

Outlook for the 40th IDS: “Things are looking up”

An interview with Dr Markus Heibach, executive director of the Association of the German Dental Industry.
By Dr Christian Ehrensberger



-Dr Markus Heibach, executive director of the Association of the German Dental Industry.

■ In this interview, Dr Markus Heibach, executive director of the Association of the German Dental Industry (VDDI), explains the importance of the 40th IDS from the perspective of the dental industry and what it means for dentists, dental technicians and their teams.

Dr Heibach, for much of the last three years, the entire global economy has been driving with the handbrake on. There are numerous challenges facing industry at once. How is the dental industry doing?

The Association of the German Dental Industry was constituted in 1916, at that time under the name of “Association of German Dental Manufacturers”. This was in the middle of the First World War. IDS was also started in the middle of a crisis year: 1923. Ever since then, it has been a catalyst for innovation for the entire industry.

This is not to trivialise our current problems. It’s not only the rising cost of energy that is a major issue occupying and even burdening our member companies, but also the sheer number of changes occurring together. Company leaders in the German dental industry have to wrestle with solutions to these varied and interconnected changes daily. For example, in addition to energy prices, procurement channels for raw materials have changed. This relates to glass, metals and plastic, for example, as well as logistical and transport bottlenecks in this regard. All these interacting factors in combination—not just the single issue of the energy price—have an impact on our medium-sized manufacturers.

Regarding these challenges, I think that it is apt to quote the philosopher Karl Popper: “There is no reasonable alternative to optimism.” We hope that, with the quantum leap now occurring in Germany, the course is set towards a continued

sustainable future and strengthening of the companies in the industry. Political will to free companies from bureaucratic burdens and, wherever possible, promote innovation is still absolutely critical in this regard. We are continually pursuing this jointly and in agreement with our umbrella association, the Federation of German Industries.

Parallel to that, I see further positive developments. People are placing a higher value on health than they did three years ago and are more open to high-quality dentistry. This helps the whole industry. The German industry in particular is

well positioned thanks to its high-quality products and global recognition of its dental profession and dental technician craftsmanship.

What importance does IDS hold for the dental industry?

The essence of IDS can be formulated very succinctly: as the German industry, we invite all competitors from Germany and abroad to a central location in fair competition to present their products to international experts and submit them to market participants for evaluation. This has developed into Olympic-level friendly rivalry to develop the

best concepts and products. The result is acceleration of the innovation cycles in our industry and correspondingly higher-quality treatment of patients.

Do manufacturers watch each other closely at the show?

Everyone is curious to see what others have to offer the audience of dentists, dental technicians and their teams. This is the nature of the market—there is intense competition, which our dental industry clearly perceives as incentive for innovations. Internationally, the German dental industry has been a market leader for decades in many segments of dental technology. Direct benchmarking of manufacturers under the critical eyes of customers provides enormous motivation and drives innovation in our industry. Celebrate successes, rework any deficits and triumph at the next IDS with an even better idea—that’s the name of the game! That is how the trade fair in Cologne functions as a catalyst for dental innovation.

How does this work exactly in the exhibition halls?

First and foremost is the professional exchange with dentists, dental technicians and their teams. Their feedback on the proven and innovative concepts and products on display is the lifeblood of the dental industry. On the basis of conclusions drawn from this feedback, research and development departments effect improvements and develop revolutionary innovations in the coming years.

Furthermore, exhibitors establish new contacts at IDS and initiate new business opportunities. Deepen-

ing existing relationships, exchanging information with the dental trade about current trends, customer wishes and expectations, involving international importers as partners—these are all crucial components for success.

International meetings have intensified from IDS to IDS. Today, importers from Asia or South America meet their customers from all global markets in Cologne, making IDS the most comprehensive marketplace.

What’s the significance of a visit to IDS for dentists, dental technicians and their teams?

At the trade fair, they find themselves in the position of decision maker, because they determine which of the many products will ultimately be the better solution for them. At the same time, thanks to this careful selection, they ensure that they are in an excellent position and gain an advantage over their competitors.

How extensive will the selection of exhibiting companies be at this year’s IDS?

We already have more than 1,700 exhibitors [as of February 2023]. This guarantees a complete and representative overview of the industry and a uniquely large showcase of products for optimal choice.

Things are looking up for us all. It is no secret that the past three years were particularly difficult. The German dental industry has overcome them. We will take a brief look at the past 100 years of IDS and then look ahead to the next century. The 40th IDS will provide the initial spark. ◀



-Industry and trade representatives, dentists, dental technicians and their teams—IDS 2023 will bring together all important participants in the dental market once again.

Come see us at IDS for a preview—and connect to what's next.

INNOVATION NEVER SLEEPS

Hall 11.1 | Stand D010/E019

