Nobel Biocare World Tour launched in Shanghai

LOS ANGELES: Nobel Biocare World Tour, a Chicago-based company, announced that it will launch its World Tour in Shanghai next Asian city to host a three-day event in June following conferences in Asia, Europe and Latin America throughout the year.

Shanghai was the second stop in this year’s annual Nobel Biocare World Tour event, which kicked off in Mumbai, India, and will come to three other locations in Asia including Singapore, Taipei and Gold Coast, Australia.

The company has announced to hold a total of 14 of its three-day conferences in Asia, Europe and Latin America throughout the year.

In China, 11 per cent of the population is dentures (approximately 145 million people) and crowns. "Market growth has slowed in higher-end discretionary procedures," said Bret Wise, chief executive of manufacturer DENTSPLY International, during the company’s first-quarter conference call.

A set of veneers can cost US$10,000, while the implant and crown-and-bridge work that reconstructs a tooth can cost US$5,000. Dental insurance, for those who have it, usually does not cover optional treatments and often does not fully cover even those treatments necessitated by pain.

"Therefore, patients tend to postpone these treatments or downgrade to cheaper alternatives in an economic downturn," said Dr Matthew Messina, owner of a general dental practice in suburban Cleveland, Ohio. "In dentistry, it's less the economy than the perception of the economy," he said. "If people are confident about their future, their job, then they’re willing to invest in more elective procedures."

This past quarter’s results reflected the new tendency of dental patients to keep their wallets in their pockets.

Small-cap Birner Dental Management Services has seen a greater than 10 per cent reduction in demand for crowns and bridges this year, said board member Brooks O’Neil, also an analyst for Dougherty & Company.

At DANAHER, where dental products excluding equipment accounted for about 8 per cent of the company’s US$11 billion in 2007 revenue, first-quarter dental revenue for existing business was flat in part because of the slowdown in sales of more expensive procedures, the company said in a conference call. 5M saw the same slowdown in discretionary treatments, the company.

“‘When this transaction is completed, we will be proud to welcome Wrigley’s associates to our company,” said Paul S. Michaels, Global President of Mars. “The strong current management of two leg- endary American companies with a shared commitment to innovation, quality and best-in-class global brands provides a great basis for this combination. We are looking forward to continuing on our path of growth by jointly de- veloping those values even further.”

The combined company would have a strong foundation of established brands in six core growth categories including well-known products like M&M’s, Snickers, Dove, Mars, and Doublemint.

The Federal Circuit issued a decision in Den-Mat’s favour: "affirming the summary judgment in the original case, states Dr Robert Ibsen, president and chairman of Den-Mat. "The Federal Circuit found that while the district court construed ‘ready for mounting’ too narrowly, it nevertheless affirmed the decision in Den-Mat’s favour, affirming the summary judgment in the original case.”

Infringing the claims of its now expired US patent No. 4,579,550, Den-Mat won the summary judgment on a claim construction basis that its product, LUMINEERS, did not fall within the scope of the asserted USN claims. The appeal to the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit centred around the interpretation of the phrase “ready for mounting,” which the district court had interpreted to mean “leaving the veneer ‘ready for mounting’ and cemented to a patient’s tooth for which it was custom- made,” according to court docu- ments. In its initial ruling the lower court had determined that the de- fendants’ process did not infringe the patent because it did not leave the veneer ready for mounting.

“We are pleased to report that the Federal Circuit issued the decision in Den-Mat’s fa- vor, affirming the summary judgment in the original case. It is our second year of World Tour events, so we are excited to come back to China and deliver a world-class global brands pro- gramme,” Nobel officials said. "In terms of cosmetic or aesthetic dentistry, smile makeovers can typically correct most deficiencies, usually through a whole set of cosmetic dentistry solutions including dental implants, teeth whitening and dental restorations,” Dr Yu Guangyan, Dean of Peking University School of Stomatology and Chairman of the Shanghai conference.

The proposed transaction is subject to customary closing conditions, including approval by Wrigley stockholders and certain governmental and agency regulatory clear- ances. Both parties hope to close the transaction within the next 6 to 12 months.

With US$5.4 billion in sales, Wrigley is a world leader in gum and confections. The transaction is expected to build the Mars business by strengthen- ing and diversifying its confectionery business, and enhancing its potential for growth in the chocolate, non-chocolate confectionery and gum categories.