



PURPOSEFUL PACKAGING

INSPIRE INNOVATE INVEST INDULGE

FIVE YEARS AGO, ALDIN VELIC SAW AN OPPORTUNITY IN THE UNDERSERVED ASIA-PACIFIC REGION FOR OLIVER HEALTHCARE PACKAGING, WHERE HE IS NOW GENERAL MANAGER FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA. HE'S SEEN YEARLY DOUBLE-DIGIT GROWTH EVER SINCE.



WORDS JACOB GOLDBERG

Asia is home to two thirds of the world's population, yet the continent consumes only a small proportion of medical devices globally, with Europe and the United States consistently behind the majority of global demand.

This is where Oliver Healthcare Packaging saw a big opportunity five years ago, when the company entered the region to supply pouches, films, lids and other packaging solutions to medical device and pharmaceutical companies.

"We saw an underserved region in the Asia-Pacific that could benefit from our products and technical know-how," says Aldin Velic, Oliver's General Manager for Southeast Asia.

After a stint as Oliver's Director of Global Marketing, Aldin relocated from the US to Singapore in 2017 to establish the company's presence there. Since then, the company has enjoyed double-digit growth in the region every year.



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That success is driven by changing demographics across the region. While many countries in the Asia-Pacific still have young populations, incomes are rising and more people are seeking private health care. At the same time, there is an increase in government-funded programs and investments in establishing healthcare ecosystems.

"There's a tremendous amount of healthcare spending by governments, which is making health care more accessible to their populations," Aldin says. "They're going to have needs and as they age, they'll need orthopaedic implants, heart valve replacements and catheter stents."

An increasingly wealthy population also means a changing health profile, which will see increased demand for medical devices and therefore safe, innovative and waste-reducing packaging for those devices.

START-UP ECOSYSTEM

As the market matures, Oliver will be looking to work not only with multinationals entering the region but also local start-ups working on innovative new products. The idea is to create an ecosystem where the company can leverage its scientific and technical know-how to encourage the development of more products to suit local needs.

"They can introduce new devices to address the number of different ailments that people are going to be faced with, and do so in a way that's sustainable and really gets the market moving and addresses the needs of the consumer," Aldin says.



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Highly regulated industries like medical packaging prefer innovation to happen at the product level, rather than in the ingredients of the device. Most of Oliver's customers want time-tested materials that they know have worked well with previous devices. That's why Oliver encourages innovation in process, design and manufacturing.

"If you look at one of our coating lines, where we run thousands of linear metres each hour, ensuring that the material is within the agreed specifications can only be accomplished using some of the latest manufacturing technologies," he explains.

SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH INNOVATION

One key innovation that sets Oliver apart from its competitors is the coatings it uses on its products.

"As new sterilisation modalities that improve the sustainability metrics set by our customers come on board and reach broader adoption, we've found that many of our coatings continue to outperform our competitors," Aldin says. "In highly stringent markets where particulate and cleanliness are most critical, we've found that our Xhale coatings outperform competitors due to the manufacturing process we utilise."

The company's CleanCut cards provide a sterile, lightweight and convenient way to hold devices like catheters and medical tubing. "These are a great alternative to more expensive, traditionally used products and are very popular as minimally invasive procedures continue to grow," he says.



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Another differentiator for Oliver is the fact it's focused purely on one industry, while competitors often have other verticals in areas like food packaging. "Most of our customers come to us because we are what they consider a pure play healthcare packaging company," Aldin says.

On top of that, a commitment to promoting sustainability through innovation means many customers turn to Oliver to help meet their waste-reduction goals. "Where bio-contaminated materials cannot necessarily be recycled, we see design playing a crucial element in reducing waste overall," he says.

"Our goal is to be the go-to partner in developing and launching a new device for a broad spectrum of healthcare companies, while also providing in-region supply and support services that are unmatched."