

# Unique medtech components that improve lives

Medical device manufacturers worldwide rely on assemblies, springs, stamping and bending parts from RPK Medical

The Basque medical technology sector is one of the region's most dynamic manufacturing and export industries. Eduardo Melón Lagos is CEO of RPK Group, a global leader in the engineering and manufacture of high-precision complex components that are used in a variety of industries. As he explains, one of the reasons that companies in the region are so strong in this technology area is that, "the Basque Country has an important tradition in mechanical industries — we were founded in the steel, metal, mechanics and automotive sectors."

RPK Group has been a major contributor to that tradition since 1974 when it was established in Vitoria-Gasteiz, the Basque capital. "We've been specializing in wire forming, spring manufacturing and small stampings for industries for 50 years and we have a global presence. More than two decades ago we opened our first plant outside of Europe, which is in Mexico and is currently our second-largest manufacturing facility. In 2009, we opened a plant in India, followed by one in China in 2018," says Melón. "In the last 20 years, the group's most powerful presence has been in the automotive market. Over that period, however, we've been developing other markets, particularly the medical and electrical sectors in which we have a lot of experience and potential."

The group's RPK Medical division is dedicated to the design, engineering, development and manufacturing of diverse metal springs, stamping and bending components, plus spring assemblies that combine both metal and plastic parts. The division's global clients include original equipment manufacturers, contract manufacturers and medical device engineers, which utilize its components in applications such as disposable autoinjectors, pen injectors, staplers, inhalers, pump sprays, wearable devices, safety syringes, catheters, airway products, blood collectors, canulas and lancets.

RPK Medical stands out from other businesses in its sector for a number of reasons. One is its commitment to not just exceeding its clients' quality expectations, but to developing solutions that make the lives of patients and healthcare professionals better. A key illustration of this is its creation of complex springs, assemblies and power packs for disposable autoinjectors, which are often used directly by patients in the regular treatment of, for example, allergies or glucose imbalances. Thanks to RPK Medical's engineering expertise and cutting-edge technologies, autoinjectors that incorporate its components easily, comfortably, safely and reliably deliver precise volumes of medication, whatever the viscosity of the drug being administered.

Another of the group's competitive advantages is the fact that it has six state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities in Europe, North America and Asia, asserts Melón: "We always offer local-to-local manufacturing, producing the necessary parts for any region on that continent. In addition, we have a very long tradition of manufacturing with specialized cleanliness requirements in all our medical clean rooms."

## Tailor-made innovation

Perhaps the most unique thing about the group within its sector is its focus on research and innovation, much of which takes place at the RPK Technological Center in Vitoria-Gasteiz that opened in 2016. "This has led us to greatly increasing our catalog of products in recent years and to expanding our capabilities in different manufacturing processes, such as laser welding and plastic overinjection," he reveals. "In the technology center, we also provide comprehensive tailor-made support to clients, many of which do not have advanced knowledge about our type of parts and their technologies. We can help with initial simulations, design and all types



RPK Medical is meticulous in its manufacturing cleanliness standards

of engineering processes, through to the development of prototypes, packaging, product testing and the industrialization of processes. We not only design products, we design manufacturing systems that incorporate different technologies."

Continuing at the forefront of innovation is a core pillar of the RPK Strategic Plan 2023-2026, which is guiding the group through the next stage of its development. Another is sustainability, Melón says: "Environmental sustainability is part of our company culture. We've had ISO 14001 certification for many years and have substantially reduced the waste we generate. Most of the energy we consume in Vitoria-Gasteiz and other plants is generated from photovoltaic panels and we're working toward 100% renewable energy. Today, the most carbon-intensive part of our product concerns the raw materials we buy. That's something we're working on with our suppliers, so that they also evolve their technologies."

For the CEO, an equally important aspect of sustainability is ensuring the ongoing economic strength of a group that achieved a 33% rise in its sales over the last seven years: "The post-COVID years have been complex for the industry in general due to, for instance, supply crises and energy price surges. RPK Group has come out of that situation stronger than before and in a good position, but we have to keep working on this. We've grown a lot in recent years and we want to continue growing, but in a sustainable way."

RPK Medical lies at the heart of the group's sustainable expansion plans. "We have sufficient knowledge, capacity and experience to grow in the medical sector, which is where we see the greatest opportunities. We're targeting the sector in Europe from our three plants in Spain and in North America from our Mexico plant — those are the markets that interest us the most, as there is exponential growth in the type of applications that we are expert in," states Melón. "If you look at the demographic curves and increase in pathologies in European countries and the US, you see rising demand for more types of treatment in which autoinjectors and inhalers are needed,



Eduardo Melón Lagos  
CEO, RPK Group

ones with increasingly specialized characteristics that put the focus on the user. This type of treatment needs to be comfortable and non-aggressive, and we are extremely skilled in those areas."

The group is now dedicating significant additional resources to build on its success in this field through its new RPK Medical brand. The division's primary target is North America, which represents 47% of the total global market and where RPK Medical already has numerous long-term clients. "We have an intense promotional plan in place, which includes participating in all types of general medical fairs and others specialized in certain applications, especially autoinjectors and pen injectors. We also have our own commercial team for the North American medical sector that is working in the region now and we have an important task ahead of us in terms of making ourselves better known," says Melón. "What I can absolutely assure all future customers is that they will be satisfied with our products. RPK has a 50-year history of always providing excellent services to its clients and of developing strong, long-lasting partnerships with them."

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