Looking Forward to Your Tomorrow

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At the age of 19, Jerry Doviak swam across the Adriatic Sea from Yugoslavia to Italy to escape communist Poland. He has never looked back, immigrating to the United States in 1968. After starting his dental laboratory from scratch, today he and his wife Tina own five laboratories with over 800 technicians.

This lab is much more than the culmination of a dream; it is a family-run organization that strives to maintain a familiar relationship with every doctor, yet continues to go forward with the dental technology of tomorrow.
DT: If I wanted to send one case to Continental Dental Laboratories to be impressed, what should I send?

CDL: Crown and bridge. Two of our most popular products are Captek and Procera. They are both proven industry performers with highly-esthetic results. Patients are more demanding than ever and want esthetics, functionality and affordability.

What sets us apart is our team of experts. From the moment the case arrives, it is carefully inspected by a technician. If there’s a problem with the impression, not enough room or clearance, we discuss it with the doctor to make sure we prescribe the right type of restoration for his/her patient. This helps us avoid the possibility of remakes and any production or shipping delays for faster turn-around.

It’s not just about the product anymore. We try to offer our customers more ancillary benefits. We want them to be “wowed” from the moment they get their first case. From customized packaging, to our patented articulators that use a unique pin system for an accurate bite. We strive to go above and beyond what most doctors expect from their lab. From automated case-tracking, to supplies, patient materials, and front-office solutions our customers have come to expect more from using Continental.

DT: What are your plans for the future with regard to new products, innovation and expansion?

CDL: The key for our growth is to build relationships. We are as concerned about China and India as everyone else, but try to differentiate our work with our craftsmanship, customer service and value-added benefits. There are no other labs that can match our full-service product selection, provide the same level of service, or match our prices.

DT: Tell me more about your concern about China and India. How can you compete with the labs that offer lower costs? What is the biggest threat to outsourcing lab work to other countries?

CDL: Continental is now located in Torrance, Calif. and continues to grow and expand by servicing doctors nationwide, along with Puerto Rico and Canada. Like any other US laboratory, we’re concerned about cheaper offshore production. These labs compete on price alone. But what services do they offer and how do you...
communicate with them? More and more US labs are “outsourcing” both domestically and abroad and “offshoring” to third-party foreign laboratories in China, India, and other nations. It’s important to note the distinction. “Outsourcing” does not always mean offshore and “offshore” doesn’t always mean outsource. Confusing isn’t it? Are you paying more for a local lab that is outsourcing its work? You’d be surprised how many labs are subcontracting their work to other laboratories in order to compete.

Continental does not outsource any of our work to other labs. We have direct control of our production, the training of our employees, the quality of the supplies and materials we use, and the turnaround time back to our doctors. From the moment we get the case, we know exactly where it is on production and which technician is working on it.

With over 800 technicians, our goal to provide world-class healthcare solutions to doctors nationwide. As a certified lab, our technicians are trained by the manufacturers of today’s most popular products like Captek, Procera, CEREC and Avanté. Continuing education and training is crucial for our technicians to stay abreast of the latest production techniques. All of our skilled technicians have received special education and training by some of the industry’s leading experts, like world renowned ceramist, Francesco Ferretti, CDT, MDT of Estech Dental Studios (Rome, Italy).

**DT:** Tell us more about new products and supplies you developed.

**CDL:** In 2003, Jerry had patented his unique Carrera Articulation System. With its distinct design and custom pin placement, each impression is carefully poured, trimmed and placed to ensure an accurate bite (it is specially designed for dual-arch tray impressions). Each case is sent back to the doctor articulated and is carefully packaged in our custom-designed containers.

Further, to guarantee the integrity of each case, we fit each case on three separate models to ensure a proper fit. This helps us reduce the possibility of any remakes.

**DT:** The most common comment from dental labs is the quality of impressions could be better. Name another area that could be improved by dentists to achieve better results.

**CDL:** In our experience, first impressions mean everything. Literally. If the impression is squeezed, distorted, has poor margins, or looks like an orange peel we know it will most likely come back to us as a remake. Unfortunately, the quality of our work largely depends on what we are given. We realize that sometimes it can be our fault too...which is why all of our remakes are done at no charge, but we try to be proactive by calling the doctor early on in the process.

Another challenge is receiving enough information from the prescribing dentist. On average, one out of five cases we receive get pulled aside because it is missing vital information; specifically, “what kind” does the doctor want? Does the doctor want base metal or high-noble? What type of PVC? Simple details can save a lot of time and frustration on both sides.

**DT:** From the lab perspective, do you notice certain trends?

**CDL:** More than ever before, doctors are now prescribing all-ceramic restorations and implants. The question we get asked most is, “which all-ceramic restoration is better?” Truly, it depends on what is suitable for the patient. Not all materials are suitable for veneers, bridges, inlays/onlays, etc. We try to simplify the decision-making process by working with our doctors and providing them with a free “All-Ceramic Product Guide” that is easy to read, color-coded, and explains the basic properties and recommended use for each product (i.e. IPS Empress, Procera, In-Ceram, CEREC InLab, and Avanté MicroCrystal.)

The new implants on the market also have caused partials and dentures to become less popular. There is a shortage of technicians who still specialize in denture set-ups and removable appliances. With better technology, non-metallic restorations and implants are stronger and better than ever before.

**DT:** Do you believe there is a sufficient workforce in the US to address the laboratory needs of dentists? Will technology be the answer?

**CDL:** There is a definite shortage of trained technicians in the US. It’s extremely hard to find technicians who are specially trained in the various disciplines of dental lab production (i.e. ceramists, waxes & metal finishers, implants, partials, dentures, etc.). It’s even harder to find technicians and technical support who have a knowledge of both crown and bridge and removable appliances.
Even though technology has come a long way, it still has a long way to go. From a lab’s perspective, in order to purchase a computer-aided design/manufacturing (CAD/CAM) machine it costs somewhere between $40,000–250,000; plus the labor of a technician to monitor and run the device. Just think of how many crowns you need to produce just to break-even. Not to mention the additional cost of materials, advertising, labor, software problems, etc. Additionally, it will be outdated in a few years, so we need to continue investing and upgrading our equipment.

**DT:** What is your process for evaluating new technologies?  
**CDL:** With any new technology, there is always a period of research and investment to see if a) it’s a viable product, b) there’s a demand for it, and c) what’s the service and reputation of the manufacturer. Each year we visit the shows and meet with the suppliers and manufacturers to determine the best products available.

As a full-service laboratory, it’s crucial that we stay abreast of the latest trends and product offerings. We choose products that are proven on the market and have a solid reputation. We try to build relationships with our suppliers and the manufacturers to make sure we have the latest upgrades, product materials, and training that is available. Before we invest in these products, we test and re-test the equipment and materials in our lab to make sure they meet our high-quality standards.

Currently, we specialize in the latest CAD/CAM technology with products like Procera and CEREC inLab. With this technology we are able to produce some of the most life-like crowns, bridges, and implant cases your patients have ever seen. With our computerized design, we evaluate your impressions, trim the dies for a precise scan and achieve amazing results.

Our goal is to make it easy for our doctors to stay abreast of the latest trends with proven products. After 36 years in the lab business, we’ve seen a lot of new products/fads that come and go…. There’s always a “revolutionary” new product on the market that disappears after a few years. There’s a fine line between first-mover advantages and proven results.

**DT:** Who are the most important people in the organization?  
**CDL:** Our technical support staff members are world-class. Each one of our tech-support personnel has over 25 years of hands-on experience in both crown & bridge and removables. They specialize in helping doctors with basic Q&A, from what cements to use, to different kinds of preparation techniques, and case design/consultation for more complicated types of cases.

Co-founder Jerry Doviack, CDT was born in Poland in 1947 and started his dental career in high school where he worked part-time as a dental technician. At the age of 19 he escaped Poland by swimming from Yugoslavia to Italy across the Adriatic Sea. He then spent the next year in an Italian immigration camp before coming to the US.

Jerry and his wife Tina started Continental Dental together in 1970 (previously known as J.W. Dental Ceramics). They started in a small office building on Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles. Jerry spent long hours working at the bench, training technicians and drumming up sales, while Tina managed the day-to-day operations and business finances. Since then, Jerry has helped pioneer trends in dental lab production and specializes in the research and development of new lab products and supplies.

Now entering its 36th year, the laboratory continues to grow with the second generation of Doviacks. Son, Bryan Doviack is head of the IT department and leads the organization with technological advances. Bryan obtained an M.B.A. from the London School of Business with a specialty in Customer Relationship Management. His younger sister, Karen (Doviack) Chamberlain earned her M.B.A. from the University of Southern California and started her career at Hewlett-Packard and Disney. In 2001, she joined the team as the Director of Marketing and HR for the laboratory.

Our technical support team is led by Robert Gonzalez, Laboratory Manager. He is well versed and trained in all phases of production, but has a keen interest in implant cases.

**DT:** Any dentist who uses the services of a dental laboratory knows there is a delicate balance between relationship and skill. Continental Dental Laboratories is committed to making both sides of that equation balance and their door is always open for a visit. If you can find a lab that satisfies your needs, that’s a dream come true.