



Bill Schiffmiller

Bill Schiffmiller, Founder and CEO of Akoio™, is dedicated to enhancing the lives of people with hearing loss and noise issues. Inspired during graduate school at Pratt Institute by the lack of innovation in hearing products, Bill founded Akoio to transform the maintenance of hearing wellness into a rewarding experience. With a background as a leader of Accessibility Advocacy for Apple, Inc., and influenced by the universal design philosophy of Sam Farber, founder of OXO, Bill brings his passion for accessibility to Akoio, striving to empower individuals to live their fullest lives while effectively managing their hearing and noise-related concerns. Bill and his wife led missions to provide hearing aids to hard-of-hearing Filipinos in the Philippines.

bill@akoio.com



Michael Piskosz

Michael Piskosz, Director of Research at Akoio, is deemed the global expert for tinnitus and sound sensitivity. During his 15+ years of hearing aid manufacturing experience at GN ReSound and Oticon Medical, he has been a pioneer in creating accessible and affordable digital tinnitus solutions. He has authored numerous articles and has presented in over 25 countries.

michael@akoio.com

The Problem of Noise

Lifelong Sound Health by Akoio®

Bill Schiffmiller

Michael Piskosz

Are we prepared to manage the long-term societal health implications of continuous exposure to intrusive and disruptive noise levels in our lives?

Do we have the wellness tools to counterbalance the negative effects of noise?

Noise can have short term, long term or permanent debilitating effects. In response we established Akoio, with a mission of combating the adverse impacts of disruptive noise while harnessing the power of sound wellness for a healthier and more balanced life. In doing so we're pioneering a revolutionary era in consumer wellness. We're introducing a unique life-long sound management approach for all. The Akoio Life-Long Sound Health Model addresses three cornerstones to improve overall wellness through sonic experiences.

Lifelong Sound Health cornerstones:

- 1. Mitigate disruptive noise***
- 2. Enhance sound wellness***
- 3. Maximize communication***

Helping people mitigate disruptive noise in their lives addresses the unspoken need to reduce the toxic levels of noise that affect us as a society and degrade our overall well-being. The fact that we can't see, taste, or smell noise may help explain why it has not received as much attention as other types of pollution, such as air and water. Unwanted noise is around us every day, yet most of us would probably not say we are surrounded by noise that is detrimental to our lives.

We have learned to live with noise, tolerate and co-exist with it, but is it allowing us to live better?

According to The National Library of Medicine (NIH), "Over 100 million Americans are exposed to unhealthy levels of noise."* The effect of noise goes beyond the auditory system and hearing loss. Noise is associated with an increased incidence of cardiovascular diseases, annoyance, disturbed sleep, and impaired cognitive performance. The effects of excessive noise affect our health and our ability to work. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), excessive noise can result in a 5-10% decrease in productivity, affecting communication, focus and concentration. Excessive noise at home, caused by loud neighbourhoods , daily landscaping, local traffic, or construction can interfere with remote work, daily routines and disturb sleep patterns, leading to sleep deprivation, fatigue, and poorer overall well-being. Noise is ubiquitous, and having the proper tools and services to mitigate noise over time helps manage our current environments and allows for preventive measures to delay the onset of hearing loss and other health concerns.**

Enhancing sound wellness, by incorporating therapeutic and rejuvenating sonic experiences into our daily lives, can help reduce stress, restore energy, and improve concentration, focus

and overall well-being. These healthy sonic experiences can also counterbalance disruptive and intrusive noise. Providing consumers solutions to exchange disruptive noise with enhanced sonic experiences can lead to improved health and performance.

Current channels for sound and noise management products do little to understand user needs. Finding expert advice to help match the best product to a specific need is confusing, complicated and often times unavailable. Users often don't have time to explore products in great detail on their own or are left to make choices based on limited knowledge. This can result in cycling through multiple products before finding an appropriate solution, leading to product selection that does not enhance their sonic experience, or even worse, purchasing products that fall short of addressing their needs.

Noise is hard to escape and is increasingly intrusive and disruptive throughout our daily lives, but where can we go to address this? As we continue to strive to become a healthier society in the future, accessible and affordable platforms that help us to perform at our best will be the leaders of that charge. Because of this, Akoio believes it is essential to consider the social, economic, and health implications of noise exposure and work towards creating more equitable and healthier living environments for all members of society. Managing disruptive noise, while enhancing our sound wellness, can improve productivity, health, and connection in our daily lives and communities.

The medical model of sound and noise management is audiology. While audiology is crucial in delivering prescriptive hearing solutions to patients with moderate to severe hearing loss, which primarily focuses on improving communication, this model lacks solutions for people who need sound and noise management help

and do not require hearing aids. The audiology model is reactive and focused on diagnosing hearing loss and determining appropriate hearing aids. Audiologists provide late-life amplification solutions, where the average hearing aid user is 60 years old.* The audiology industry faces challenges reaching younger generations, expanding their commercial sound and noise management services and offering affordable solutions. There is hardly any focus on preventative care or solutions focused on improving overall well-being by mitigating intrusive noise and utilizing sound wellness.**

There are ways to provide lifelong sound solutions without the use of hearing aids. By making lifelong sound management accessible and affordable to all, we can facilitate much-needed awareness and education around these issues, while providing solutions and services that allow everyone to proactively mitigate detrimental noise and incorporate healthier sound wellness behavior in their lives. Akoio's mission is to empower people of all generations to become more productive, feel more rested, and increase their overall well-being.

References:

* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4819987/>

** <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/noise/default.html>

***<https://hearingreview.com/inside-hearing/research/marketrak-2022-navigating-the-changing-landscape-hearing-healthcare>