Japanese takes over European operations of SHOFU

Daniel Zimmermann
DTI

HONG KONG/LEIPZIG, Germany: The Japanese dental company SHOFU Inc. is changing its management offshore. During the International Dental Show in Cologne, the company officially announced that Akira Kawashima of SHOFU Japan will take over the management of the European subsidiary in Germany from April 2011.

Wolfgang van Hall, the current Managing Director of SHOFU Dental GmbH, will step down but hold a consulting position for another year. He has been with the company for more than 50 years.

Kawashima announced his intention to expand the company's product line for dentists and intensify sales activities in European markets. Prior to his appointment as General Manager of SHOFU GmbH, he worked in the International Department of SHOFU Inc. in Kyoto in Japan, where he was responsible for several product launches, including Vintage and the zirconium silicate Ceramage. He also spent one year as a trainee in the SHOFU GmbH headquarters in Germany in 1984.

“The German dental market differs greatly from the Japanese,” Kawashima said. “While in Japan there are many independent and smaller dealers, in Germany the main revenue is achieved by dealer groups that use a common sales and infrastructure. This demands a different approach for us as a manufacturer than in Japan.”

Demand for dental gold declines

Yvonne Bachmann
DTI

LONDON, UK/LEIPZIG, Germany: The demand for gold used in dental applications has reached a new record low in the last quarter of last year. According to the latest report by the World Gold Council, UK dental applications made of the precious metal recorded a year-on-year decline of 8 per cent in the last three months of 2010. The annual worldwide demand declined by 5 per cent compared to 2009 to 49.8 tons worth US$ 2 billion.

According to Mühlenberg, this trend is irreversible, even though there is still a demand for gold as it is a reliable dental material and has been used successfully for a very long time.

In contrast with this decline, the worldwide gold demand for all industries, including dentistry, surged to 5,812.2 tons in 2010, reaching a ten-year high and a 9 per cent rise compared to 2009, as per the World Gold Council. The major reason for this positive trend was the demand for jewelry, which saw a rise of 17 per cent.

IDS shows growth, stimulated by dental markets

Digitalisation increasingly entering treatment processes in general dental practice

held every two years in Cologne in Germany, IDS is one of the most important international platforms for launching and marketing new products for the dental industry. This year, dentists were able to see a large number of new technologies in the fields of prevention and diagnostics on display.

Digitalisation of dental treatment processes is also increasingly entering the general dental practice, with improved intra-oral scanners, imaging systems and CAD/CAM technologies. VDHi Chairman Dr Martin Rickett said that the show demonstrated that digital processes and technologies have become increasingly popular, as they offer greater quality and effectiveness of treatment.

Even though there was a definite digital trend, new simplified endodontic file systems, as well as improved filling materials and dental instruments were also launched.

In view of a successful IDS, German Dental Association President Dr Peter Engel called on policy-makers to conduct overdue revision of regulations on licences and fees for dentists in the country. “The dental market is providing Germany with economic drive,” Dr Engel commented. “Policy-makers have to create health policy frameworks so that these innovations can be put into practice.” Interest groups and dentists have sought a revision of the current dental fee system for years, which they say penalises patients and limits the financial autonomy of dentists.

The next IDS will be held from 12 to 16 March 2015 at the Koelnmesse fairground in Cologne.

Visitors enjoy the Piazza of the Koelnmesse fairground (DTI/Photo courtesy of Koelnmesse, Germany).

DTI: Asia Pacific Edition Business 9