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For the automation portfolio, we see a strong and growing demand for application-related solutions : Dr Peter Fruhstorfer

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Eva van Pelt, Co-CEO & Chief Commercial Officer along with Dr Peter Fruhstorfer, Co-CEO & Chief BusinessOfficer, Eppendorf Group, Germany spoke to Ankit Kankar ,BioSpectrum Asia sharing more details about this achievement.

In the fiscal year 2020, Eppendorf AG succeeded in posting record revenue of €967.2 million as compared to the revenue of the prior year at €803.9 million. It is a significant year-on-year increase of 20.3 per cent. 2020 came across as, by far, the most successful fiscal year for the Eppendorf Group. The company was able to make positive progress in all market regions and across all product groups.

What were the key highlights for the FY 2020 at Eppendorf in terms of growth & investment?

Eva van Pelt: Our fiscal year 2020 was extraordinary in every respect. For one thing, the spread of the coronavirus demanded a great deal from all the employees at Eppendorf. Yet 2020 was also by far the best financial year in the company's history. The Eppendorf Group recorded consolidated revenue of €967 million (prior year: €804 million). In comparison with the same period last year, this corresponds to an increase of 20.3 per cent.

Peter Fruhstorfer: As the year before had already been a good one, we have taken the opportunity to make a major investment. In July 2020, Eppendorf acquired the centrifuge business of Koki Holdings Co., Ltd. from Japan. The company's products are known and highly valued in the industry under the brand name Himac, which is why they will continue to be listed under this name in the Eppendorf portfolio. The acquisition opens up long-term growth opportunities for Eppendorf's centrifuge business and will strengthen our leading market position in the field of separation technologies.

Eva van Pelt: Additionally, we further developed our Going-to-Market strategy, which we aligned more closely to the regional customer needs. We also made progress on our digitalizsation projects, implementing a global customer relationship management (CRM) system and relaunching the eShop on m, for example.

Which products/services were more in demand, and why?

Peter Fruhstorfer: A lot of Eppendorf's products were needed for the development of coronavirus vaccines or for coronavirus testing, for example. Eppendorf directly or indirectly has been supplying consumables to diagnostic laboratories all over the world involved in detecting coronavirus infections and performing antigen testing. For this purpose, our customers are using Eppendorf pipettes and pipetting robots as well as the associated laboratory consumables. The Eppendorf ultra-low-temperature freezers that were also highly requested are specifically designed for a very low-temperature low temperature range. Their interiors are colder than the coldest point on earth. Following the outbreak of the pandemic at the beginning of the year, demand for pipette tips rose abruptly and remained at an extremely high level throughout the 2020 financial year. So, Corona boosted those products groups greatly. But in total there was a positive revenue trend across all product groups.

How did the APAC region perform? What were the key achievements?

Eva van Pelt: The Asia/Pacific/Africa region performed remarkably well, with a growth of over 43 per cent compared to the prior-year period. This was the strongest rise in revenue in that region's history. Despite China's drastic lockdown during the first few months after the outbreak of the pandemic, Eppendorf was able to achieve growth of 7.5 per cent in this important market region. We thus succeeded in turning around the sharp drop in revenue of the first quarter and posting a rise in revenue instead.

This was only possible because of the strong ties between our sales and service teams and Eppendorf's customers. Employees in all market regions demonstrated great flexibility and commitment in their use of digital channels and formats. When on-site visits were not an option, we used new digital communication channels and dialoguedialog formats all over the world to stay in touch with customers. Even under the most difficult conditions, our customers always received the best possible support. That was a big key achievement.

How is Eppendorf currently accelerating vaccine development and & supply to combat the pandemic?

Peter Fruhstorfer: We expand production capacities to live up to the consistently high demand for consumables, freezers, pipette roboters and other general lab equipment. With the new production halls at our site in Oldenburg in Germany, for example, we are able to further increase our extensive availability of high-quality consumables by 30 per cent.

Eva van Pelt: Furthermore, we launched an ongoing strategic project to optimise optimizse the supply chain in 2020. The goal of this transformation project is to align the global logistics at Eppendorf, with the requirements of the future. Despite the many challenges posed by the pandemic, Eppendorf was able to keep customers in all regions and countries supplied in 2020, proving that we have set off on the right course with our supply chain project. We will continue to improve and adapt, so that we can guarantee a continuous supply for our customers in the future.

What are major plans for the FY 2021? Are you planning to launch new products or open new facilities?

Peter Fruhstorfer: Yes, of course. The first products launch in 2021 has have been the VisioNize pipette manager as well as its first digitally connected centrifuge, the model Eppendorf Centrifuge 5910 Ri. With the introduction of the Centrifuge 5910 Ri, Eppendorf offers scientists enhanced functions to simplify and accelerate centrifugation steps. This new model can be operated via the intuitive VisioNize Touch Interface and is networked in the laboratory thanks to VisioNize Lab Suite. These two products show the evolution of Eppendorf from a production company to a solution provider.

Eva van Pelt: With regards to new sites: Up until now we moved into new and very modern additional office spaces in Tokyo, Japan, in Moscow, Russia, and in Vienna, Austria. In the course of the year offices in Milan, Italy, and in Warsaw, Poland, as well as a new calibration technology centre center in Limerick, Ireland, will follow. Eppendorf will grow continuously and be located and located close closely to our customers in the next couple of years.

How do you foresee the growth of lab automation in the life sciences sector- both industry and & academia in the coming years? What are the challenges?

Peter Fruhstorfer: Automation is one of the growth engines of Eppendorf. Especially for the automation portfolio, we see a strong and growing demand for application-related solutions for the industry as well as academia. A challenge related to automation enabling devices is that these products are highly specific specified in their set-up and need highly specialiszed colleagues to build and develop them. Both cater caters to the fact that building such an automated system is not possible overnight.

Would R&D digitalizsation soon become a reality for science globally?

Eva van Pelt: Sure! The future is digital. Therefore, not only our product innovations focus on digitaliszation, but also our services for customers worldwide will offer more digital solutions and touchpoints. Be it in the context of remote service offerings, digital training programs or our eShops to facilitate order processes. We match our customers' demand for more digitaliszation.

Peter Fruhstorfer: I absolutely agree and would like to add that add, that Eppendorf drives and strengthens the development of smart lab management software solutions. We developed VisioNize?Lab Suite for laboratory management, which enhances enhance productivity for all routine tasks in the laboratory.?It is our goal to bring digitaliszation to our customers and to support them while improving their processes. We help to enable them to focus focusing on their everyday work and accelerating their research.

Ankit Kankar