

Specialty distributors multiply Worldwide Innovation and Technologies’ sales efforts

Interventional radiologists face a tough choice. They wear lead aprons and vests, and use table skirts, to protect themselves from radiation that “scatters” throughout the procedure room. But the fact is, irradiated patients themselves emit radiation. As a result, clinicians’ faces, hands, arms and legs can be exposed to radiation in harmful doses. In fact, by April or May, many interventional clinicians often have been exposed to the maximum annual allowable amount of radiation. Here’s their choice: They can either 1) quit working for the rest of the year or 2) remove the badge that tells the radiation safety officer how much radiation they have been exposed to. Most choose Option No. 2.

William Orrison, M.D., an interventional neuroradiologist in Las Vegas, Nev., decided there had to be a better way to deal with radiation scatter. So he developed the RADPAD®, a disposable “blanket” or “shield” which, when draped over the patient, blocks the emission of radiation during procedures anywhere from 50 percent to 95 percent. With the RADPAD, hospitals could comply with ALARA, an industry term that stands for radiation levels “as low as reasonably achievable.” He received 510(k) marketing clearance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in 1998.

Then he began the tough task of building a market for his product. “Tough” because, after all, innovative technologies – no matter how beneficial – don’t sell themselves. He was joined by John Cadwalader, a Kansas City native who, after a 16-year career in the pharmaceutical industry, was ready for a new challenge. “We started selling RADPAD out of the house,” recalls Cadwalader, who today is the CEO of Worldwide Innovations and Technologies Inc. (www.radpad.com). Cadwalader, his wife (who is an integral part of the business) and a colleague began traveling to medical meetings to show the product. “Doctors liked it and started buying it,” he says.

But growth was slow. After all, there are only so many doctors that three people can personally visit with. The young company was ready to try something new. At that point, a contract manufacturer put Cadwalader in touch with a specialty distributor.

“The considerations weren’t that difficult,” recalls Cadwalader, recounting the thought process that led him to take on specialty distributors. “Yes, they would

have to be paid for their work. But they could service the customers onsite much better than we could. We couldn't go all over the country. They were in the hospitals a lot more than us. It just made sense." Especially for a product such as the RADPAD which, while relatively simple, is not intuitive. "You can't just sell it and walk away," he says. Doctors must be trained on how to use it properly.

Since those first days selling products out of the house, Worldwide has developed more than 100 RADPAD products, not only to protect interventional radiologists, cardiologists and electrophysiologists from radiation exposure, but patients as well.

The company now has specialty distributors around the country, and in 2007, introduced the products into the European marketplace. "We couldn't have gotten as far as we have without specialty distributors," says Cadwalader. The company shares tradeshow booths and costs with its distributors. "We see it as a partnership," he says. "As long as there's a strong trust factor and everyone is committed to growing the business, we work well together and the business grows. Over time, the trust and commitment factors have been the key issues."

The experience of Worldwide Innovations and Technologies Inc. demonstrates one of IMDA's recurring messages to manufacturers: If you make commodity products, seek out a general-line distributor. But if you make an innovative technology that calls for an educated, technical, and even missionary sell, consult a specialty distributor. Consult IMDA.

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