Tell me a little about Forestadent’s history.

**Humphrey:** Our history goes back to Germany in 1907 when Bernhard Förster founded Bernhard Förster GmbH, which manufactured spring clasps and necklace locks for the jewelry industry. In 1934, the company expanded its horizons and ventured into watch movements under the brand name Foresta. In 1974 Förster’s grandsons, Rolf and Gerhard, reinvented the company and took an exciting turn into the orthodontic industry under the brand name Forestadent. We’ve been growing ever since. We branched into the U.S. market in 1995.

What is Forestadent’s business philosophy?

**Humphrey:** Our philosophy is simple. We take a very customer-oriented approach to our business. First and foremost, we focus on the development of relationships with our customers—not short-term profits—so our customers don’t feel like just another account number.

Additionally, we focus on the precision manufacturing and quality of our products, not price. Our customers place a great deal of trust in us as a supplier, to deliver a high quality product, and we therefore have a Quality Policy in place that is the driving force behind our business. One of our tag lines is “Precision is Our Business.” We believe the products available should be manufactured with the same care and precision that every orthodontist takes at each and every treatment appointment. Our products are the perfect mix of quality, ingenuity and value.

Speaking of products, can you explain how a product is developed from concept to delivery?

**Humphrey:** We have a team of well-respected doctors that take a very active role in the development of new products. Once a concept is created, Research and Development works through all of the design features and tweaks the product until they develop the most functional and beneficial design. One of the manufacturing techniques that we specialize in is the Metal Injection Molding (MIM) Technique. This technique is used in several of our bracket lines, and allows for a more stable composition of our products because it allows one-piece construction.

What are some of your better known products? And the ones you are most proud of?

**Humphrey:** Forestadent is probably best known for its expansion devices. When we launched into the orthodontic industry in 1974, we had very specialized experience engineering and manufacturing the screws and movement for watch parts. So we took that experience and transferred it to orthodontic expansion devices, and those were the first products that were produced under the name Forestadent. As the company evolved, we have produced some very innovative expansion products. Our most recent is the Snap Lock Expander. Many doctors report that treatment in their patients is prolonged because of the improper activation of their screw appliances. The unique feature with this expansion screw is that it snaps into place on every activation so the patient knows it has been activated properly.

Our most popular product is the QuicKlear; we are proud of the success of this bracket. There are several design features that set it apart from the others. The base is patented, and it is a variation of the base that is on the BioQuick bracket. The most common feedback we receive from doctors about the use of ceramic brackets is bond failure, difficulty during debond and damage to the enamel. The innovative design of this base...
Precision

From right: Paul Humphrey, president; Doug Hurford, corporate controller; Sandy McPherson, office manager; and Karri Denny, marketing coordinator. Photograph by John Fedele.
addresses each of these issues. It has an inverse hook-style base and a specially formulated ceramic mixture that aids in the bond strength helping to prevent bracket failure. Secondly, the Paul's debonding tool, specifically designed for use with this bracket, allows the bracket to be easily debonded without splintering or damage to the enamel.

The company really has grown in the last two years. When did it decide to break into the U.S. market? What's happened since?

**Humphrey:** Forestadent knew that for expansive growth worldwide it needed a presence in the U.S. market as the economy (orthodontic care) was growing at a tremendous rate. Forestadent USA was established in St. Louis, Missouri in 1995. Since the U.S. company opened its doors, we have seen a steady increase in sales, and every year have increased the sales force and corporate support team to support this growth.

In the past few years, we have really stepped up our marketing programs to build awareness in the U.S. This has helped us tremendously get our name out there as a player in the U.S. market. In turn, more doctors are trying our product, and once they try it, they experience the difference first-hand, and return for the next order.

What does the global landscape for orthodontics look like, from your perspective? Where are the current and potential hot beds?

**Humphrey:** The integration of technology into patient treatment and care is on the rise. It is up to us as producers and manufacturers to stay on the cutting edge with new, innovative products that can work with the ever-changing orthodontic environment.

Aesthetic treatment is also on the rise, as well as past treatment modalities such as lingual orthodontics. With the advent of complex materials being discovered and developed, we have been able to integrate these materials in some of our cosmetic product lines.

Another area for potential growth in the industry is adult treatment. More adults are looking at ways to improve their appearance; this rise in adult treatment has changed the landscape of orthodontics opening new avenues for suppliers and manufacturers.

Tell me about the team at Forestadent.

**Humphrey:** Our employees are the faces of Forestadent, and we want all of them to feel a part of the family. We have flexible work hours, which enables everyone to work around their individual family schedules. In addition, employees are recognized for their dedicated service, either with trips, bonus or special gifts. These little incentives keep our employees loyal. Our customers reap the benefits of our loyal employees, because they have a business partner that sticks around for a long time, and they can count on someone who is truly interested in helping them grow their business.

Part of your team works in customer service, which the company prides itself on. When an orthodontist calls Forestadent, what can he/she expect?

**Humphrey:** Even though we have experienced tremendous growth, we maintain that “family-owned” feeling with our customers. When a customer calls our office, they speak to an actual person when they place an order. Our phones are answered by customer service representatives. We have a very friendly Customer Support Team, and they go out of their way to make sure that all questions are answered, and all needs are met. In addition, we have also implemented a more intense training program in order to provide our customers with a more knowledgeable staff, so we can address their needs, questions and concerns more efficiently.

Outside of the office, our corporate sales representatives (CSR) provide a very important dimension of personal customer service. They are out every day meeting with doctors and their staff, labs and universities, providing product demonstrations, classes and personalized support on every call they make. The CSRs take this personalized service very seriously, and go out of their way to make sure each and every

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**Testimonial:**

“I switched to using Forestadent’s products when it first began bringing its products to the St. Louis area. The products were similar to what I was using at the time, and what I have found is it has a high commitment to developing leading-edge technology with innovations to assist me in delivering great orthodontic treatment. The products are not just similar, but superior to others I have used. And equally (and perhaps more) important is the high degree of personalized service that we receive from the company. It gives us the confidence that it will deliver what it commits to.” – Dr. Steve Hough, St. Louis, Missouri

Left: Chelsea LeGay enthusiastically taking an order from a valued customer. Photograph by John Fedele
Right: QuicKlear ceramic self-ligating bracket
customer is happy. This level of dedication is very much appreciated by our current customers.

How do you obtain feedback from your orthodontist customers? What do you do with that information?

Humphrey: We value the input we receive from our customers. We have a direct link on our Web site for any of our customers to send us suggestions, feedback, etc. More importantly, during a consultation with one of our corporate sales representatives, he or she takes a full evaluation of the customer needs, and any feedback generated from the consultation is used to start developing new products, new marketing programs, etc. Our customer's feedback is beneficial for us, but it is equally important for our customers because it helps us tailor our business and services to directly meet our customers' needs.

Forestadent is very dedicated to education and philanthropy. How does the company express these?

Humphrey: Forestadent is a proud sponsor of the AAOF, and has been for many years. In addition to the monetary contributions to the AAOF, we sponsor lectures and workshops across the globe, in a variety of languages, covering the hot topics within the orthodontic industry. As we continue to foster global partnerships in business, we notice more customers benefiting from cross-cultural education as well, and strongly encourage participation in the worldwide activities.

We recently saw the need for a scholarship program, so we launched one. It is no secret that the costs of education are on the rise. Education costs, combined with the 10+ years of education required to obtain a specialized degree in orthodontics, there is a huge financial burden on those in pursuit. So in May 2010 we launched the Forestadent USA scholarship program. We offered three $5,000 scholarships. This program was very successful for the first year out. We received a great deal of positive feedback from the residents, and dedicated support from the universities. Our program for the 2011/2012 year just came to a close, and again, just as we did last year, we had a wonderful and very deserving group of applicants. The awards will be given in October, so stay tuned to see the winners of this year's program!

What is the Forestadent Symposium?

Humphrey: The Forestadent Symposium is the big annual meeting held every year. Each year it takes place in a different place around the world. In the past it has been held in Spain, Athens, Paris, and this year will be held in Lake Garda, Italy. This year's focus is entirely on lingual treatment. Lingual treatment has really taken off in the international sector, so it should be very well attended. We have a great line up of speakers who have been practicing lingual for a number of years. It should be a very informational meeting. We encourage U.S. doctors to attend.

What can we expect to see from Forestadent in the future?

Humphrey: In terms of products, Forestadent has some very innovative and intuitive individuals working tirelessly in the Research and Development department to bring doctors the products that they need to provide world-class treatment to their patients. The orthodontic community has new and exciting ideas and products in store as we go forward.

And lastly, what is Forestadent's single greatest advantage?

Humphrey: The single greatest advantage of Forestadent is the fact that this company has been around for more than 100 years, and has been able to evolve and adapt becoming more successful on each turn. This family-owned company has stayed true to the core values and philosophy that the original owner and visionary Bernhard Förster implemented. This company is thriving, and will continue to deliver quality and service.

To learn more about Forestadent USA, visit www.forestadent.com, or call 314-878-5985 or 800-721-4940.