

The “Apple” of the implant market

The Swiss company, TRI Dental Implants Int. AG, was founded in 2010. The IDS 2011 marked its first “public appearance”. So what do these three letters stand for, what similarities are there to Apple and what can the dental market expect from TRI Dental Implants? The company’s CEO, Tobias Richter, provided us with interesting answers to these and other questions.

DI: Mr Richter, which product did you present to start off with?

Tobias Richter: At the heart of the product portfolio is the TRI® Performance Concept, with its product features Zirconia Blast Media implant surface (ZBM), TRI-BoneAdapt implant design, TRI-Friction implant connection and TRI Soft Tissue concept. We are convinced that, with this, we have successfully fulfilled the fundamental modern demands for a holistic implant system in implantology today. This technology is integrated in the product lines TRI® Vent Dental Implant System (with the diameters 3.7 / 4.1 / 4.7 mm) and TRI® Narrow Dental Implant System (3.3 mm). In addition, we also offer a very streamlined and innovative surgical kit with an intelligent drill stop system. These core systems are complemented with additions to the prosthetic lines (angled screw-retained abutments for all-on-four restorations) as well as navigated surgery.

For us, it was essential that we created the most efficient and flexible implant system possible, the “Apple of the implant industry” so to speak. Our implant system comprises a total of just 180 implant components which represents a more than 50% reduction in components compared to conventional systems. The key factor behind our success lies in the fact that we only have one implant connection and thus the number of components is

reduced to an absolute minimum. This equates to a minimisation both of storage costs at practices and application errors when assisting.

DI: How has the company developed since its foundation?

TR: We now employ a total of 50 members of staff. In the direct markets we have a 30-strong sales team and, via our distributors, are already represented in 11 countries with our products. What's more, we are currently involved in negotiations aimed at expanding our international activities further. We opened our international distribution and service centre in Freiburg on 1 April in order to cope with the high level of demand through efficient and centralised order processing.

DI: What does the corporate structure look like?

TR: We need to keep our company as streamlined and efficient as possible so as to be able to offer our partners and customers the best possible value for money. This is why we decided to base our headquarters, with management and development strategy for the international business, in the heart of Switzerland. The proximity to our Swiss production centres was the decisive factor behind this move.

Our central international distribution and service centre, on the other hand, is located within the EU, in Freiburg. This enables maximum proximity to customers, speed and cost awareness. Our strictly sales oriented corporate structure is based on cooperation with the dedicated sales teams in the main markets of Germany and Italy which are managed directly from Switzerland. Other international markets are handled by experienced and professional distribution partners in Europe, Asia and South America. The complete corporate structure is subject to a modern corporate planning system (ERP) which coherently links process steps without the need for other interfaces – from registration of the order through accounting to delivery of the products.



CEO Tobias Richter: “It is our goal to maintain a high level of innovation in order to remain attractive to customers and differentiate ourselves from the competition in the long term.”

DI: Which renowned practitioners and clinics were involved in the development of your products?

TR: We developed the Performance Concept and the TRI® Dental Implant System in close cooperation with a group of leading experts, whereby Dr. Marius Steigmann (Institut Steigmann) was the decisive driving force. When developing the implant system, the main focus was on launching a user-friendly solution onto the market. Other international experts and study partners of the TRI Dental Implant System include Dr. Paolo Triesi (Italy), Dr. Wolff-Ulrich Mehmke (Germany), Dr. Giulio Raspérini (Italy), Dr. Hom-Lay Wang (USA) as well as Dr. Alberto Rebaudi and Dr. Marco Esposito (Italy).

DI: What does TRI stand for: Tobias Richter Implant or, rather, "Through Research Innovative"?

TR: The identical abbreviation is a pleasant coincidence. "TRI" actually stands for "Through Research Innovative", a slogan which was developed by a group of leading experts with one common objective, namely the merging of the latest clinical findings and know-how from implant research to develop a performance-oriented and easy-to-use implantology concept. Our scientific consultant, Dr. Marius Steigmann, phrases this as follows: "The TRI project goal was to combine practical experience with the latest implant research to produce an enhanced performance-oriented implant concept. A concept that respects both the hard and soft tissue parameters and which also ensures maximum primary and secondary stability."

DI: You are not an unknown entity on the implant scene. How much of Tobias Richter is there in TRI?

TR: As a founding member, I have inevitably been involved in shaping the company's profile. Yet at the heart of our success is the radical product philosophy of producing an extremely streamlined and, at the same time, flexible implant system which is able to satisfy the latest findings from implant research. In this regard, thanks must be given to the developers and pioneering opinion leaders.

DI: What is the target group for your system – newcomers or experienced practitioners?

TR: Given our size, we are currently not able to comprehensively support newcomers entering this market. We focus on experienced implant practitioners who, in addition to their current "premium" implant system, are looking for a substantial system in the low price segment in order to accommodate the needs of more price-conscious patient groups. It is our experience that practitioners can indeed sense the pricing pressure on the market but, at present, can only find very few sustainable alterna-

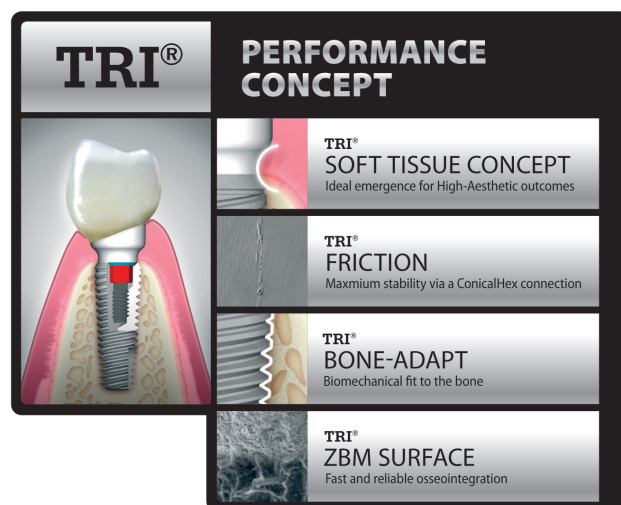
tive products priced at less than € 150 per implant.

DI: With each year the implant market is becoming increasingly more competitive. What is the key difference between TRI and your competitors?

TR: I completely agree with you that there appears to be a surplus of implant companies. However, we have examined the market carefully and established that the companies are either positioned in the premium segment or in the low budget segment where the emphasis is on price. We are committed to striking a balance between these two extremes: We set great store by sustainability, quality and service and, at the same time, still offer attractive prices. This policy can be summed up as: "Peak performance at the right price". This mix is possible thanks to our very slim corporate and costs structures. We believe we have a great chance of achieving sustainable differentiation with the right team and our Swiss roots.

DI: Mr Richter, in concrete terms what do you offer your customers?

TR: Our customers are able to purchase our products from well-trained sales partners whose numbers we are successively developing. We can also be contacted directly via our online shop and the European-wide hotline which can be called daily on 00800 3313 3313. With the opening of the new service centre in Germany, we have created the ideal framework conditions for ensuring ongoing expert support through further training. We offer online webinars in order to reduce travel costs, keep content up-to-date and, nevertheless, guarantee that participants feel personally connected to the training offered.



Graphic illustration of the TRI® Performance Concept with its product properties

Obviously our attractive pricing policy means we cannot compete with all of the services provided by the leading companies. However, we have looked closely at what actually presents added value to practitioners and believe we satisfy up to 90% of all service wishes. We are convinced that the services offered (see box, editor's note) combined with our prices equate to a transparent product which guarantees both security and reliability.

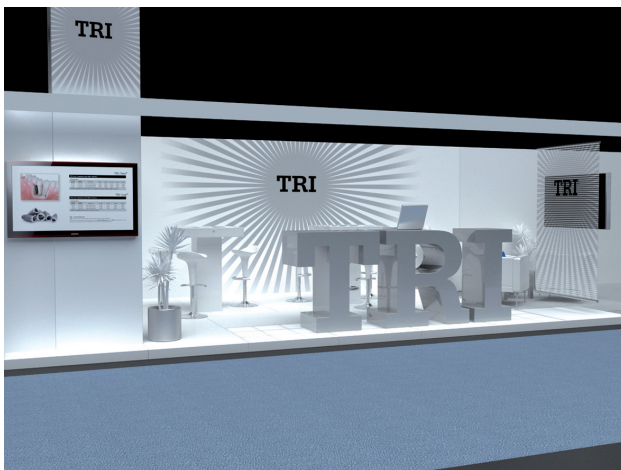
DI: Nowadays, service, customer loyalty and sales promotions are all priorities. What additional services do you offer?

TR: For us, tailored customer care is an important tool in developing long-term customer loyalty. In addition to the personal support provided by our sales team we also offer free advice via our expert hotline. Carrying on from last year, we will once again be visiting all of the regions in Germany as part of our successful road show TRI Performance Days this year. We are extremely pleased to have been able to expand our pool of experts and we can now offer a selection of various subject areas. In June, in cooperation with the Hamburg dental laboratory, Zischow Dental, we shall be hosting an implantologist brunch with a live operation and shall be organising further seminars after the summer. In addition to demonstrating our system, these events are, above all, an opportunity to present the latest scientific findings and new treatment methods. And, of course, we also maintain direct contact with our customers via social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

DI: What can the dental market expect from you in the future?

TR: In terms of the IDS 2013, we are already looking ahead to some exciting new product offers. Compared to many established companies, our

focus is firmly on the development of the strategically important core European markets of Germany and Italy. At the same time, we are also working on building up our international network with distributors. We are committed to fostering partnerships with leading consultants and researchers by means of joint studies and case study programmes. In terms of products, it is our goal to maintain a high level of innovation as this is the only way to remain attractive to customers and also differentiate ourselves from the competition in the long term. Last, but not least, we are currently working on creating a strong supervisory board within the corporate structure which will oversee our growth and guide us in the continuous discussion process.



First ever trade fair stand at the IDS 2011 in Cologne.

TRI Dental Implants services

Lifetime warranty

Lifetime warranty on all implants purchased and a restricted lifetime warranty on all prosthetic components.

100-day exchange

All unopened products can be returned and exchanged up to a 100 days after being purchased.

Free shipping for orders in excess of € 1,000

Free shipping with standard delivery for all single orders in excess of € 1,000

24-hour express delivery

24-hour express delivery to the address of your choice in our direct markets.

Free expert hotline

Personal telephone support provided by experienced expert dental technicians on all technical issues.

Online orders www.tri-implants.com

24-hour order service with optional direct payment by credit card and AirMile collection.