



How world player Dentsply Implants became Factory of the Future

03 August 2017, 00:00

Pascal Pollet

Continental, Dentsply Implants, Newtec and Provan are the first factories of the future in this country. For a number of years now these technology companies have been investing in state-of-the-art production technology, digitisation, social innovation and ecology and are now among the top manufacturers in this area. There is no doubt that they deserved to be presented with the Factory of the Future award on 3 February this year. One by one, we now put these remarkable companies under the spotlight.

Following an assessment process, four companies have now achieved the status of 'Factory of the Future'. The last of these four that we're presenting to you is Dentsply Implants, a merger of two renowned Belgian players, Materialise Dental and ES Healthcare. The company belongs to the absolute top in the market for dental implants and has over one hundred employees.

The main objective of the company is to ensure reliable and sustainable implant care tailored to each patient. In addition to dental implants, it also offers a range of digital products. Most of the products are developed and manufactured in Belgium, at the production site in Hasselt. To this end, Dentsply Implants makes use of modern production techniques, such as 3D printing and CAD/CAM milling.

Optimum 3D-production process

Innovation is a key driver for the success of the company, both in the product range and in the processes. 15 years ago, Dentsply Implants was already a pioneer in 3D printing with plastic. By investing in and building up knowhow around 3D printing technology, Dentsply Implants succeeded in drastically pushing back the margins of error in production and in reducing material costs by 40 percent: the waste percentage dropped from 10 percent to 3 percent and 'first time right' rose from 60 percent to 90 percent. Production now runs far more efficiently and the overall turnaround time was able to be halved.

This evolution not only provides internal benefits for efficiency, but also ensures that customers can count on faster delivery times. Thus in recent years, Dentsply has managed to reduce the delivery time for surgical components from a week to a couple of days for certain products and for the prosthetics product line, from ten days for certain products, to 3 to 5 working days.

Digital monitoring

As a result of the digital follow-up of the products, Dentsply Implants is able to serve its customers not only faster but also to keep them better informed about the production phase of the products ordered and where they are. That way, the dental lab or the implantologist can perfectly plan the rest of the process with their patient.

Investing on three levels

Over the next three years, Dentsply will be investing more than 5 million euros in Belgium, including in 3D printers for metal products, in the associated know-how and in its personnel. In order to be able to work with the latest technologies, workers must continuously receive further training and additional education. This results in a win-win for both the company and for the employees.

Within the scope of [Made Different](#), both Sirris and Agoria are currently providing support for another 140 companies in their transformation towards becoming Factories of the Future. These companies are currently undergoing one or more actual transformations. The companies operate in a wide range of sectors: technology, foodstuffs, textiles, paper, pharmaceuticals, transport, chemicals, leather, furniture, medical, construction, etc. In total they encompass both SMEs (66%) and large companies (34%) spread over the Flemish provinces. Sirris and Agoria have estimated that by 2018 approximately 50 companies will have acquired 'Factory of the Future' status. During this time they additionally want to reach and assist 500 companies in the realization of one or more transformations (while the 50 Factories of the Future excel in all seven transformations).

Authors



Pascal Pollet