

Ramping up diagnostic solutions for covid testing kits

Unither Pharmaceuticals, the Blow-Fill-Seal (BFS) worldwide leader, provides diagnostic companies with capacity solutions and innovative technologies for their testing kits. The use of Blow-Fill-Seal technology, enables RNase-free single doses, that can also be sterile if necessary. With more than 10 million unit-doses manufactured each month for Covid testing kits, the French CDMO answers to current challenges based on its sterile unit doses development and manufacturing expertise. Through its 5 BFS plants on three continents (in France, the United States and China) and an R&D center, Unither is able to manage the full development of a diluent or reagent from formulation to production. And they continue to ramp up production, according Eric Chesnel, Sales & Commercial Director at Unither Pharmaceuticals. "With BFS we can radically accelerate vaccine production."

Unither Pharmaceuticals was founded in 1993, in Amiens, France, to develop, design, produce and market affordable and easy-to-use products to improve the lives of patients. It is with this vision that the CDMO has specialized in the manufacture of galenic forms for pharmaceutical and generic drug companies, and has become the world leader in Blow-Fill-Seal (BFS) technology, which is used in eye drops, physiological sera and anti-asthma

drugs in sterile unit doses. In 2005, Unither wished to pursue its development by acquiring Créapharm, a French manufacturer of effervescent tablets with a development center for third parties. In 2009, Unither took over the Colomiers (France) site from Sanofi in order to develop the to develop liquid stick-pack technology, thereby expanding the list of products that can be sold in single-dose. From 2010 onwards, the company has

become international with successively taking over pharmaceutical plants in the United States, Brazil and China.

"The increasing number of projects and the task of transforming them into products and then into successes, pose increasingly difficult challenges in an environment that is demanding in terms of its regulatory, quality and competitive landscapes. As a result, we continue to grow our expertise," says Mr. Chesnel. "To meet global demand, we can now be found on all continents. The next challenge is to address all technical and capacity requirements in our geographic markets and therapeutic areas, such as ophthalmology, asthma and rhinology and diagnostics."

The BFS activity, which is today the group's spearhead, has been developed over the years, and has won visibility for Unither Pharmaceuticals. By the end of

The infographic features a background image of a healthcare professional in a white coat and mask, holding a syringe labeled 'COVID-19'. In the foreground, two clear glass Blow-Fill-Seal vials are shown. The Unither Pharmaceuticals logo is in the top left. Five callout boxes with white text on orange backgrounds point to specific features of the vials: 'Resealable' points to the top of a vial, 'Filling from 0.22 to 5 mL' points to the liquid inside, 'Formats: 1 mL, 3 mL, 5 mL Blow-Fill-Seal vials' points to the vial's body, 'Global industrial capacity' points to the bottom of a vial, and 'Strong expertise in covid tests' points to the vial's neck.

2008, Unither had sold more than one billion doses in one year. “It took us 15 years to become the world leader in volume. Leadership in this activity has also made us more visible to our future clients,” Mr. Chesnel comments. “Our leadership in this area is the result of our credibility and our commitment to those who have faith in us. This commitment has borne fruit — we crossed the symbolic barrier of two billion doses in 2015. As for the threshold of three billion doses in one year, we reached that in 2020 and it should take us only four years to reach the one billion additional doses mark — i.e. four billion doses per annum. The acceleration phenomenon is undeniable. Over the years, we have focused on innovation and have had the courage to take calculated risks. As a result, our development projects have flourished.”



Following an initial request from a customer, Unither Pharmaceuticals’ BFS technology has proven to be perfectly suited and adept at meeting the needs of testing against Covid-19. With more than 10 million single doses manufactured each month, Unither has set up a unit that can be used to meet the specific needs of Covid and other diagnostic tests. “Our different locations enable us to be responsive and offer large capacities,” Mr. Chesnel points out.

The company’s industrial capacities continue to grow in each of its markets, through constant and sustained investment in new high-speed BFS lines, as well as through new acquisitions. Last year, Unither initiated the acquisition of the Nanjing Ruinian Best Pharmaceutical Company Limited’s plant in China. In 2021, Unither will be installing six new

lines — three lines in Coutances (France), two in Rochester (USA), one in Gannat (France).

Unither Pharmaceuticals has 7 manufacturing sites and 1 R&D center located in France, the United States, China and Brazil. These sites generated a revenue of €330 million in 2020 with a headcount exceeding 1.600 employees.



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