3Shape LABcare supports each customer

Did you know that when you acquire a 3Shape Dental System™, you automatically get 3Shape’s LABcare™ package? 3Shape LABcare represents a strong value for dental labs because it addresses support, training and upgrading — three critical areas for labs using digital technologies.

A future-secure investment
3Shape believes that a lab’s CAD/CAM investment should be long lasting and maintain high value. No matter the system, successful application of digital technologies does not end with purchase and installation alone. Ongoing training will help lab technicians exploit the full potential of their system’s many functionalities.

Every lab should be backed by immediate and efficient support, preferably provided in the client’s local language, to ensure optimal uptime and guard against delays in services. Finally, labs should not have to worry about their software’s ability to compete with newer systems. By directly addressing all of these concerns, 3Shape’s LABcare package is designed to protect a lab’s CAD/CAM investment and help ensure their on-going and future success with digital dentistry. Labs can do what they do best and let 3Shape worry about the rest.

Annual releases
3Shape’s LABcare is also designed to help labs stay competitive in an industry influenced by continuous technology changes and increasing regulatory demands. Every year, 3Shape’s global innovation center, with more than 150 developers, creates a new, major 3Shape Dental System software version — incorporating the accumulation of the previous year’s ongoing market research, direct requests from labs and interaction with dental professionals.

Ownership of annual system releases, plus all minor updates, are included as part of the 3Shape LABcare package. Releases and updates include new functionality, tools, more indications, added libraries and beneficial interfaces to third-party systems. The system upgrade concepts built into LABcare ensure that a lab’s 3Shape system continually grows stronger and more versatile rather than older.

Training, competence development
Ongoing training will help lab technicians exploit the full potential of their system’s many functionalities. The 3Shape Academy provides access to training initiatives, including online webinars, extensive learning materials and selected hands-on training courses. The power and available features in 3Shape’s Dental System increases every year, and the 3Shape Academy ensures that 3Shape’s users have the opportunity to keep up to date.

Support and service
As part of their LABcare package, all 3Shape users are entitled to local support from their 3Shape representative. 3Shape boosts its first-line reseller support network with its own second-line support force of more than 30 in-house experts offering support in more than 12 languages. 3Shape’s support teams work daily from five different Support and Service centers strategically placed throughout the world.

3Shape LABcare in a nutshell
Customers receive:
• Knowledge and competence-gaining services.
• Local training and webinars.
• Extensive support and service backing first line and second line.
• Major system and feature upgrades and annual system release.
• Regular improvements, updates and minor changes.
• On-line information services and access to 3Shape’s online Trainings Center with manuals, training videos and more.

Get news, tips and tricks — plus relevant information — directly to your mailbox.

Customer benefits:
• Professional training for technicians to get the most out of the CAD/CAM system.
• Strong support network for high uptime.
• Support in local language and timezone.
• Secure investment; your system grows stronger every year.
• Stay competitive; never lag behind the other’s technologies.
• Direct knowledge channels. Stay up to date with the latest digital technology news and trends.

(Source: 3Shape)
Website features top educators on demand

xpAPce creates unique e-learning community for dental professionals; also posts courses to Dental Tribune Study Club site

The Dental Tribune Study Club (www.dtstudyclub.com) has partnered with xpAPce, a new online dental C.E. company, to offer branded lectures and modules that are procedurally specific for improved patient outcomes and reduced risk.

Dennis Tarnow, DDS, on ‘Periodontal and prosthetic management of furcated teeth

Among the first modules offered through this partnership is a series of presentations by Dennis Tarnow, DDS, renowned lecturer, scholar and teacher, who will present *Periodontal and prosthetic management of furcated teeth*. Here is an overview the session:

Long before there were implants, and long before treatment planning shifted away from treating compromised teeth with guarded prognoses, clinicians needed to develop techniques to deal with less than optimum situations. Roots were removed, teeth were prepared differently, and accommodations were made to account for weaker abutments.

The decision-tree of how to approach teeth with furcation problems remains as valid today as it was years back. Perhaps even more valid. Not all patients are surgical candidates, in part because more patients than ever are living with compromised medical conditions that might preclude dental surgery. The list of conditions that might rule out surgery is ever-growing, including anti-coagulants, radiation treatment and bisphosphonates.

There are times when the dental professional does not have the luxury of gaining the many benefits from osseointegration and simply needs to save a compromised tooth to support a prosthesis.

That is why this single module of three lectures, provided by one of the top clinicians in dentistry today, is so valuable — both as a review and as a reminder of what can be done with compromised teeth, what can’t be done, and how to best approach these clinical situations going forward.

XP squared: online dental community

In addition to posting monthly courses on the Dental Tribune Study Club website, www.dtstudyclub.com, xpAPce will use a unique format to provide e-learning for the dental profession: a 24/7/365 dental community where courses may be taken anytime it is convenient for the learner.

First-time users should register online at the website www-2.virtualevents365.com/xpsquared; then be sure to visit the xpAPce eLearning booth in the site’s “Exhibition Hall.”

Unusual name, expert insight

The company’s name, xpAPce, is an abbreviation derived from the phrase: eXPert APproved Continuing Education. An international committee of academic scholars vets all of the courses.

The company invites you to visit the online, 24 hours-a-day convention at www.xpapce.com to see a full listing of all its courses and modules.

(Sources: xpAPce, XP squared and Dental Tribune Study Club)

Images are from ‘Periodontal and prosthetic management of furcated teeth,’ by Dennis Tarnow, DDS. Photos/Provided by Dr. Dennis Tarnow

Screen capture from the xpAPce website. Photo/Provided by xpAPce
New dental needles are triple-beveled and include a ‘guide’ arrow

Mydent International introduces DEFEND Dental Needles

Mydent International has introduced Dental Needles, the latest in its line of DEFEND procedural products. To protect dental professionals, these needles specify lot No., size and have a sterile seal on each individual casing.

DEFEND Dental Needles are triple-beveled and feature an arrow indicator to help orient the bevel position during injections.

Constructed of a stainless steel with polypropylene hub with aluminum insert, the needles are siliconized to help ensure a gentle insertion into tissue for minimal discomfort. In addition, the pre-threaded plastic hub facilitates a straight attachment to the syringe, creating a secure fit.

Request samples
Licensed dental professionals are able to request samples for their office by emailing samples@defend.com.

DEFEND Dental Needles are designed for use on standard 1.8 ml dental syringes and are color coded for easy diameter identification.

Available through most dental dealers, DEFEND Dental Needles are packaged 100 units per box.

Mydent International is dedicated to fully maintaining its brand promise: Provide the healthcare professional with the highest quality infection control products, disposables, preventatives and impression materials at affordable prices, supported by superior service and 100 percent customer satisfaction. The company’s slogan is “DEFEND. Works Better. Lasts Longer. Costs Less.”

For more information on Mydent International and the DEFEND brand of products, call (800) 275-0020, or visit www.defend.com.

(Source: Mydent International)
Accidental discovery leads to 601 new patients in one week

Turn your front-office staff into your strongest marketing asset

By Jay Geier

Odds are your practice is suffering because of a blind spot that I guarantee you’re not aware of. A blind spot that is costing you $1,500 to $4,000 a month (maybe even more). A blind spot that, if removed, could boost your new patients by 20-50 percent, maybe even as much as 100 percent.

Sandwich board gets attention, but doesn’t close appointments

It all started about 15 years ago. I was vice president of marketing for a large private practice in Georgia. My sole responsibility was generating new patients, and my livelihood depended on it. I employed every imaginable tactic to get new patients — screenings, health fairs, referral programs, contests, magazine ads, newspaper and yellow page ads — just to name a few. I think I even wore a sandwich board and waved to drivers passing by at one point. It was never a question of whether or not my efforts were successful. They generated hundreds of calls every month, but the hard-earned calls just weren’t translating into new patients.

As you can imagine, this was a beast that had to be tackled. So I rolled up my sleeves and started sifting my teeth into it to figure out how to close the huge gap that was negating every marketing dollar spent and costing the practice thousands of dollars a day. I was able to use our practice as a learning lab. I worked day in and day out to discover the blind spot and figure out how to get rid of it. I knew I had cracked the code when the calls started translating into booked appointments and our staff set a practice record, scheduling 601 new patients in one week.

Turn your largest expense into your greatest investment!

To eliminate the blind spot in your practice, it doesn’t require an additional investment. It doesn’t require a new source of new patients. It requires an open mind because it almost seems too simple to be true. The secret lies in your telephone and your team, specifically your front-desk team. Both are investments you have already made, but they are not being leveraged to their peak performance potential.

No doubt your staff is courteous and helpful to everyone who calls your office — and while that’s good, it’s simply not good enough. In fact, their courtesy is probably resulting in lost new patients. And lost new patients means lost money. For example, let’s say your average new patient is worth $1,500. Then one lost would cost you $1,500, five lost would cost you $7,500, and 15 would cost you $22,500. And that’s just one month’s worth. Imagine the impact of that over an entire year or how the impact would increase drastically if your patient value is higher.

Being courteous and helpful are not praiseworthy qualities if your staff doesn’t produce a profitable result and, even worse, if it is costing you money. Actually, effective “closing” skills are the attributes your staff should strive to master. But you can’t just expect them to possess this and know how to effectively use it. No one is born with these skills. They must be taught, then practiced, then reviewed on an ongoing and consistent basis.

Not knowing this could cost you tens of thousands

If you are among the majority of dentists who are spending money to market your practice you are absolutely not an exception. In fact, the reason for recognizing this blind spot and taking action to eliminate it is even more compelling because you are investing thousands of dollars, maybe tens of thousands, to get your phone to ring. And if the phone rings and it’s a shopper and the shopper doesn’t translate into a new patient, you might as well take every dollar, one by one, and flush them down the toilet.

Revenue-producing dream team

It takes a lot of skill — and an open mind — to scrutinize your practice to create positive change. It takes even more talent, knowledge and a gift for teaching to work with your staff on the fine points of the changes needed to take your practice to the next level, and way beyond. But it’s worth it and it’s a win-win.

Your staff can be one of your best and most profitable marketing tools if they are trained and you leverage them correctly, but if not, they could cost you thousands.

Create a plan to get your staff trained. Talented employees want training. They want to perform better and contribute to your practice’s growth and success. If you have someone who doesn’t, they shouldn’t be on your team.

‘Being courteous and helpful are not praiseworthy qualities if your staff doesn’t produce a profitable result.’

Jay M. Geier is president and founder of the Scheduling Institute. He helps his clients reach new levels of success and create a lifestyle they dream of — using their practice as the vehicle. He has a unique ability for getting results in a practice by leveraging its current resources, with a primary focus on getting the staff to take more ownership and responsibility and teaching them how to produce results. To find out today how your staff is performing with new patient calls, see www.schedulinginstitute.com and click on “Take the 5 Star Challenge.” Call the office toll-free at (877) 971-4545 or send Geier an email at jay.geier@SchedulingInstitute.com.
3Shape TRIOS digital impression solution now with implant scanning

Dentists can now use 3Shape’s TRIOS® digital impression solution for their implant abutment cases. TRIOS captures implant positions and soft-tissue emergence profile in a unique dual-step workflow, thereby allowing optimal clinical and esthetic results. Based on the TRIOS digital impressions, 3Shape labs can directly design sophisticated digital implant models, customized abutments, and the final crowns in a straightforward and integrated workflow that is both easy and patient friendly.

3Shape, a technology leader in 3-D scanning and CAD/CAM software for dental applications, announces its latest breakthrough innovations for implant work. With 3Shape TRIOS, dentists can now capture single implant positions using autoclavable scan bodies supporting a wide range of implant systems.

Implant cases made easy
For dentists, digital impression-taking with 3Shape TRIOS represents many advantages. The straightforward workflow replaces conventional implant impression-taking which traditionally can be time-consuming, error-prone and cumbersome. Furthermore, with TRIOS digital impressions, dentists can save time and money by skipping the extra steps involving custom tray production, shipping and handling by the lab.

“Scanning with 3Shape TRIOS makes implant cases easy. It allows me to capture not only the implant positions, but also the soft-tissue,” said Dr. Simon Kold, Herning Implant Center. “By adding scans of the soft tissue emergence profile, I can give my lab detailed information that allows them to optimize the fit and esthetic qualities of the customized abutment and final restoration. This is great for clinical and esthetic results while boosting patient satisfaction.”

Labs: new implant service options
With TRIOS, labs can receive the digital impression minutes after scanning and immediately start designing the digital implant model, the customized abutment and the crown. The TRIOS digital implant impression, 3Shape’s Model Builder™ and its Abutment Designer™ software come together in a fully integrated workflow.

3Shape’s Model Builder™ CAD/CAM software enables labs to design digital models for implant cases. Based on the software’s implant position detection, users can virtually add interfaces for implant analogs, including glue-in analogs, directly in the model design.

3Shape TRIOS is currently available in Europe and is expected to be launched in North America and other selected markets in late 2012.

About 3Shape A/S
3Shape A/S is a Danish company specializing in the development and marketing of 3D scanners and CAD/CAM software solutions designed for the creation, processing, analysis and management of high-quality 3-D data for application in complex manufacturing processes. 3Shape’s flexible solutions empower dental professionals through automation of real workflows, and its systems are applied in thousands of labs in more than 85 countries worldwide, putting 3Shape technologies at the peak of the market in relation to units produced per day by dental technicians. 3Shape boosts its first-line distributor support network with a second-line support force of more than 30 in-house experts placed in five support and service centers strategically placed around the globe. For more information about 3Shape, please visit www.3shapedental.com.

(Source: 3Shape A/S)
New crown-and-bridge material is fast

**VOCO Structur 3 temporary material: Nano-filled, quick-setting, strong — with fast ‘wipe-and-go’ technology**

VOCO is introducing Structur 3, a new temporary crown-and-bridge material for the quick fabrication of strong and aesthetic provisional crowns and bridges (short term and long term), inlays and onlays, veneers and temporary posts.

With Structur 3, VOCO is using its advanced nano technology to create strength and esthetics. One of its biggest advantages is the ‘wipe-and-go’ effect. Structur 3 has a very smooth surface with a minimal oxygen inhibition layer and no longer needs to be polished. All it takes for the clinician to achieve a brilliant gloss is to wipe off the temporary with alcohol, and they are done, saving plenty of polishing time. Structur 3 has a natural looking fluorescence and outstanding color stability.

Structur 3 is economical, with a quick intraoral setting time of only 45 seconds, which is half the time of most other materials. The 1:1 mixing ratio allows for smaller tips and makes “bleeding” of material before changing mixing-tips obsolete, resulting in up to 20 more units out of each cartridge compared with 10:1 and 4:1 products.

The nano technology used in Structur 3 leads to a high fracture resistance and compressive strength of more than 500 MPa, making the material ideal long-term temporization cases.

Structur 3 is available in 50ml 1:1 cartridges, fitting every impression material dispenser or in small 3ml automix QuickMix syringes in eight VITA® matching shades (A1, A2, A3, A3.5, B1, B3, C2, Bleach).

(Source: VOCO)
Aribex, which describes itself as the worldwide leader in handheld X-ray technologies, has completed production of its 10,000th NOMAD® handheld X-ray system. Aribex celebrates the demand of this technology, as dental offices increasingly prefer the versatility and improved patient care offered with the use of the handheld X-ray.

“We’re proud that the NOMAD has been so widely accepted in the market that we’ve reached this 10,000-unit milestone,” said Ken Kaufman, president and CFO of Aribex. “We’ve worked very hard to get to this point, and we cannot thank our customers enough for their continued patronage and support. We’re looking forward to many more exciting product achievements in the future.”

In celebration of the 10,000th unit, Aribex participated in the Wasatch Wellness 10K/5K/1 mile run held this summer in Provo, Utah. Race proceeds helped benefit the Provo Canyon Behavioral Hospital and mental illness patients who actively pursue increased behavioral wellness and seek the return to a normal routine in life.

Eighty-six employees, family members and friends participated in the event, with nine of them carrying NOMAD devices during the competition and 10 of them winning medals in their respective races and age/gender categories. Aribex also won the Corporate Cup Challenge for the most participants.

Aribex is donating the 10,000th NOMAD to a humanitarian organization. “Since our company’s roots are based on humanitarian efforts, we thought it appropriate to donate this historic unit to an organization that works among those with exceptional needs,” said Kaufman. “We’ve also seen that dental offices using the NOMAD have greater opportunity for humanitarian outreach, due to the portability of the NOMAD.”

Unlike the conventional wall-mount and portable X-ray systems, the NOMAD handheld devices from Aribex are lightweight, rechargeable (battery-powered), and can go anywhere. The NOMAD has rapidly become the X-ray device of choice for dental professionals around the world. Because of its handheld nature, the NOMAD has been found to be of great value outside the traditional dental environment. Units have been taken on countless service missions around the world, treating those who previously have not had such access to care. Recent missions have gone to the Philippines, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Mozambique.

In addition, the NOMAD has been used in forensic victim identification following natural disasters such as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and last year’s earthquake in Fukushima, Japan.

About Aribex
Aribex is the worldwide leader in portable and handheld X-ray products. Aribex

NOMAD X-ray systems are now in use in clinical, remote and mobile facilities throughout the world, from the finest professional offices to humanitarian missions reaching underserved populations who desperately seek care. The NOMAD significantly decreases costs and provides hundreds of safe, high-quality images for dental and veterinary applications on a single battery charge. For more information, visit www.aribex.com.

(Source: Aribex)
**Shade matching device uses color LEDs**

*Rite Lite 2 Shade Matching instrument simulates multiple lighting conditions*

The Rite Lite 2 Shade Matching instrument is a low cost device that incorporates Tri-Spectra LED technology to simulate multiple lighting conditions that aid in the shade matching of teeth, porcelain and composite dental restorations.

**Rite Lite 2 has three modes of lighting for shade taking**

1. Color corrected north white daylight at a color temperature of 5500 Kelvin, considered a standard in shade measurements.
2. Incandescent warm room light at 3200 Kelvin, found in many indoor environments, and
3. Ambient room light at 3900 Kelvin. This combination of room light and daylight is used to further verify shade.

**Powered by 12, multiple-color LEDs**

The Rite Lite 2 is powered by 12 color-matched LEDs, two AA batteries and has a voltage regulator and low battery-level indicator to assure constant light intensity.

This instrument is intended for use by dentists, dental ceramists and dental laboratories.

For additional information, contact AdDent at 43 Miry Brook Rd., Danbury, Conn. 06810, or phone (203) 778-0200, extension 104. Find AdDent online at www.addent.com

*(Source: AdDent)*

**Impression material adds ‘super-fast set’**

*Aquasil Ultra Smart Wetting Impression Material also is known for its high tear strength and very low contact angle*

DENTSPLY Caulk has expanded the Aquasil Ultra Smart Wetting® Impression Material portfolio to include “super fast set.” Aquasil Ultra Super Fast Set material is available in all viscosities and packaged in a convenient two-cartridge 50 ml or DECA™ 380 ml refill. Aquasil Ultra Super Fast Set formula is optimized to offer an adequate intraoral work time of 35 seconds and Super Fast mouth removal time of two minutes and 30 seconds. Aquasil Ultra Smart Wetting Material is indicated for all dental impression techniques.

**Unidose system for easy wash material application**

Aquasil Ultra Smart Wetting Impression Material is known best for its unique combination of high tear strength and very low contact angle. Use with B4® Pre-Impression Surface Optimizer for excellent detail with less stress. A complete portfolio of five tray and three wash material viscosities are available in three set-time options. Delivery systems include the digit® Targeted Delivery System, a unidose system for easy wash material application, 50 ml and 380 ml cartridges.

To learn more visit www.aquasilultra.com or call (800) 532-2855 or call an authorized DENTSPLY distributor.

**Meet DDS Dan**

Meet DDS Dan — part dentist, part fixer and part detective. He is an everyday guy who has all the answers and can solve composite problems for you. Follow D.D.S. Dan on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube as he tackles some of the most challenging restorative cases and identifies ways in which TPH® composite from DENTSPLY Caulk can solve many of your composite challenges. Meet DDS Dan today at www.tph3.com/ddsdan.

*(Source: DENTSPLY Caulk)*
Recycling dental waste into marketing

**Patients bring used oral-care items to your office for upcycling**

TerraCycle, an upcycling and recycling pioneer, runs a free recycling fundraiser to collect what otherwise would be non-recyclable oral-care waste. To keep more of this non-recyclable material out of landfills and help dental offices engage and market to local communities, it offers local public relations support to locations that sign up to collect this waste.

Becoming a community drop-off point can generate foot traffic and attract new patients. By collecting previously non-recyclable toothbrushes, toothpaste tubes, toothpaste caps and floss containers, dental offices also can offer their patients and local community an easy way to earn extra funding for local schools or charities.

Anyone in your office can sign up at [www.terracycle.com](http://www.terracycle.com). Print informative fliers, set up a collection bin in the waiting room, and when the box is full, print a pre-paid shipping label to send it all to TerraCycle (six-pound minimum).

For each piece of packaging received, the office earns two points, which can be put toward buying a specific charity gift or converted to cash and given to a local charity that they choose. TerraCycle will recycle the collected packaging into plastic items such as park benches, recycling bins and plastic lumber.

TerraCycle’s Oral Care Brigade is sponsored by Colgate.

**Colgate Oral Care® Brigade**

*What kinds of packaging are acceptable?*

TerraCycle accepts any brand of used toothpaste tubes, toothbrushes and plastic toothbrush packaging, excluding cardboard.

*What do I need to sign up?*

You need to provide: 1) a contact person to oversee the brigade at your location; 2) a valid email address; and 3) a valid mailing address.

If you choose to redeem points toward a non-profit or charity of your choice, you will need the mailing address and contact information for the 501(c)3 charity and its Federal Tax ID number.

If you do not have your own charity, you can choose to redeem your points toward one of TerraCycle’s charitable gifts.

*Do I have to pay for shipping?*

No. You will be able to print pre-paid UPS shipping labels from the TerraCycle website through your online account. That’s how your Colgate Oral Care Brigade collections get back to the TerraCycle factory to be up-cycled into TerraCycle eco-chic products.

You win, TerraCycle wins, and the environment wins.

*How do I ship collections to TerraCycle?*

If you already have a reused box or bag, you can download your own pre-paid UPS return label by clicking the red “Ship Your Waste To Us” icon located on your account and select the Colgate Oral Care Brigade under the drop-down menu. Print the pre-paid label and affix it to the box and take it to your local UPS drop-off location.

Or you can have TerraCycle ship two UPS pre-paid return labels, by clicking “Send Me Mailing Labels.”

Your pre-paid return labels will be shipped to your address. Allow three to four weeks for delivery. Delivery times may vary depending on your location.

(Source: TerraCycle)
Human hand is starting point for every instrument’s design

At NSK, handpieces are viewed as an extension of the practitioner’s hand

By Robert Selleck, Managing Editor

For years, NSK dental handpieces have had a strong base of devoted users in the United States and Canada who are attracted to the company’s reliable, user-friendly performance and reputation for quality. A word-of-mouth advertising strategy combined with highly targeted customer relationships has worked well for the organization. But the strategy has also meant that there are many dental professionals who still aren’t sure about what makes NSK so different in the handpiece market.

During the past year, that’s quickly been changing.

The dental equipment manufacturer, founded in 1930 in Japan, is raising its U.S. and Canadian profile in a big way, perhaps most tangibly to date by the May 2011 opening of its newly constructed North American headquarters in Illinois. The facility includes a showroom, training facility, expanded warehouse space and a larger parts and service center.

“The company made the decision last year to increase its investment in North America in 2011,” said Rob Gochoel, NSK Dental marketing manager — North America. “We’ve also added office and technical-service staff, and an internal team of representatives who will be able to work directly with a greater number of dental practices.”

The company is also expanding its distributor relationships. As a whole, the efforts is enabling NSK to provide information about its unique business model to most of the dental practices in North America.

The company’s efforts also include an expanded dental convention presence, which began with the 2011 Greater New York Dental Meeting, so practitioners are more easily able to hold an NSK handpiece and experience firsthand what has enabled the company to become one of the top handpiece manufacturers in the world.

“We’re making the investment in an opportunity to connect with more customers,” Gochoel said. “Not only will we be able to handle customer questions and inquiries much faster, but we also will be able to further develop a sense of loyalty by developing even more personal-relationships with doctors.”

Innovation based on input

Close relationships with its customers are critical to the company because that is what has driven its global growth for more than eight decades. “Everybody is pretty excited,” said NSK Dental President Marco Stiehle. “We have very good feedback from the market so far I am looking forward to working with dental professionals and learning more about what they want from us because that’s where we’re coming from. We need to understand what we need to be doing to be successful in the U.S. And that means providing products that fit to the customer demand.”

NSK is able to respond quickly and specifically to localized needs because it maintains complete in-house control of the manufacturing process. An example of how such a philosophy translates into real products is the NSK S-Max Pico, which has the smallest head and neck size of any handpiece on the market.

NSK built S-Max Pico in response to requests from practices in Asian markets with higher numbers of patients with smaller-than-average mouths. Interestingly, a bonus realized by the company’s willingness to address this need is that the S-Max Pico has gone on to also receive high interest from pediatric practitioners throughout the world.

“We know there are other needs out there that aren’t being met,” Gochoel said. “We want to provide options based on what customers are asking for. We love to solicit feedback through our office at (888) 675-1675 and through our microsite at www.nsdkental.us.”

To control quality, virtually every step of the process is kept in-house key to the company’s ability to develop equipment in direct response to customer need is its commitment to controlling the entire manufacturing process. Nearly 90 percent of the 17,000-plus parts that go into the creation of its handpieces are manufactured in house.

In addition to supporting its market responsiveness, NSK’s keep-it-in-house philosophy enables it to relentlessly control quality at every step of the development, testing and manufacturing process. “Quality is really the top priority for us,” Stiehle said, “especially for Eiichi Nakanishi [NSK president and CEO].”

Nakanishi confirmed that statement: “Since the founding of the company,” he said, “we have adhered to very strict quality controls to make sure our products earn dentists’ satisfaction. We have strong policies on manufacturing almost all components in-house. Currently about 90 percent of the mechanical components, including electric micro-
motors and high-speed ball bearings, are manufactured in-house. No other competitors can make ball bearings and micromotors in-house like we do. This is one of our biggest strengths and competitive advantages."

Based in Japan, but frequently traveling the world, Nakanishi described his core role at NSK as being to ensure the global organization has a strong, motivated team in place with a clear understanding of what it takes to delight customers.

“We have the engineering excellence needed to enable dental professionals to make their dream products real,” Nakanishi said. “We want to listen to the voices of dentists in order to develop very useful and wonderful products.”

Stiehle said that responding to specific customer demand isn’t limited to a product’s purpose and function. “It’s not just that we offer a product in every category of dentistry from a clinical point of view,” Stiehle said. “It also means offering a range of price points.”

Cost sensitivity also drives the company’s focus on providing one of the largest selections of coupler adapters available to make it easier for practitioners to test-drive and purchase an NSK handpiece. “Our intent is to make it as easy as possible to integrate an NSK handpiece into the practice,” Gochoel said. “By being compatible with virtually all competitor coupler systems, we eliminate the need to buy a lot of additional couplers or incur the expense of retrofitting all the operatories. It’s just one more example of a smart, customer-centric focus.”

Rounding out the commitment to quality assurance, pricing options and responsiveness is awareness that the final customer is the patient. “I am a strong believer in the need to be aware that we are a medical device company, and that with that comes a huge responsibility, not just in terms of quality, but also comfort and safety of the patient,” Stiehle said. “When I am sitting in the dentist chair, I want to make sure that I am worked on with the best product out there. That’s what is most important to us: safety and comfort of the patient.”

Customer feedback feeds everything

Lots of companies like to talk about being responsive to customer needs. NSK, a global manufacturer of dental handpieces and other small-motor equipment, walks the talk with devices created solely in response to customer feedback. One of the most telling examples is the S-Max Pico, the handpiece with the industry’s smallest neck and head size. “In our Asian markets especially, dentist were asking for a smaller head handpiece to use with patients with smaller mouths,” Gochoel said. “We kept hearing how difficult it was to use a standard or even miniature handpiece for restorative work on patients with smaller mouths, especially when working on posterior teeth. Having a decent amount of room to see and work in is critical when you’re trying to be as minimally invasive as possible and leave as much healthy tooth undisturbed as you can.”

Industry game changer

To address the need, NSK engineers and product developers went to work on a concept they called an ultra-miniature handpiece. “It’s more than 20 percent smaller than the smallest miniature out there,” Gochoel said.

Coming up with the new device wasn’t just a question of taking a standard system and making everything smaller. Many of those existing parts were already about as small as the materials and demands on them would allow. So, in many ways, the design team had to start from zero — rethinking the engineering but keeping the core goals the same: durability, ability to stand up to frequent autoclave sterilization and delivery of as much torque as possible. The result, Gochoel said, is an industry game changer.

Growing global interest

“The S-Max Pico has been capturing a lot of excitement at the major dental meetings,” Gochoel said. “We’ve been taking a lot of orders from dentists who don’t even feel the need to test it in the operatory first.”

At the other end of the spectrum, NSK also has recently launched a line of premium handpieces that incorporate its micro-production technology while also setting a new benchmark for durability and performance. According to NSK, the Ti-Max Z series handpieces perform at a remarkably low noise level with virtually no vibrations — two requests the company had frequently heard from clinicians looking for fewer distractions and increased patient comfort. “The two products together definitely announce NSK as a key player in the industry, one who knows how to listen to customers and quickly get finely crafted, durable products to market based on that input,” Gochoel said.

More innovations expected

As the company increases its presence in the North American market, with high-visibility booths at the biggest trade shows and a growing distribution system, it’s hearing more from customers in the U.S. and Canada. “It’s all about making dentists more productive,” Gochoel said. “Coming up with improvements that make dentists lives easier — and make their patients more comfortable.” NSK engineers already are looking into some new ideas based on multiple inquiries the NSK team has been receiving from customers.

‘Expect perfection’

The organization’s total-control approach to its products is what enables it to use the slogan, “Expect perfection.” Gochoel said the company approaches each new product with the goal of creating the perfect handpiece. The result is that the company keeps setting the bar for itself higher — while removing limits on what its customers are able to imagine.

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(Source: NSK Dental)