



LI BUSINESS

[THE SCOOP



] JAMES BERNSTEIN

Dental supplier looks to China

HEALTH CARE

What's the next stop for Henry Schein Inc., Long Island's largest company by revenue, already in 25 countries around the world?

Like many other businesses these days, it's China, despite that country's bureaucracy and the difficulty many Western companies have dealing with government officials there.

But with growth prospects limited in the United States, Melville-based Henry Schein is looking to the east for its future. It says China will be needing a lot more dentists as it grows to a super-industrialized power, and those dentists will need Schein's products.

Stanley Bergman, chief executive of Henry Schein, one of the world's largest suppliers of dental products, said in an interview last week that the nearly 80-year-old company has already established a beachhead in China. It distributed a catalog at a dental show in Beijing earlier this year. It has about 70 sales and operations people in the country — in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Beijing. It claims about 2,500 customers.

"The opportunity for providing dental services will be huge," said Bergman. "Our plans are to develop China's



Henry Schein CEO Stanley Bergman said the company has established operations in China in order to grow its dental supply business.

first full-service dental distributor."

About 33 percent of Henry Schein's \$7.5 billion in sales last year came from overseas. Overseas sales have been growing as the market for such products has matured in the United States.

In China, Henry Schein says, market growth is estimated at between 15 percent to 20 percent annually over the next decade or so.

The country, with a population of 1.3 billion people, is home to only about 100,000 dentists, company figures say.

It has only 34 dental schools, which turn out about 2,500 dentists a year.

Bergman said a major step for the company is to find business partners in China to help sell and distribute Henry Schein's products. Growth in China will also mean jobs in

the United States, Bergman said. "A lot of products" will be manufactured in the U.S., he said. It could even mean growth for the company on Long Island, where there are about 1,000 Henry Schein employees. The company employs 14,500 around the world.