Hearing Technology Industry
Impact Report
2017
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Unfettered imagination, perseverance, and the unrelenting desire to help people with hearing loss have been the most powerful forces fueling advancements in hearing aid technologies.

Helen Keller once wrote, “Blindness separates people from things; deafness separates people from people.”

The people who have made the creation of advanced hearing technologies their life’s work understand that.

Behind every discovery, behind every breakthrough, behind every incremental advancement has been a sustaining sense of purpose: To keep those challenged with hearing loss connected to life, to the world, and to the people around them.

The Hearing Industries Association (HIA) is proud to share this impact report with you. It lays out our industry’s work. And it shines a light on the lead we have taken over the past four decades to harness breakthroughs in scientific understanding and wed them with the power of imagination and ingenuity to help millions of people with hearing loss live fuller lives.

This report takes a close-up look at eight of our member companies: Cochlear, Earlens, GN Resound, Oticon, Sivantos, Sonova, Starkey, and Widex.

First, the report offers a snapshot of the depth and breadth of their new technologies, as reported in the media. It goes on to talk about their groundbreaking partnerships and future plans. Importantly, it spotlights what their customers are saying. And finally, it gives a glimpse of some of the many awards earned through years of work and dedication.

The pages of this report tell the untold story of an industry that has pushed the frontiers of knowledge and technology to help millions of people better hear the world—and to remain an important part of it.
“That’s the untold story of hearing aid development: All along, we’ve been at the forefront of technological advancement, applying new ideas in engineering, science, and technology in groundbreaking ways, ahead of other industries. We’ve been pioneering smaller, increasingly powerful, ever-more capable devices to help people compensate for a serious and intricate sensory loss. And we were doing it long before other industries cared, and long before hearing loss ever made headlines. The fact is, an unrelenting drive to help people struggling with hearing loss is in our DNA, and we’ll keep advancing hearing aid technologies for as long as innovation is possible.”

Carole Rogin, President, Hearing Industries Association (HIA)
Introduction

More than 10 million people in the U.S. use hearing aids.

Hearing aids have morphed into tiny, personalized, high-tech computers that can do amazing things to help people with hearing loss. But it wasn’t always that way. And it was never a clear path. It took decades of research and development—trial and error—by the industry to dramatically advance hearing aid technologies. Just think, the first electric hearing aid was invented in 1898. The first all-transistor hearing aid was invented in 1952. And the first commercial digital hearing aid came out in 1987.

Breakthroughs in electronics, microelectromechanical systems (MEMS), and their manufacturing processes fueled more recent advancements in hearing aids. Often, hearing aids were the first commercial devices to apply these developments.

At every turn, the industry seized upon novel scientific ideas and engineering applications to move hearing aids forward. Eventually, miniaturized hardware enabled engineers to pack more amplification and signal processing power into small, wearable housings. And these devices were fitted and programmed for the individual’s specific hearing loss, by frequency and lifestyle needs. In essence, personalized medicine has always been at the core of how quality hearing aids work.

Today, breakthroughs are happening at an accelerated rate. And the most current emerging technologies are giving new hope to the roughly 40 million Americans facing hearing problems.

Since the launch of digital hearing aids, connectivity has been the overriding disruptive technology. And it’s paving the way for new hearing aid models and experiences. Bluetooth-enabled hearing aids are empowering wearers with added control over their device and listening environment; and new functionalities are enabling wearers a multitude of lifestyle conveniences.

In short, the newest hearing aids are not just compensating for a hearing loss. They are enhancing wearers’ lives, connecting their ability to hear to the personal devices that organize their days and power the world around them.

Looking ahead, the possibilities for even further advancement in hearing technologies remain endless. And it was over 40 years of work, ingenuity, and an unwavering vision by the hearing aid industry that paved the way.
Our Companies & Awards

Technological achievement inspires even more technological achievement. Each and every year the hearing aid industry builds on that momentum to develop ever-better hearing aids to keep people with hearing loss connected with life.

People often make the mistake of thinking that hearing loss is a simple, mechanical sensory loss that can be remedied as easily as picking up a pair of “cheater” reading glasses at a local supermarket. But it’s not.

The fact is, hearing is an extremely complex sense that involves a multifaceted interplay of sound and neural signals within the ears and several areas of the brain. The complexity of treating hearing loss is heightened by the challenging environment within the ear canal where hearing aid technologies need to function.

The challenge is great. But the advancements have been tremendous.
Hear now. And always.
Recent Awards

**Red Dot Award: Product Design 2015**

Cochlear

Cochlear’s Baja 5 Sound Processor won the Red Dot Award: Product Design 15 in the world’s most important competition for product design. International experts assessed 4,928 entries from 56 countries across different industries, ultimately awarding the Baha 5 Sound Processor the sought-after Red Dot seal of quality and noting that “[t]his sound processor is a highly successful translation of modern technology into an exceptionally compact design.”

**Read More:**


**Best Medical Technology 2015**

Earlens

Named one of the “Best Medical Technologies” in 2015 by medGadget, an independent publication that reports on medical technology from around the world.

**Read More:**


**CES Best of Innovation Award 2017**

GN Resound

The ReSound ENZO smart hearing aid wins the 2017 CES Best of Innovation Award for Accessible Tech.

**Read More:**


**CES Best of Innovation Award 2017**

Oticon

Oticon Opn™, the world’s first internet-connected hearing aid, captured awards in the prestigious CES 2017 Innovation Awards in two categories – “Tech for a Better World” and “Wearable Technologies.” Opn is the world’s first internet connected hearing aid and a groundbreaking technological achievement. Oticon’s newest BrainHearing™ solution offers a range of powerful features to benefit people with hearing loss, including the ability to connect seamlessly to smart devices and smartphones and manage the challenge of noisy environments with multiple speakers – a problem even the most advanced hearing devices of today can’t solve.
**CES Innovation Awards Honoree 2017**

**Sivantos**
Signia Hearing Aids Named as CES 2017 Innovation Awards Honoree. Cellion, which is built on Signia’s advanced primax technology platform, is the world’s first lithium-ion inductive rechargeable hearing aid. Its high-capacity power cell is completely sealed into the hearing aid’s housing and provides up to 24 hours of continued use with unlimited Bluetooth® streaming on a single charge.

**German DESIGN AWARD Winner 2017**

**Sonova**
The Roger Pen is an advanced wireless microphone for hearing aid users and cochlear implant recipients. With its inconspicuous design, it mimics a pen in shape and looks more like a stylish device than a medical instrument. The Roger Pen was selected to receive the coveted seal of design excellence in the category of Medical, Rehabilitation and Health Care by an international, high-profile jury of design professionals, press members and academics.

**Winner of the SXSW Interactive Innovation Award for Wearable Tech**

**Starkey Hearing Technologies**
Halo 2 was honored for its ability to merge audiological advances with mobile technology to provide a hearable technology built for better hearing and active living. Featuring revolutionary quad-core twin compressor technology, a unique music algorithm and high-definition operating system, Halo 2 enables high-definition sounds and speech audibility across life’s changing landscapes. Additionally, Halo 2 was also honored for its destigmatizing effect.

**European Inventor Award (2012)**

**Widex**
Widex has won the prestigious European Inventor Award 2012. The Danish hearing aid manufacturer came top of a strong field of 15 finalists for its ground-breaking CAMISHA technology – a sophisticated method of manufacturing individual hearing aid shells, earmolds and ear-pieces. CAMISHA stands for Computer Aided Manufacturing of Individual Shells for Hearing Aids. It uses laser technology to make an impression of the hearing aid user’s ear canal and turns this data into a 3D computer model.

Read More:
Additional Awards

Take a look at all our additional awards. The truth is, the hearing aid industry regularly wins many types of awards for leading-edge innovation focused on improving the lives of the millions of people with hearing loss.

**Cochlear**

- **German Design Award, German Design Council – Nucleus 6 System Graduate Employers 2016**
- **Good Design Award, Australian International Design Awards – Nucleus Aqua+ 2015**
- **Good Design Award, Australian International Design Awards – Nucleus 6 Sound Processor 2014**
- **Good Design Award, Australian International Design Awards – Cochlear Codacs System 2014**
- **Medical Design Excellence Awards – Cochlear Codacs Systems 2014**
- **Powerhouse Museum Award – Nucleus CR110 Remote Assistant Fitting 2013**
- **Medical Design Excellence Awards – Silver winner – Nucleus CR120 Intraoperative Remote Assistant 2013**
- **Good Design Award, Australian International Design Awards – Nucleus CR120 Intraoperative Remote Assistant 2013**

**GN Resound Inc.**

- **CES Innovation Award Honoree 2015**
  ReSound ENZO is the first super-power hearing aid on the market to bring Made for iPhone technology to people with severe-to-profound hearing loss. To support the processing performed by the brain, ReSound ENZO hearing aids continuously exchange data about the user’s surrounding sound environment to optimize the hearing aid’s settings. This is made possible by the most advanced version of the patented Surround Sound by ReSound™ technology resulting in maximized speech understanding even in challenging listening situations.


- **Bluetooth Breakthrough Awards Finalist 2015**
  GN ReSound Smart - An app that interfaces with GN’s ReSound Linx hearing aid designed specifically for Apple iPhones, the GN ReSound Smart app lets users receive auditory information from their smartphone, including FaceTime audio, phone calls, music, podcasts and more. Additionally, users can interface with the app to adjust hearing aid volume, assign custom sound profiles for any geotagged location, and set up a “find my hearing aid” tracker that uses GPS to locate a lost unit.

Additional Awards

GN Resound Inc. (continued)

Good Design Award 2014
A winner at the 2014 good design award, the GN resound ‘linx’ is a bluetooth enabled hearing aid that connects wirelessly to smart devices. The instrument uses a unique noise processing strategy called surround sound, that emulates the function and performance of the human ear. This means the user can once again communicate effortlessly and enjoy rich, natural intonation. Another feature is the binaural directionality technology that helps the wearer understand speech in noisy situations by amplifying what they need to hear and reducing background noise. The binaural environmental optimizer also enhances this function as it ensures the product automatically regulates volume according to different environments.


Sivantos

2014 CES Innovation Design & Engineering Awards Honoree

2015 Gold Edison Award

CES 2017 Innovation Awards Honoree

Spark Gold Award
Sounds are among the strongest triggers of memories. Sonova Holding AG, the world’s leading provider of hearing solutions, has won a total of three awards at the Cannes Corporate Media & TV Awards for a short film, “Life without Limitations,” about German junior soccer player Simon Ollert, and another short film describing multiple World Beard Champion Fritz Sendlhofer’s “Sound Memories.”

**Red Dot Design Award 2016**

**Red Dot Product Design Award 2010**

**Red Dot Product Design Award 2011**

**IF Design Award 2016**

**British-Swiss Business Awards 2013**

**International Commercial Film Festival – Gold Award**

**European Excellence Award 2016 – Storytelling Category (Shortlisted)**
Additional Awards

**Starkey Hearing Technologies**

**Red Dot Design Award 2014**

**Good Design Awards 2015**

**Edison Award 2015 – Silver Award**
Starkey Hearing Technologies, Minneapolis, Minn, announced that is has won an Edison Award for its Halo Made for iPhone hearing aid.


**Eureka! Award 2015**

**Core 77 Design Award (runner up)**
Starkey Hearing Technologies and Karten Design tackled the hearing aid stigma by introducing Halo™, a Made for iPhone® hearing aid engineered to coexist with the iPhone®, iPad® and iPod touch®.


**Inc. Magazine Best in Class Design Award 2016**

**The American Business Awards (Stevie Awards) 2016 – Technical Innovation of the Year, Bronze**

**Spark Awards 2016 – Gold Product Design Award**

**Widex USA**

**European Inventor Award 2012**

**Association of Independent Hearing Healthcare Professionals Awards 2012 – Best Technology, Best Individual Support, and Best Manufacturer**

**Widex first company in the world to become “WindMade” 2012**

**RedDot Award 2009 - World’s smallest hearing aid**

**Danish Entrepreneur of the Year 2009**

**Widex first company in the world to become “WindMade” 2012**
Media Accolades

The hearing aid industry has reason to be proud. We’re a small industry. But we’ve made a big difference.

Perhaps one of the best ways to demonstrate the positive impact our work has had on the lives of millions is to draw from the words of journalists.

This snapshot of media coverage captures many of the technological breakthroughs our industry has brought to the market—and to people struggling with hearing loss.*

Our work continues.

*An appendix with a more extensive round-up of coverage appears at the end of this report.
“The fact is, an unrelenting drive to help people struggling with hearing loss is in our DNA, and we’ll keep advancing hearing aid technologies for as long as innovation is possible.”

Carole Rogin, President, Hearing Industries Association (HIA)
Media Accolades

Cochlear

“He attends a regular local elementary school…[and is] in a gifted program at another school. He’s in the 99th percentile for reading, several grade levels ahead, which makes his mother chuckle. ‘It’s kind of ironic that someone who started off so far behind has surpassed his peers in terms of language development,’ she says.”


“Some people with hearing loss have the attitude that this is how I was born, I’ve lived with this, this is my burden,” Crawford said. “I can understand that. I had those feelings. But the difference [with Cochlear Implants] is incredible. It’s like a whole new world opened up.”


“Before his implant, [his wife] said they couldn’t talk to each other when they went on dates because Cervi couldn’t hear her… It never really bothered her, but she, like Cervi, didn’t really know what she was missing. She said she cried the day the couple discovered Cervi’s hearing was at 70 percent after only three months [with his implant].”

“For the millions of Americans with hearing impairment, hearing aids can significantly improve regular daily communications, as well as overall quality of life,” said William Maisel, M.D., M.P.H., deputy director for science and chief scientist in the FDA’s Center for Devices and Radiological Health. “People with hearing impairment now have a new option that may help improve their hearing by amplifying sounds over a broad spectrum of frequencies.”

www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm464839.htm

Sound waves are converted by the system to electronic signals, which are digitally processed, amplified and sent to the ear tip. A laser diode converts the signals into pulses of light, which shine onto a photodetector in the tympanic membrane transducer. This then converts the light back into electronic signals to transmit sound vibrations directly to the eardrum. In a 48-subject trial over 30 days, Earlens offered a 33% average improvement in word recognition.


What we’re trying to do is build a channel in ENT, and we’ve got a proprietary differentiated technology that addresses some of the limitations associated with the existing air conduction hearing aids. Instead of using a speaker, like they all do to amplify sound, we actually use light to transmit sound and energy. If you think about a contact lens that sits on your eye, we’ve got a similar approach where we’ve got a contact lens that sits on the eardrum and we’ve got a laser that is housed into a custom ear tip and that shines onto the contact lens.

“Think of how stigma-reducing that is,” says Laurel Christensen, ReSound’s chief audiology officer. “You can control your hearing aids simply by doing what everybody else is doing today, playing with their iPhone… No one has to know you are adjusting your hearing aid.”


“ReSound LiNX again underlines our core strength of bringing breakthrough innovations to the hearing impaired, making them consumers with choices rather than patients with challenges,” GN CEO Lars Viksmoen said in a statement.

www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2427590,00.asp

“Hearables” — the next “wearable” health trackers - are the next frontier in the convergence of healthcare and technology.

www.huffingtonpost.com/laurel-a-christensen-phd/how-mobile-phone-compatib_b_6374804.html
“The results for measuring peak pupil dilation were statistically significant (p=0.04), indicating a significant reduction in peak pupil dilation,” Behrens said. “These data demonstrate that Oticon’s Opn is the first hearing aid proven to make it easier for the brain, freeing up the cognitive resources for more recall.”

www.news-line.com/onewnews.lasso?Search=Action&-token.profession=NL&-token.target=onenews&-Table=webinfo&-MaxRecords=50&-SkipRecords=0&-Database=newsline&-KeyValue=25304

Opn is the world’s first internet connected hearing aid, creating a world of opportunities for connecting to smart devices and wearables,” Ole Asboe Jørgensen, Oticon’s VP of sales and marketing, tells us. “By designing recipes through the If This Then That (IFTTT) network, users can get really creative and add genuinely useful functionalities to their listening device. “We’ve seen examples such as receiving a message from a smart doorbell, an alert from a baby monitor, or automating a message to a loved one when a hearing aid is turned on each morning, but really the possibilities are endless.”

www.wearable.com/saves-the-day/wearable-tech-transforming-how-we-live-with-disabilities

The new hearing aid is the first to be part of the Internet of Things revolution. It can connect to smoke detectors and lighting systems. The device decreases the amount of effort that users have to exert to hear conversations, especially in noisy environments. Traditional hearing aids listen in a single direction at a time but the Oticon Opn can listen to several conversations at the same time while getting rid of background noise.

You might think that all hearing aids are the same but in reality they’re not. While they operate and offer similar functionalities, it is really the micro-processing chip — very similar to the brain — that distinguishes one hearing aid brand from another. Similar to how the brain controls every aspect of the human body; the primax chip contains nearly 20 million transistors and is capable of executing over 250 million instructions per second.


There are many hearing aid manufactures, but the Signia Pure hearing aids are a revelation in technology-driven innovation. Much like Tesla Motors is pushing the limits on autonomous driving, Signia is exploring the limits of autonomous ‘listening’. It could be the start of a truly remarkable tech revolution for people dependent upon technology to help them with everyday tasks.

http://www.forbes.com/sites/moorinsights/2016/10/27/hearing-aids-enter-the-autonomous-listening-age/#344b5e6a5f09

The good news: new technology is making smaller, better, smarter hearing aids that, in many cases, are invisible (they sit in the ear canal rather than behind the ear, which is where legacy products resided).

www.thestreet.com/story/13557707/1/why-hearing-aids-have-gotten-so-cheap.html
The study, published in the American Journal of Audiology, found people with moderate-to-severe hearing loss who used the Roger Pen could understand speech better than those with normal hearing at noise levels of 65 decibels (dB) and above.

www.reuters.com/article/us-sonova-hldg-device-idUSKBN0GY1RL20140903

At the core of Sonova's success thus far is its concentration and focus on innovation, says Hansjurg Emch, president of Advanced Bionics, a unit of Sonova. “Close collaboration in R&D to share the benefits of innovation across the company is at the core of Sonova's success. The complementary strengths of the Advanced Bionics and Phonak R&D teams were demonstrated by the development of a next-generation sound processor,” he adds.


“The new dual-core chip platform presented today is the result of many years of development work and provides the foundation for further substantial innovative hearing solutions from all of Sonova's product brands,” Chief Executive Lukas Branschweiler said in a statement.

We're reaching a new stage of how we interact with our devices. It’s an excellent time to think about what tools we can build when we're in constant conversation with the machines around us. “It was a big blow to learn I was going deaf at such a young age, but through this project I’ve seen that actually I can use the situation I’m in to my advantage, and explore abilities that nobody else gets to experience,” said Mr Swain.

www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/one-man-hears-wi-fi-wherever-he-walks-9858488.html

“When people think about hearing technology, they don't think about small and stylish and wireless and superhigh quality audio,” said Chris McCormick, Starkey’s marketing chief. “When they hear about this tech, they say, ‘I wish I'd done this five years ago.’”


Recreating hearing is an incredibly difficult task. Unlike glasses, which simply bring the world into focus, digital hearing aids strive to recreate the soundscape, amplifying useful sound and suppressing noise. As this changes by the second, sorting one from the other requires a lot of programming.

The hearing aid, called a biCROS system, works by adjusting for the loss of hearing in his failing left ear, like a normal hearing aid. But it also “tricks the brain” into believing his deaf right ear can hear. A wireless receiver on his right ear takes in the sound, and transmits it into his left ear, mimicking full hearing.


Either on its own or as part of a hearing aid, the Widex Zen device technology trains the brain to break free of the tinnitus cycle by playing subtle—but more interesting and less frightening—sounds. Patients are distracted by the new sounds and learn to ignore the constant ringing of tinnitus. “It takes away some of that fear,” says Lezynski. “[Tinnitus] is always there, but with Zen, it kind of drops to the background.”


“The finely detailed mold is scanned through a 3D scanner taking millions of measurements to create a “3D point-cloud” representing exactly the inside of a patient’s ear. The Invisible In-Canal (IIC) hearing aids allow for more sound to be collected naturally by the shape of the ear, and to flow down the ear canal as it would with unassisted hearing, improving the fidelity and range of sound. The fact that the shell is modeled so exactly on the user’s ear also prevents any noise from leaking out – so no more “whistling.”

Addendum
Media Coverage
Media Coverage

Cochlear

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Hearing Health & Technology Matters
www.hearinghealthmatters.org/betterhearingconsumer/2016/tipping-points-knew-hearing-aids-werent-enough/

KERA News
www.keranews.org/post/after-losing-her-hearing-baby-girl-making-her-mark-kindergarten

St. Louis Post Dispatch

“My first experience was riding home after activation. I asked my wife what was that clicking noise. She informed me that it was the directional signal of the car. That was one of many sounds that I had not been hearing… At 88 years old, I feel rejuvenated! Now, I can actively participate in life. These past two years have given me such confidence and, more importantly, a renewed sense of purpose in my life.” Fred Terryn, 88, Cochlear Nucleus® recipient

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Oh Gizmo!
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“Really love the fact that Earlens has just changed my life. Now I can hear what I really want to hear. Earlens seems to broaden how much I hear so I don’t have to hear it as loud, but I hear more.” Carol L., California
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www.mashable.com/2014/02/25/apple-iphone-ready-device-is-worlds-smartest-hearing-aid/#x98f7du_iq3

MedCity News

Medical Daily

Mother Nature Network
“When I played my first performance with the [ReSound] ENZOs, I was braced for distortion, but it never happened – everything was there to hear, from guitars and flutes down to the lowest note of my bass. For years I had to put up with hearing aid distortion in performance, and I am now faced with the happy task of relearning how music is supposed to sound.”

Rick Ledbetter

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Oticon, Inc.

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“The Bluetooth technology is just awesome with cell phones and TVs.”
Robert

Read More www.oticon.com/your-hearing/
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**Advance Healthcare Network**

**Brookfield Elm Grove Now**

**China Daily**

**Cool Wearable**
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**Joe’s Geek Fest**

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**Optician Online**

**Sci/Tech Nation**
www.scitechnation.com/6-wearable-medical-devices-need-know/

**ShinyShiny**

**SlashGear**

**SlashGear**
Media Coverage

Sivantos

“I’ve used a lot of fairly sophisticated Bluetooth headsets that work on noise cancellation and try to deal with the wind. I’ve never used anything that comes close to these hearing aids. In other words, this is a thoroughly modern experience that takes your hearing to the next level. For any who have large loss, (which, thankfully, I do not yet), they provide the ability to understand speech that they may have missed in certain situations.”  

J.T. Frazier

Media Coverage

**Sonova**

3D Print.com

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“My new Phonak V70 hearing aids have immeasurably improved the quality of my life! I can contribute, participate, and enjoy every conversation, meeting and concert with confident audio reception!”

Wendy Marty

Read More www.myhearingresources.com/testimonials/
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“When I go to restaurants, the Halo remembers the settings I had on at that specific location, so the next time I’m there it will know to project the sound of the person I’m having a conversation with over the background noise. I also have preferences set at home and when I’m on an airplane. There’s even a find-my-device feature to track down lost hearing aids.” Daymond John
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www.timesledger.com/stories/2014/20/hearingcenter_bt_2014_05_16_q.html

“Just a brief email to say how delighted I am with my new hearing aids you supplied and fitted. The Widex UNIQUE 440 is indeed a massive advance on my old hearing aids and the wind noise reduction element works a treat, and thanks to the custom made ear molds they’re very comfortable, even to wear all day. The way that they keep analyzing the sounds around you and keep changing to give you the best listening experience possible is amazing and doesn’t cause any issues. The functions that you programmed into them all work well…”  

Martin Oakes
Conclusion

Hearing loss is in the spotlight as it has never been before.

New research tying many other serious health issues to hearing loss has raised its importance in the eyes of public policy makers, the healthcare community, media, and even other industries.

We, in the hearing aid industry, will continue to further advance the work we began more than 40 years ago. As the American population gets older—and as more people acquire noise-induced hearing loss at younger ages—the mission of the hearing aid industry will become even more relevant.

Our purpose has always been to keep those challenged with hearing loss connected to life, to the world, and to the people around them.

In this new era of understanding and engagement, we will remain at the forefront of technological advancement, pushing through barriers to new discoveries and bringing forth ever-improving, more and more innovative, life-enhancing technologies.

Keeping people with hearing loss connected and an integral part of the world is our life’s work.

Our determination to bring forward even greater advancements in hearing aid technologies remains stronger today than ever.