

Interview Livio Marzo, CEO Thommen Medical, Grenchen, Switzerland

“We are very well prepared”

The concentration on the dental market continues. More and more small and medium-sized companies are being swallowed up by the big players. Typically, we see this in the form of large corporations or in acquisitions and takeovers. Thommen Medical, the Swiss designer and manufacturer of dental implant systems, is one of the exceptions in the industry with its very own strategy and philosophy. The EDI Journal asked Thommen Medical CEO Livio Marzo for his perspective.



Thommen Medical
CEO Livio Marzo

Mergers and acquisitions are following one another ever more rapidly in the dental market. What does a medium-sized manufacturer hold against arguments such as “critical size” and “one-stop shop”?

Where is the critical size? That’s the big question. I think Thommen has overcome this hurdle. We are a medium-sized company that has been established in the market for many years, so I see no reason why that should affect us. We have rejected some potential offers/acquisitions and have even strengthened our position. As to the “one-stop shops”, we clearly believe that it is just not a really good concept, because you definitely lose focus if you position yourself too broadly.

Precision and high quality can also be found among aggressively priced implants. Where lies the added value of the premium system Thommen Medical?

The suppliers of low-price implants or products in the lower value segment have not developed anything themselves, they have only copied others or followed trends. As a result, they will now encounter enormous problems to keep their products compliant with the new MDR. That’s why I see a big barrier coming up for them, and I am convinced that these companies will soon no longer exist – they will be taken over or the products will disappear from the market. At this price level, it is simply not possible to conduct R&D, carry out clinical studies and sell internationally. We at Thommen, on the contrary, are very well prepared. We have already been working on the new MDR for three years, that’s why we are in a very good position today and will have completed the most important elements by the end of this year.

The innovative Inicell technology for even more hydrophilic implant surfaces sounds promising. Is the advantage really clinically measurable?

Absolutely. The difference lies in the early healing phase. Inicell demonstrably improves the direct cell reaction at the bone-implant interface [1]. We have also documented that there is more bone on the implant surface with Inicell after two weeks healing [2], while the University of Bern has validated Inicell’s three-week healing protocol in their clinic [3]. *Grunder* and *Le Gac* have shown a significant reduction in early failures with Inicell in a clinical study with almost 3,000 patients [4].

A high insertion torque of the implant leads to high primary stability on one hand, but it may also cause unnecessary stress to the bone on the other hand. High stress may compromise the osseointegration process due to extensive bone remodeling. We avoid this with our well-tuned implant system consisting of our unique VECTOdrills which perfectly fit together with our implants. We have demonstrated in animal studies that we do not lose implant stability during the osseointegration process. All these factors play an important role and they are the reason why our implants osseointegrate fast and lead to predictable clinical results.

Most of the new implant systems come with a new low-speed drilling protocol. Your opinion on this?

I agree with that one hundred percent, but it’s not a new insight. Thommen has been recommending a low-speed drilling protocol for more than 15 years. We measured heat generation in bone caused by drilling extensively. Based on these data, we have optimized the design of our VECTOdrills and we have defined the maximal speed for each drill diameter. Believe me, the little extra time you need with a low-speed drilling protocol is worth it!

Thank you very much for the interesting interview, Mr Marzo.

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