Digital technology and CAD/CAM will determine dental market development

An interview with Dominique Deschietere, President of the Association of Dental Dealers in Europe

As the dental industry and the health-care sector in general produce a wide range of products, from extremely sophisticated devices to consumables, we as distributors need to be vigilant regarding medical device regulations. The regulatory framework provided by the EU for market access, international business relations and legal agreements is in the patient’s best interest. However, we also think that these matters should be adapted to the dental distributor market.

Why do the current regulations need to be changed at all?

The main reason for the revision is that current EU legislation dates from the late 1990s and is considered insufficient by many for our rapidly changing market. In addition, some member states of the EU have tended to interpret some of these rules broadly, which is not necessarily to the benefit of the patient. It also makes competition unfair for those distributors who adhere to the regulations. Therefore, it is essential to impose new regulations in order to increase traceability of dental products within and beyond the borders of the EU.

According to a 2011 survey by your organisation, sales of dental materials and equipment in Europe remained relatively stable. What is the current state of the industry on the continent?

Preliminary figures from our latest survey of the industry show that, except for a few countries, the market has achieved good sales. There might be a slight decrease in traditional product segments, as old technologies are replaced by new ones but it is still too early to provide a clear picture on the current market situation. Unfortunately, not all figures from our 2012 industry survey to be discussed during the IDS are available yet. However, we would like to invite everyone to our presentation(s) to be held on Wednesday, 13 March, at 16.00 in the Blue Room at the Koelnmesse Island.

During a press conference in December in Cologne, the Chairman of the Association of German Dental Manufacturers, Dr Martin Rickert, said that the outlook for markets in Southern Europe is rather negative owing to the financial constraints the health-care sector is facing at the moment. What is the situation really like there?

It is no secret that some countries in Southern Europe that suffered most from the financial crisis are showing a negative trend with regard to dental investments. It is likely that this will be reflected in the sales figures from last year.

While sales of sundries and technical services increased slightly in 2011, equipment sales decreased by over 2 per cent. Have dentists become more wary of investments?

Socio-demographic developments and changing patterns of reimbursements by public health services and insurers have had an impact on patients’ health-care spending. Consequently, dental practices are increasingly making use of digital imaging and planning instruments, find their way into dental practices. Dental laboratories too are increasingly making use of CAD/CAM technology. Both these developments will determine how the market and the dental business models will develop in the future.

Europe has traditionally been one of the largest markets for dental material and equipment, rivalled only by North America. How important have markets overseas become?

It goes without saying that in terms of economic growth, spending ability and other factors, the BRIC countries hold great potential. Dental distributors in Europe will be involved in this process as we gain access to other products and technologies from around the world. From this competition only will increase within the EU. Our members will have to follow these changes carefully and learn to respond to them in a professional and transparent manner.

Thank you for the interview.
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We to create
Welcome to the International Dental Show 2013
By Dr Martin Rickert, Chairman of the Association of German Dental Manufacturers (VDDI)

The dental industry in Germany is very dynamic in every aspect, technologically and economically. Particularly in the last ten years, the field has seen the introduction of numerous preventative and treatment procedures, all of which were inconceivable a mere 15 years ago. New ceramic dental materials, synthetic filling materials, CAD/CAM in restorative dentistry, digital imaging and imprint treatment planning—these have been working as a team in every area, keeping the German dental industry a world leader. Together, we are smart and full of ideas, as well as innovative and flexible in our thinking. Nowhere else can you find this more than at the International Dental Show, which is to be held from 12 to 16 March in Cologne in Germany.

Well, what can you expect to see at the show? CAD/CAM is increasingly finding its way into daily practice with an ever-expanding offering of intra-oral scanners of all varieties. Video signals, blue LEDs, the computer principle, with or without scanning powder, you will have the opportunity to see and experience everything within a day to help you make your purchasing decision.

At the same time, one-closed systems can now be used with different software, production units and scanners. This flexibility offers numerous possibilities for you to optimise work procedures in your own practice and in collaboration with your dental partners. Likewise, more and more options are becoming available to you owing to developments in the dental industry. The outsourcing of dental work requiring large and expensive machinery has been an option for years. Recently, there has been the opposite trend, which has been a surprise to many, of insourcing previously outsourced manufacturing steps.

With the recent advancements in CAD/CAM technology, decisions regarding material selection can increasingly be tailored to every single patient. With state-of-the-art ceramic materials, dentists and dental technicians, for example, can work on multiple indications and with conventional metal ceramics using high gold-content alloys, which themselves are very up-to-date. Modern rapid prototyping procedures could also become more important in the field of high-performance ceramics.

Is everything becoming digital then? The answer is yes, but everything is also becoming more biological and interdisciplinary—nowadays, dentists increasingly refer patients to other medical specialists. The fight against periodontitis and peri-implantitis has to be viewed in the context of systematic diseases, a link clearly supported and illustrated by recent scientific results. Therefore, microbiological studies on genetics in particular have gained a more prominent role in dental science. In this field, the International Dental Show is also expected to showcase more precise and faster scanning procedures.

In addition, innovations in the field of imaging have made their mark in the high-technology sector. Increasingly combined into compact hybrid systems, intra-oral cameras, fluorescence cameras and even polymerisation lamps have become effective tools in the diagnosis of caries and in dental filling.

Owing to these developments, I am looking forward to the upcoming International Dental Show, and particularly to your visit and expert opinion on the innovations presented there.

By Katharina C. Hamma, COO of Koelnmesse

The industry highlight of the year
By Katharina C. Hamma, COO of Koelnmesse

The standout to the International Dental Show (IDS) has started. In a few weeks, the global dental community will meet again in Cologne. The IDS is the undisputed leading global trade show for the dental industry. A visit to the trade fair halls in Cologne is a must for dentists and dental technicians, other dental staff, members of the specialist dental trade, scientists and researchers. There is no other event in which the entire dental industry—including all international market leaders—presents such a wide range of products and services. The exhibition will be showcasing items from many areas, including dentistry and dental technology segments; infection prevention and maintenance; dental services; and all of the relevant information, communication and organisational channels.

This year, the show will occupy 150,000 m² of exhibition space for the first time. More than 1,500 companies from over 55 countries will be presenting the latest trends, as well as many innovations and services. Once again, the percentage of visitors and exhibitors from outside Germany will increase, as we are expecting to welcome 10 per cent more exhibitors from abroad than we had two years ago. Overall, 68 per cent of the exhibitors will be coming to Cologne from outside Germany. From this, it is clear that the IDS is cementing its position as the leading global trade fair.

Visitors to the IDS will be travelling to Cologne from all over the world. Two years ago, some came from as far away as the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Zimbabwe, Togo, Madagascar, Gabon, Oman, Laos, Cambodia, Tajikistan, Polynesia and Micronesia. This year we are expecting to welcome more than 12,000 visitors from every part of the world, professionals who want to take a closer look at the latest innovations in the industry. Such an international exchange of experiences and business deals is only possible at the IDS in Cologne.

Visitors can be sure that there will be no lack of innovations at the fair. The industry’s innovative capacity is well known, and the IDS is the largest show of innovations in the world of dentistry. However, new products and technologies are only one side of the coin. As usual, the supporting programme will offer added value. At the Speaker’s Corner in Hall 3.1, for example, IDS exhibitors will provide information daily about new products, services and technical processes. They will also report on the latest scientific and research findings. In addition, the German Dental Association (VDZI) and the Association of German Dental Technicians (VDTG) will round off the events at the IDS with their professional activities.

For an event of this scope, excellent preparation is essential. We offer visitors a number of tools to enable them to plan their visit optimally. These tools include the current update of the IDS app for smartphones, which now features an exhibitor search function and a navigation system to guide visitors through the halls and to stands of their interest. The update also provides video information about previous events, local services and the IDS supporting programme. Thanks to the Business Matchmaking 365 function, exhibitors and visitors can communicate with each other even before IDS 2013 begins and after it ends. The online schedule planner makes it possible to arrange meetings with exhibitors in advance via e-mail. Anyone wanting an overview of the latest products can search for them in advance using our online innovation database. All these features will make it much easier to prepare for a visit to the IDS.

You will not want to miss the IDS. It is the ideal business, information and communication platform for the entire world of dentistry. And that makes sense if everyone arrives in the dental industry.

I wish you a successful IDS 2013 and an enjoyable stay in Cologne!