



FEATURED MEMBER

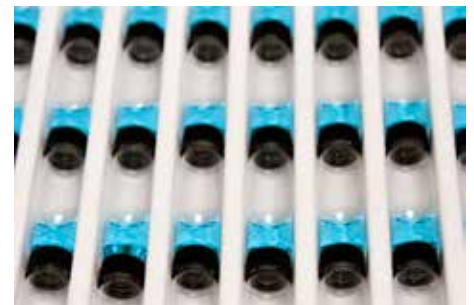
Founded in 1982, Artel manufactures systems and provides services which ensure data integrity in laboratory liquid handling and testing processes. Products include instruments and test kits for calibration and volume verification, training and software for laboratory quality assurance, and systems validation services. Headquartered in Westbrook, the company has 65 employees. Artel has been a MITC Member since 1998 and was recognized as the MITC Innovator of the Year in 2011.

Increased Need for Global Standardization Strengthens Company's Position as Worldwide Leader

Standardization is more important than ever with the increasing globalization and commercialization in the life sciences sector. When a pharmaceutical company develops a new drug in the U.S. that will be manufactured and tested around the world, they need technology to ensure measurements of components down to a billionth of a liter will be comparable from Boston to Frankfurt to Shanghai. President and Co-Founder Kirby Pilcher describes Artel products

and services – which enable just such precision for measuring tiny, nearly invisible quantities of liquid – as an “essential yardstick.”

Artel has found a niche in the global life sciences and health market which requires consistency in quality standards, measurements, diagnostics, and experimental methods. As a worldwide leader in liquid handling quality assurance, the company's customers are clinical, forensics, and public health



While other liquid handling systems measure volume by weight, Artel's proprietary technology uses a dual-dye solution and photometry to obtain extremely precise measurements on liquid samples as small as the period at the end of this sentence.

laboratories. Artel is now leading an international committee that is developing new global laboratory standards.

Over 2,000 laboratories around the world use Artel technologies and services including the FBI, Mayo Clinic, and multinational pharmaceutical companies such as Amgen, Merck, Novartis, and Pfizer. The accuracy of laboratory results can mean the difference between life and death in diagnosing a disease, conviction instead of acquittal when handling evidence in a criminal investigation, or making a breakthrough discovery of the next miracle drug.

Artel has been selling internationally since 1997. The company's first experience with overseas sales came as a result of a forward-thinking, Belgian distributor who was well-established in the pharmaceutical niche market approaching Artel at a trade show in the U.S., recalled Pilcher.

"The relationship was successful from the start," Pilcher said. "Working with that first distributor turned out to be excellent training for us on how to go about international business."

Today, the company has a global network of distributors in over a dozen countries and dedicated offices in Germany and Canada. Pilcher noted that Artel has seen the best results in commercializing their products from either working with specialized distributors or through direct sales to laboratory customers.



Based in Maine with its corporate headquarters in Westbrook, Artel has offices in Montreal, Canada and Stegen, Germany and a global network of distributors in more than a dozen countries including Australia, Japan, Kuwait, Mexico, and South Africa.



The fastest-growing area of the company is Technical Services, which includes consulting in the management of complex laboratory automation and hands-on training for laboratory personnel in quality assurance processes. Wendy Vaccaro, Technical Services Manager, explained that consistently delivering high-quality, customized technical services requires a dedicated staff presence in the region. She manages a technical staff of eight located across the U.S., from Florida to California, as well as in Canada and Germany.

“In spite of cultural differences and time zone challenges, we find that laboratory professionals speak the same language,” Vaccaro said. “They all want to optimize productivity, maintain quality, and in many cases, ensure compliance to demanding regulatory standards.”

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In 2012, Artel participated in the State of Maine Trade Mission to China. “The trade mission was a good introduction for us,” Jack Wood, Supply Chain Manager, commented. “We came back smarter and better equipped. With MITC’s help, we ascended the learning curve of Asian shipping and logistics and also built a new network of business and customer contacts.”

Following discussions on the trade mission, the company chose to partner with the large Swiss laboratory instrumentation firm Tecan, which was already



Prior to joining Artel, Wendy Vaccaro, Technical Services Manager, worked at Maine Medical Center. Like Vaccaro, all of the Technical Services staff have clinical experience and understand the importance, as well as challenges, of precision liquid handling in a real-world environment.



established in China, rather than a distributor.

“Tecan is a collaborator in the U.S. and Europe,” Wood explained. “By working with them in China, we are able to reduce risk and make faster progress in this new market.”

With a goal to increase international sales from 15% to 33%, Wood sees the best current growth opportunities in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Canada.

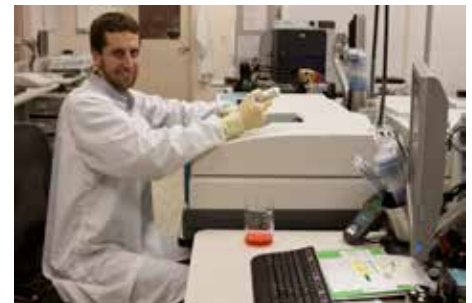
“There’s still a lot more territory there to plow,” Wood said.

Looking further in the future, Pilcher cites worldwide growth of the middle class driving raised healthcare expectations in countries such as Brazil, India, and China.

“Additional vaccine and diagnostics development, manufacturing, and distribution to meet the rising demand will create increasing quality control opportunities for Artel,” Pilcher reasoned.



Jack Wood, Supply Chain & Facilities Manager, says MITC has been extremely valuable for networking. “It’s not necessarily an immediate need, but down the road you find an opportunity to work together.”



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