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## Inside the low-key Boston design firm behind everything from sneakers to ‘body on a chip’

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If you take a walk through EPAM Continuum’s Seaport offices, you’ll spot everything from Reebok Pump sneakers to Pampers, and potentially a peek at a prototype surgical suite of the future.

It’s a display of some Fortune 500 companies’ biggest revenue-driving products. But behind the scenes, many of these products were created, at least in part, by the design and consulting firm.

EPAM Continuum has made its name creating and helping to commercialize multi-million dollar medical devices and consumer goods like Procter & Gamble Co.’s (NYSE: PG) Swiffer cleaning product and local firm Insulet Corp.’s (Nasdaq: PODD) Omnipod diabetes pump. The latter made Insulet close to \$500 million last year, according to financial records.

For much of its history, the 36-year-old company has focused on life sciences tools. Its scope has slowly expanded and now reaches into universities, financial services, and consumer products. The company is also exploring getting into overall business design.

Life science companies still make up half of EPAM Continuum’s list of roughly 50 clients each year.

EPAM Continuum’s growth is being aided along by new parent company EPAM Systems Inc. (NYSE: EPAM). The Pennsylvania-based software development services firm spent a combined \$74 million to purchase Continuum – which was then called Continuum Innovation LLC – and one other company last year. EPAM estimated Continuum would add it roughly \$30 million to its annual revenue.

The renamed EPAM Continuum has



**Design and product consulting firm EPAM Continuum’s office in Boston’s Seaport showcases different products it has helped with, including Target’s shopping carts and baskets and Insulet Corp.’s Omnipod diabetes pump.**

increasingly brought pharmaceutical companies into its portfolio of clients, helping to design physical and digital packaging and means of using data sets.

That’s where the company’s acquisition by EPAM yields the most benefit, according to Gaurav Rohatgi, the co-lead of EPAM Continuum’s life science business. The life science industry is increasingly focused on digitization, which professional services firm Accenture plc estimates can yield \$100 billion in commercial value.

Parent company EPAM employs more than 30,000 people worldwide, primarily in IT roles. Around 120 people work in the Boston EPAM Continuum office.

“I think pharma, in general, is being encouraged more to look beyond selling the pill and the dose,” Rohatgi said.

The day-to-day work at EPAM Continuum can be unusual, sometimes requiring someone to determine what makes up the grime on a kitchen floor. Such was the case when the company was developing a mop replacement

with a \$100 million sales potential, ultimately coming up with Swiffer.

Some clients bring in EPAM Continuum to create the final design and packaging for a soon-to-be-released product. Other times, it is tasked with creating new products or revenue streams, according to business head Chris Michaud.

The firm is currently working with a group of MIT researchers and London-based CN BioInnovations Ltd. on a paperback book-sized device that can replicate the inner workings of organs for use evaluating drugs. Unlike a similar product currently being tested by local startup Emulate Bio, the MIT-created “body on a chip” simulates multiple organ systems at one time.

It is also working with pharmaceutical companies on products related to cell and gene therapies.

“They did a superb job turning our initial designs... ideas and prototypes into functional platforms that could be used by our lab personnel,” said MIT professor Linda Griffith, who worked with the product consulting firm.