‘Our most important goal is to help our customers weather the storm’

‘today’ talks with Tim Sullivan, president of Henry Schein Dental, about the company’s new products, its desire to help its customers and special promotions they offered during the Greater New York Dental Meeting

Henry Schein was proud to launch DDX at the GNYDM. This desktop and Web-based application will enable communication between dental practices and dental labs, and between a doctor’s practice management software and the laboratory’s lab management application. This technology platform makes dentistry possible for all doctors and all labs to be connected digitally for the very first time. DDX will enable dental practices to improve efficiency and increase profitability by moving beyond traditional telephone communication with their labs.

Case submission, digital file transfer and management, case status updates, pickup reminders and account payments are all provided through DDX. For labs with DDX-enabled lab management software, DDX is completely integrated, allowing practices to access all account details, including aged balances, statements and invoices.

2008 has been a tough year financially for many companies. How do you see 2009 shaping up for Henry Schein? Do you have any company goals for the coming year?

Although the health care markets that Henry Schein serves are relatively resistant to macro economic challenges, and certainly less sensitive than most of the business world around us, they are not immune to these economic times when consumers are tightening all aspects of their discretionary spending. Henry Schein’s first and most important goal for the coming year is to help our customers weather the storm so that their practices can thrive during this unstable economic time. We will maintain our focus on investing in our business and repositioning our resources so that Henry Schein can continue to expand and strengthen our product and service offerings to our customers.

With the economic struggles, this also is a difficult time for many dentists, and thus practice management seems to play a more important role than before. What is Henry Schein doing in this area, in terms of products or services, to help ensure success for its practitioners?

Dentists operate small businesses, and Henry Schein’s mission is to do everything that we can to facilitate our customers’ ability to operate their businesses as efficiently and productively as possible, so that they can focus on providing better clinical care. We strive to provide our customers with the most innovative practice management tools to help practitioners thrive during these difficult economic times. We work closely with our customers to help them decide how they can make effective investments to maximize practice productivity, which is essential during this period of economic uncertainty.

Tim Sullivan has been the president of Henry Schein Dental since 2004. He was executive vice president from 1997-2004. He received his bachelor’s degree in accounting and financing from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, then went on to work for Sullivan Dental Products as assistant controller, controller, vice president of operations and president and CFO before the company merged with Henry Schein. Today, Sullivan is directly responsible for the Henry Schein Dental core business, which includes more than 2,500 Team Schein members.

Are there any new products that attendees got to see during the meeting? Could you tell us a little about them?

This year, Henry Schein had a number of innovative new products featured at the GNYDM. These included:

Snap-on Smile: Snap-on Smile® is a patented, revolutionary dental appliance that is flexible and incredibly strong and snaps right over a patient’s natural teeth. Its exclusive design requires no prep and no injection. The retention of Snap-on Smile is completely toothborne, so the appliance does not impinge on the gum tissue nor cover the palate, making it look and feel very natural. Snap-on Smile is easily removable, completely reversible and is an excellent option for patients looking for a noninvasive, affordable approach to restorative and cosmetic dentistry.

DENTRIX G4: DENTRIX G4, which was launched at the GNYDM, is a state-of-the-art interoffice communication tool that will accelerate day-to-day tasks and improve efficiency for our customers.

E4D: E4D chairside CAD/CAM technology enables the dental professional to provide same day crowns, inlays, onlays and veneers to patients with no compromise in quality. The E4D system is designed with the patient and dentist in mind. From the very beginning, D4D involves dental profession- als in the design development of the E4D system, resulting in an easy-to-use product and process that can pro- vide a significant return on invest- ment. The E4D system gives the den- tist to create beautiful restorations that provide form, fit and function, which is demanded by both dentist and patient today. The E4D system offers many advances and advan- tages to the dentist. Here are just two of them:

The E4D system uses laser tech- nology that offers three sources of scanning to provide options to the dentist, The system can scan in the mouth, on models and on impres- sions, all without the use of powder. Another feature that customers love is SOS, or Support on Sight®. This feature is available for dentists and office staff to contact E4D’s customer support team. With the dentist’s permission, a customer support representative can remotely access the E4D system to assist in scan, design or even system diagnosis. The E4D product is loaded with innovative features that have allowed it to earn the gold medal in medical excel- lence design for 2008.

Several of our Equipment Part- ners have new products and tech- nology that we showcased as well.

Henry Schein is constantly updating its software programs. For instance, the DENTRIX G4 is on the horizon. Could you tell us a little more about this and any other new software developments?

To best serve our customers, we believe it is essential that we use our expertise to constantly update and improve Henry Schein’s software programs based on the feedback we get directly from our customers.

DENTRIX G4 is the latest upgrade to this market-leading practice management software system, with dozens of improvements that will save time and increase productivity. Some of these enhancements include the ability to customize personal preferences, quick access to training resources, family alerts and improved options for administrators managing billing statements, insurance claims and payments.

During a difficult economy, prac- tice marketing and efficiency are more crucial than ever, Henry Schein offers DemandForce to help our cus- tomers drive patient referrals via the Web. To assist our customers in improving the productivity and effi- ciency of their practice, Henry Schein representatives were available at the booth to set up “Business Discovery Meetings” with customers after the show to assist with lowering practice overhead, improving team harmony, taking advantage of Section 179 and boosting overall revenue.

Henry Schein had a number of special promotions at our booth, including the popular Henry Schein holiday promotion, and only available at the GNYDM, we offered a special 45-day, risk-free trial of the shade taking device, Shade-X. Imme- diately adjacent to the booth, Henry Schein offered C.E. workshops on E4D, Equipment Repair, EasyDental and Dentrix.

The Henry Schein booth is always a huge draw at meetings. What did people see at the booth during this year’s Greater New York Dental Meeting (GNYDM)?

As always, Henry Schein’s booth featured the latest innovations in technology and products for dentists. One of the highlights of our booth this year is our E4D demo, with clinicians on hand to walk doctors through the process of treating a patient with CAD/CAM technology. In addition, DemandForce has also been growing rapidly, and we had several different units for visitors to our booth to compare, including the popular Henry Schein holiday promotion, and only available at the GNYDM, we offered a special 45-day, risk-free trial of the shade taking device, Shade-X. Immediately adjacent to the booth, Henry Schein offered C.E. workshops on E4D, Equipment Repair, EasyDental and Dentrix.

About Tim Sullivan

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Robert Achtziger celebrates his 35th anniversary with the company

We are based in Woodside, N.Y., and the staff numbers 26.

Who are the major players in the company and how is it structured?

The company is privately owned by me, and I started with the company in 1973 as a shipping clerk and rose through the ranks to become the CEO and sole shareholder.

What exactly is the nature of the company’s business?

We distribute and manufacture unique and proprietary dental and health care related products. We sell dental, medical and some beauty related products.

How would you explain the company, and by this I mean its main point, what you hope those who hear it will immediately connect to when they hear the company name?

Medidenta markets some unique and proprietary products directly to the end user and certain health care facilities, thus providing direct savings of time and money over the conventional dealer or middleman.

What is the company involved in any charities or community outreach programs?

We provide some funding for local after school programs for children and community social activities.

What is the promise behind your brand?

Great value with personal attention.

Do you offer special promotions? What do these entail?

We generally run “no-nonsense” percentage discount pricing.

How can people access your products, both online and by phone?

Can they also view all products on line? Our Web site is a comprehensive shopping location and has sustained dramatic growth the past two years to where we are also known as Medidenta.com.

What things are taken into consideration when choosing products to carry?

Medidenta decides to carry a product based on whether it is user friendly, time saving and cost effective for the busy professional.

What is involved in the decision process in terms of choosing products?

We have over 50 dentists who evaluate our products in their daily practice before we ever enter into full production.

What’s new these days in terms of products you carry?

The CeraTorque handpiece, which is an ultra lightweight and precise speed control motor system for non-evasive operative dentistry and hygiene procedures.

Are you working on any new products right now to add to your brand?

Since the change of management in 2007, the company has made some substantial investments in new product development and we expect to launch several new products in mid 2009 and beyond. Product development requires a financial commitment coupled with the patience of trial and error.

How many do you add per year?

Considering we are a specialty company with a limited product line, we generally try for one or two new products annually.

What do you feel are the most important concerns/hurdles faced in the area of marketing its products?

Converting overhead costs and attracting new patients.

What are the primary categories your products break down into?

Endodontics, handpieces, rotary medical devices and beautician products.

After 35 years with the company, do you have any words of wisdom to share?

“You can’t always get what you want, but if you try sometimes, you just might find you get what you need.” Being in business for 65 years and now my own 55 years with the company I have to say its been a long, winding, and most gratifying road to success and happiness that the company enjoys, even in these most difficult times.

What are some of the hurdles the company faces in terms of marketing its products?

To remain competitive against the billion dollar conglomerates that can easily outspend us, but our product savvy and specialized personal customer service will keep our customers coming back for the value and satisfaction we provide.

What makes your company stand out from the crowd?

Personalized customer service where you are a name and your business is truly appreciated.

By Dan Jenkins, DDS

Can you tell me about the genesis of the company since its foundation?

Frederick Benton founded the company in 1944. Benton was an original “carpetbagger” when he went door to door around Manhattan selling posts and temporary crowns. It was his intuitive eye that found the first automated device for endo treatment, namely, the Giromatic, and helped to bring many more endo-related products to the market and is now well established as an innovative endo and handpiece company.

How will the company celebrate this big anniversary?

Showing customer appreciation with big discounts in 2009 because our loyal customers are the reason we have flourished for 65 years.

Where is the company based and how many employees does it employ?

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