stage. Beaulieu shared a fiscal perspective for the future on how attendees can prepare their business and personal finances in 2024 and beyond.



Ashley Mills, CEO of The Vision Council delivered closing remarks, reiterating The Vision Council's strategic priorities for 2024, and emphasizing the organization's mission to provide members with the tools and resources needed to find success.

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About The Vision Council

The Vision Council brings the power of sight to all through education, government relations, research, and technical standards. A leading advocate for the optical industry, the association positions its members to deliver the eyewear and eyecare people need to look and feel their best. Vital to health, independence and safety, better vision leads to better lives.