LISTEN
THE WORLD OF WIDEX

USER FRIENDLY
DEAR READERS

What is good design? Inevitably that is a hard question to answer. Design means different things to different people. One thing many agree on though is the importance of usability to good design. The cover story in this issue of LISTEN takes a look at usability and what it means to good design - both in general and for us here at Widex.

When it comes to concrete examples of good design, then look no further than the latest member of our acclaimed DREAM™ series of hearing aids, DREAM™ FASHION. LISTEN examines why this discreet and powerful hearing aid is out of the ordinary.

One of the people who appreciate Widex design and technology is former Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs Uffe Ellemann-Jensen. In an exclusive with LISTEN, Uffe talks about his hearing loss and why he decided to become a Widex ambassador.

We hope you enjoy this issue; if you are curious for more, you can find our previous issues on-line at www.widex.com/listen. And we are always pleased to hear from our readers, so if you have any comments or suggestions, feel welcome to write to us at listen@widex.com.

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Unusable: It’s surprising how many objects are designed without usability in mind. The LISTEN cover story in this issue examines examples of both good and bad usability.
Nicola Alexis is a British actress best known for playing the role of WPC Ruby Buxton in the long running TV drama series The Bill. She is also a new Widex wearer and as a result feels more confident in both her professional and home life.
TO BE, OR NOT TO BE, A WIDEX WEARER

This London-based performer has been acting professionally for 13 years appearing in a wide range of stage, screen and radio productions. “My main credits include a part in the Alan Bennett revival, Lady in the Van; the lead role in the Francis Matthews production Lucky You and starring twice as Beauty in the pantomime Beauty and the Beast.”

Her TV appearances include feature roles in the film Summerhill, dramas Desperados, EastEnders, Absolute Power, Doctors, Holby City and Dangerfield. She has also appeared on the stages of some of the UK’s most illustrious theatres such as Bristol Old Vic, The Birmingham Rep, the Tricycle Theatre and The Royal National Theatre.

HARD TO HEAR IN CROWDS
She first realised that there was something amiss with her hearing some eight years ago. “I became aware that my hearing wasn’t as good as others around me. But it took another year or two before I went to my doctor, who then sent me to the ENT department at the local hospital, to have a hearing test.”

Nicola found that group conversations were problematic especially in noisy and crowded places. “My confidence was starting to be affected when in unfamiliar situations or with new people where I found difficulty in understanding everything they said and I just didn’t want to keep asking them to repeat themselves. In addition, I found the clarity of words difficult and often misheard what was being discussed around me, which I found affected how much I contributed to the conversation.”

The level of hearing impairment Nicola was experiencing was also affecting her acting. During auditions for roles an actor needs to be at their best and clearly hear instructions shouted at them. “I have had a couple of auditions where I have not found it very easy to do this. Plus, when in post-show discussions with audiences I often found it very hard to hear questions from the auditorium, again making me less likely to get involved as much”

DISCREET AND USER-FRIENDLY
At first Nicola was prescribed aids on the NHS. But in the summer of 2012, she visited Harley Street Hearing in London where she was introduced to Widex hearing aids. She now uses two Widex ME-CIC (completely-in-canal) instruments. “I wanted something that was cosmetically small and performed well in terms of clarity.”

Nicola is delighted with them. “I have tried two other types of aids and these are definitely the ones for me. I find them extremely user friendly and like having the control over when I can take them out and put them in. I often forget I am wearing them so comfort gets top marks. Size and visibility is a major thing for me and these are very discreet, even with my ears being very small! The sound again is something I have gotten used to very quickly. Adjusting to new aids and indeed aids in general can be hard, and the more natural the sound quality the better. As I said before, I often forget I’m even wearing them so I feel they must be doing everything right.”

Nicola describes the beneficial effects on her work and personal life in one word – confidence. “Personally I don’t worry about being in noisy environments anymore or it being my fault if I just can’t hear someone. Things like after show talks and auditions are no longer things to be dreaded. Having just the right amount of confidence in my career is really very important.”

“Just being able to hear more is a major confidence boost”
Nicola Alexis
The latest member of the acclaimed DREAM family of hearing aids makes conventional Behind-the-ear hearing aids look ordinary.

For people who wear Behind-the-ear (BTE) hearing aids, choosing an appropriate model is often about finding something with suitable power. Size is often a secondary consideration. The new FASHION hearing aid from Widex is both powerful and tiny - in fact, it is much smaller than a conventional BTE.
By changing the placement of the hearing aid’s receiver (where the sound comes into the hearing aid), Widex engineers have been able to make FASHION considerably smaller while retaining all the technology that makes it sound incredible.

According to Niels Christian Damgaard Jakobsen, a mechanical design engineer from Widex, “the main idea for FASHION was to make the perfect BTE hearing aid package – that means the right balance between functionality and size for this segment of users.” To do this, the mechanical parts inside the hearing aid have been reduced in size as much as possible without compromising the sound. Basically all areas and designs have been squeezed to a minimum, says Niels. “The microphone, receiver and telecoil – even the microphone cover has been moulded down to only a quarter of a millimetre in thickness, which has never been done before.”

Usability
Particular attention has been paid to the physical design of FASHION; it was important that its small size didn’t mean it is difficult for users to operate. The volume control is placed within easy reach and to change programs, you simply hold a button down. The design took into consideration people’s sense of touch. “Another thing that reduced size and increased usability was the use of tactile switches,” says Niels. “The volume and program buttons on FASHION give the users a ‘click feeling’ – so that the response they get is not only audio but also tactile, as in a feeling in their fingers.” It also makes using these functions as natural as possible. “From a usability perspective, the idea of having a toggle key for the volume on the top side of the hearing aid and a push button for programs on the bottom of the hearing aid - was to divide the interaction intuitively. So the user would use one finger for volume adjustment and another finger for program toggle,” says Niels.

Sound of FASHION
Like other members of the DREAM family, FASHION delivers outstanding sound. It lets more sounds come in - so soft sounds can still be heard and loud sounds are undistorted so hearing aid users can enjoy a larger and richer sound picture – and hear sounds the way they really are. FASHION has also been proven to help users better recognise speech, with a recent test of hearing aid users revealing that those who tried DREAM experienced a marked improvement in their ability to recognise speech.

Other benefits? Well, FASHION is super-efficient and uses less power so users can enjoy great sound for longer. It is also protected against the elements with the nano-coated WeatherCover specifically designed for hearing aids. This also reduces wind noise. And for the fashion-conscious, FASHION comes in a wide range of fourteen different colours.

You can read more about FASHION here:
Widex.com/dream
A CURE FOR HEARING LOSS?

News that the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved trials on children with hearing loss to assess the impact of stem cell treatments has got the industry buzzing. But how far away are we from a cure?
Stem cells are being used in research around the world – and across a bewildering range of conditions ranging from spinal injuries to Alzheimer’s. In many sectors, studies into stem cell-based treatments start with research using small animals.

**Mice studies**

Mice suffering from hearing loss have been injected with stem cells and improvements in their hearing have been found in a number of studies. Japanese researchers used bone marrow stem cells injected into the cochlea of mice with drug-induced hearing impairment - for which partial recovery occurs over some time - and recorded higher levels of recovery than found in those not treated*. Australian scientists used nasal stem cells, also injected into mice cochlea – again with positive results**.

More recently in the UK, a team from Sheffield University revealed in September 2012 in the science magazine Nature that they had restored the hearing of previously deaf gerbils by injecting them with human embryonic stem cells***.

**Children studies**

But last year a potentially massive step forward was taken. The Children’s Hermann Hospital in Houston Texas announced that it had obtained FDA approval for stem cell research with children with hearing impairment.

The hospital’s statement announcing this said: “The study, which will use patients’ stem cells from their own stored umbilical cord blood, is the first-of-its-kind, and has the potential to restore hearing. This follows evidence from published laboratory studies that cord blood helps repair damaged organs in the inner ear.”

The hospital launched its recruitment drive for suitable children at the start of 2012. It was looking for ten children, aged between six weeks and 18 months, who had suffered post-birth hearing loss.

Dr James Baumgartner, a sponsor of the study and guest research collaborator at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston Medical School explained why the search for a treatment for such young children was so important: “Children only have 18 months to acquire language skills and, if a child does not hear well, they will not acquire the language skills to speak normally”.

Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center surgeon Dr Samer Fakhri, who is the principal investigator for this study, was quoted as saying, “Currently, the only treatment options for sensorineural hearing loss are hearing aids or cochlear implants. We hope that this study will open avenues to additional treatment options for hearing loss in children.”

Following the announcement of the start of the study there has been a bit of a news blackout. It has been reported that the recruitment phase has been successfully completed – but our requests for some interim information on how the study has progressed have met with silence, perhaps understandably. So, we wait with anticipation the results of the research.
Listen – The World of Widex

Cure concerns
But not everyone seems to welcome a cure for hearing loss being on the horizon. Karen Putz is a mum from America with a genetic hearing loss that affects her parents, siblings and children who writes a blog****. She describes herself as, “...a deaf mom of three deaf and hard of hearing kiddos. The hubby is deaf too. However, we’ve got a cute little Westie who can hear a rabbit breathing a half mile away.”

She has been talking to the doctors at Memorial Hermann and expresses mixed feelings. “I spent the last 26 years getting really comfortable with myself after going from hard of hearing to deaf. In sharp contrast to the teen who hid every sign of hearing loss, the teen who became deaf at nineteen learned to embrace a whole new world that included American Sign Language. My world truly opened up after becoming deaf and I saw the change as a blessing. I learned to embrace the gift I was given.”

“I thought of my siblings. I know each and every one of them would jump at the chance of being able to hear again. I asked my daughter how she felt. ‘I want deaf kids,’ she said. ‘It makes me kind of sad to think of the world without deaf and hard of hearing people in it.’ ”

“Yes, deep inside of me, there was a bit of sadness. I believe the world is a more vibrant, colourful place with the tapestry of deaf and hard of hearing people who have crossed my path over the years. I cannot imagine a world without them.”

Years to go
But a successful stem cell-based treatment for hearing loss could still be years away stresses Stefan Heller, a stem-cell researcher at Stanford University in California who is also working on differentiating cells involved in hearing. “The first stem cell-based treatments for hearing loss are likely to be at least 15 years away...”

Until then, we’ll just have to wait and see.

Sources:
* Kamiya et al. 2007
** Sonali et al. 2001
*** Examiner.com
**** www.deafmomworld.com

The DNA double helix is an acid molecule often referred to as the building block of life. The discovery of the DNA is attributed to James Watson (b. 1928), Francis Crick (1916–2004), and Maurice Wilkins (1916 – 2004) who jointly received the Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine for their 1953 determination of the structure of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). DNA provides the information, in the form of genes, which is necessary to make all the various cell types that a living body is composed of.
USER FRIENDLY, FRIENDLY USER

The popularity of smart phones and tablets such as the iPad has transformed our expectations of usability. We expect more from products than just reliability. But why are some things easy to use and other frustrating? And what makes something user-friendly?

Without doubt, the iPhone and iPad owe a large part of their phenomenal success to the fact that they are so easy to use. Watch how quickly a small child takes to an iPad for example and you realise just how intuitive the design of these products is. But for every well-designed iPad there are a thousand other products that are cumbersome and difficult to use. Technological products in particular can suffer from elaborate design that focuses on advanced engineering to the neglect of the user.

We have all grappled with things that may function perfectly well but are annoying to use. From a TV remote control, to computer software, to even the humble can opener - our everyday interaction with the things around us can be fraught with frustration. Simple things such as street signs, maps and signs that should help us are often confusing, misleading and not particularly, well...user-friendly.

Safely, easily, joyfully
But just what do we mean by usability?

Randolph G. Bias, Associate Professor at the University of Texas at Austin in the Unites States, is a usability expert and consultant. He defines it “as that quality of a device, user interface, workflow – any human artefact – that allows people to carry out their tasks safely, easily, even joyfully.”

Joy is not perhaps something we always encounter in our interactions with everyday objects. Often we’re pleased if they simply function properly. Does good usability really matter? After all, many hearing aid users for example, just want their hearing aids to let them hear as well as possible. “Usability is important,” says Randolph, “because good usability means that users have access to the product’s functionality – all that wondrous, well-conceived, hard-earned ‘functionality’ is of no value if people can’t find it and figure out how to use it.”
According to Randolph, the reason that usability sometimes takes a back seat in product design is often because of users themselves. “Usability engineering has been slow to be accepted as an essential part of any product development effort [because] people have had a tendency to blame themselves. ‘Oh, I’m such a technophobe.’ ‘Oh, I should’ve been able to figure that out.’ No! You’re a member of the target audience. We should’ve done a better job of designing a device that fits your needs and worked as you expected it to,” he says.

“USABILITY CAN BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SUCCESSFUL PRODUCT AND ONE THAT BECOMES THE PUNCH LINE FOR LATE-NIGHT COMEDIANS”
- Kipp Lynch

People have their own set of expectations when they encounter an object or product or, for that matter, another person. Randolph explains: “When you walk up to a man for the first time and he smiles and extends his right hand, palm facing to his left, fingers outstretched, thumb pointing up, what do you do? Do you assume he’s fixin’ to poke you in the stomach? No, you infer, from past interactions with other similar beings, that he wishes to shake your hand.” People generate expectations and explanations, employing metaphor to apply what they already know to new situations. “OK, this collection of pixels on my screen looks like a button on my phone,” continues Randolph. “I’ll bet if I click on it with my mouse cursor it’ll behave just like a real-world button on my phone when I push it with my finger. Though of course all this happens in fractions of seconds, and without the internal dialogue. Indeed, this is how designs get in trouble – when something looks like an X but behaves like a Y.”

Users are all smart
Companies that manufacture advanced products such as hearing aids are sometimes guilty of putting technology before user-friendliness. “Technology that people can’t use is just wasted effort!” says Randolph. “I believe there is an insidious tendency for developers to think or to believe subconsciously, ‘Wow, developing this was hard. People should realize how complex this is.’ No. Of course it was hard! That’s why it took smart people like you to do it. But we want everyone - not just people with a Master’s degree in electrical engineering - to be able to use our product. I have said, charmingly, that a lot of companies have gone out of business because their users were ‘too stupid’. Users are all smart, in their own domains. We can either design to them, or sit around whining that they don’t realize what great functionality we’ve built.”

Of course that doesn’t mean technology should be forgotten, but “if you don’t attend to the usability of that technology, all that effort will have been for naught,” says Randolph. What’s more, good usability can actually help differentiate a company’s products from its competitors. “When functionality becomes a commodity, then usability becomes the differentiator,” says Randolph. “That is, if the functionality of your hearing

hit list:
LISTEN asked the experts for their examples of bad usability.

Randolph: Blister packs (or bubble packs): They support some tasks very well – the manufacturer’s task of putting the product in the packaging, the customer’s task of understanding what the product looks like, the store owner’s task of minimising theft. But the task of unpackaging the thing is exceedingly NOT user-friendly. And so I find the whole design downright disrespectful.

Kipp: I was recently at the gym and it never fails that some new person asks me how to operate the treadmill. A fairly simple device that should be little more than speed and slope, requires about a dozen button pushes just to get started. Remote controls are another device with numerous usability issues – to compound the problem, most people have several remotes.
aids is a lot better than your competitors’ products, then perhaps customers will suffer through an unusable website, a less-than-intuitive installation process, etc. But if the functionality is approximately equivalent, then a better user experience will win.”

Furthermore, good usability doesn’t just apply solely to the design of the hearing aid itself. The entire experience is important. “A customer’s user experience with Widex can be influenced by their interactions with the device itself, the packaging, your website, perhaps your customer support or sales or training personnel, and so on,” says Randolph.

**DEX user interfaces**

This user interaction was the primary focus of the design team behind Widex DEX accessories (see page 20). Known as DEX assistive listening devices, they help people use their hearing aids with mobile phones, televisions, music players and so on, and a chief consideration in their design was to make them easy and intuitive to use. In particular, attention was paid to the user interface of the DEX devices. The user interface is not just where the user interacts with the device itself but also relates to the overall user experience – from the aesthetic appearance to the way in which the DEX responds.

According to Thomas Kyhn, Global Training Manager from Widex, who was involved in the DEX project, great care was taken in thinking about exactly how people would use technology. “People have certain expectations when they use new products. When they embrace a new product like our DEX devices, we want them to be able to recognise how to use it. We spent a lot of time considering the ways in which people behave when they use technology,” he says. “Designing the devices to look and function in a way most people would expect is important. That’s why the on/off key on the TV-DEX is similar in look and placement to an on/off button on a television remote control for instance.” Recognition is another key factor; the TV-DEX looks like a TV remote and the M-DEX (for phones) resembles a mobile phone.

**“USABILITY MAKES THE WORLD WORK BETTER”**

www.worldusabilityday.org

People’s sensory reactions are also important. “The way they touch and see something like DEX devices should hopefully make it comfortable for them to use and make them feel reassured and in control.”

**Customer feedback**

Involving users at all stages is crucial, particularly in real-world situations. As usability expert Kipp Lynch emphasises, listening to customers can only get you so far. “The key is to observe your customers in the real world,” he says. “Customers can tell you what they want, since they come with many preconceptions, but they are unlikely to come up with something innovative – they are stuck with their own experiences and habits. They usually offer some
variant of ‘faster, cheaper, lighter, and add feature X.’ It is only by observing numerous customers and seeing both patterns of use and unique behaviours that designers can go beyond the incrementalism that pervades the product design industry.” With hearing aids, it is always a good idea to “understand the user and observe them in the real world to uncover problems and unmet needs,” says Kipp.

**Good usability sells**

In a crowded market, good usability doesn’t just help a product stand out but also makes good business sense. According to Randolph, “poor usability leads to more customer support burden for the company, increased training needs, and more expensive rework - when problems are discovered late in the development process rather than early. Poor usability leads to frustration on the part of the user, and reduced chances of subsequent purchases. And, in this day of social media, each individual who has a bad experience can share that news broadly.”

Kipp agrees, adding that “the importance of usability cannot be overstated, from a business point of view it can be the difference between a successful product and one that becomes the punch line for late-night comedians – Apple’s Newton [an early tablet computer], most Windows products, and the now antiquated VCR. And from a health care perspective bad usability can result in patient complications, for example.”

So what lessons can we learn from the success of products that are easy to use, such as smart phones? Kipp says the early success of phones, when they evolved from a single-function to a multi-function device, was limited “until Apple made them truly usable as well as beautiful. I think the takeaway is that no matter how many features you add, without good usability you are limited to a niche market - for example, the early Blackberry days.”

“Also, it is very difficult to anticipate how ubiquitous something new might become in a short amount of time,” says Randolph. Good design of course can help, but ultimately you can never be sure. “Some people are great at coming up with a design first time out, and that is not most of us,” he concludes.

“**WHEN FUNCTIONALITY BECOMES A COMMODITY, THEN USABILITY BECOMES THE DIFFERENTIATOR**”

Randolph Bias
T-DEX
A hands-free, wireless neck loop for use with all hearing aids with a telecoil. It connects easily with Bluetooth mobile phones. The sound is transmitted wirelessly to the hearing aids.

PHONE-DEX*
An all-purpose, cordless phone that streams crystal clear sound directly to your hearing aids. Provides you with the best possible listening experience – without using a telecoil program or streamer. Also works as a conventional phone.

RC-DEX
A stylish, compact and user-friendly remote control that gives you better control of selected hearing aid functions. Allows you to adjust volume and change between programs quickly and discreetly. Small enough to fit on a key ring.

TV-DEX
A palm-sized, user-friendly wireless assistive listening device purpose-built for enjoying TV and audio. Allows up to 10 hours of uninterrupted, stereo TV or hi-fi sound between recharges.

M-DEX
An incredibly versatile and user-friendly device for managing mobile phones. It reproduces phone conversations directly into your hearing aids. Features the unique Room Off function which turns the hearing aids' microphones off temporarily so you can only hear your mobile. Can also be used as an advanced remote control and features a telecoil function.

FM+DEX
A high quality streaming device that is small and discreet, and designed specifically for wireless hearing aids. Has three functions: FM, telecoil and audio line in, giving the user great flexibility. Easily operated with a toggle button.

*Available in selected markets only. Contact your hearing care professional for more information.

Here is your guide to the Dex accessories:
A WHOLE WORLD OF WIRELESS SOUND

The DEX assistive listening devices open up a whole new world of sounds for hearing aid users.

Thanks to the unique wireless technology, WidexLink, they give you easy and convenient control over all your devices, and let your hearing aids communicate easily, instantly and without interference.
YOU MAY HAVE SEEN THE MEDIA COVERAGE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR PUBLICISING AN AMERICAN STUDY THAT SUGGESTED DRINKING RED WINE MIGHT HELP TO PREVENT HEARING LOSS.

It's just one of a number of health claims for red wine – previous research has suggested it might protect against heart disease and dementia - that is fast making it a ‘super drink.’ Or perhaps it just confirms what Benjamin Franklin claimed – “Wine is constant proof that God loves us…….”

WINE DRINKING RATS
Dr Michael Seidman from the Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit, USA, has been investigating a compound called resveratrol, which is found in red grapes. Healthy rats fed this substance were less likely to suffer noise induced hearing loss after being exposed to loud noises for significant periods of time.

The Daily Mail newspaper quoted Dr Seidman as saying, “Resveratrol is a very powerful chemical that seems to protect against the body’s inflammatory process, as it relates to ageing, cognition and hearing loss.”

LISTEN contacted Dr Seidman about this study, which took one year to complete. We started by asking why he and his team were studying the health effects of resveratrol and what the background to it was?

“We have been studying extracts from wine for more than 15 years,” answered Dr Seidman. “This study was trying to understand the mechanisms involved in the protective effect we were seeing. Thus far we have been able to show a protective effect of resveratrol on hearing loss, cognitive decline, and some other aspects of ageing.”

Seidman continued: “We showed that we could expose rats to loud noise and the placebo subjects suffered hearing loss. Those treated with resveratrol had 50% less hearing loss – which is a very powerful and exciting result.”

WINE DRINKING HUMANS
But what about the effects on people who already have hearing loss? Could their consumption of resveratrol reverse hearing loss levels? “I wish I could make such a generalization,” added Seidman, “but the study was done in animals and not all animal work translates to humans. I am doing work with the military and I think this certainly has merit and should be considered.”
WINE

Wine is an alcoholic beverage made from fermented grapes or other fruits. The earliest production of red wine seems to have occurred around 6000BC, principally in Georgia (in the Caucasus region between Europe and Asia) and in Iran.

Some of the main types of red grape varieties include: Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Sangiovese, Merlot and Zinfandel.

Source: www.redwine.co.uk
Will you be doing research on humans? “I would love to, but it costs many millions of dollars and so far we have had no joy on getting those millions.”

Resveratrol is found in a number of foodstuffs – including dark chocolate, mulberries and blueberries. But it is found in the largest quantities in red grapes and red wine. So, is Dr Seidman a red wine buff?

“I used to hate the taste of red wine. It is clearly an acquired taste. Now I love it. Mostly I drink a Cabernet or Merlot.”

The red grape with the highest concentrations of resveratrol is Pinot Noir. “The highest concentration to date is found in a Pinot Noir from the Frank Konstantin winery in Northern New York State. This is the wine we fed our rats for some of our studies.”

AVOID ‘TEABAG’ TANNINS
Not everyone likes red wine, so what’s the best way to introduce you to it? “For those people who only drink white wine, to move on to red is a different experience altogether,” comments Fiona Taylor, the resident wine expert at UK wine merchants ChristopherPiperWines.co.uk. “White wines have complexity and acidity. However, with red wines the first things you are faced with on tasting are tannins.”

Tannin is a natural preservative and is one of the many components that give wine its longevity. It comes from the skins, pits and stems of the grapes. Another source of tannin is wood, such as the oak barrels in which some wines are aged or fermented. Generally, red wines have a higher level of tannin than whites because red grapes are usually left to ferment with their skins.

“The tannins in a newly bottled red wine – like a Bordeaux - will have the same effect as sucking on a stewed teabag. You will get that dry, chewy feeling and texture in the mouth. Yet, with some bottle age, these tannins soften and the wine becomes much more palatable. So red wine novices should try a light red with very soft, almost unnoticeable tannins, and a grape variety that produces a fruity style and flavours. I would suggest a French Beaujolais Villages or Fleurie.”

Fiona would recommend a Beaujolais Villages from Château de Grandmont (a rich, concentrated wine with deep colours and plenty of black cherry and raspberry fruit) or Fleurie, Clos de la Chapelle (a classic Fleurie with excellent silky fruit, penetrating concentration and the telltale iris and chocolate nose).

A GLASS A DAY
But what if you don’t like any wine? “To be honest if you don’t like wine - at all - I’m not sure there’s anything that’s going to change your mind,” Fiona added.

Surely non-red wine drinkers could get similar effects by either eating red grapes or drinking grape juice?

“Yes and no,” comments Dr Seidman. “This is because I am not convinced that it is just the resveratrol. I think the tannins and the alcohol also have some benefits. To cut a long story short have a glass of wine a day (unless its against your religion or personal beliefs) and take Body Language Vitamin Company Men or Women’s System each day – which contains resveratrol.”

ABOUT DR MICHAEL SEIDMAN
Dr Seidman has been studying noise induced hearing loss for over 25 years. He and his team have published nearly 40 articles on this topic. They were the first to show in 1988 that noise causes decreased blood supply to the inner ear and that significant noise causes enough reduction of blood flow to cause hearing loss.

He co-authored the book Save Your Hearing Now: The Revolutionary Program That Can Prevent & May Even Reverse Hearing Loss (Michael D Seidman & Marie Moneysmith). It is available on Amazon.

The study Resveratrol Shows Promise to Protect Hearing, Cognition was published in May 2013 in the journal Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery.

Dr Seidman is director of the Division of Otologic/Neurotologic Surgery at the Henry Ford Hospital.
When the editor of LISTEN suggested an article on phonophobia, my foolish first thought was that I couldn’t imagine writing a whole article on a fear of telephones. So it was perhaps as well that I started by looking up a dictionary definition.

Phonophobia is ‘a morbid fear of sounds including your own voice’. The classicists among you will know the word comes from the combination of the Greek words ‘phono’ (sound) and ‘phobia’ (sense of dread, horror). It is one of a litany of sound related conditions that also includes misophonia.

Firecracker phobia
A case report from the Malaysian Journal of Medical Sciences gives an example of what sufferers experience. It describes the symptoms of a 12-year-old girl as “acute, electrifying, intensified noise sensations in both ears when hearing sudden loud sounds.”

Apparently, this had been brought on by repeated exposure to the noise of firecrackers at Chinese New Year celebrations some weeks previously. This child now experienced extreme, intensified sounds followed by an uncomfortable buzzing sensation each time she heard ‘normal’ noises such as the rustling of a bag or the popping of a balloon.
**MISOPHONIA SYMPTOMS**
- the age of onset will often be around 10-12
- the “trigger” sounds which tend to be most difficult are connected with eating and breathing
- the reaction starts with the sound (or some aspect of the sound) and often develops to include actions associated with the sound and even anticipation of those actions
- the closer the sufferer is emotionally to the “trigger” person, the more offensive the sound tends to be
- the reaction is experienced most commonly as extreme rage
- the trigger sound can create an overwhelming flight or flight response in the sufferer

Source: www.misophonia-uk.org

**GLOSSARY**

**Phonophobia:** Fear of sounds. It is a treatable psychiatric disorder.

**Misophonia:** Dislike of sounds, sometimes quite soft sounds.

**Astraphobia** (astraphobia, brontophobia, keraunophobia, or tonitrophobia): An abnormal fear of thunder and lightning.

**Sonophobia:** A hypersensitivity a patient has to sound and can be part of a diagnosis of a migraine.

**Ligyrophobia:** Another form of phonophobia that includes a fear of devices that can suddenly emit loud sounds.

**Hyperacusis** (hyperacousis): Extreme sensitivity to everyday sounds. 40% of tinnitus patients complain of mild hyperacusis.

**BLOG BITS**

There is a blog, written anonymously, about living with misophonia. This is a window into the world of sufferers as well as a source of information and support.

http://lifewithmisophonia.wordpress.com/

Here are some excerpts from blog:

Describing misophonia: “It also includes a strong, negative reaction to the person seeing a certain motion, such as the tapping of a foot or a person biting their fingernails. These sound and sight triggers create such a reaction within the mind of the person who has misophonia that the person may feel the need to flee from the sound.”

“Relaxation and breathing techniques, however, did appear helpful at calming me down after I was able to escape the sound that was causing my negative emotions. Without using relaxation techniques, I can find that too much exposure to a trigger noise can send me into an awful mood for minutes after getting away from the sound.”

Describing their reaction to a bowl of candies in the office: “The sucking sound associated with any lollipop has always been bad for me. To make matters worse, these apple pops are coated in caramel, meaning they are very sticking and lead to constant lip smacking.”
Her reaction to these ‘normal’ sounds included “palpitations, shivering, excessive sweating and crying.” There was no history of other ear related complaints.

ENT clinical examination drew a blank. She was referred to a psychiatrist who, after a detailed evaluation, diagnosed phonophobia. A treatment programme was devised that included regular therapy sessions, relaxation techniques and a gradual exposure behavioural programme. The case study reported that the girl showed improvement in her symptoms after three months and was eventually able to enjoy fireworks again after six.

Selective sound sensitivity
So what is the relation between phonophobia and misophonia? “Phonophobia is just fear of sound, most often louder or very loud sound or particular high pitched louder sounds. Misophonia, on the other hand, is a dislike, an emotional reaction, to specific sounds that are often very soft in volume or quiet,” explains leading American expert and Doctor of Audiology, Marsha Johnson. “Many misophonics also have visual reactions to sound-producing activities, like seeing someone chew gum through a window.”

In an interview with Dr Johnson in the New York Times in September 2011, misophonia was described as sending sufferers into a blood-boiling rage when near people chewing, chomping, slurping, and gurgling.

Marsha agrees that misophonia has only been identified recently. “I would say Dr Pawell Jastreboff noticed cases back in the late 1980s and 1990s. I trained with him in 1997, and began collecting cases in my Oregon clinic. I named it Selective Sound Sensitivity. Later in 2002, he named it misophonia. The number of patients has varied but I believe I have had more contact with this group than anyone else - collectively more than 5,000 sufferers since 1997.”

Misophonia seems to strike younger people. “It affects both genders, appears to have genetic connections, and is most common around pre-puberty, ages 9 to 13, with sudden onset.”

OCD connection
But what are the causes? “I suspect some variant of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, which shows a sudden onset in pre-teen or teens, and there is discussion about bio-chemical changes in the lower or central brain regions. To date, no one is sure.”

The treatment of misophonia looks similar to that described in the Malaysian case report for phonophobia. “Various treatments have been tried. However, the dominant one at the moment is the one I developed based on Dr Jastreboff’s Tinnitus Retraining Therapy. I called it the Misophonia Management Protocol (MMP), and I have been working with a group of 11 audiologists all around the US to refine and further this treatment program. To date, the MMP has compiled initial data on 65 subjects who have completed it and have demonstrated significant improvement. The MMP uses a combination of sound therapy and psychological counseling.”

Dr Johnson is concerned that some sufferers are not being diagnosed. “I would like those with misophonia to know that this is indeed a physiologic disorder, in the way that diabetes is a physiological disorder or disease. No one creates misophonia out of force of will or emotional distress. It is a true disease with specific characteristics and we can help manage it for now. But someday we hope to see targeted research using advanced imaging techniques that will show everyone the true origin of the disorder and perhaps, provide a direction for creating a cure.”

By the way, a fear of telephones is called telephonophobia or telephobia.

SOURCES
*Phonophobia and Hyperacusis: Practical Points from a Case Report (by Zamzil Amin Asha'are, Nora Mat Zain, Ailin Razali)*
Marsha Johnson, Doctor of Audiology, is the clinical director of the Oregon Tinnitus & Hyperacusis Treatment Center in Portland, Oregon

DIG DEEPER:
Dr Johnson moderates an internet support group at Yahoo called Soundsensitivity.

There are a number of other sources of support online, including:
http://www.allaboutcounseling.com/library/phonophobia/
http://www.hearinglink.org/noisesensitivity
http://misophonia.com/
ZEN IN THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN

A NEW STUDY FROM JAPAN REVEALS THAT MUSICAL TONES SUCH AS THOSE FOUND IN THE WIDEX ZEN PROGRAM COULD BE ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO HELP PEOPLE WITH TINNITUS.

When using sound to treat the effects of tinnitus, the perceived wisdom has been to use noise from a sound generator or a hearing aid. But music can also play its part. A recent study in Japan looked at the effectiveness of what is known as Tinnitus Retraining Therapy or TRT. TRT commonly uses a combination of counselling and sound therapy. A neutral sound is often used in TRT because it is less distracting and emotional than music.

In the study, which was carried out by doctors at three hospitals in Japan, patients were given various Widex hearing aids featuring the Zen program. Zen plays random, soothing harmonic tones designed not just to manage the effects of tinnitus but also help users relax, reduce their stress and improve their concentration. The tones in Zen are also known as fractal tones, meaning that they are random and never repeat themselves.

The patients in the study could choose to use the Zen program, or take advantage of a special broadband noise option, and they could use them in combination or separately. All the hearing aids also included a Master listening program – a conventional amplification program. They were then instructed to try all these options. After six months of use, there were marked improvements for those patients who tried the fractal music or Zen option.

MUSIC TO THEIR EARS
“The cycle of the treatment with fractal music leads people to become conscious of the tinnitus first, and then conscious of the fractal music, which makes them feel relaxed, relieved and comfortable in the end,” explains one of the doctors involved, Dr Yoshimasa Sekiya. He was surprised at how positively fractal music was received. “At first I expected that people would become easily bored with the fractal music, but contrary to my expectation, most continue to choose and listen to the same music for a long period,” he says. “Most of the people with tinnitus who had difficulty with traditional treatment have improved their tinnitus by using fractal music.”

Some improved dramatically. A seventy-year-old woman with severe hearing loss and tinnitus had reduced work performance, decreased appetite, and anxiety due to her tinnitus. She had previously tried various tinnitus therapies at several clinics, but did not experience improvement. After only a month with Zen and counselling, her anxiety was significantly reduced and after three months, she was coping well with her tinnitus even without the hearing aids.
THE ENSŌ

The ensō is a sacred symbol in the Zen school of Buddhism and one of the most common subjects of Japanese calligraphy. Ensō (円相) is a Japanese word meaning “circle” even though it is a symbol and not a character. It symbolises absolute enlightenment, strength, elegance, the universe, and the void; it can also symbolise the Japanese aesthetic itself. As an “expression of the moment” the ensō symbolises a moment when the mind is free to simply let the body/spirit create, and it is often considered a form of minimalist expressionist art. Some artists will practise drawing an ensō daily, as a kind of spiritual practice.
ZEN AND NOW
The results of the study back up stories from other hearing aid users. Alison from the US uses DREAM440 hearing aids and they made an immediate impression. “I love them,” she says. “What an amazing difference in just one day. It really helps tinnitus and it’s amazing to have it on for eighty minutes at night so you can go to sleep with it in without the amplification on and not hear ‘z’ sounds in your head all the time.”

Anders, a tinnitus sufferer from Denmark, has also seen his life improved with the help of Zen. “I have been very pleased with Zen because it has increased my tolerance for noise and can mask my tinnitus if I am really tired,” he says. “I use Zen several times a day and I feel that it gives me more energy so I can work, enjoy my social life and be a more pleasant man to live with. Eventually I hope that the Zen program will make it easier for me to tolerate the noise that is in airplanes and trains so I can start to travel a little more,” says Anders.

WHAT IS ZEN?
Zen is a revolutionary tone and music program that plays random harmonic tones to help users relax. Users can choose between a range of different musical tones (called Zen styles) in major and minor keys, and volume, tempo and pitch can be adjusted to suit.

To ensure that the tones are always audible, the Zen program takes both the user’s individual hearing loss and background noise into consideration.

Zen is available in certain hearing aids such as DREAM, mind and CLEAR. There is also ZEN2GO, a unique tinnitus management device for those tinnitus sufferers without hearing loss.

WHAT IS TINNITUS?
Tinnitus is the perception of sound that’s heard in one or both ears for which there’s no external source. While commonly described as a ringing in the ears, the sounds may include roaring, clicking, hissing, or buzzing. The experience of tinnitus is individual.

Although tinnitus is heard in the ears, it stems from the neural circuits in the brain that make sense of the sounds we hear. We don’t really know what happens in the brain to create the illusion of sound when there is none.
UFFE – THE LIFE AND TIMES
- Born November 1, 1941
- Journalist and former editor of the financial daily newspaper Børsen
- Minister for Foreign Affairs 1982-1993
- Leader of the Liberal Party (Venstre) 1984-1998
- President of the European Liberals (ELDR) 1995-2000
- Co-founder of the Baltic Development Forum
- Married and has four children
- Opera lover and keen fisherman
WHO SAYS POLITICIANS DON’T LISTEN?
Former foreign minister of Denmark Uffe Ellemann-Jensen is a new Widex ambassador and an avid user of the latest hearing aid from Widex, DREAM. LISTEN caught up with him in Copenhagen.

While many politicians are used to being accused of not listening, it is not usually because they can’t. For Uffe Ellemann-Jensen though, listening is something that he cherishes - particularly now that he uses hearing aids after discovering he had a hearing loss.

Like many people, Uffe was reluctant to acknowledge his hearing loss. “I didn’t think that I had a hearing loss,” he explains. “Who, me? Well, every now and then I had to hold up my hand, but that was of course because other people mumbled. I didn’t feel I had a hearing loss. And my wife started to nag me, and after a lot of nagging, I finally said, all right, I’ll drop in to one of those hearing centres that have popped up everywhere, have a test, and then go back to her with proof that my hearing was perfect! And then I was hit by the shock. I had a considerable hearing loss.”

Uffe’s friends and family were not surprised, particularly in light of his past in the army and as an avid hunter and shooter. But they were relieved that he had finally got around to doing something about it. “My friends said, ‘Well, we just thought that you were getting older and did not want to listen to what other people had to say, and were so satisfied with listening to yourself. But now it’s an improvement, it’s so much easier to engage you in a conversation now’.”

In any case, he is eternally grateful for his wife’s insistence that he do something. “Thanks to my wife I got this push, because otherwise I might still have been going around with this sad reputation of being someone who didn’t want to listen to other people,” he says.

“LISTENING TO WAGNER WAS AN OVERWHELMING EXPERIENCE”
There were birds and they were singing
Once Uffe had made the decision, things moved quickly. “It was just a matter of a few days before I had the first set of hearing aids, just to test what it was like. And after that I had absolutely no doubt, because I remember vividly stepping out on the street with my first set of hearing aids, never having tried them before, and suddenly I could hear lots of sounds that I hadn’t heard before. Sounds from the surroundings, the traffic, and so on. And when I went out into my garden, I suddenly heard the birds. And I asked myself, ‘Where have all these birds come from? I haven’t heard birds here for years!’ And of course, they had been there all the time, I just hadn’t heard them.”

As a self-professed gadget freak, Uffe not only enjoyed getting to grips with the technology but was also happy to realise just how easy it was. “I was surprised to find out how relatively simple the whole process was,” he says. “Very, very small pieces, very easy to fit in, and then a lot of new possibilities, where I learned about all the different programs with which you could adjust the hearing aids. And all the extra gadgets you could use, where you could combine your smart phone with your hearing aids, and your MP3 player. Suddenly you can have music, and a small device that you can put on your TV, and get TV sound.”

From dinner to Wagner
Actually using them has been nothing less than remarkable. From being active in social occasions to listening to music at home, Uffe has experienced a vast improvement in his hearing. “I move in a lot of circles where you go to meetings, go to big dinners, and so on, and I have felt a considerable improvement in getting a better impression of what is actually said,” Uffe says. “When you sit, for instance at a dinner party with a lot of people present, it was previously very hard to hear what the person next to you was saying. Now it’s so much easier. Just a few clicks on the remote control in your pocket, and suddenly you have a new program that makes it easier to concentrate on what the people sitting closest to you are saying, or to get an impression of what the overall conversation is all about. So it has certainly been an improvement.”

And listening to music too has been a revelation. “The first time I heard a Wagner overture played inside my head, well, it was an overwhelming experience for an old Wagner buff,” he says.

Join them, don’t beat them
Uffe’s past as a respected journalist and politician, and his abilities as a thoughtful and articulate speaker, make him an ideal Widex ambassador. His personal charisma and humour made him popular on the domestic scene, where he remains quite a celebrity. He is best remembered outside Denmark for an incident in 1992, when the Danes - who had just rejected the Maastricht treaty against his recommendations - won the final of the European Football Championships. Reacting to Denmark’s famous win, he charmed the international press by announcing: “If you can’t join them, beat them”. Thankfully, he had decided to join Widex rather than beat us.

Having a high profile in the community gives Uffe a sense of responsibility. “As a public figure, you have the opportunity to make a difference by standing up and saying, ‘if I can, so can the rest of you’.” He is unwavering in his advice to others. “My recommendation to friends and acquaintances is that if they are in my situation, go and have your hearing checked! And if you find out that you have a hearing loss, don’t hesitate: get hearing aids. It will mean an improvement in your quality of life, and will make you so much more effective in what you are doing,” he says.

For the complete interview with Uffe Ellemann-Jensen see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqfkjPH6Qr8

WHAT IS A WIDEX AMBASSADOR?
Ambassadors work with Widex to raise awareness of hearing issues and encourage others to take up hearing aids. Other ambassadors include football manager Morten Olsen, acclaimed artist Per Arnoldi and Indian cricket star Syed Kirmani.
The speed of sound measured in miles per hour (1,230 kilometres per hour).

0

The number of ears on a fish. Fish can hear pressure changes through ridges on their body.

billion. The number estimated to be affected by hearing loss by 2015.
The percentage of hearing impaired people in Japan who use hearing aids.

The number of dBs a baby’s cry can reach - louder than a car horn!

Humans are born with 30,000 cochlear and vestibular hair cells per ear.

The percentage of hearing impaired people in Norway who use hearing aids.

The percentage of the world’s population affected by hearing loss by 2015.

The number of kilometres it is believed an elephant can hear another elephant’s call, under ideal conditions.

March 3 is observed as the International Ear and Hearing Care Day. This date was chosen because the two 3s in the date represent two ears.
MONGOLIA – THE FACTS

Full name: Mongolia
Population: 2.8 million (UN, 2012)
Number of livestock: 40 million
Capital: Ulan Bator
Area: 1.56 million sq. km
(603,909 sq. miles)
Major language: Mongolian
Major religion: Buddhism
Life expectancy: 65 years (men),
73 years (women) (UN)
Monetary unit: 1 Togrog (tugrik) = 100 mongos
Main exports: Copper concentrate, cashmere,
textiles, hides
HEARING

MONGOLIA
Mobile home: the ger, or yurt, is a common sight in Mongolia and suits the nomadic lifestyle of the herders perfectly.
Mongolia has a high incidence of hearing loss and people have limited access to hearing care. A team of Widex audiologists have been helping to train local hearing care professionals and providing much needed expertise.

When Australian audiologist Jenny Smith travelled to Mongolia in 2009, the contrast from her native Melbourne could not have been greater. She left Australia as the temperature reached record highs of 37 degrees, and arrived to the frozen steppes of Mongolia with a top of minus 17. “The locals cheerfully told me it was very warm,” she says. “And next week the expected temperature was minus 30 degrees.”

Mongolia is only two hours behind Melbourne but a lifetime away culturally and economically. Landlocked between China and Russia, it was under Soviet rule for most of the twentieth century. The most obvious legacy of this today is the barren and austere architecture still prevalent throughout the capital, Ulan Bator.

Since the fall of communism though, Mongolia has been busy opening itself up to the west and now has one of the fastest growing economies in the world, with tourism and the export of cashmere at the forefront. And more recently, the economy is being revitalised by massive foreign investment in Mongolia’s vast mining reserves.

However, despite its potential, Mongolia remains poor and faces many social and economic challenges. The United Nations estimate that 27 percent of Mongolia’s urban population live below the poverty line and in rural areas that number is nearly 50 percent. And according to the World Health Organization, Ulan Bator has the world’s worst air pollution.

Acute need
It is hardly surprising then that most people have limited access to basic amenities such as electricity and running water, and that adequate health care is scarce. And this also means that hearing loss is widespread. According to Jenny, there is “a high incidence of hearing loss, as well as poorly managed middle ear diseases. Poor overall medical care and hygiene can result in middle ear disease which if not treated causes long-term chronic hearing loss,” she says. “So there is an acute need for hearing aids, but at the same time there is little knowledge of them.”

To help remedy this, Jenny travelled to Mongolia (along with experienced audiologist Mimi Shirako from Widex Japan) to take part in a hearing assessment and rehabilitation programme. The programme was established by Widex to help train and educate local hearing care professionals in the newly emerging hearing care industry. “It was comprehensive,” says Jenny. “We covered everything - from the latest hearing aid technology to ENT assessment and treatment to counselling to battery and repair service.”

“The people we met tackled it all with wonderful enthusiasm and energy,” she smiles. And she was overwhelmed by the high standards of audiology on offer when she first visited Widex distributor’s Mon-Anir clinic. “What I found would be a credit to any...
Perhaps the one Mongolian everybody has heard of, Genghis Khan was the notorious leader whose name is synonymous with warfare and conquest. Under Genghis Khan, the Mongolian empire stretched all the way to Europe. In 1211, Genghis and his army unleashed a massive onslaught on China and with the Great Wall proving no deterrent, Beijing was captured. Kahn himself though died on the way; rumour has it that his body was carried back to Mongolia by a funeral cortege of ten thousand men who murdered every man and beast within ten miles of the road so that news of Kahn’s death could not be reported before his family had been gathered from the farthest corners of the empire.
western hearing aid dispenser,” she recalls. “A well-signed, bright, spotless clinic with a welcoming front desk and up-to-the-minute marketing material on the latest hearing aids. There was a large well-presented clinic room and a huge paediatric soundproof booth, easily meeting international standards, an immaculate earmould laboratory. Laptops and PC’s in abundance, all with Microsoft Office 2007, high speed internet access, and widescreen plasma monitors.”

Out of tune
But it wasn’t all work and no play. Jenny remembers one evening in particular: “In the depths of winter in Outer Mongolia, I found myself in an Italian restaurant drinking a pleasant Californian red and being personally serenaded by a Mongolian pop star, with the black brush back hair and wraparound sunglasses, singing ‘Sailing’, followed by ‘Amazing Grace’! My response was a terrible rendition of ‘Yesterday’ with my local Mongolian colleague, Munkho Liira. I discovered this highly entrepreneurial and driven man, with excellent skills in audiological counselling, staff team building and business networking, also has a great singing voice – alas I do not. The band’s sound system was rather more primitive, and whilst the locals delighted in their new knowledge of feedback, a good cancellation system would have been highly desirable. As I returned to the Chinggis Khan Hotel with a temporary threshold shift and a headache, I reflected that my life as an audiologist with the Widex Team had brought me some truly fascinating experiences!”

A land of contrast
The team at Mon-Anir are committed to providing a high standard of audiological care throughout the country, not just in the capital. When Jenny returned in the summer of 2012 - this time to a lush green land of sunshine and warmth - she ventured off the beaten track in a convoy of four-wheel drives together with the local team. They visited primary health care centres deep in the Mongolian hills, sleeping in the local gers (tents), eating wonderful fresh local food, and providing practical training on the diagnosis and management of hearing loss and hearing aid fitting. “It was an unforgettable experience,” says Jenny, “and a privilege to work with such wonderful people, dedicated to improving the lives and opportunities of all Mongolians.”

The training has paid off and today the Widex distrib- utor employs twenty people uniquely placed to make a difference in the lives of people with hearing loss. According to Sales and Business Development Manager Christopher Munns, “it is helping people in such a remote country that is the most rewarding. After all, this is what it’s all about.”

MINING BOOM
Mongolia sits atop some of the world’s largest mineral reserves, estimated to be worth trillions of dollars. One of them, Oyu Tolgoi (or Turquoise Hill), is a huge copper and gold ore deposit in Southern Mongolia that is larger than the state of Florida. However, the mining boom has also raised concerns about the environmental impact on a country where nearly 40 percent of the population are herd-ers (Indeed livestock are revered so much that they are protected in the constitution as ‘national wealth’ to be protected by the state).

There are also signs that large-scale mining has increased the instances of noise-induced hearing loss. According to a report from the Mongolian Nature and Environment Consortium, gold miners for example, are at high risk of suffering from deafness and hearing impairment.
PHILIPPINES  Ledesma Audiological Center  
POLAND  Widex Polska Sp. z.o.o. S.K.A.  
PORTUGAL  Widex - Reabilitação Auditiva, Lda.  
ROMANIA  Sonorom SRL  
RUSSIA  000 “Widex”  
SAUDI ARABIA  Basha Medical Group  
SERBIA  OPTICUS d.o.o.  
SINGAPORE  Widex Singapore Pte Ltd  
SLOVAKIA  WIDEX SLOVTON Slovakia s.r.o.  
SLOVENIA  Slusni Aparati - Widex d.o.o.  
SOUTH AFRICA  Widex South Africa  
SPAIN  Widex Audifonos S.A.  
SRI LANKA  D.S. Jayasinghe Opticians (Pvt) Ltd.  
SUDAN  Sudanese Hearing Center  
SWEDEN  AB Widex  
SWITZERLAND  Widex Hörgeräte AG  
SYRIA  TEBA Medical Equipment  
TAIWAN  Melody Medical Instrument Corp  
THAILAND  D MED Hearing Center Co.,Ltd.  
TUNISIA  C. M. Acoustiques  
TURKEY  Widex Tibbi ve Teknik Cihazlar San. ve Tic. A.S.  
UKRAINE  ReOton  
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES  Widex Emirates Hearing Care  
UNITED KINGDOM  Widex UK  
URUGUAY  Audilux  
USA  Widex USA, Inc.  
VENEZUELA  Instituto Auditivo Widex S.A.  
VIETNAM  QUANG DUC HEARING SERVICES Co., Ltd.  
YEMEN  National Hearing Center
By choosing Widex, you are choosing a company that has been WindMade certified. WindMade is the first global consumer label identifying companies that use wind power.