

Working towards a better quality of life

The Italian company Rizzoli Ortopedia S.p.A. has been synonymous with excellence in orthopaedic technology for 110 years. Set up in 1896 as a technical support to the orthopaedic institute carrying the same name, it has left its imprint upon the national and international history of orthopaedic technology. Due to its close links with the University of Bologna, with which it has cooperated since its beginning, Rizzoli Ortopedia boasts several patented orthopaedic aids and is well-known for its medical training courses.



“After having been a state institute for 100 years, we became a private company in 1996 and have since undergone massive restructuring,” says Antonietta Zaccarini, the head of business development & MRKT and a member of the board. “After a strenuous start, we have seen substantial growth in the last two years. Since 2003, we have invested massively in research and development, and these investments are now paying off.”



Headquartered in Budrio near Bologna, Rizzoli Ortopedia has set the technological benchmark in the orthopaedic and rehabilitation sector



Rizzoli Ortopedia offers innovative technical solutions that grant the freedom of natural movement together with a steady postural balance

Working towards a better quality of life, Rizzoli Ortopedia is a historical leader in custom-made prostheses. It sells its products under its own label ‘Rizzoli su misura’ to highlight the customer-orientation of its services and solutions. The stabilising boot, an instrument serving to make paraplegic and tetraplegic patients stand straight, was one of its first patents. In cooperation with a German supplier, Rizzoli Ortopedia has very recently developed two products that grant newly amputated patients freedom of movement within a period of just three weeks. “This is a major improvement compared to the six months the healing process

would usually take,” says the head of business development. “Our temporary prostheses are an absolute novelty and a real breakthrough.” Thanks to its long-standing know-how, Rizzoli Ortopedia is a preferred partner to health professionals, hospitals and patients alike. It has proved its versatility and innovation in numerous instances and has particularly benefited from the synergies that have sprung from its continuing education offers. “The Italian Ministry of Health requires doctors, therapists and assistant medical technicians to undergo a certain number of training hours per year. We offer corresponding

training sessions as far as the professional ethics of treating people with disabilities are concerned," explains Ms. Zaccarini. "This offer enables us to not only highlight the excellence of our products, but it also helps us to receive valuable feedback from practitioners."

The company is the Italian leader in orthopaedic and rehabilitation products and among the top seven companies of its kind worldwide. Production is centred at its headquarters in Budrio. For the last three years, Rizzoli Ortopedia has also provided its products to private labels; orthopaedic stores throughout Italy thus sell Rizzoli products under their own brand.

"We are the only one in Italy with over 100 service centres located in hospitals, clinics, rehabilitation and

health centres," adds Ms. Zaccarini. "While there are many smaller companies in the field of orthopaedic products, very few have our size and the breadth of our portfolio." Looking to further develop its product range, the company has recently acquired Sant Orsola, a specialist in sanitary items, and is continuing to explore the takeover of related companies in Italy.

With a staff of 148, Rizzoli Ortopedia reported sales of 20 million EUR in 2005. "Due to our acquisition of Sant Orsola and an expanded portfolio, we expect turnover to rise to 26 million EUR in 2006," says Ms. Zaccarini. 60% of sales are due to tailor-made prostheses and related aids; 25% results from aids for the disabled, and 15% are due to standard sanitary items.

The Italian company has only very recently made a foray into foreign markets and wooed customers in Spain and France. While its export share currently amounts to 2%, Rizzoli Ortopedia is keen on expanding its activities through foreign sales partners or partnerships.

"We are interested in providing private labels as well as selling products under our own label in cooperation with distributors abroad," adds the head of business development. "As for custom-made products, we have already established first contacts with possible partners in Austria, Syria, Egypt and Iraq. Russia, too, is a promising market." Aiming to generate further growth, Rizzoli Ortopedia is also keen on entering new market segments, while simultaneously maintaining its forte in training seminars. ■



The Italian company is particularly well-known for its lower limb prostheses and stabilising boots

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