

A winning partnership

Sanner develops and manufactures a wide range of packaging, with particular emphasis on the pharmaceutical and medical technology sectors. The company's core competence lies in plastic injection moulding and the manufacture of closures with integrated desiccants. The company has three factories located in Germany, Hungary and China that operate within high standards and offer its customers standardised, certified quality, clean room production and high levels of service.

The company's close cooperation with Sumitomo (SHI) Demag has been the topic of discussion with International Plastics News for Asia (IRNA) with Ralf Tiemann, Vice President Asia of Sanner Pharmaceutical & Medical Packaging Materials (Kunshan) Co., Ltd.



Sanner's closures with integrated desiccant revolutionised the packaging of effervescent tablets.

IRNA: What do you understand by "Made in Germany"?

Mr. Tiemann: For us, it means that every Sanner factory, regardless of location, never compromises on quality and service. Our products are all of uniformly high quality and the technical standards we apply are the same everywhere in the world, so our customers know our products are always identical, regardless of where they are made.

IRNA: In what way does Demag help you to achieve this "Made in Germany" standard?

Every Sanner factory, regardless of location, never compromises on quality and service.

—Mr. Ralf Tiemann,
Vice President for Asia, Sanner Pharmaceutical & Medical Packaging Materials (Kunshan) Co., Ltd.

Mr. Tiemann: Sumitomo (SHI) Demag specialises in injection moulding machines for polymer processing. It has a global development and production network, with four plants in Japan, Germany and China. Demag helps us because the company is guided by the same principles. The machines that are made in China allow us to produce exactly the same quality products in Kunshan (Shanghai) as the ones we manufacture in Bensheim or Budapest. Top-quality service is also important for us, as it allows us to continue production without any downtime.

IRNA: Which countries are you currently manufacturing in, and why did you choose these locations in particular?

Mr. Tiemann: Our headquarters are in Bensheim, Germany, and this has traditionally been where we've done the bulk of our manufacturing. It's also where our product development and innovation management divisions are located. Our factory in Asia is important, as we recognised back in 2000 that this was going to be an enormous growth market, while Hungary is the mainstay of our Eastern European operations.

We've been manufacturing in China since 2000. There are international standards (ISO) for clean room production and we have applied these standards in China. We also have to comply with certain





Officials of Sanner and Demag Plastics Machinery (Ningbo)



Demag machines at Sanner factory in Bensheim, Germany.

additional guidelines from the local SFDA authorities. We made no compromises when we were setting up the clean rooms and if we couldn't find the right quality components locally we imported them.

IRNA: Are you likely to expand your manufacturing into other important markets?

Mr. Tiemann: At the moment we're in the process of upgrading our facilities in Germany and China. In Germany the focus is on improving energy efficiency, while in China we are looking to double our production capacity. Both of these projects should be completed in 2013 and we're already working on more ways of expanding and consolidating our position as market leaders in Asia once they're finished.

IRNA: Who are your customers and how do you support them with product development?

Mr. Tiemann: Our customers are pharmaceutical companies and those in the healthcare and diagnostics fields. We have a wide range of products to satisfy our customers' demands for packaging with integrated desiccants, but we also have R&D departments at each of our facilities staffed by technicians, engineers and designers, who work with the customer to develop individual solutions up to the point

where they are ready to be manufactured.

IRNA: What sophisticated technical solutions do you offer your customers?

Mr. Tiemann: We are market leaders in closures with integrated desiccants and have a unique level of expertise in this area. We apply this knowledge and technical skills to the needs of the market and as a result we always have new packaging solutions to offer our customers. For example, our 360 desiccant capsule came about because our customers were looking to combine higher levels of patient safety with improved product safety, while our new flip-top closure for effervescent tablets was developed with the needs of older people in mind.

We have extended and enhanced our product range in the company's core areas of test strip packaging, effervescent tablet packaging and pharmaceutical/OTC packaging. We now have an extensive range of products in all three segments, from entry-level solutions to premium packaging that is individually tailored to suit each customer's needs. We intend to continue developing and expanding our range in the years to come.

IRNA: Why did you decide to use Demag machines?

Mr. Tiemann: Demag offers customised

and standardised systems for the automated handling of moulded parts, technical solutions for special applications in process engineering, tailor-made service concepts and various forms of financing for investments in injection moulding machines – which Sanner has been successfully utilising in its operations.

There are several reasons why we chose Demag's machines. Firstly, because they are very cost-effective, but also because of their worldwide availability and Demag's quick reaction times. The staff at all our production facilities are trained on the machinery by Demag, who are also responsible for the maintenance and servicing of the machines since 2003. This means we can manufacture to the same high standards in all our factories, so to "Made in Germany" quality levels.

IRNA: Which series of machines did you buy?

Mr. Tiemann: We installed different machines from Sumitomo (SHI) Demag in our various facilities depending on the end product. One of the machines we use in Germany, for example, is the high-speed hybrid El-Exis, while in Hungary we use full-electric IntElect machines. For our manufacturing in China we use a mixture of Sumitomo (SHI) Demag machines from Germany and Systec C series machines made by Sumitomo (SHI) Demag in China.

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