We are seeking business opportunities worldwide

An interview with Kenji Cheung, CEO of Hong Kong-based supplier Tesco Dental

Established in 1974, Tesco Dental is a leading Asian dental supplier. The family-owned company is based in Hong Kong, with subsidiaries in Shenzhen, Shanghai, Taiwan and Beijing. Dental Tribune spoke with Tesco CEO Kenji Cheung about the company’s values and its vision of leading modern dentistry into the future.

Could you introduce Tesco briefly for our readers?

The Tesco Dental group offers a one-stop solution for the dental industry. Our portfolio includes dental education, different types of advanced dental products and equipment for dental practices and laboratories, including aftersales training and consulting services.

Our professionals are dedicated to providing training in advanced dental technology to lead modern dentistry into the future. Tesco Dental offers quality services and technical support and brings bright smiles to our customers through our genuine aesthetics concept. We listen carefully to our customers and treat them with consideration and respect.

Which regional markets are you targeting specifically?

Tesco Dental is a leading dental supplier with subsidiaries in our main markets of Hong Kong, China and Taiwan.

What are your values as a family-owned business?

Trust in the family allows us to share our opinions openly and freely. It enhances our company’s efficiency, since decisions do not need to pass through a complicated hierarchy. It really took a while for us to understand our strengths and beliefs. Over the past few years, we have summarised the core values of our company: integrity, creativity and passion.

How would you describe your position in the market?

I would say we are a pioneer and a market leader in terms of offering complete dental solutions. In the very beginning, my father, Cheung Tak, who founded the company, together with VITA Zahnfabrik was among the few introducing metal-ceramic restorations to China in the early 1980s. Today, we focus on both analogue and digital restorations, as well as infection control, endodontics and oral healthcare.

Have you observed any trends that you feel Tesco ought to follow?

Artificial intelligence must be the leading trend regarding future developments and an increasing digitalisation. We have adopted the latest payment technologies, now offering users the convenience of Alipay and UnionPay and credit payments using Visa or Mastercard.

Regarding our social media activities, we have a WeChat fan page that provides dental information, news and updates and that links dental professionals. Currently, we have over 176,000 followers; this number represents about 70 per cent of all dentists in China.

Moreover, the Asian market has been growing rapidly, resulting in huge demand in the dental industry. This is mainly due to a general increase in income and people seeking a better quality of life.

Consider Taiwan, for example. It is a market with increased emphasis on and concern regarding infection control and oral health care, so we provide a variety of related products to meet the country’s shifting needs.

Do you plan to make inroads into other fields or regions?

We plan to expand geographically, but focus only on dentistry-related industries, as it is our main expertise—especially for emerging markets such as the Philippines, which we believe represents great growth potential for us.

You are actively promoting the advancement of dentistry in China. Could you describe your engagement in this area?

Yes, we have continued to introduce advanced dental technology in China. As an organiser of training events, we have also put tremendous effort and resources into the education of dental students and we offer many workshops and courses for continuing professional development of dentists and dental technicians in China.

Regarding charitable initiatives, we recently introduced our For You, For Him/Her, For China campaign, through which we provide free materials to laboratories and dentists to help those in need of dental treatments who cannot afford it.

With which institutions or research bodies are you working?

We are working closely with almost all reputable universities and hospitals in Hong Kong, China and Taiwan.

What are your strategic plans for the future?

We are seeking business opportunities worldwide. In recent years, we have acquired several quality dental enterprises, manufacturers and research projects. Our goal is to become a comprehensive dental solutions provider all over the world.

Thank you very much for the interview.
DTI welcomes new partner from Japan

By DTI

LEIPZIG, Germany: Dental Tribune International (DTI) has added a new licence partner to its global publishing network. Together with Tokyo-based company Medical Net, the DTI publishing group will now also be providing dental professionals with the latest news in Japanese. The first issue of the new edition is set to be published in October.

In Medical Net, DTI has found a strong local partner in the country. The listed Japanese company is engaged in electronic site management and runs a variety of medical and dental search sites.

“We are pleased to have finally joined DTI,” commented Medical Net President and Chief Operating Officer Yuji Hirakawa on the new partnership. “Japan is the third-largest economic power in the world and there are many good dental companies in the country. We want to be a bridge between Japan and the rest of the world.”

The alliance is part of the company’s efforts to expand its business outside of Japan. According to Hirakawa, who established Medical Net in 2001, the company had previously focused on its home market exclusively. Another step towards internationalising business will be the opening of a dental clinic in Bangkok in Thailand in September, he said.

Launching in autumn, Dental Tribune Japan aims to reach about 20,000 dentists and 10,000 dental hygienists through its local website. The first issue of the print edition will be published on 2 October with a print run of approximately 10,000 copies. As of 2018, the targeted publication frequency will be four editions a year with a print run of 50,000 copies.

With more than 100,000 dentists and about 64,000 dental clinics, the Japanese dental health care sector is one of the largest worldwide. Figures from Statista on the number of dentists between 2000 and 2014 show that the profession enjoys great popularity and has continued to grow. The number of dental practitioners per 100,000 inhabitants rose from 70.3 in 2000 to 80.7 in 2014.

Catering to the needs of the growing number of dental professionals, Medical Net also plans to add an educational offering to its portfolio in the future, utilising DTI’s expertise as an organiser of continuing education programmes, including e-learning, through the Dental Tribune Study Club.

The combined DTI portfolio currently includes more than 130 print publications and multiple websites that reach over 650,000 dentists in more than 90 countries and 25 languages.

Sulzer enforces its rights against South Korean counterfeit products

By DTI

WINTERTHUR, Switzerland: Swiss-based dental manufacturer Sulzer Mixpac has successfully filed legal actions against three South Korean suppliers and a manufacturer of copies of the company’s patented MIXPAC tips. According to Sulzer, it is not the first time that counterfeiters of its static mixing tips for two-component cartridges and syringes have been discovered.

Shortly before the 2017 International Dental Show (IDS), the three Korean infringers accepted the preliminary injunctions filed at the Düsseldorf regional court. Furthermore, the manufacturer of the patent-infringing mixing tips, Seil Global, has agreed to respect Sulzer’s rights worldwide for all members of the patent family for their remaining lifetimes, the company stated.

In addition, 11 preliminary injunctions for unfair competition were issued by the court against various providers during IDS 2017 in which the offering, advertising and marketing of these counterfeit mixing tips for the dental industry were prohibited.

Although Sulzer has enforced its rights in dozens of cases already, copies of its mixing tips and patent-infringing mixing tips have increasingly been discovered in recent years, the company said. Counterfeit products from other manufacturers are not subject to Sulzer’s strict quality controls and not covered by its warranty. In addition to violating intellectual property rights, unauthorised products can lead to incomplete mixing and failed procedures, as they are manufactured under unspecified conditions with unknown plastics and colours, the company warned.

According to Sulzer, counterfeit mixing tips look very similar to its MIXPAC mixing tips, since they mimic the dome shape and trademark colours of the original. However, genuine tips can be identified by the MIXPAC trademark name stamped on the retaining ring and the CANDY COLOUR quality seal stamped on the top edge.