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# manufacturing

BEST PRACTICES FOR INDUSTRY LEADERS

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# BETTER BY DESIGN

AFTER 10 YEARS IN THE U.S. MARKET, WOUND CARE PRODUCT MANUFACTURER EUROMED IS A LEADER. **BY BROOKE KNUDSON**

**Penetrating the U.S. medical device market** might not be easy, but EuroMed President Jarl Jensen is up for the challenge. The company is backed by expertise in skin-adhesive and wound-healing technology.

The company focuses solely on hydrocolloid healthcare products, and manufactures wound care dressings, ostomy skin barriers and skin fixation devices for the professional medical market, as well as products for the consumer market for minor abrasions, blisters, burns and cuts.

Hydrocolloids are naturally occurring, water-absorbing particles that can be made from natural substances such as cellulose, guar, pectin and gelatin.

Euromed's products are sold to medical device marketers and distributors worldwide on a contract, private-label or co-marketing basis.

## NEW BEGINNINGS

Founded in Denmark in 1991 by Ole Jensen, Jarl's father, EuroMed holds more than 50 product patents. In 1997, the company expanded into the United States. Jarl Jensen joined the business early on in his professional career and in 2004 was promoted to president.

Today, roughly 80 percent of the company's business is generated in the European market, although Jensen is optimistic that U.S. market demand will grow.

In September 2007, the company opened a new manufacturing facility, moving its U.S. headquarters from Northvale, N.J., to Orangeburg, N.Y. The 38,000-square-foot facility will allow the company to expand produc-



EUROMED OFFERS WOUND CARE DRESSINGS, OSTOMY SKIN BARRIERS AND SKIN FIXATION DEVICES FOR THE MEDICAL MARKET.

tion of its wound care, ostomy barrier and incontinence products. EuroMed is an ISO13485:2003, 9001:2000 and FDA registered facility.

The company is now a part of the Rockland Empire State Development Program, an investment area in the county that reimburses local tax jurisdictions for the taxes Euromed would normally pay if located outside of the county and state.

Thanks to the program, EuroMed

says it will save substantially on property taxes.

Jensen had been searching for property for the new plant and says he felt Rockland's business-centric economy was the perfect fit. In addition to being able to operate almost tax free, the company was also granted other financial incentives by Rockland County Economic Development Agency for bringing new business and employment opportu- >>



PRODUCT INNOVATION PLAYED A BIG ROLE IN EUROMED'S HISTORY, AND THE COMPANY WILL FURTHER EMPHASIZE R&D.

» nities to the area. "We're only operating out of one facility, and that is a huge advantage for us," Jensen asserts.

"Sales, marketing, research and manufacturing are all under one roof, so the people responsible for creativity, problem solving and understanding of what needs to be done are readily available to address the issues," he continues.

#### TRULY CUSTOMIZED

EuroMed says it has unique patented processes, technology, machinery and equipment in place to ensure that its customers receive a high-quality product. Although it offers several standard hydrocolloid wound dressing shapes, styles and configurations, the company can also manufacture custom designed products.

"We are a business-to-business

company," Jensen explains. "The big OEMs are our customers and they demand perfection. Anyone who has done business with companies whose business is their brand, knows what they value. Our success comes from allowing customers to make good margins and by being a highly efficient manufacturer of a value-added product."

A typical hydrocolloid product starts with a compound adhesive mixture made in batches of 500 kilograms. Those batches are transferred to the clean room where the adhesive is heated and shaped into the dressing and then laminated on a polyurethane film. From there, product is packaged and sterilized. The manufacturing process is highly automated, and the company invests heavily in equipment such as laminators, packers, extruders and mixers.

EuroMed works in conjunction with sister company Jentec Inc. USA, which designs and builds EuroMed's production equipment. Ole Jensen developed Jentec in 1986 specifically to develop equipment and processes for the medical device industry.

Every two years, Jensen says it

## HEALING OASIS >

**Hydrocolloid dressings are one of the most advanced wound products on the market today because of their fast-healing capabilities.** "The main things hydrocolloids do is they seal and heal," says Dr. Laura Bolton, an industry expert in wound care technology. Hydrocolloid particles work by converting into a gel-like substance when they come in contact with wound fluid.

"[Hydrocolloids] have the capability of sealing in fluid under the dressing and over the wound so that the wound stays moist and allows healing cells to survive," Bolton explains. "By allowing the healing cells to thrive, the wound heals about twice as fast than with traditional gauze dressing, with less pain because free nerve endings that are responsible for pain signals are in a fluid environment similar to their normal environment." Bolton adds that since hydrocolloid bandages create an impervious outer layer, they prevent bacteria and viruses from entering the wound and causing infection.

"They really perform well on chronic wounds like pressure ulcers

and leg ulcers because they can help to manage the exudate that is often present in these wounds, which results in longer wear times," Bolton notes. "They're also used on acute wounds like surgical incisions, donor sites, burns, and some traumatic wounds.

Both chronic and acute wounds experience reduced infection rates, less frequent dressing changes and less pain when managed with hydrocolloid dressings compared to traditional gauze."

Bolton's career in wound care began in 1974 when she worked as a senior scientist for Johnson & Johnson. She eventually moved on to a position as global director of scientific affairs at ConvaTec, where she earned a reputation as a pioneer in the development of hydrocolloid dressings. Today, Bolton runs the scientific consulting firm, BoltonSci. On the market since the late 1970s, Bolton says the product has since evolved. New generations of the product have improved the adhesive strength, cohesiveness and flexibility of the dressings to improve performance and user satisfaction.

upgrades its production line with new machinery.

Additionally, Jensen says, "Our customers are requesting faster lead times, so we are looking to address this challenge in a number of ways.

"We will start with a review of our process and our people. We will review each position from the line supervisors to the supply chain managers to identify areas in need of improvement and to determine how best to train and sharpen job skills to upgrade overall performance. We will critically assess our forecasting accuracy in order to fine tune our production scheduling and inventory management and we will strategically lengthen production runs on key products to enhance our overall efficiency, long term cash flow and profitability."

**INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS**

Product innovation plays a big role in EuroMed's history and Jensen says the company will further emphasize research and development.

"We try to innovate in every area," Jensen says. "We mix our own adhesives that are skin-friendly and stay on in tough conditions." Jensen says the company is developing a line of adhesives with antimicrobial properties to meet the growing challenges of protecting against nosocomial infections prevalent in health care facilities and the presence of organisms such as Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) in the community.

In late 2007, EuroMed was recognized by *Medical Device & Diagnostic Industry Magazine* with a Medical Design Excellence Award in the gen-

eral hospital devices and therapeutic products category for its new SureSkin I.V. hydrocolloid dressing.

Designed to protect intravenous and central catheter insertion sites, the SureSkin I.V. dressing uses a thin, yet strong transparent adhesive, which allows the caregiver to see the insertion site without the need for removal.

EuroMed seeks feedback from end-users to determine how they can improve its products. "Our goal was to create a design that was not only highly-functional, but also easy to apply," Jensen explains. "Innovation is critical and we are planning a continuous improvement and ongoing expansion into wound care. I think we can go a long way forward. We have the products and the technology to advance and grow in the future." **mt**



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