80 percent of revenues are generated outside of Japan

By Dental Tribune Asia Pacific

It is no secret that the years since the global financial crisis have not been kind to companies in Japan. First, the recession slowed business investments significantly; then the effects of the 2011 tsunami and the massive destruction it wrought, which almost brought the world’s third largest economy to a halt.

For NSK, one of the country’s largest dental manufacturers, troubles in the home market are its least concern because the company conducts most of its business elsewhere. According to president and CEO Eiichi Nakanishi, with whom Dental Tribune International recently had the opportunity to speak at the company’s headquarters in Tochigi, more than 80 percent of the company’s revenues are now generated by its operations outside of Japan.

In the last three years, NSK has been performing particularly well in mature markets such as Europe and North America, where it boosted its presence with the opening of its new headquarters near Chicago in 2011, despite unfavorable conditions such as high market saturation and the ongoing decline of the yen against the dollar.

According to the 48-year-old, who has run the company since 2000, one of the major reasons for NSK’s strong market position, even in established markets, is its dedication to innovation and quality, combined with the excellent after-sales service it is able to provide to customers in almost every country except North Korea. But this hasn’t always been the case.

Founded in the 1930s, the company had a rough start, and operations were completely halted during World War II. The production of dental handpieces resumed in 1951, however, the company has grown extensively and now employs more than 700 people in its Japanese offices in Tochigi and Tokyo.

Since 2009, Nakanishi has seen his company regaining market share in Asia through centralized distribution and after the sale support offered through its new subsidiary in Singapore.

Another significant contributor has been NSK’s European office in Germany, which accounted for almost one third of the 22.2 billion yen ($276 million) in sales the company reported in 2011. “That is why economic conditions in our home market have little or no impact on our overall business. We really think globally,” Nakanshi explains.

One of NSK’s recent innovations, launched at the 2011 IDS in Cologne, Germany, for example, is the Ti-Max Z series, a durable premium handpiece that is claimed to have the smallest heads and necks in the sector, as well as an exceptionally low noise level and virtually no vibration. The Surgic Pro surgical micro-motor has also received much interest, particularly by dental implant surgeons, and is now distributed alongside systems by major implant manufacturers. NSK asserts it pays close attention to the needs of its customers, a philosophy that has resulted in products such as the S-max pico, which was developed solely for the treatment of patients with smaller mouths, such as children.

Moving into other markets is conceivable but unlikely to happen anytime soon, Nakanshi says. Even though his company has begun to enter new areas in the past decade with the launch of instruments such as ultrasonic scalers and polishers, its core business will remain dental handpieces and other small motor equipment.

“When it comes to handpieces, we have produced more innovations than our competitors,” he remarks. “Our goal is to become the No. 1 company worldwide in this segment.”

‘Barrier protection’ critical in dental professionals’ gloves

While caring for their patients, dental and health care professionals are constantly exposed to bodily fluids that may carry viruses and other infectious agents. It is therefore critical that the gloves these professionals use provide the best possible barrier protection.

Many types of gloves are available today, but it is important to know that not all gloves have the same barrier capability, depending on the type of material used. For example, natural rubber latex gloves have long been acknowledged for their very effective barrier properties, while non-latex gloves, such as vinyl (PVC), have inferior barrier capability as shown by numerous studies.

Other synthetic gloves, such as nitrile and polyprene, perform much better than vinyl but are more costly, especially polyprene gloves. Using gloves with inferior barrier capability could expose both the patients and users to undesirable/harmful infections.

Malaysia is in the world’s largest medical gloves exporter (latex and nitrile). Both quality and user’s safety are of top priority to the nation’s glove industry. To this end, a quality certification program (the Standard Malaysian Gloves or the SMG) has currently been formulated for latex examination gloves.

All SMG-certified gloves must comply with stringent technical specifications to ensure the gloves are high in barrier effectiveness and low in protein/low allergy risks, in addition to providing excellent comfort, fit and durability—qualities that manufacturers of many synthetic gloves are attempting to replicate.

Furthermore, latex gloves are green products, derived from a natural and sustainable resource, and are environmentally friendly. (Learn more at www.smg.gloves.com and www.latexglove.info).

The use of low-protein powder-free gloves has been demonstrated by many independent hospital studies to vastly reduce the incidence of latex sensitization and allergic reactions in workplaces.

More important, latex allergic individuals donning non-latex gloves can now work alongside their co-workers wearing the improved low-protein gloves without any heightened allergy concern. However, for latex allergic individuals, it is still important they use appropriate non-latex gloves that provide them with effective barrier protection, such as quality nitrile and polyprene gloves.

Selecting the right gloves should be an educated consideration to enhance safety of both patients and users. For decades, gloves made in Malaysia have been synonymous with quality and excellence, and they are widely available in an extensive array of brands, features and prices.

They can be sourced either factory direct (www.mrepco.com/trade and click “medical devices”) or from established dental product distributors in the U.S.

(Source: Malaysian Rubber Export Promotion Council)
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Online, automated ordering system used to control costs

Dental Savings Club says its dental-instruments prices are influenced by unique automated, ordering system

Dental Savings Club has a wide variety of dental instruments and other products at great savings, thanks to a unique web-based automated ordering system that minimizes expenses and passes savings to customers.

Hawk loupes and lights
Evaluating dental loupes can be difficult. But asking these basic questions can help:
- Are the loupes available in different magnifications?
- Are the loupes available in both flip-up and thru-the-lens models?
- Can the loupes be used with a light source (of the same brand or from other manufacturers)?
- And, finally, are the loupes light weight?

The answer to all of these questions is “yes,” when evaluating Hawk loupes and lights. Among all the criteria to consider, perhaps most important is weight and balance. Weight is important because the clinician will wear them for many hours during the course of the day. Many dental professionals describe the Hawk loupe/ lights as quite comfortable.

Magnification strengths are available from 2.5x to 4.5x to satisfy most needs. The light source is light in weight and extremely bright, projecting a pure white light. Accurate light is critical when selecting a shade for restorative material.

If you are already set with loupes, but perhaps need a light, the company reports that the Hawk light source is known for compatibility with nearly every loupe in the marketplace. According to the company, many buyers report cost benefits with Hawk loupes because the loupe and light source can be bought separately.

Wolf handpieces
Despite the fear it might invoke in patients, the conventional drill remains one of the most important instruments in a dental practice. Although maintaining and repairing these vital instruments can be pricey, such preservation is necessary because of frequent usage and the need for steam autoclaving after each use.

Dental Savings Club reports that it is already known for savings available on KUT carbide and diamond rotary instruments, Kopy impression material and Hugs and Kisses hygiene instruments and whitening products. The Wolf handpieces line builds on this reputation for cost efficiency. These lightweight handpieces are available for most systems (Kavo, NSK, W&H, Midwest, Star and four-hole systems). They are well-balanced and include swivel capability (although couplers are not included), push-button chucks, fiber optics with LED beams (for shadow-free visibility) and a triple-port water spray.

Wolf handpieces are known for low maintenance-and-repair costs. Their power output is 18 watts, and the handpiece spins at 400,000 rpm.

According to Dental Savings Club, you can purchase a new Wolf handpiece for far less than it costs to repair many name-brand handpieces.

Topical anaesthetic now offered in Canada

Switching to unit dose just got easier: HurriCaine® topical anaesthetic is now even easier to apply with new Snap-n-Go® Swabs. The disposable swab applicator helps eliminate risk of cross contamination. Just snap the tip and HurriCaine liquid fills the swab at the other end.

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Snap-n-Go offers other products such as our HurriView® and HurriView II® plaque disclosing swabs for preventive care. HurriView and HurriView II will help you show patients where they have plaque build-up and help motivate them to improve oral hygiene routines.

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Visit booth No. 221 to learn more about HurriCaine Snap-n-Go Swabs and receive a free sample.

HurriCaine, HurriView and HurriView II Snap-n-Go Swabs are exclusively available through Henry Schein Canada.

(Photos/Provided by Henry Schein Canada)