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The IDS Experience

The International Dental Show (IDS), held every other year in Cologne, Germany, takes the U.S. version of a dental meeting to the next level. For the 2025 meeting, 135,000 visitors from 156 countries represented a 15 percent increase in the number of attendees, even in the face of geopolitical and economic uncertainties. More than 2,000 companies from over 60 countries presented the latest in dental medicine and dental technology products, appealing to visitors willing to invest. It was clear that the worldwide industry was thrilled to be together to discuss, learn, and together take the next step forward into a more connected dental world. In the IDS final report, Dominik Kruchen, President of the Guild Association of German Dental Technicians (VDZI), shared that IDS 2025 was a complete success.



The next IDS
the 42nd International
Dental Show is
scheduled to take
place from
March 16-20, 2027.

He said, "This year's IDS continues to be a leading trade fair for many dental technician laboratories. The laboratories examine new technologies, materials, and workflows here and search for game changers, who supply prostheses. And in doing so they fall back on their entrepreneurial vision and professional experience. Well-founded investment decisions are taken with a view to the implementation in the laboratory. The high number of trainees in the exhibition halls is an expression for the fact that our upcoming generation is getting ready for its role in the future prostheses supply chain."

Many representatives from U.S. dental laboratory technology manufacturers had the opportunity to attend IDS 2025. A typical attendee at a meeting of this magnitude may pre-select specific vendors to visit considering the 180,000 square meters of hallways to walk. An exhibitor, however, remains stationed and ready to interact with a vast variety of people from all over the world, eager and prepared to answer their questions. This provides a unique perspective of their meeting experience.



Jamie Stover, CDT is the Sr. Manager of Application Strategy and Integration, Oral Health at Carbon, Inc. As a repeat attendee of IDS, he was already familiar with the magnitude of both the size and number of attendees and looked forward to being back in Cologne. Throughout his many discussions with visitors at Carbon's booth and exploring the halls, his take on this year's meeting was that there were not many groundbreaking materials being shown but a lot of companies were focused on providing automated hardware and software solutions for labs and clinicians.

Stover said, "I always ask people I meet and talk with at IDS, 'What is the most exciting thing you've seen so far?' or 'Have you seen any new materials, hardware or software that has really impressed you?' The consensus was that the material trends we have seen the past few years are continuing, namely the growth of resins for 3D printed applications, but nothing super disruptive was unveiled."



Stover was impressed with the growth of solutions for photogrammetry and noted the substantial number of companies facilitating guided implant overdenture workflow with hardware and software.

"Another key takeaway was the continued growth of chairside 3D printing and how many companies are now offering printers and materials for both labs and clinicians, which seems to me like challenging waters to navigate," said Stover. "I felt fortunate that at Carbon, not offering a chairside printer, we can fully focus on supporting labs. From what I saw and got my hands on at IDS, in my opinion the materials for chairside printing of permanent, fixed restorations are still not as esthetic and still lack the work of fracture strength of materials such as zirconia or lithium disilicate. Another notable takeaway from IDS 2025 for me was the growing number of SLM 3D printers on the market and the varying price points. A few years ago, the printer options were more limited, and the price

point was fairly high across the board. Although SLM printers are still expensive compared to most DLP printers, I was surprised to see more variation in price points. Labs I spoke with about metal printing unanimously expressed interest in the technology, even if they aren't ready to adopt it for internal production right now."

On the global scale, Stover was surprised by the variance between countries and regions when discussing embracing and adopting digital production processes and workflows.

He said, "Labs in some countries are being very proactive about implementing machines and materials for moving from analog to digital, making it a key part of their strategic vision, while others seem resistant and even protective of utilizing analog methods and materials. Some of this is because of the way the health-care systems function in each country, how that affects reimbursement and the way labs charge for products. Most labs I spoke with, however, regardless of which country they are in, reported that an aging technician workforce, high labor costs, and a shortage of

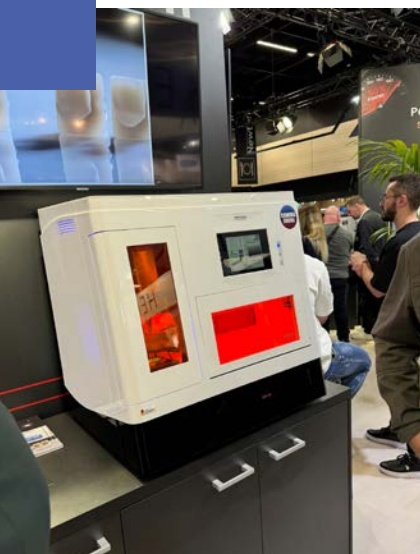


experienced technicians continue to be driving factors in the adoption of digital production, materials, and automation. For dental companies this is shifting the 'dental arms race' from materials to automated hardware and software solutions that reduce the amount of technician labor that's required."

Mark Palmer is the Vice President & General Manager at Zahn Dental. Over the course of the two IDS meetings he has attended, he has witnessed the show's evolution. From the expansive range of products to the array of networking and knowledge-sharing events, there has never been a shortage of activities. The energy at the 2025 conference stayed high from his landing in Germany to the time he left.

"Fresh off LMT Lab Day Chicago, the engagement remained strong at IDS," said Palmer. "Both events focused on enhanced workflows, technology, and advancements. With over 135,000 participants, IDS had an upbeat feel, fostering a dynamic atmosphere for business innovation and professional development. It provided an opportunity for us to connect with customers from around the world, allowing us to hear pain points and offer expert product knowledge and advice."

Palmer observed the conference's focus on many key areas vital to the global dental profession. These included the promotion of young talent and strategies to address staffing shortages. Digitalization – spanning equipment and new products to





technology/software – and the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) was also prevalent. Additionally, discussions centered on ensuring the full integration of oral health into broader medicine and addressing disparities in access to both oral health care and preventive service.

“There are incredible advancements in AI and technology that have the ability to revolutionize this industry,” he said. “From automated workflow production to robots helping with manual processes, there is so much potential. The industry continues to innovate and move closer to fully automated workflows that help technicians optimize production. For example, the XTCERA AI Auto-Production Line was featured on-site at IDS. This line offers a touchless zirconia workflow by using AI combined with digital intelligence for automated material handling, production, and more. Extensive additive and subtractive materials and equipment were also showcased, including the imes-icore CORiTEC Mythos. This is a manufacturing process that combines additive and subtractive technologies into one system. And last but not least, the AutoFinish dental finishing machines remained a focal point at IDS. The user-friendly machines enable dental laboratories to smooth, buff, and polish a variety of restorations from zirconia crowns to printed dentures and nightguards with enhanced consistency and accuracy, all with minimal to no technician involvement.”

Palmer was interested to see how suppliers incorporate solutions that covered both 3D printing and milling workflows into one piece of equipment. Additionally, he saw solutions for one-piece jetted digital dentures, for example, Myerson and Trusana1’s 3D print system showed that new materials will open workflow opportunities. Another innovation that stood out was the Shining 3D Aoralscan Elite Wireless, an intraoral scanner that integrates Intraoral Photogrammetry (IPG) technology, making it a 2-in-1 system that combines high-precision 3D scanning for traditional dental work with advanced photogrammetry for accurate implant positioning.

Henry Schein’s leadership also had the opportunity to share insights concerning where the dental industry has been during their “Conversations with Henry Schein: Exploring the Present and Future of Oral Health” roundtable discussions. In addition, Stanley M. Bergman, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Henry Schein, Inc., and Andrea Albertini, Chief Executive Officer, Global Distribution and Technology, hosted “A Look Back, A Look Forward: A Decade of Digital Dentistry” and the Company’s “Digital Workflow: 3-Click Dentistry” presentation focused on advanced digital workflow solutions. Team Schein also showcased a selection of dental solutions to support dental and lab teams.



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The Personal Experience

Elvis Dahl and Barbara Warner, CDT, AAACD, fearless leaders of the industry's leading podcast, *Voices from the Bench*, quickly jumped on the opportunity to attend IDS 2025. Back in early 2024, they received an invitation to attend exocad's global CAD/CAM conference "Insights 2024" held in Palma de Mallorca, Spain. At the Chicago 2024 meeting, Dahl and Warner met with Christine McClymont, Global Head of Marketing and Communications, to prepare for the May meeting. The idea for exocad to bring them to IDS 2025 was broached and by the end of 2024, was locked down.

"Attending IDS has been a goal of mine, and Elvis's as well, for many years," said Warner. "I never thought it would happen, so I am so grateful for the chance to attend. I wouldn't have passed this opportunity down for any amount of money in the world."

Stationed at the exocad booth under the *Voices from the Bench* banner, Dahl and Warner interviewed dental laboratory technicians from around the world. As these amazing interviews are released, listeners have the chance to share in their experience and learn more unique international perspectives and challenges.

"We talked to people from all over the world: Iraq, Iran, Poland, Egypt, Scotland, Ireland, Canada and more," said Dahl. "We would have never gotten the chance to meet all of these people without IDS."

In addition to the huge diversity of people to meet, the sheer size of IDS 2025 was a lot to take in.

"I got lost every day going to and from the booth," Warner said. "Whatever you may imagine, multiply it by 100. It was exhausting, overwhelming, and wonderfully unbelievable."

Dahl agreed.

"When you look at the map and see there are six buildings, you don't realize five of them have three stories," he said. "It's more massive than anyone can describe. Also, the amount of money vendors spend on their booths is ridiculous with the craziest marketing. I'd like to send a big shoutout to the vendor representatives. They do the setup, work all day, and then socialize and network late into the night. As this is a five-day event, it's a lot."

IDS has long been considered the precipice of new technological advancements. Fueled with the brainpower from global experts around the world, this year was no different.

Dahl said, "My mind was blown with the bite finder. They have taken that data and can now print models with unique condyles printed for that patient. The printed model has the actual patient jaw movement record; that is crazy insane."



Warner was impressed with exocad's *TruSmile Video*.

She said, "This is going to be a real game changer for the whole team, including the patient. It really was exciting to see all of the buzz around *TruSmile Video* at IDS."

After attending a meeting of this magnitude, it takes time to decompress and evaluate the experience. With the flood of information, innovative concepts, and new people, attendees walk away feeling tired yet privileged. Even though the intent of this meeting is to highlight the latest dental laboratory technology advancements, both Dahl and Warner said the most significant imprint was in fact emotional.

"I walked away reminded of how great our industry is," said Dahl. "It's the same feeling as every show, but it was even better. There wasn't anyone I met who wasn't willing to sit down and start talking. We had some conversations almost an hour long. Dental laboratory technology has such great people, and it certainly doesn't stop in the U.S."

Warner said, "For me, I had some emotionally moving conversations that really got inside of me and made me think about work-life balance. What we do is stressful and overwhelming with a lot of pressure. To hear others from around the world talking about it makes it more ok for everyone to say out loud that we are stressed or burnt out. You must find the happy medium of reaching deadlines and having a life to enjoy. I also really enjoyed sharing this experience with Elvis. We get along well and doing live shows is super enjoyable. We love talking to people and I can't wait to launch the interviews." **JDT**

