With a new 32,000 square-foot facility in Charlotte, NC and a hefty pipeline of new products, Sirona Dental Systems, the worldwide leader in dental equipment manufacturing, is strengthening its commitment to the U.S. dental market.

Sirona is a relatively new name in the United States, but it represents a company with a long and proud history of innovation in dental technology. Formerly Siemens Dental Systems, Sirona has been introducing high quality, high-tech products that deliver superior value to dental practitioners and patients for more than 125 years. Sirona was responsible for bringing the first electric drill to market, the first dental x-ray, the first whip-arm delivery system and the first digital pan ceph. As the leader in “digital dentistry”, Sirona also developed the CEREC, the first fully functional CAD/CAM system for the dental practitioner. Today, Sirona is the undisputed worldwide leader in CAD/CAM dentistry.

“One of the essential prerequisites for successful product development is a continuous dialogue with the customer,” said Michael Augins, President of Sirona Dental Systems. “At Sirona, we make a point to stay close to the clinical staff, the people who use our products, as well as the dealers who sell them. And we keep them involved all the way through the development process. It’s the only way to produce cutting-edge, high-performance equipment.”

CEREC is a classic example of a product that has evolved rapidly as a result of customer feedback. First introduced in 1986, the original version produced chairside inlays and onlays. Today, CEREC 3D generates three-dimensional images that create inlays, onlays, veneers and crowns right in the dental operatory during a single patient visit. The patient is spared a second appointment, and the dentist saves both time and money.
History
Originally founded in 1887, the dental division of Siemens AG grew to the stature of a worldwide leader in dental technology over the next century. In 1997, Siemens’ entire dental business worldwide was sold to a private equity group and renamed Sirona Dental Systems. The following year Sirona’s privately-owned dental depots (dealers) in Europe were restructured as a separate business, and the new entity was named Demedis.

Sirona Dental Systems (the manufacturing division) employs more than 1,250 people and is headquartered in Bensheim, Germany. Serving every major market around the globe, Sirona today is the largest dental equipment manufacturer in the world.

“As a global industry leader, Sirona is committed to technological innovation, unparalleled product quality and world-class customer service,” said Augins. “Here in the United States, these are the factors that have enabled us to grow our business at a pace much faster than the industry overall.”

Sirona manufactures a complete line of products designed to increase the efficiency and value of the dental practice, including digital and film-based intraoral imaging systems, panoramic and cephalometric x-ray systems, CAD/CAM restoration systems (CEREC), handpieces and dental treatment centers. The common theme across all Sirona product lines is “functional integration”.

“It might sound simple, but products in the dental operatory must be able to work together seamlessly in order to perform efficiently,” said Michael Williamson, National Sales Manager at Sirona. “Our fully-integrated systems enable the doctor and staff to work more efficiently, thereby optimizing chair time and increasing office productivity.”

Treatment Centers
There was a time when dentists would purchase a chair from one manufacturer, a delivery head from another and a light from yet another. Those days are gone. Today, it’s all about integrated systems.

Sirona’s new C8+ is the embodiment of design integration. Every possible option (e.g., piezoelectric scaler, air abrasion, digital camera, fiberoptic handpieces, etc.) can be integrated as a built-in component of the delivery head. The C8+ is the optimal combination of integration, ergonomics and patient comfort.

“We understand that everything in the operatory revolves around the patient and the treatment center,” said David Lee, the U.S. Marketing Manager for Operatory Equipment. “That’s why we created a treatment center that not only serves as an efficient venue for patient care but also communicates with the other systems and equipment in the modern dental office. The C8+ is also designed to be easily upgradeable so it allows dentists to add new technology as their practices expand.”

Since its introduction to the U.S. market in 1998, the C8 treatment center line has become the “gold standard” for systems integration, ease-of-use and value for price. The C8+ is simply the next generation of this product family, with special features designed specifically for the U.S. market. The C8+ product family is unrivalled for its sleek lines, aseptic design, flexibility and systems integration.

Imaging Systems
Today, the trend in dental imaging is away from film and toward digital. Why? Because the entire dental office is going digital. As a starting point the digital office is driven by an electronic practice management system. Practice management systems can store digitized information and make repetitive tasks less time-consuming, which enables the staff to spend less time on paperwork and more time on treating patients.

Sirona’s digital imaging systems are compatible with most of the practice management systems on the market today. They provide intraoral, panoramic, cephalometric and transversal slicing (TSA tomographic) images that form the foundation for clinical diagnosis. Digital images not only expedite the diagnostic process; they improve office workflow, reduce environmental waste and increase practice earnings.

All Sirona imaging products are network-capable systems designed for

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“As a global industry leader, Sirona is committed to technological innovation, unparalleled product quality and world-class customer service.”
Michael Augins, President, Sirona Dental Systems
seamless integration in the digital dental environment. Digitizing the office can begin with a simple stand-alone system that later expands through the server to every computer in the practice. There are no incremental licensing fees for Sirona’s SIDEXIS imaging software. Simply purchase it once with any Sirona digital product and then load it on every other computer in the practice at no additional charge.

SIDEXIS XG imaging software is at the heart of the Sirona Diagnostic Imaging System. Its direct digital images eliminate the time and cost associated with film-based systems, and the software includes powerful image enhancement tools not available with film.

Sirona’s ORTHOPHOS family of panoramic x-ray units is easy to operate, accommodates all types of patients and produces sharp, consistent images. A menu card assists with program selection, and the system features automatic exposure compensation. In concert with Sirona’s IO 2 direct digital sensors, the ORTHOPHOS digital pans consolidate the diagnostic information onto one intuitive imaging module.

In the Spring of 2004, Sirona will be announcing the launch of the ORTHOPHOS XG Plus, the most advanced digital pan-ceph on the market. The neXt Generation imaging system will incorporate new automated functionality, a simple-to-use graphic interface and a full-color touch screen that will offer more flexibility for future upgrades and functions. Already proven in the European market, the new Pan/Ceph/TSA unit will offer peerless image quality and create higher expectations for ease of use and diagnostic workflow.

“One of the most important developments in dentistry is the ability to digitize and simplify not only administrative tasks, but also patient diagnosis and treatment.”

John Smithson, Director of Marketing, Sirona Imaging Systems

Initially slow to embrace electric systems, U.S. dentists are coming to appreciate the constant high torque delivered by electric motors. Regardless of the speed or load on the bur, they are finding that electric motors maintain their cutting power.

As one of the worldwide leaders in high quality electric handpieces, Sirona intends to capitalize on the U.S. trend toward electric systems. Starting in mid 2003, the company began introducing its full line of electric motors and contra-angles in the United States. The response from dentists has been overwhelmingly positive.

Sirona also offers a complete line of air-driven high speeds, including the patented “Click & Go” feature. This unique capability enables dentists to effortlessly integrate Sirona high speeds into their

Handpieces

In 1887, Sirona established itself as a pioneer in handpiece development with the invention of the first electric dental drill. Since that time the company has invested heavily in handpiece research and development. Today, Sirona has the most comprehensive line of handpieces available anywhere in the world. The line includes a combination of air-driven high speeds, contra-angle handpieces and high-performance electric motors.
practice, regardless of the brand they are currently using.

Another unique feature of the Sirona line is the “Five Year Total Warranty”. By purchasing a predetermined amount of Sirona lubricant along with the handpieces, the dentist can extend the standard two-year warranty to either three of five years.

“When Sirona might be perceived as a relative newcomer to the U.S. handpiece market, we are actually one of the leaders in the global dental community,” said Michael Leadlove, Marketing and Sales Manager, Sirona Handpieces. “Looking ahead, we feel that the quality and breadth of our product line coupled with unique features like the five-year total warranty will make Sirona a household name in dental handpieces in this market in a relatively short period of time.”

**Dental CAD/CAM (CEREC)**

Patient demand for esthetically pleasing ceramic restorations led to the development of the CEREC CAD/CAM Systems. The outstanding durability of the CEREC restorations – backed by more than 100 clinical studies – has resulted in CEREC’s worldwide acceptance and acclaim.

CEREC 3D, Sirona’s latest chairside system, adds an exciting new three-dimensional platform for the fabrication of ceramic restorations. 3D’s intuitive design features are similar to the way dentists already work, and this familiarity enables them to design ceramic restorations with confidence, control and total accuracy. While CEREC was once considered a technology for “early adopters,” Sirona’s latest 3D software has transformed it into a product for the “mainstream” dentist.

CEREC inLab, Sirona’s CAD/CAM system for laboratory use, provides clinically reliable results through proven CEREC technology and VITA materials. Recently enhanced to also include 3D, CEREC inLab 3D now has the capability to mill crown copings and multiple unit bridges out of single, solid blocks of VITA material. By early 2004, the 3D unit will also have the capability to produce inlays, onlays and fully-contoured crowns using materials from Ivoclar Vivadent, 3M ESPE and VITA.

“CEREC is the embodiment of Sirona’s leadership in technology and innovation,” said Dr. Stefan Hehn, Director of Marketing & Sales, CAD/CAM Systems, “enabling dentists and dental laboratories to serve their respective customers more efficiently and more economically than ever before. With both versions of the CEREC adopting user-friendly 3D platforms this year, CAD/CAM now makes sense for everyone. In fact, we envision that a sizeable percentage of dental laboratories and private offices will be investing in CAD/CAM technology within the next 3-5 years.”

**Customer Support**

Understanding that the newer, high-tech equipment brings with it the need for a more sophisticated level of customer service and technical support, Sirona’s mission is to set the industry standard for unparalleled customer care.

Due to its expansive user base, Sirona handles hundreds of customer calls every day. “Our goal is to provide an immediate and knowledgeable response to 100% of the callers,” said Steve Sutton, Director of Customer Care. “We understand that dentists are busy and that the majority of their time should be spent with their patients, not trying to resolve technical issues relating to systems or equipment. It’s our support team’s responsibility to relieve them of that burden.”

With the CEREC System, for example, doctors can email screen shots of their procedures along with specific questions to a CEREC support rep. In this digital format, the Sirona rep can see the same procedure that the dentist sees, and walk him through it over the phone. While some companies have gone almost entirely to “automated responses” to customer inquiries, Sirona believes the customer should be able to communicate with real, qualified personnel...in real time...with real results!

“We know that Sirona’s technology and integrated systems add immediate value to any dental practice,” Sutton said, “but it’s the customer care group that creates happy customer experiences and sustains committed relationships over the long haul. Our Customer Care Team is all about building long-term partnerships with our customers.”

**Conclusion**

Sirona’s unique dental products, its penchant for innovation and its strategic vision have helped to shape the practice of clinical dentistry around the world for the past 126 years. With new products about to be released in all four Sirona divisions, it appears that trend is going to continue for many years to come.

Product innovation and technology have long been the bedrocks of Sirona’s success, but management feels there is one additional essential ingredient. “It may sound cliché but it’s true,” said Augins. “As much as technology drives the marketplace, it’s the individual customer who drives our business. The more we value and nurture customer relationships, the more successful we become.”

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**Sirona Dental Systems, LLC**

4835 Sirona Drive, Suite 100
Charlotte, NC 28273
800-659-5977