VladMiVa—success comes with persistence

By VladMiVa

VladMiVa, a large Russian holding company that unites a number of Belgorod-based companies and is invested in the development and manufacturing of materials, tools and equipment for dentistry, celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2017.

VladMiVa's activities and products have not only been recognised nationally and by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, but also in the global dental market, the company is known as the largest manufacturer of dental materials and instruments in Russia. On the night of the anniversary, we interviewed the founder and general manager of VladMiVa, Vladimir Chuev, who is also a doctor of technical sciences and a professor and the head of the Department of Medical and Technical Systems at Belgorod State University (BSU).

Prof. Vladimir Chuev, tell us the story of how your enterprise began. Prof. Chuev: The critical moment when people are “on the edge” is often a decisive moment. Someone drops his hands and someone starts to act despite of their fears, difficulties and main future. In 1992, the state funding for the laboratory that I directed was stopped, but our developments were of an applied nature, so we could try to find use for them. I decided to create a commercial enterprise, invest my own savings in it and convinced almost all my colleagues to stay and work with me. Our first development was very successful. In the same year, 1992, we received a silver medal from the USSR Exhibition of Achievements of the National Economy for the technology we developed to manufacture amalgam fillings. The next important step was the development of a technology for the production of dental cements for the Voronezh-based enterprise, Raduga-R. Our first success inspired us to carry on.

VladMiVa consists of a group of companies. What kind of companies are they and which idea unites them? We very quickly realised that focusing only on technological development is not very promising. Therefore, in 1994, the commercial department began its work. We started with direct sales on 2 m² of exhibition space—that seems ridiculous today—but we managed to find our customers and see a clear picture of real consumer demand. In 1998, JSC «VLADMIVA» EXPERIMENTAL PLANT was opened.

The idea of “Development—Production—Realisation”, upon which we base the foundation of the company’s activities, was soon realised. Between 2001 and 2002, we mastered the production of dental equipment and diamond burs and by 2009 we had produced more than two hundred kinds of products. In 2004, we opened our own dental centre, which was not only a place to confirm the high quality of our materials, but also a prime example of a world-class dental centre. The holding company today also includes Trade House, our own transport company with branches across Russia.

Over the past 25 years, the number of employees has grown from four to four hundred, we produce more than three hundred kinds of products and our consumers are not only in Russia, but also in more than 50 countries around the world. The main activities of the company today include the development and manufacturing of medical products for dentistry, providing raw materials for their development, pharmaceutical production, the production of modern disinfectants for medical institutions, developing veterinary medicine and consumer services.

Do you participate in programs with state support? What is the role of science and education in your work? The first aid that we received from the state was a small grant from the Foundation for Assistance to Small Innovative Enterprises in Science and Technology. Since 1997, we have participated in many programs of the foundation and are very grateful to its leadership for their assistance. Participation, together with the BSU, in the federal project on government’s resolution of the RF No. 218 became an interesting experience and has led to the emergence of the first Russian certified nanocomposite, DemLight as well as the creation of two small innovative enterprises, NANOMAT and Keramos-BSU.

We also actively cooperate with leading scientific centres, such as the Federal State Institution Central Research Institute of Dental and Maxillofacial Surgery, Dmitry Mendeleev University of Chemical Technology of Russia, Moscow State University of Medicine and Dentistry, Samara State University, I.M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University and Tula State Medical Academy. By 2020, the employees of VladMiVa have among them received four PhD degrees as well as a doctoral thesis.

Furthermore, at the Department of Medical and Technical Systems at BSU, the nominal audience of VladMiVa was opened and five scholarships were awarded to the best students. Our dental centre is also a clinical base for these students. We want to realise one more idea, which is to further educate our young employees.

What about your employees today? How do you solve their social problems? Today, our companies employ a total of 400 people of different professions. Of course, like any other company, we experience a shortage of skilled employees, such as technologists, but this does not diminish the quality of our work. We value each of our employees. Even in the most difficult times of crisis, we do not delay the payment of wages. We also never refuse payments on sick leave or on paid leave. We have developed a corporate program of material assistance to employees who are in difficult socioeconomic situations.
All our employees also receive dental care on preferential terms. We have also built a new plant with a work environment that meets all the modern requirements of labour protection.

For 25 years, we have formed corporate traditions, such as joint holidays and excursions where the families of our employees participate and we can enjoy children’s performances and competitions.

We try to create a comfortable environment for all our people. We have built a chapel, planted flowers and always aim to provide good production and living conditions. We respect our veterans. We also love our city Belgorod and participate in its development.

VladMIVa products have a high quality. Can they keep up with, or even replace, the imported goods?

In 2011, our production received a Certificate of Compliance with the requirements of International Standards (ISO 13485:2003). Later, we obtained the right to label our products with the mark of European conformity (CE), which means compliance with EU standards. In 2014, JSC «VLADMIVA» became one of the first 25 enterprises that have the right to label their products as “Russian nanotechnological products”, which is a confirmation of the high quality of our products.

Out of our three hundred products, more than 190 are in demand on the foreign market. In Russia, we have to overcome the phenomenon of “Westernism” in dentistry and persuade consumers through systematic participation in exhibitions, conferences and seminars that “Made in Russia” means quality.

We are always pleased to offer to Russian dentists a large selection of dental materials, including prophylactic, restorative or treating materials, as well as materials for paediatric dentistry, biomaterials for the regeneration of bone tissue and various tools, of excellent quality, at a reasonable price.

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