“Foreign markets are very important to us”
An interview with Olaf Sauerbier, CEO of VOCO GmbH, Cuxhaven, Germany

VOCO, based in Cuxhaven on the northern coast of Germany, is an established international provider of high-quality dental materials. In addition to products for restorative dentistry, it offers a wide range of materials and preparations for the fields of prosthetics and prophylaxis.

Dental Tribune Group Editor Daniel Zimmermann spoke with Olaf Sauerbier, CEO and chief of Marketing and Sales, about new products and aesthetic trends in restorative dentistry.

Daniel Zimmermann: The Association of Dental Dealers in Europe (ADDE) has recently predicted growth rates above three per cent for most European dental markets. Do you see any signs of recovery in your company?

Olaf Sauerbier: To be honest with you, the recession never really caught us. We usually tend to perform slightly better than the overall market and expect to see no different for this business year. The year 2010 started off better than last year ended, and we saw some significant growth in most of our business segments in the first and second quarters.

Although we have invested significantly in our German businesses by extending our sales team by 15 new employees, foreign markets are very important to us. At the moment, we are expanding our existing businesses worldwide, especially in North America. It will be a while before we are able to take full advantage of the enormous potential this market has to offer.

Did the products you introduced two years ago at IDS Cologne meet your expectations?
The most important product we introduced at IDS in terms of sales was definitely the non-run, non-drip NDT syringe. This new delivery form helped us to increase sales of most of our highly flowable materials like Grandio Flow, Grandio Seal and Jalousie. Our gingiva-shaded restoration system Amaris Gingiva has also shown good performance. We have to admit that the market for such a product is still small, but on the other hand, we see the demand for aesthetic restorations of exposed necks of teeth increasing owing to demographic changes and people ageing.

Those who have highly aesthetic restorations very well often have to do hard to pass this product by.

We were using the white opaque shade of our flowable composite Grandio Flow for gingiva applications, as this is the typical shade of highly bleached teeth in the US. Normally, we recommended it only be used to whiten dark spots or in cases in which dentists absolutely need an opaque layer.

This is not the direction we wish to take. Teeth have a natural translucency and we want to keep it that way. I believe that with our current portfolio we offer dentists viable solutions to achieving long-lasting and natural aesthetic restorations.

Do aesthetics play a more prominent role in the development of a composite like GrandioSO?
The primary goal is function. There is a place for aesthetics too, but we must not compromise functionality or the stability of the filling. There are different points of view in dentistry regarding this matter right now but for us the primary goal cannot be highly opaque teeth that might be currently in vogue amongst Hollywood stars.

In the US, for example, we found that dentists were using the white opaque shade of our flowable composite Grandio Flow for gingiva applications, as this is the typical shade of highly bleached teeth in the US. Normally, we recommended it only be used to whiten dark spots or in cases in which dentists absolutely need an opaque layer.

We will still offer Grandio SO. It is already available in Germany and other selected European markets. Like its predecessor, GrandioSO is universal but a little more translucent, so it can be used for restorations in the maxillary anterior region.

But we did not stop there. With GrandioSO, we are now able to present another nanohybrid composite to the dental community that has outperformed our original expectations. In terms of its physical properties, it is probably the most tooth-like material on the market.

When and where will it be available?
It is already available in Germany and other selected European markets. Like its predecessor, GrandioSO is universally applicable but a little more translucent, so it can be used for restorations in the maxillary anterior region.

We will still offer Grandio to our customers worldwide. In the end, it is the dentists who decide which product they prefer.

When will GrandioSO be the main focus of your presentation at IDS next year and are you planning to introduce more products there?

We are looking forward to introducing our new product to the dentistry community at IDS. It will be the main focus of our IDS presentation, but there are other products that we plan to launch this month and at IDS 2011.

Thank you very much for the interview.

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Areal view of the VOCO headquarters in Cuxhaven in Germany

An interview with Olaf Sauerbier, CEO of VOCO GmbH, Cuxhaven, Germany

Top: Olaf Sauerbier (left) in talks with DT Group Editor Daniel Zimmermann. (DTI/Photo Antje Kahnt, DTI)
Bottom: Dental Tribune Group Editor Daniel Zimmermann in post-endodontic treatment complete system for placing accessory, Grandio SO is universal but a little more translucent, so it can be used for restorations in the maxillary anterior region.