

Testing times

Laboratory tests play an important role in patient diagnosis, supervision and prognosis. A lot can be learnt from a simple vial of blood, making the collection of blood and other fluid samples one of the main tools in the medical practitioner's arsenal. Studies in Germany have shown that laboratory results contribute to around two thirds of all diagnoses while in the US this figure is as high as 80%. The precondition for an accurate result is the absolute reliability of the collection system so that the at times minute fluctuations that are indicative of a problem can be accurately identified. Greiner Bio-One in Austria is a leading supplier of blood collection systems and markets its products throughout the world.



Greiner Bio-One's headquarters in Kremsmünster, Austria



CEO Franz Konrad

Greiner Bio-One was founded in Germany in 1963 as a family company. The founding family is still represented in the company today, although it is now headquartered in Kremsmünster, Austria. The company is a global player and employs approximately 1,200 people in 13 countries. Turnover in 2006 reached 220 million EUR, up from 203 million EUR in the previous year despite continuing pressure from the weak dollar. "The size of the US market makes it an extremely important one for us, so any weakness in the dollar that makes our products

more expensive in relation to our competitors in the US market can have a negative impact on sales," says CEO Franz Konrad. "Nevertheless we have enjoyed strong double digit growth rates in the past few years encouraging us to continue with our strategy of actively targeting turnover growth." The company's strategy has resulted in it gaining significant market shares in the USA, South America and Asia confirming its position as the second largest player in the industry worldwide and its intention to challenge for the top spot. With an

85% market share in Austria, Greiner Bio-One is by far the leader in its home market. It owes its leading position to an innovative product range that has chalked up a number of world firsts. "Greiner Bio-One's invention of the world's first blood collection system made out of shatterproof PET plastic in the mid-1980s was just the first in a long line of pioneering innovations, which have improved safety in the field of Preanalytics on a long-term basis," says Mr. Konrad. Greiner Bio-One is now established as a trendsetter in safety with other innovations such as

puncture the patient's vein. The system has a number of features designed to eliminate contamination and improve patient comfort. By making it possible to remove the collection tube while the needle is still in the patient's arm, nurses can fill several tubes of blood while only needing to puncture the vein once. Some products offered provide a visual cue indicating when the vein has been successfully penetrated, which is particularly helpful when collecting blood from difficult veins. The systems also include specially prepared collection tubes that al-



The VACUETTE® Blood Collection System ensures maximum accuracy of results and optimal patient comfort

safety blood collection sets and a safety tube holder that prevents healthcare workers from accidental needle-stick injuries. The company's blood collection systems are marketed under the VACUETTE® brand name. This comprises of closed systems using vacuum technology to draw the blood into the collection tube, which is separate from the needle used to

ready contain the preservatives or chemicals needed to preserve the blood during transport or prepare it for a particular test. "Our collection tubes have a slightly thicker wall than those of competing brands and are virtually unbreakable even when frozen or put in a high speed centrifuge," says Mr. Konrad. "The patented double wall tube has proven itself in practice over many



Test accuracy depends on obtaining high quality, uncontaminated samples

years and is a guarantee for reliable test results." In addition to blood collection systems, Greiner Bio-One also supplies closed systems for the collection of urine and saliva. The closed system ensures improved safety for laboratory and hospital personnel as contamination is virtually impossible when decanting the specimen into a secondary container. "Saliva is much simpler to collect than blood or urine and although it can never replace blood entirely for testing it does provide an interesting alternative in certain situations," explains Mr. Konrad. Preanalytic systems account for 60% of the company's business. The remaining 40% is shared between two relatively large and one smaller product area. The first of these is the production of systems for cultivating tissue for treatments such as skin grafts. The second com-

prises of machines for high throughput screening, which are used in the manufacture of vaccines. The final area of activity is in immunology. Greiner Bio-One's customers include pharmaceutical companies, universities, laboratories and hospitals. In addition to its own international subsidiaries, its sales efforts are supported by partners in over 100 different countries. The Internet is another important marketing instrument and the company recently won the German Multimedia Award for its company presentation in CD-ROM format. Exports account for 98% of sales of which 50% is generated in Europe closely followed by the US and Asian markets. "Marketing and raising awareness of our products is extremely important," says Mr. Konrad. "We advertise in trade magazines and exhibit at important trade fairs such as the

COMPANY PROFILE IN BRIEF

Activities

- Leading supplier of blood collection systems and other preanalytical equipment

Products

- Closed systems for collection of blood and urine samples marketed under the VACUETTE® name, and saliva collection system marketed under the GBO name

Facts and figures

- Founded in 1963 in Germany
- Turnover in 2006: 220 million EUR
- Exports: 98%
- Employees: 1,200
- Subsidiaries in eleven countries
- Four production locations on three continents

Performance

- Double digit growth for the past four years



Greiner Bio-One also supplies tissue culture equipment...



...and high throughput screening equipment as used for vaccines



Another area of activity is in the manufacture of equipment for use in immunology

Medica in Düsseldorf, Germany and the AACC in the USA. We can also be found at the Analytica in Munich and a number of other international exhibitions and congresses." Greiner Bio-One enjoys a high profile internationally and is one of only two companies in the world offering comparable products. Production takes place at four locations on three continents while an international distribution network

guarantees rapid deliveries to customers. Greiner Bio-One also guarantees its customers the highest levels of quality as well as innovative solutions. "The position Greiner Bio-One has built up over the years is based on constant product improvement and outstanding relationships with customers," says Mr. Konrad. "Both supplier and customer circles are easily defined so that everyone in the market

knows each other. We have been encouraged by our success even in the face of challenging market conditions and are certain that we can continue to gain market share in the years to come." An ageing population means that the need for diagnostic tools will continue to grow for the foreseeable future meaning further growth opportunities, which Greiner Bio-One is keen to exploit. ■

Greiner Bio-One GmbH

Bad Haller Strasse 32
4550 Kremsmünster
Austria
phone: +43 7583 67910
fax: +43 7583 6318
office@at.gbo.com
www.gbo.com