

Wöhlk forms a capital alliance with a Japanese partner

North German contact lens manufacturer joins forces with SEED Contact Lens

Schönkirchen, May 14th, 2019: Wöhlk Contactlinsen GmbH has formed a capital alliance with a Japanese contact lens manufacturer, SEED Co., Ltd., which acquired 40 percent stake in Wöhlk. With this international collaboration, the North German contact lens producer strengthens its position in the international market and, at the same time, expands its portfolio: while Wöhlk is an expert in individual contact lenses and a German market leader in this sector, SEED Contact Lens focuses on the production of daily and 2-week lenses.

The investment is a strategic decision: “With this, we are deepening our cooperative partnership, which has already existed for many years,” explains Lothar Haase, Managing Director of Wöhlk Contactlinsen GmbH. Silicone hydrogel contact lenses and highly gas-permeable materials for Ortho-K lenses have thus been jointly developed. The companies have also already been jointly supplying Asian customers with RGP (rigid gas permeable) material. Daily lenses produced by SEED are also marketed across Europe by Wöhlk in the form of the ZEISS Contact Day 1.

“With this investment, we are putting Wöhlk in a strong position for the future,” explains Lothar Haase. The Managing Director and owner of Wöhlk Contactlinsen GmbH joined the company in 1996. At the time, it was a 100 percent subsidiary of the technology company ZEISS. In 2000, Wöhlk was then sold to the American group of companies Bausch & Lomb. Lothar Haase took over the company in 2005 and developed it into its current form. He also decided that only international reinforcement with regard to current developments could provide the desired stability for the future. “It is a business responsibility to be far-sighted in your planning here.”

In Japan, SEED is also pleased with the decision. “We have been working together with Wöhlk Contactlinsen GmbH for a long time. We maintain a trusting relationship with them and are impressed by their corporate philosophy as well as the logistics, manufacturing and material development: from research and development to manufacturing up to sales and distribution – Wöhlk has everything in-house and thus works very efficiently. For us, this investment is an opportunity to further establish a presence in the European market,” says Mashiro Urakabe, President and CEO of SEED Co., Ltd.

About Wöhlk Contactlinsen GmbH

With the invention of contact lenses, Heinrich Wöhlk not only established modern contact optics, he also laid the foundation, in 1947, for Wöhlk Contactlinsen GmbH. Today, the medium-sized company is a market leader throughout Germany in the field of individual contact lenses and a pioneer in the development of innovative materials, manufacturing processes and products. Research, development and production takes place in Schönkirchen near Kiel, at the company headquarters which has a research laboratory, development department and contact lens studio. Under the leadership of owner and Managing Director Lothar Haase, a total of 140 highly qualified and specialised professionals work towards a shared vision here: superior contact lenses for the best possible vision quality and the greatest possible wearing comfort. www.woehlk.com

About SEED Co., Ltd.

SEED is a TSE listed comprehensive contact lens manufacturer in Japan with 61 years history. SEED produces and delivers a wide range of contact lens products including RGP lenses, soft conventional lenses and a number of disposable contact lenses. Its production capacity of daily disposable contact lens is currently 44million pieces per month in its factory located in Japan. Its sales is approximately EUR 235 million in FY 2018. SEED is keen to expanding internationally. Currently SEED has direct subsidiaries and/or Rep offices in: Shanghai, China; Taipei City, Taiwan; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Hanoi, Vietnam; Singapore; Kiel in Germany; and Louvain-la-Neuve in Belgium. In the last year, SEED acquired 100% shares of Contact Lens Precision Laboratories, Ltd. (CLPL), which is the long-established contact lens company in the UK and is widely known for the brand names of “UltraVision” and “Kerasoft” all over the world. In addition, SEED exports its products to 28 countries and regions. www.seed.co.jp/en/

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