



No Compromises: Embracing the Advantages of Reusable Laryngoscope Systems

Amid the migration to disposable products in the OR environment and rising concern over medical waste that is landfilled or burned, HEINE, a global manufacturer of primary diagnostic instruments, wants to help healthcare providers look at product procurement from a quality and sustainability point of view. According to Christian Berling, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, the company has created the next generation of laryngoscope systems so that providers do not have to compromise on performance or environmental impact. In this interview, Berling shares insights about responsible product innovation and the importance of executable instructions for use (IFU) while dispelling myths about the cost and safety of reusable products.

Q: Tell us about your company.

HEINE is a leading manufacturer of primary medical diagnostic instruments for the early detection and control of diseases and for providing optimal support during medical procedures. Due to their exceptional quality, HEINE products enable healthcare professionals to make the earliest, most accurate, and reliable diagnosis. We are a third-generation family company that still manufactures our products in Germany.

Q: Which of your company's products are you most excited about right now?

Our entire laryngoscope product line, with particular focus on the new EasyClean Handle (see Product Profile on page 19). This product line offers such tangible benefits to the provider, the hospital, and the environment, and showing it to customers is so exciting because we get to see the real difference our products can make.

Q: What is the top issue or challenge that your product provides a solution for?

Compromise, on the part of the customer or provider, is the top issue that HEINE's laryngoscope system eliminates. With all other laryngoscope options, whether they are less expensive reusables or disposables, the customer has to make some form of compromise in terms of performance, reliability, or environmental impact. With our laryngoscope system, providers get the best-performing, most cost-effective, and most environmentally responsible product without having to compromise.

Q: Your company has chosen not to migrate from reusable to disposable products. What has led you to maintain your commitment to reusable products?

There are two main reasons. The first goes back to one of the founding principles of Helmut Heine, Sr., who believed that if his name was on the product, it should be of the best quality. Ultimately, our laryngoscope systems are designed to allow the provider to have the best view possible to perform the intubation safely, quickly, and efficiently. When providers go with disposable products, quality is taken out of the equation and replaced with a focus on low price.

The second reason is in the same vein. HEINE designs quality products that will last for 10-plus years. This duration is not only more cost-effective than disposables, but also more environmentally responsible. As a manufacturer, we are committed to environmental and sustainable business practices.

Q: You have spoken candidly about properly designed reusable products and the limitations of those designed for single use. Please explain for our readers and tell us what sets your product apart from the competition.

To create a properly designed reusable product, we spend more than a year speaking to all stakeholders who interact with our laryngoscopes. Through that process, we outline the characteristics of the ideal reusable solution. When a manufacturer builds a product based on stakeholder input and is able to check all the boxes identified during the design process, the results can be powerful. Instead of just a tweak or



Christian Berling, HEINE USA
Vice President of Sales and Marketing

A PROPERLY DESIGNED REUSABLE PRODUCT CAN BE CLEANED AND STERILIZED EFFECTIVELY. IT IS THAT SIMPLE.

enhancement to an existing product, we leverage stakeholder insights to build the ideal product. That is why, with the HEINE laryngoscope system, the user doesn't compromise on performance, reliability, cost, safety, or impact on the environment.

Q: To what extent do you factor the Joint Commission (JC) audit process into development of your product?

This has become a huge consideration for us. We need to understand the world our customers exist in, not just from a patient care standpoint but also from an accreditation one. The JC is important in terms of the direction we anticipate the audit process will be heading in the coming years. For example, we designed the EasyClean laryngoscope handle to be sterilized, even though only one state (California) in the country currently requires it, based on the assumption that the JC may potentially make sterilization a nationwide standard. If that happens, our handle will be compatible because we have been focused on the current and future audit process.

Q: What are your customers most surprised to learn about the benefits of reusable laryngoscope systems?

Number one, they are surprised to find out that they will save money by investing in the best product on the market. When making the initial investment, customers find our products are not the cheapest; however, due to their quality and longevity, they provide a return on investment in less than three years compared with disposables or cheap reusables.

The second thing that people find surprising is that HEINE's laryngoscope system has a handle that does not have to be disassembled in any way to be sterilized. A battery or bulb does not have to be removed, either. This is such a departure from every other reusable product that it has become one of the product's "wow" factors.

Q: As a German-based company, how does your international presence inform your approach to U.S. customers?

As a global company that serves end users in more than 100 countries, HEINE has a collaborative and supportive culture that encourages best practice sharing from different markets and countries. Two of the biggest influences our international presence has are product quality and longevity. In our home country of Germany, we have distributors and customers who have been using our products for decades. This history of quality and performance reinforces our message to our U.S. customers that quality products should, and can, last for years. This is especially important in markets where disposables and knock-off products are prevalent.



PRODUCT PROFILE



HEINE Laryngoscope System and EasyClean Handle

Perfect View of Vocal Cords

- 3 times brighter than conventional halogen bulbs
- 10 hours of continuous operation
- Lifetime of up to 50,000 hours

Reliable Design

- New ergonomic wave design for more secure grip
- Sterrad and Steris compatible—that means the LED, too!
- Indestructible handle

Easy Reprocessing of Handle

- No disassembly or reassembly
- Can be wipe-disinfected for intermediate-level disinfection
- 100% waterproof; can be soaked
- Can be steam sterilized/machine washed if batteries are removed



Environmental Cost Savings for Reusable vs. Single-Use Laryngoscopes^{1,2}

1.5 to 7 times lower



Annual Direct Cost Savings^{1,2}

\$500K to over \$1 million PER YEAR

Q: In this changing landscape of product use, what is your company's approach to IFU?

Having clear, executable IFU is necessary for helping to ensure safe patient care when using any medical device. Our approach is to design products that perform optimally and stand the test of time, which includes the ability to be cleaned easily and effectively. When creating the IFU for our laryngoscope system, we collaborated with sterile processing professionals about the device design and cleaning practices. This collaboration was paramount in making our products easier to clean and our IFU easier to follow.

Q: What is your perspective on the link between ease in processing of laryngoscopes and patient safety?

The link is strong and often overlooked by manufacturers. In meeting with sterile processing professionals over the years, one of the most common complaints I hear is that new products are complicated and difficult to clean. HEINE wants to provide products that help providers and patients achieve the best outcomes. In the case of laryngoscopes and handles, the cleanliness of the product is a key component in achieving this goal. Our blades and handles have been designed with features that ensure simple, efficient, and effective cleaning to prevent cross-contamination.

Q: How do you respond to safety concerns related to cleaning and sterilization of reusable products?

A properly designed reusable product can be cleaned and sterilized effectively. It is that simple. The vast majority of

critical instruments used in the OR are reusable and sterilized effectively every day. Regarding laryngoscopes, there is a large amount of misinformation in the market about cross-contamination that has unfortunately scared many hospitals. The reality is that sterile processing equipment is better than ever, and a reusable device that is properly designed can be effectively reprocessed for safe and reliable use.

Q: What is one piece of advice you can offer to an OR leader who is evaluating whether to procure reusable versus single-use laryngoscopes?

In the current climate of environmental stewardship, providers should do their research. For anyone who cares about quality patient care as well as the health of the planet, do not hesitate to get detailed and verifiable responses from manufacturers regarding waste disposal and recycling of their products.

REFERENCES

1. Axelrod D, Bell C, Huncke TK, Ryan S, et al. Greening the operating room and perioperative arena: environmental sustainability for anesthesia practice. *American Society of Anesthesiologists*; Jan 2017.
2. Sherman JD, Raibley L, Eckelman ML. Life Cycle Assessment and Costing Methods for Device Procurement: Comparing Reusable and Single-Use Disposable Laryngoscopes. *Anesth Analg*. 2018 Aug;127(2):434-443.

EDITOR'S NOTE

OR Manager's *Industry Spotlight* series features both established and rising company leaders and asks them questions about their service and product offerings, how they enhance perioperative performance, their competitive differentiator, and what inspires them.

ENVIRONMENTAL ALERT!

US Landfills will start running out of space in as little as 8 years!

WHERE ARE YOUR DISPOSABLE LARYNGOSCOPES REALLY GOING?

Disposable Laryngoscope Systems are not recyclable:

- Composed of mixed plastics and the Endocrine Disrupting Chemical PVC
- Utilize toxic manufacturing and disposal processes

BOTTOM LINE:

When hospitals choose Disposable Laryngoscope Systems, they are putting **TONS** of waste into landfills each year.



Add a HEINE Reusable Laryngoscope featuring the LED EasyClean Handle System to your Sustainable Procurement!

- Contains no PVC or Plastic.
- Proven to be more cost effective than disposables.
- Compliant with JC Guidelines for choice of wipe down or sterilize without disassembly.
- Now Available on the GreenHealth Exchange.

Contact HEINE at: (800) 367-4872 or service@heine-na.com for a demonstration.

