Interview: Karl Sciberras – CEO, Tektraco, Malta



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Karl Sciberras, CEO of telecom projects, laboratory solutions and medical engineering specialist, Tektraco, discusses the company's operations in Malta and Libya and why it is the partner of choice for clinics and hospitals.

Can you give our international readers an introduction to Tektraco?

Tektraco is an engineering company established 28 years ago. We are a service provider specialized in three different fields: Telecommunications, Medical gas systems and Laboratory solutions. This is a rather unique company, one of the very few that is specialized in the field of medical gas installation. I would also like to highlight that the company's specialization in medical gas systems is an ongoing activity in this sector, and apart from Medical Gas installation projects we also ~~in~~ offer 24 hours stand- by service to hospitals, clinics and elderly homes. In Malta, we have executed practically all medical gas installation projects since 1990 and we pride ourselves in being a market leader in this specific niche. The company has a vast portfolio of projects executed both in Malta and overseas- Libya, Tanzania, Oman and Albania. As a result of its professional approach to business Tektraco is capable of designing, installing and commissioning complete medical gas systems to the necessary specifications- this is a holistic approach to any project of this nature. We also supply and install other products commonly used in the 'Patient environment' such as; Bed Head units and Nurse Call Systems, and others products found in 'Operating theatres' such as, Theatre Pendants and Modular Operating Theatres. In the healthcare sector, we offer these products and services to hospitals, clinics and elderly homes. Our installations are not limited

to Medical Gases only as we also provide installation of laboratory gases to the pharmaceutical sector as well as other labs that require such an installation.

Our second division – 'Laboratory solutions' supplies products to a wide clientele including the pharma and life sciences sector. We represent various international brands and thanks to their vast portfolio of products and services we cater for the requirements arising from different sectors within Malta and Libya, mainly; petrochemical, food and beverage, pharmaceutical and life sciences as well as the educational sector. Our vast product portfolio ranges from the general items used across any laboratory such as labware, lab chemicals and basic lab equipment to high end analytical equipment manufactured specifically for the sectors we specialize in. In addition, we also design, supply and install laboratory furniture for those clients that are setting up new laboratories.~~,~~ The involvement of this division in life sciences sector is growing year after year, and although presently ~~to~~ a great percentage of our sales comes from the sale of laboratory consumables, we are working on strengthening our product range to cater for specific equipment commonly used in this field and beyond.

You have been in the company since 2004 and you have taken over the position of CEO six months ago. What were the priorities you set when taking over the position?

There are different priorities we have set for ourselves in different divisions. Obviously, being a project-based company, we are primarily aiming to gain as many projects in the healthcare sector as possible. There are many upcoming pending projects in the near future; both from the private and public sector thus our main objective and focus is to remain the first choice when it comes to medical gas systems installation as well as the other products in our portfolio. Competition for certain products is fierce, therefore our main aim is to gain as much of the market share as possible in this specific niche.

Certainly, as we have always done in past 28 years, we always look at other areas outside our shores in order to grow, since the size of our market is limited. In fact over the past few years we have installed Medical Gas Systems in Oman, Tanzania, Libya and Albania. We have been working hard to establish ourselves in the Middle East, in particular in Oman on Medical Gas installations for the past 3 years. Unfortunately, although we finally did manage to penetrate the market, our local partner let us down as they did not keep to their commitment of training their staff to the required standards. As we firmly believe that this job requires trained local professionals maintaining the system regularly, we could not do this from afar thus we had to rethink our strategy.

Rather than taking on new physical projects, we decided to focus on offering our Services related more to the planning phase of a Hospital project rather than the actual installation phase. Just recently, nearly two years ago, we have established an extended service arm to Tektraco Medical called **MediGasConsult** which gathers experience and expertise we have in this field to provide medical planners and people involved in hospital projects with the best support. Our aim is to promote ourselves globally as we indeed have developed the capabilities to offer this service to any hospital project worldwide and we already see the interest from the third parties. Services are targeted towards not only new hospitals, but also the existing ones, and particularly in the countries where hospitals do not satisfy the level of required standards of quality. We can assist in helping hospitals with an audit and suggestions on what is necessary to be done to reach the required level of quality. In fact, we have already done this in Libya and Albania where we ensured the system doesn't fail the patient. Our trained staff, values and expertise we have gained over the last 28 years are certainly a beneficial factor that will be of help in growing the operations.

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Why are you the partner of choice of clinics and hospitals?

We like to be seen as the partner looking after their system. First and foremost, we provide the high- quality services that is expected from Hospitals as we follow the HTM 02-01 (British) and EN 7396 (European) standards when it comes to supply, installation as well as Maintenance procedures on all the Medical Gas System. Our clients can rely on us- they just have to plug in their oxygen or any other medical gas we provide with, while we take care of the rest. Indeed, we offer integral solutions and the 24 hours service. Our mentality reflects what we do; we provide vital services as it affects a human life, therefore, being available and accessible at all times is our core philosophy.

The global medical gas market size was valued at USD 7.5 billion in 2016 and is expected to witness a CAGR of 9.0% until 2024 due to increased demand. What are the key trends in demand in Malta?

The actual sale of any medical gas is not within our scope, however we can confidently say that locally we haven't experienced the exponential growth that has happened globally as this would have been reflected in a higher demand for medical gas installations which was not the case. Nevertheless, we must point out that presently there is a big demand for elderly homes due to an aging population. As the government does not possess enough resources and space to fit the elderly population, we are now seeing an increase in elderly homes projects, either private or

through private/public partnership schemes. These new elderly homes as well as the upcoming Hospital projects will then surely increase the demand for medical gases, thus in the very near future we should be matching the figures you have quoted.

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Looking at the future, where do you hope to take Tektraco under your leadership in the next three years?

In the healthcare sector I would like to consolidate the leadership in the medical gas area and we intend to do this by constantly working on improvements and keeping abreast with technology, ultimately providing the best possible service to our clients. Our goal is to keep on improving both the 'operational aspect mainly related to project work' and the 'maintenance aspect of our client's Medical Gas system'. In fact, currently we are improving our reporting system and digitalizing it to ensure that our clients have faster access to the information.

Our other priority for the next three years will be targeted towards putting a lot of energy into MediGasConsult (Tektraco Medical's services arm) as we believe our experience is valuable to those who are either in the early planning stages of a project or else require our expertise to evaluate an existing system that requires the necessary upgrade to the present Standards. Currently, we have the capabilities, we have the personnel, we have the resources to cope with any demand in this area, and now we have to work on increasing our clients' database.

The other aspect which we are constantly working on is, looking at new products which can complement our product portfolio. We are on the constant lookout as we feel it is important that we keep up with the latest technology. We are also regular visitors of 'Medica' the biggest Medical Exhibition in Europe which gives us the opportunity not only to meet with our suppliers but also to see the latest products on the market at first hand. Therefore my aim is that in three years' time we would have an even wider portfolio of products to offer to our clients within the Healthcare Sector.

The report on Malta will be read by more than 50,000 executives worldwide. What would you like them to think when they read about Tektraco and its extended arm MediGas Consult?

I would like them to think of us as the service provider of medical gas systems that can cater to the requirements of any company in Europe or wider due to high quality international standards that we follow. Being a small company is our great advantage, as we are flexible and price competitive ensuring to offer the top- quality service at affordable price. More importantly, I would like Tektraco

to be perceived as a company that enables its customers to sleep tight at night and takes away their worries as we are looking after them at all times.

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