OZ Optics Ltd.

OZ Optics designs and manufactures advanced fiber optic components and test equipment for various fiber optic markets. The company implements rigorous quality standards to achieve its goal of providing all customers with a competitive advantage, and has become a leading worldwide supplier of optic products.

Headquarters	219 Westbrook Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K0A 1L0
Year Established	1985
NAICS	333310 - Commercial and service industry machinery manufacturing
Employees	450
Major Expansions	1988
Exports	US, EU, Asia-Pacific
Parent Company	N/A
Other Locations	OZ Turkey - Sarnıç Mevki, 35410 Izmir, Turkey, OZ China - 289 Muyang RdXiuzhou Qu, Jiaxing Shi, Zhejiang Sheng, China, 314033

OZ Optics Ltd. (OZ) designs and manufactures advanced fiber optic components and testing equipment. Over the past 33 years, OZ has grown to become a leading worldwide supplier of fiber optic products by implementing rigorous quality standards to provide all of its customers with a competitive advantage.

The first product offered by OZ was created by company founder Ömür Sezerman, in response to an issue he faced during his PhD studies at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In 1982, a piece of technology that Sezerman required to complete his PhD work cost $2,000, which represented 80 per cent of the total funding his professor had secured for the project. Given that this expense was not feasible, Sezerman created a simple and inexpensive product called a laser-to-fiber coupler, which could perform the same function as the expensive technology he required. After applying for and receiving a patent for this simple but innovative product in 1985, he was ready to start his business. After beginning operations in his basement in Halifax, Sezerman relocated the firm to Ottawa, Ontario, in 1988 to accommodate the increased demand for the product, and gain better access to customers in the United States. Today, OZ has grown to employ more than 450 individuals worldwide, and offers more than 1,000 different products in over 60 counties.

Designing and manufacturing these products requires significant creativity and innovation. OZ has been able to consistently develop new products because of its strong relationships with domestic universities and its dedication to customers. Additionally, OZ's willingness to design custom solutions for unique problems faced by its customers presents other avenues to develop new products. OZ has manufacturing

facilities in Turkey, China, and Canada. All prototyping, product development, and R&D occurs at its Canadian facility.

OZ supplies its products to more than 65 countries around the world, selling to over 10,000 customers. The company forms relationships with customers by attending numerous trade shows, and using a worldwide network of distributors. Customers value OZ's commitment to developing innovative products that provide them with new capabilities. For example, OZ was the first company to introduce polarization maintaining fiber optic components to the marketplace, as well as the first to integrate wireless technology into its designs of remote fiber optic measurement systems and instruments.

The option to purchase bulk orders of products at a lower cost (i.e., by having the products manufactured in China or Turkey) is another benefit that OZ is happy to offer its customers. Sezerman's philosophy puts customer satisfaction above all else, and he often personally participates in customer interactions to ensure that OZ is addressing all of its customers' needs. This high-quality customer service and innovative product development directly contributes to OZ's ability to sell to customers in a wide range of industries, including telecommunications, medical, aerospace, oil and gas, and industrial.

Approximately 240 of the company's 450 workers are employed at its Canadian facility. Although Sezerman acknowledges that a strong educational background in physics or engineering is important within the fiber optics industry, he is more concerned with potential employees' character when he is hiring; the core values that he looks for are leadership, teamwork, boldness, commitment, and innovation.

Relocating to Ottawa in 1987 provided OZ with access to a much larger pool of talented workers who would be a great fit for the company. Once hired, the firm provides all employees with opportunities to further their professional development through additional education or training. With the help of his wife, daughter, and members of senior management he met while at university, Sezerman has assembled a team that is deeply committed to the success of OZ and its customers.

Moreover, Sezerman is always looking for ways to turn this success into benefits for the local community. Next to his manufacturing facility in Ottawa, Sezerman created the "OZ Dome" because of his passion for sports (and soccer in particular) and his dedication to the wellness of his employees. The OZ Dome contains multiple soccer fields, a volleyball court, tennis court, badminton court, indoor pool, sauna, and gym, and is open for charity events as well as OZ employees. Proud of his Turkish background, Sezerman also sponsors multiple events for the local Turkish community. Additionally, authentic ceramic tiles imported from Turkey with beautiful images on them are displayed throughout the OZ Dome and the manufacturing facility.

OZ also uses its success to help promote other Canadian manufacturers on a global scale, specifically within the photonics industry. Sezerman is a founder and past chair of the Canadian Photonics Consortium, and has helped a number of companies with global trade issues. In addition to being an annual participant in the largest photonics trade show in the world, Photonics North, OZ also participates in and sponsors another show, Photonics West. As a sponsor of the latter event, OZ enjoys certain benefits, which it shares with other manufacturing firms from Canada by allowing them to join the "Canadian Cluster" of companies at the event.

The most difficult challenge overcome by Sezerman was securing the initial funding to establish OZ in 1985. After nine months of negotiating with venture capitalists, Sezerman was still unable to reach a deal because the investors wanted more control of the company than he was willing to give. However, the friends and mentors that Sezerman met during his time at Dalhousie University helped him to surpass this challenge by

donating $100,000.

Another challenge that OZ encounters from time to time relates to approval for patent applications. Although the company has more than 20 patented products, some patents were not granted after the first application. For example, Sezerman's patent application for his first product, the laser-to-fiber coupler, was rejected. However, Sezerman was persistent, and finally received approval after requesting that the application be reconsidered. Today, after more than 30 years of leading his company, Sezerman's passion and persistence are stronger than ever, which helps OZ continuously develop patented products.

In the short term, Sezerman plans to take OZ further into the e-commerce industry by focusing on the growth of its online sales. The rapid advancement of technology has made it increasingly easier to purchase products online, and capitalizing on this opportunity is important to the company. Additionally, OZ will place more focus on marketing the standard products it manufactures, so potential customers are aware the company is capable of offering innovative standard products in addition to custom solutions.

OZ's long-term goals include continuing to expand its cutting-edge research and development by observing industry trends, and approaching unique customer issues with an open mind. Sezerman believes that achieving these goals will help the company continue building its reputation as an innovative product manufacturer, and also contribute to creating and maintaining strong customer relationships. Another long-term goal is to leverage OZ's patented technology and proprietary expertise, which will result in sustained sales growth. Sezerman plans to continue diversifying his sales markets by actively seeking out new industries that would benefit from OZ products. Finally, OZ is always seeking to expand its manufacturing capacity and improve its operating efficiency so that it can offer its products to customers at more cost-effective prices. As Sezerman notes, in order to stay successful, OZ must focus on growing in ways that will positively impact its customers.