



SWISS

SUPPLY IN TIMES OF

TROUBLE

The coronavirus crisis has undoubtedly turned the world on its head, but for Hänseler AG, a leading Swiss manufacturer and supplier to the pharmaceutical sector, cool and calm efficiency is the order of the day as it maintains a flow of disinfectants, OTC products and raw materials for pharmacies and hospitals. While enjoying a boom in demand for natural health products, the company is also looking to bolster its international standing with herbal OTC products in women's health, tinctures and plant based extracts. Andy Probert reports.

Hänseler AG is proudly asserting its industry-setting credentials across the Swiss pharmaceutical landscape, having successfully switched its business to keep pace with the public's need for disinfectants in times of Covid-19.

As a regular supplier of pharmaceutical raw materials to pharmacies, hospitals and drug stores across Switzerland, Hänseler has been exceptionally busy sourcing alcohol, ethanol and glycerine for production of disinfectants.

Meeting Swiss demand

"We have sourced from within Switzerland, Europe and even outside the European Union to keep pace with demand," detailed Michael Jäger-Rhomberg, Executive Board Member and Head of Marketing & Sales.

The company's innovative approach has also seen its teams working with breweries to buy alcohol by-products from their manu-

facturing processes to utilise in Hänseler's own production line.

As manufacturing of Hänseler's own products and those of industrial partners tailed off during the crisis, so Hänseler ramped up production of its disinfectants – tripling from 3 to 9 tonnes per day at peak. The company then limited supplies to ensure a greater number and spread of pharmacies across Switzerland could quickly source the products.

"We successfully devised flexible solutions to ensure a continuous supply of disinfectants to pharmacies in different regions, so preventing just a few pharmacies purchasing all our stock," asserted Mr Jäger-Rhomberg.

Hänseler has been rooted in Appenzeller canton, near Lake Constance, in East Switzerland, since its founding in 1964 by Edwin Hänseler. The company was initially built on the sale and production of pharmaceutical raw materials – mainly plant-based

products – to naturopaths (health practitioners who apply natural therapies).

Today, Hänseler has three pillars upon which its business rests: in the trade and processing of pharmaceutical raw materials; contract manufacturing of pharmaceutical fluid and semi fluid products; and the manufacture and sale of its own over the counter (OTC) drugs, food supplements, medical devices and cosmetics.

Market leader

Since 2004, the company has been majority-owned by Steinegg Foundation. Located in Herisau, Hänseler's 135-strong workforce is geared to providing products, service and advice to most of Switzerland's 1,700 pharmacies and 600 drug stores.

As a market leader in pharmaceutical raw materials in Switzerland – accounting for more than half of its business – Hänseler



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Expansion plans

The company’s export side is still very young, but there are signs the company is embarking on a mission to widen its brand awareness, particularly through its women’s health and medical product portfolio.

While just a small part of its business is done internationally, Hänseler successfully took over an Asian business, entering that regional market with Planox® (lemon verbena) in 2015, and expanding this further over the years.

In 2020, the company acquired a natural scar treatment cream called Kelosoft, which is prevalent outside Switzerland in Canada, Greece, Austria and Lebanon. The product was already made by Hänseler, but an opportunity arose to acquire the brand and incorporate it as its own, which the company positively acted upon. The plant, which Kelosoft is derived from, is cultivated and harvested close to Lake Constance,

and the oil is harvested and converted by Hänseler to a cream,

“We want to strengthen further our natural-based products, such as tinctures, extracts which are then sold to produce drugs, cosmetic products and food supplements,” affirmed Mr Jäger-Rhomberg.

2020 saw the launch of a range of Hänseler Forte products (Curcuma, Boswellia), a new plant-based women’s health product Achillea for menstruation problems, and 2021 will see the launch in Norway of plant-based urinary tract infection product Cysticina, which is also already sold in Austria with more countries to come.

“Hänseler is also looking to bolster its international standing with herbal OTC products in women’s health, tinctures and plant based extracts,” revealed Mr Jäger-Rhomberg without, understandably giving anything away.

While Hänseler recently won a national metal recycling award, environment regula-

tions in Switzerland and the European Union are becoming more complex, he reflected, particularly with laws governing the likes of food supplements, drugs, cosmetics and raw materials and narcotic drugs.

He added: “We have enormously good relations with clients and suppliers thanks to, but not limited to, our GMP. Building trust and confidence is extremely important, and we maintain standards, validation and quality across our portfolio mix. This is backed up by our extensive know-how and expertise in regulatory and registration topics about a wide range of products, and the ability to deliver to customers across Switzerland.

Mr Jäger-Rhomberg concluded: “We are aware the market is changing fast, and we have to keep on track in various areas, such as special food supplements and OTC products. We are adapting to end-customers’ needs, and will continue to look for future business opportunities.”

offers more than 3,000 products. It is an intermediate supplier of anaesthetics, chemicals, herbs and tinctures to pharmacies, non-dispensing chemists, hospitals and industrial partners. Raw materials are sold ready to use OTC, or they can produce their own products to sell on.

It is also an exclusive distributor in the Swiss market of raw materials, drugs, food supplements and medical devices made by international partners, for example, manufacturers of drugs, vitamins, vitamin blends, essential and neutral oils.

Mr Jäger-Rhomberg said the company has a strong distribution network complemented by a fleet of vehicles which are temperature-controlled and is certified as having ‘good distribution practice’ (GDP).

The company also boasts the biggest Guaranteed Identity (GID) product range in Switzerland which offers convenience and service and peace of mind during cantonal pharmacist inspections, as well as saving time and reducing laboratory work when handling raw materials.

A big part of the company’s turnover is derived from its own-branded OTC products, such as herbal medicines, and these can usually take a long period of time before they are registered and ready to be officially sold publicly.

Brands range across products in women’s health, food supplements and medical products. This extensive portfolio includes bestsellers such as Alcacyl®, Original Bach®-Flowers/RESCUE®, Gly-Coramin®,

Hänseler D-Mannose, OLBAS®, Nieren-und Blasendragées S, as well as Hänseler Achillea and Hänseler Forte Curcuma.

All of these products are made from high-quality raw materials to tried and tested formulas in Swiss retail.

The third pillar is contract production and packaging - which afford good manufacturing practice (GMP) and GDP-certification. This includes manufacturing of different fluids and semi-fluid products for use in APIs in finished products for oils, tinctures, powder mixtures, ointments, gels and natural extracts.

Hänseler handles around 75,000 customer phone contacts per year, with 360 products despatched daily, while 2.6 million packages are produced annually.

