

# “You can experience digital innovation at almost every booth”

An interview with Mark Stephen Pace, chairman of the board of the Association of German Dental Manufacturers.



■ The International Dental Show (IDS) will celebrate its centenary in March. In this interview, Mark Stephen Pace, chairman of the board of the Association of German Dental Manufacturers (VDDI), gives an overview of the present status of the preparations for the show and hints at some of the highlights in store for dentists and dental technicians.

**Mr Pace, the 40<sup>th</sup> IDS will be held from 14 to 18 March 2023. At the same time, we will be celebrating 100 years of IDS. How far have preparations for the event progressed?**

At 100 years, we could focus on the historic perspective and congratulate ourselves on being part of the immensely important ongoing tradition of trade fairs.

However, it is even more important to embrace IDS for what it is and always has been: the leading dental industry trade fair. It offers the orientation that we will so desperately need for the next two, five, ten years—even for the next one hundred years, for those of us who think in generations. In my experience, there are many in the dental industry who do so.

**Do you consider that, with the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and supply chain disruptions, the present conditions are particularly difficult for a trade fair?**

We are presently operating in a difficult environment and, in addition to the things you mentioned, we are also faced with the threat of inflation and excessive bureaucracy. On the other hand, the German dental industry has been confronted with many challenges in its more than 100-year history—economic, geopolitical and industry-specific. We have mastered these challenges together with the German dental technician profession. And that is what IDS is all about: presenting innovative solutions or developing new ones together so that we, as dental manufacturers, can fulfil our mission for the benefit of dental technicians, dentists and patients even under the most difficult conditions.

**To what extent will the forthcoming IDS live up to this role?**

I am very optimistic that IDS will do so. I have hard facts to back this up and also have a good feeling about it. The number of exhibitors registered has already exceeded 1,600, of which around 400 have registered for joint booths. The companies come from more than 60 countries and include numerous international market leaders. A wide range of dental manufacturers will thus be represented in Cologne. And, of course, I am particularly pleased about the participation of the Verband Deutscher Zahntechniker-Innungen (VDZI; the German association of dental technicians), which has an information booth and which will also host the Gysi Award ceremony.

**What do you consider to be the current megatrends in dental technology?**

Digital technologies continue to constitute a global megatrend. Prosthetic work can be created very differently these days, compared with the situation ten or twenty years ago—let alone 100 years ago! Digital impression taking, design on the computer, CAD/CAM production—this workflow has been learned and was included in the new ordinance on vocational training for dental

technicians in Germany. This was published in the Bundesgesetzblatt (Federal law gazette) on 1 April and came into force on 1 August.

This represents a coherent modernisation of training regulations, and it will help to ensure that we are not threatened with the one problem

**What does this mean for everyday dentistry?**

The dental technician will be working closely with manufacturing robots, with machine learning-enabled systems and with tightly networked laboratory equipment. Of all the players in the dental field, dental

*“Most [dental technicians] are already right in the middle of things and are pioneers.”*

that everyone is presently talking about: a shortage of skilled workers. This is because digital content is increasingly being included in both the teaching curricula and the examinations. This complements the more classic skills of the dental technician, keeps the profession attractive and opens up good future opportunities for trainees in a modern, demanding and extremely versatile profession.

**Where will this development be reflected at IDS?**

In a word: everywhere! You can experience digital innovation at almost every booth. In addition to this, the VDZI's Gysi Award for young dental technicians is another highlight. It honours the best young dental technicians and gives a future-oriented demonstration of how state-of-the-art digital and analogue processes can be used to inspire dentists and patients.

**Where do you foresee the greatest potential?**

There is already a considerable amount of artificial intelligence included in intra-oral scanner technology but even more in dental CAD software. This can bring to the daily practice automatically generated, patient-customised treatment plans for the design of crowns and bridges. Used together with facial scans, these proposals can be presented immediately. The dental technician can show them to the dentist and to the patient, motivating them to favour a high-quality restoration option.

technicians are probably best at this, as they are traditionally the technophiles within the team. For example, dental technicians will find it easy to match post-processing equipment to materials and printers in 3D printing because they are experts in both analogue and digitally networked systems as well as in dental materials.

**What should dental technicians be doing now to prepare specifically for the future?**

Most of them are already right in the middle of things and are pioneers. A visit to the 40<sup>th</sup> IDS from 14 to 18 March 2023 in Cologne will enable dental technicians to take an even greater step forward. In the exhibition halls, they will find analogue and digital systems—in some cases as alternatives, in others as collaborative partners. This will allow them to choose the best of both worlds for their own laboratories.

IDS exemplifies the generational thinking in dentistry, and many dental professionals will remember the good investment decisions made by their parents and grandparents after a visit to the trade fair. We will also be celebrating this at the forthcoming instalment of the world's leading dental trade fair by staying true to the motto “100 years of IDS—and the next 100 years will be even more exciting”.

We look forward to seeing you there! ◀

Editorial note: This is an edited version of an interview that was originally published in German in issue 3/2022 of Zahntechnik TELESKOP.



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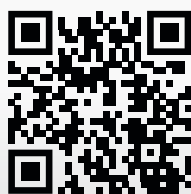
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