This can’t be the place!” I thought to myself as I rechecked my directions to the headquarters for Captek. The quiet parking lot they described was nowhere to be found. Instead, hi-tech film cameras mounted on cranes, huge video production trucks and slick agents jabbering into cell phones surrounded me. “I knew these guys were growing, but this is ridiculous!” I muttered under my breath. That’s when I decided to ask for help. I stopped a young man donning a headset and asked him what on earth was going on. He smiled and informed me the studio for the pop super group N-Sync was just a few buildings away and they were shooting their latest video. It was then that I spotted an unassuming building further down the road...Captek.

As I entered Captek’s corporate offices just north of Orlando, Florida, I couldn’t help but think Captek and N-Sync actually have a surprising amount in common. Both have enjoyed monumental success, nationwide popularity and seem to be getting bigger every day. Of course, no one would ever camp out to get an autograph from Captek’s Lou Azzara, Dr. Itzhak Shoher, Nick Azzara and Aharon Whiteman but that aside, Captek’s loyal following continues to grow by leaps and bounds.

So why are Captek™ crowns and bridges setting the world on fire? In an interview with the Captek team, I asked them to share their rich corporate history and visions for the future. I began the interview by phoning Dr. Shoher and Mr. Whiteman in Israel and followed up with Lou and Nick Azzara, who spoke with me from Captek’s Orlando office.

Richard Davis: So how did the concept for the Captek restoration get started?

Dr. Itzhak Shoher: I had just finished graduate studies in prosthodontics at Tufts University in Boston. After graduation, I returned to Israel and started a private practice limited to prosthodontics. Being the very first full-time practicing prosthodontist in Israel, I really wanted to provide the highest quality dentistry possible. I soon became acquainted with Mr. Whiteman and his exceptional talent in dental technology.

Aharon Whiteman: I was working in a lab and eventually moved to an office next door to Dr. Shoher. His quest to provide exceptional dentistry led us to create a product that could really benefit patients.

Shoher: Our goal was to find a restorative material that would not have a single failure. When you live in a small country like Israel, you have to use something that works because everyone in the entire country starts talking and their opinions rapidly get back to you!

Davis: Can you tell me about your restorative material? I’ve heard your product is known primarily for its amazing beauty, but rumor has it you actually developed it for its strength before esthetics even came into the picture?

Shoher: You’re correct, first and foremost we wanted the restoration to be incredibly strong.

Whiteman: Then, we began focusing on the esthetics and continued our work until we were both satisfied with all facets of the restoration—strength, health and esthetics.
Davis: So, after developing this unique and outstanding restoration, you decided to share your discovery with the dental community. Why did you ultimately select Lou and Nick Azzara to take this product to the next level?

Shoher: We knew Lou and Nick had an incredible passion and thoroughly believed in the product. Through them, we developed an incredible team in America.

Lou Azzara: My brother and I knew right away the Captek restoration was exceptional. Actually, our passion continued to increase the more we discovered about the product. We knew this restoration was not developed in a marketing department but based on a sincere desire to deliver an exceptional dental material. What impressed us the most though was Dr. Shoher and Mr. Whiteman’s sincere commitment to help patients.

Davis: It must have been great to discover just how everyone—technicians, clinicians, independent researchers and patients—are impressed with the Captek restoration.

Shoher: Actually, it makes every day worthwhile! Initially, when we met with people in the industry to discuss our product, we always tried to under-describe its characteristics. We wanted them to discover its quality, beauty and applications for themselves and say, “Wait! This delivered even more than what you said!” We were lucky enough to have that really happen and when it did, the feedback gave us even more motivation.

Davis: It sounds like you take the relationship with your clients very seriously and try to develop a rapport with them.

Lou: We’re not here just to ship out materials. We very much integrate ourselves into the value chain of our clients. Captek’s a customer-centric organization and we treat our clients as partners. Our commitment is always to them and to continually bring an awareness of Captek’s many benefits to the dental industry.

Davis: And those benefits are...

Nick Azzara: Our tagline is, Esthetics without Compromise,” and it’s true. Captek delivers everything one would want in a restoration—strength, beauty, predictability, ease-of-use, versatility and plaque resistance. The reinforced nature of the gold is what enables the material to achieve the necessary physical properties. This is why other material such as high gold cast alloys, sintered or electroplated copings do not compare. We make many claims. All of them are substantiated!

Davis: Has the growth of the Captek restoration surprised you?
Lou: I have always felt that if we as a company presented and supported Captek, the results of the product would speak for itself. Hearing the intensity of enthusiasm from the labs and dentists has been our greatest reward.

Whiteman: Dentists have begun to realize the difference and see the many benefits of Captek. Our company’s future looks very good too.

Davis: I know Captek supports labs with the distribution of marketing and support materials. Does support to dentists play an important role too?

Lou: What’s important to laboratories using our product is also very important to their clients, the dentists. In essence, to truly partner, we had to understand the way clinicians operate, what their priorities are and the daily challenges they face in order to help them in delivering real value to their patients. Our close relationship with clinicians has enabled us to focus and strengthen our support system.

Davis: Captek doesn’t have sales reps, and yet the product is in great demand. How did you go about accomplishing such great recognition?

Nick: Our company has always focused on education and technical support for our clients. I’d put our technical team up against anyone in the industry. I’m talking about Chris Lowthorp, CDT; Jeff Lowthorp; Wayne Campbell, CDT; Al Fillastre Jr., CDT and Bruno D’Innocenzo in addition to numerous lab owners and consultants. They work in labs and with labs all across the country making sure technicians can do their best possible work with Captek. To us, dentistry is a one-at-a-time industry. It’s one laboratory at a time, one technician, one dentist and one case. Over the past 10 years, with an enormous amount of units placed, Captek has earned the right to be an everyday restoration.

Davis: You certainly do have happy clients. Patients and dentists are raving. You’re enjoying unprecedented growth. Now that Captek is so successful, how are you and your associates reacting to this success?

Don’t call Dr. Ross Nash a bandwagon fan of Captek. He’s been using a version of the product since the early 80’s. Today, Captek plays a major role in his world-famous Charlotte, North Carolina office. Dr. Nash says, “whether it’s for a single crown or a bridge, anterior or posterior, Captek’s my personal PFM crown of choice. My clinical success in the practice has shown it to be quite dependable and even more improvements have been made lately. That makes me feel even more confident.” Nash adds, “Captek fits in beautifully with the all-ceramics because it looks like an all-ceramic restoration. We can really mix and match materials well when we’re using Captek.” Nash also sites other attributes. “Because of the thinness (of the coping) and the ability to overlay porcelain on it with a very, very thin layer of opaque, we can bring the porcelain right to that metal margin and it does not compromise the esthetics at all. It gives me the security of having the metal to the margin and a good seal on the margin but also I can achieve esthetics right down there to the same point.” This flexibility allows Nash to prepare the tooth more conservatively and ultimately allows him to deliver better esthetics. Nash is equally impressed with Captek’s health benefits. “The tissue around these materials just looks terrific. It really responds well.” Nash adds, “It’s a very dependable restoration. I could probably count on one hand the Captek restorations I’ve had to replace in the last several years.”