

Industry Focus: Natec Medical Ltd



Natec Medical Ltd is a cutting edge medical device manufacturing company in Mauritius and supplies catheters globally through strategic partnerships. Mr Miroslav Secerov, the VP for Sales & Marketing, gladly accepted to tell us more about this successful organisation in an exclusive interview given to EM.

1. Kindly introduce yourself?

My name is Miroslav Secerov. I have been working in this area for almost 25 years, starting my marketing and sales career in Europe. I have an MBA combined with a medical background. Three years ago, I took on a professional challenge by coming to Mauritius and working with Natec medical Ltd. I am so far extremely happy. Currently, I am Vice-President for Marketing and Sales; I am also involved in business development and my goal is to develop the medical device sector in Mauritius.



2. Tell us more about the company?

Established in Mauritius in 2000, Natec Medical Ltd. (Natec) is basically an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) and we are positioned as a global outsourcing partner in Percutaneous Interventional Devices (PIDs), precisely catheter based therapies which is an alternative to open surgery. Such therapies allow doctors to repair coronary and peripheral arteries and organs, such as the brain, the kidneys, bladder without having to cut the body open. Our aim in Natec is to develop the medical device sector doing vertical and horizontal integration. By doing so, we are developing a medical device cluster in Mauritius.

3. Are Percutaneous Interventional Devices a novelty in the health and care industry?

No, Percutaneous Interventional Devices have existed since the 19th century. The first catheters or infusions were in fact interventional devices. Once a device penetrates the skin, it is referred to as percutaneous. Percutaneous devices were around when the first syringes existed. This industry is as a matter of fact quite large as devices include needles, stethoscopes, catheters, clips, sizzles,

coils, and more. These devices usually enter the body for two purposes, i.e. either diagnosis or repair. But the novelty lies in the fact that Natec Medical Ltd is the first of its kind here in Mauritius.

4. What types of products does the company manufacture?

We position ourselves mainly in interventional cardiology. This discipline focuses on the repair of the coronary arteries, whereas interventional radiology focuses on the repair of the other arteries. Our catheters are designed and manufactured to serve the benefits of the first discipline.



5. What are the main markets for your products?

Europe and India are the main markets for our products. Being an OEM, we offer Business-to-Business services to other internationally renowned medical device companies which reach the market directly. Imagine you have an iPhone. Actually, Foxconn manufactures the iPhone. Foxconn is present worldwide, yet it is visible nowhere. Similarly our products are around the world but we are not present as a NATEC brand.

6. The preference of customers often varies across markets, as each market has its own specificities. How does your company meet the requirements of various markets?

Actually, preference or variation across markets for us is linked to the regulatory system. For instance, we have to comply to DCGI rules for the Indian market, whereas if you go the US market you have to comply to FDA rules, or CE marking rules for Europe and ANVISA for Brazil. Even if the product remains the same we have to comply with these rules as our partners are around the world. We forge strategic partnerships and develop products to suit the needs of our clients.

7. Tell us about new product development in your organization?

A product is a function and a design. Our aim as a manufacturer is to adapt the design and the function to customer specification. Take a table, for example, it can be created in various colours, bigger with taller legs or even smaller but it is defined by the function. We design and manufacture catheters which have a defined function to treat coronary or peripheral arteries and

these are adapted according to client specification.

There are 190 people working for the organization and out of these, 15 people are fully engaged in product development. We are not into R&D in the sense that we are not engaged in developing innovative products but in developing high performance and more efficient products. We are looking at process innovation and not product disruptive innovation.

8. We are talking about a highly technical and quite innovative industry. Could you tell us about patent protection with regard to new products?

To be successful in today's marketplace and globally, a medical device company needs a superior product and patent protection for its medical device and related methods of use.

Patents are critical. A granted patent is a legal right that excludes others from practicing, manufacturing, and selling the technology claimed in the patent (the medical device and/or method of use of the medical device). To obtain such patent protection, a medical device company must submit a separate patent application for each country (or region, in the case of the European patent application) in which it wishes to protect its investment and invention. The time, money, and effort required to obtain U.S. and international patents are important considerations, because the process to obtain a patent requires a significant investment after filing the application.

Without patent protection, the costly product development process for medical devices may easily be copied by competitors.

9. Are there any new products being devised or new product lines launched?

We have another company manufacturing endo-luminous devices. These catheters can treat different lumens and their indications can cover gastroenterological urology and gynecology specialties.



10. What are the main challenges faced by your organization?

The main issue for us was the decision to set up the organisation in Mauritius. Because it is an island, we were concerned about logistics. Another critical factor was lean management which is pivotal to our business model. In fact, we had to set-up a complete manufacturing line starting from the design stage up to sterilization after the product has been created. Now we have reached a fully integrated manufacturing process.

Today we rely on various pillars at Natec Medical Ltd, for instance, sterilisation, microbiology, product design, regulatory and marketing. These split into different organizations across the world and we are now synergising all these functions to build a network or a sort of ecosystem for Natec to develop further. The next step would be able to connect with our value chain partners in such a way that we can anticipate and fulfill their needs.

11. Then Why Mauritius?

Well, there are a lot of very good reasons. First of all Mauritius enjoys political, economic and social stability, a crisp taxation system and an appropriate regulatory framework has been established to protect investment.

Another interesting factor was the people. The workforce is bilingual, fluent in English and French with a high literacy rate. Since the very beginning, we have not been a national company working internationally but an international organization working in Mauritius.

Mauritius also happens to be in a very interesting time zone as our partners are in China, Europe and India.

12. What are the reasons behind the success of Natec Medical Ltd?

People! A team is simply not a group of people working together but a group of people who trust each other. A product is the outcome of a good organizational structure and to have a good product you need good people. If you put the right people in the right place, doing the right thing, then you will have exceptional results.

Now, doing a good product is fairly easy, but creating the structure which would allow you to make all your products excellent, this is the real challenge.

13. Where do you see your organization in the next 7-10 years?

I have a dream. To be present in any interventional catheter based therapy field. I would like Natec Medical Ltd. to design tools that would allow us to repair a brain, a heart, a valve, or even regenerate the muscle with stem cells, not only for big medical consortiums, but also for start-ups. We would need to create incubators for the medical device cluster. We have to be able to get global patents in Mauritius, securing funds from Mauritian investors. We would then make a huge leap forward and become like Hong Kong or Singapore.

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