

Lifelong Sound Health

A FRAMEWORK OF AUDITORY HEALTH ACROSS OUR LIFESPAN.

akoio®

Introduction

To truly make an impact on auditory health, we need to flip the script. Akoio introduces a new modern auditory health framework that engages consumers earlier, by understanding their unique generational needs.

Consumer narratives of hearing aids and cognitive decline currently dominate the auditory health conversation, however, these approaches don't resonate with younger generations below the age of 60. This leaves the vast majority of the population left with unmet services and proper auditory solutions.

People don't realize that they are in the position to control and manage their auditory needs over time.

Akoio's *Lifelong Sound Health* changes that, by offering a fresh approach to auditory health that prioritizes generational distinction, moving beyond the ineffective strategies of the past.

This report establishes the groundwork for understanding the unique needs of each generation and highlights the importance of supporting consumers throughout their auditory health journey with a concept we call *Lifelong Sound Health*.

Bill Schiffmiller is founder of Akoio, a consultancy on Accessibility and Auditory matters. An Accessibility thought leader and business innovator, advocating innovative consumer approaches that opposes demeaning conventional models of patient care and "disabilities."

A former leader of Accessibility Initiatives at Apple and co-inventor of the Akoio hearing aid battery dispenser, Bill brings years of unique perspectives on design and accessibility.

Michael Piskosz is Akoio Director of Research and Client Relations. Michael is a global thought leader on auditory health, tinnitus innovation, and consumer behavior in the hearing health space and beyond. He is well-connected with leaders in the industry, contributing to the advancement of auditory health through his extensive network.


Together, Bill and Michael, created Akoio Consulting to focus on noise mitigation, accessibility and auditory matters. Leverage from their expertise and network to help your business's goals and objectives.



Bill Schiffmiller
Founder



Michael Piskosz
Director, Research

A person with long, wavy blonde hair is seen from the back, wearing large black over-ear headphones with the 'Marshall' logo. They are holding a black smartphone in their hands. They are wearing a dark blue jacket with a mustard yellow collar and a silver chain strap. The background is a blurred train, suggesting motion.

It's not just about
Hearing Loss, it's
Lifelong Sound Health.



Why this report is Important.

Current auditory health models primarily focus on late-life hearing loss, addressing only 20% of the world population.* This approach leaves many without adequate support, particularly those experiencing auditory challenges earlier in life.


Akoio recognizes a pressing need to shift from reactive hearing aid purchases to proactive strategies, broadening the scope of auditory care to address hearing health across all ages – Akoio identifies this as *Generational Distinction*.

The World Health Organization (WHO) projects that by 2050, 2.5 billion people will require auditory services, doubling today's numbers.**

Akoio stresses there is an urgent need to transform current models to accommodate growing demand and increase proactivity.

* https://www.who.int/health-topics/hearing-loss#tab=tab_2

** <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/deafness-and-hearing-loss>



What comes to
mind when people
think of noise,
sound and hearing?

We don't realize the urgency of auditory health.

Society overlooks noise, sound, and hearing as interconnected wellness issues impacting our overall wellbeing.

Excessive noise contributes to stress and health problems yet is rarely thought of or considered in public health discussions. Most people do not realize that constant exposure to disruptive noise can lead to cumulative auditory health fatigue and damage over time.

Many people overlook the powerful benefits of sound and how it can enhance performance and overall well-being. Auditory health is not just about addressing hearing loss, it is about understanding noise, sound, and hearing throughout life for optimal wellness.



© Adobe

Lifelong Sound Health

Unlike traditional models focusing on late-life care, The *Akoio Lifelong Sound Health* approach thrives on proactive auditory care and understanding the evolving effects of *mitigating disruptive noise, enhancing sound wellness and maximizing communication* across each person's lifespan.

The *Lifelong Sound Health* model is designed for each age group, from educating the young about loud music and gaming to aiding older adults with hearing technology to improve communication. This generational distinction understands each person has a different entry point onto their personal auditory journey.



*85% of all children
will have an ear
infection before
school age.**

© shutterstock.com/wavebreakmedia

Start early by planting the seed.

Auditory health in the birth - 11 years age range plays a critical role in shaping a child's development, setting the foundation for effective communication, learning, and social interaction. Early testing and identification of hearing issues are paramount, as even mild hearing loss can significantly impact speech and language development during these formative years.


Education around auditory health must be a priority, not only within schools but for parents as well. By ensuring timely screenings, particularly during infancy and preschool years,

early detection can address potential auditory challenges before they escalate.

Parents play a pivotal role in guiding their children through this developmental stage, from managing ear infections to limiting exposure to loud noises, instilling healthier auditory habits

Proactive and informed care during these years will have a lasting impact on a child's ability to thrive, making auditory health a cornerstone of their overall development.

* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470332/>



12-19 age
group

*43% of gamers
experience tinnitus
after playing. – WHO**

© Shutterstock

Auditory world is constantly “on.”

12-19 year olds are driving a shift towards the personalization of sound, especially within gaming and virtual socialization.

However, this always-on lifestyle and the constant “fear of missing out” (FOMO) are contributing to an emerging auditory health crisis. With 43% of gamers experiencing tinnitus after playing, there’s a growing need for awareness and protection in these generations.

They want to stay connected and have personalized experiences, yet they need to be conscious of the long-term impact of noise exposure.

Addressing this issue requires proactive measures to reduce noise levels while ensuring that these young individuals can continue to enjoy their immersive, social, and connected experiences without compromising their auditory health.

** WHO, Safe listening in video gaming and esports, 2023*



20-29
age group

74% feel technology
helps “me express
who I am.” – CTA*

© Midjourney image generator

It's all about new experiences.

The 20-29 year olds value experience, growth, and independence above all else, making them less receptive to traditional messaging centered around later-in-life issues like hearing loss, cognitive decline, and dementia.

Instead, their focus is on proactive health measures that allow them to enjoy the present while safeguarding their future. They seek to mitigate noise without compromising their experiences, embracing a lifestyle of responsible listening to protect their overall wellness.

For them, it's about staying socially connected, living in the moment, and ensuring that their passion for sound doesn't lead to long-term auditory issues.

Addressing their needs requires a shift in messaging towards awareness, protection, and preserving the quality of their experiences, rather than focusing on problems to be fixed later in life.

* CTA Report January 2024: *Exploring Technology Preferences Among Gen Z*



68% of
Americans say
they would
consider the
noise level at
work when
making future
employment
decisions
– Quiet Mark*

Family, career, growth and planning

For individuals aged 30 to 49, balancing the demands of working families, connectivity, and financial security is crucial. These responsibilities, coupled with the need to manage health, achieve quality sleep, and maintain job security, drive their desire for high performance and energy in their personal and professional lives.

Auditory fatigue and noise disruptions are significant barriers, with Akoio research revealing that 40% of this group report noise interrupting their sleep quality.

Poor auditory health can lead to reduced income and career opportunities, making it even more critical to address these challenges. To support their well-being, it's essential to offer solutions that enhance work productivity, household manageability, and job security while protecting them from the negative impacts of noise and auditory fatigue.

* Quiet Mark USA, *National Noise Report*, January 2022



*66% in US report hearing enhancement will influence next purchase of earbuds. – Qualcomm**

© iStock/bernardbodo

It's “Me Time,” I deserve it.

For individuals aged 50 to 64, this stage of life is about enjoying the fruits of their hard work—embracing “Me Time” and the benefits they’ve earned.

However, the onset of disruptive hearing loss presents new challenges, prompting many to consider OTC hearing aids to maintain their social connections, performance, and relevance.

With cognitive health risks on the horizon, there’s a growing need for seamless, personalized tech solutions that enhance their experiences and protect their well-being.

Addressing these needs involves:

- Tackling issues like disruptive noise
- Ensuring reliable wireless connectivity
- Providing knowledgeable consumer retail experiences to help them navigate their options effectively

This age group values solutions that integrate smoothly into their lives, offering enhancement and protection to keep them connected and thriving.

**State of Sound, 2023 Report*

Gracefully Aging

For individuals aged 65 and older, this phase of life is about aging gracefully while maintaining an active and engaged social presence.

This is the stage where hearing loss becomes increasingly prominent and often disruptive. Prescriptive hearing aids become relevant and necessary, fostering stronger relationships with audiologists.

As consumer behavior shifts, there is a growing demand for accessible and seamless user experiences with technology that simplifies life rather than complicates it. These individuals seek solutions that help them stay socially connected, sharp, and fully engaged in their communities.

This generation values simplicity and effectiveness, seeking out technology to seamlessly integrate into their lives while enhancing their ability to conquer the road ahead.



© Freepik

More than 2/3 of this age group has hearing loss with unresolved noise-related issues.

American employment rate for those over 75 has reached its highest level since 2009, with 1 in 12 still working.

© iStock

Staying Dynamic

The 80+ age group is witnessing unprecedented changes, with many continuing to lead active professional and social lives.

The employment rate for Americans over 75 has reached its highest level since 2009, with 1 in 12 still working. Whether driven by the love of their careers, financial need, or a shift in retirement perspectives, older adults are redefining what it means to age in today's society.

This generation brings invaluable contributions to society, offering loyalty, experience, and adaptability. Hearing health is

paramount as they continue to work and engage socially. Hearing loss significantly impacts both their professional and social interactions.

For those 80 and older, seamless auditory solutions are critical, with technology that adapts to their needs—hearing aids or workplace adjustments—ensuring that they stay connected and engaged. Accessible, user-friendly auditory care becomes essential as workplaces adapt to older workers and society rethinks aging. In this stage of life, auditory health is about more than staying connected—it's about continuing to thrive.

Cornerstones of Lifelong Sound Health.

Lifelong Sound Health empowers consumers by addressing three key areas, mitigating disruptive noise, enhancing sound wellness, and maximizing communication across their lifespan. Each pillar provides tailored solutions to meet evolving generational needs, ensuring support at every stage of life.

Sound Wellness

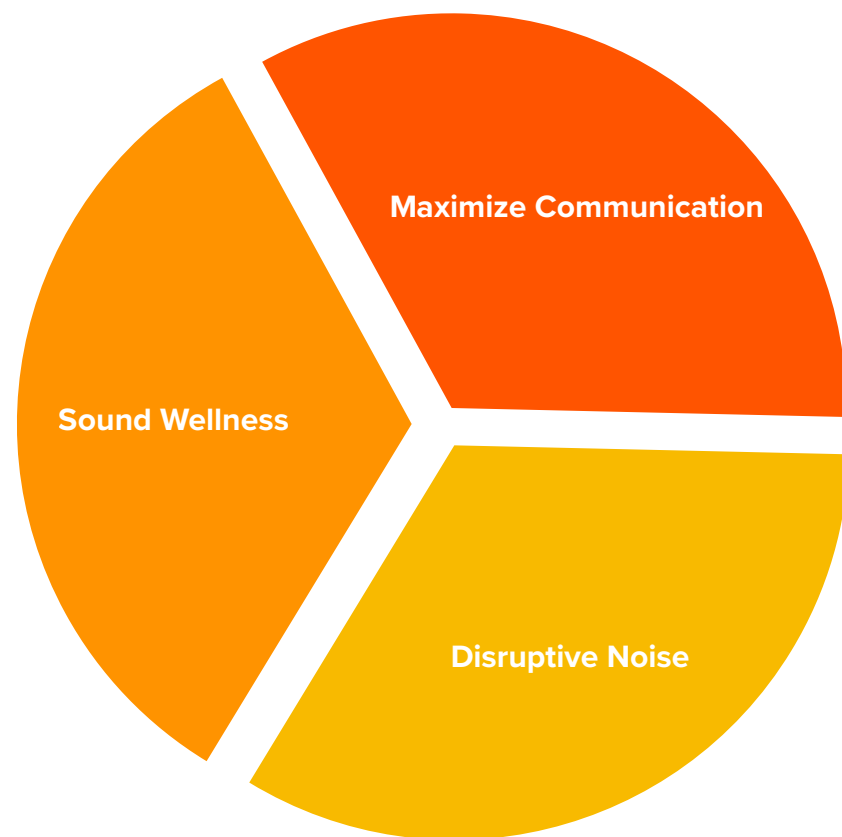
Sound wellness varies by generation due to different auditory environments and preferences. Older adults often benefit from quiet, soothing environments for relaxation and cognitive support, while younger generations may prefer curated soundscapes that enhance mood and reduce stress. Tailoring sound to these needs promotes mental and emotional well-being across age groups.

Maximize Communication

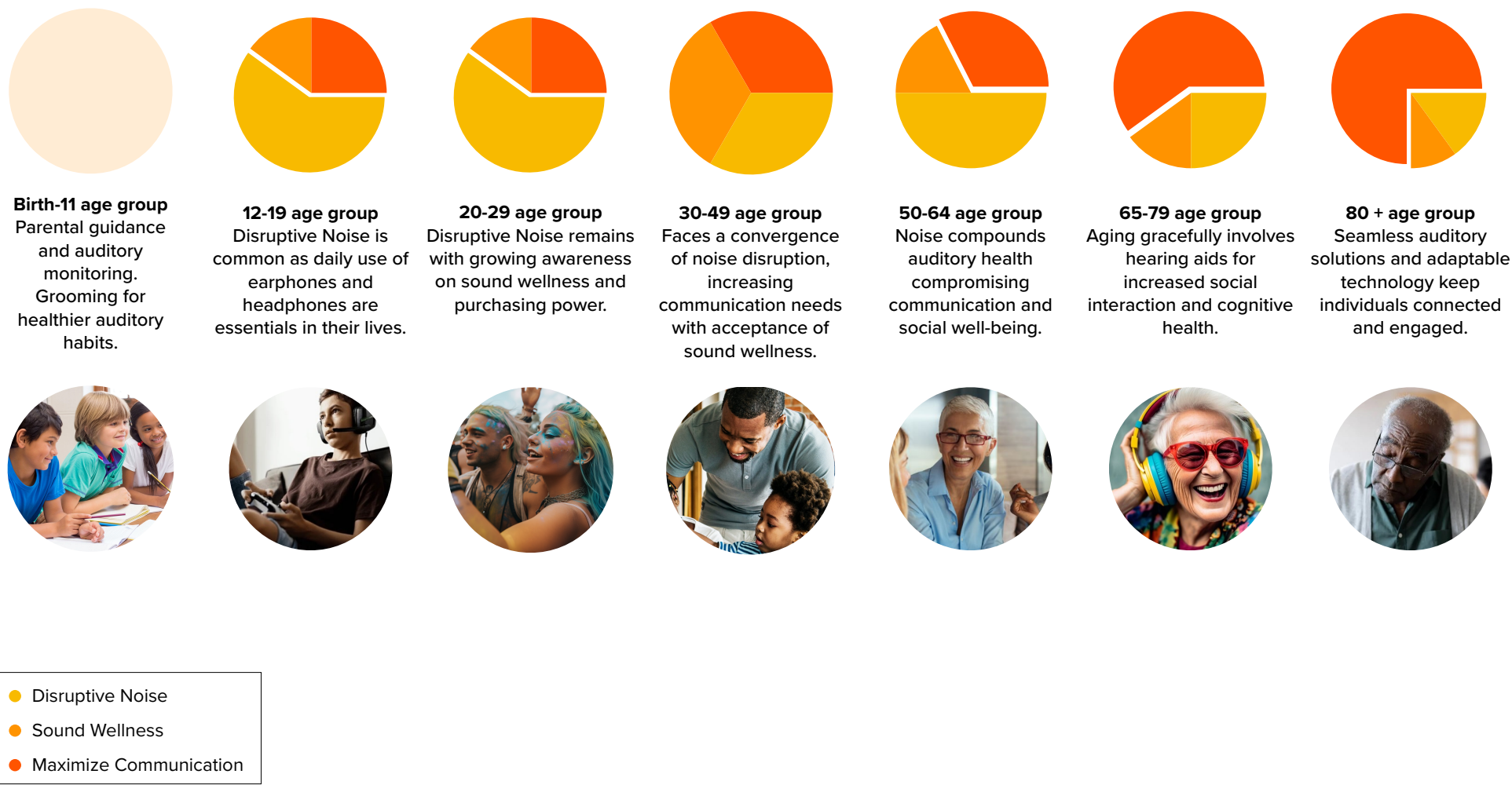
Generational differences impact communication. Older adults face hearing loss, making hearing aids and clear speech essential. Younger generations struggle with digital distractions and noisy environments. Addressing these needs through technology, environmental adjustments, and communication strategies can enhance clarity and connection across all age groups.

Disruptive Noise

Each generation faces distinct challenges with disruptive noise. Older adults may experience noise-induced hearing loss from prolonged exposure in workplaces, while younger generations contend with digital noise from constant device usage and urban living. This auditory fatigue can lead to stress, sleep disturbances, and decreased productivity. Tailoring noise mitigation strategies to each generation's unique experiences is crucial for improving overall well-being and focus.



Generational order of needs



Lifelong sound health across lifespan.

Identify ("Need to Know")	Awareness (Start early)	Protection (Healthy Habits)	Performance (Auditory Fatigue)	Enhancement (OTC Hearing Aids)	Communication (Prescriptive Hearing Aids)
<p>Importance of regular hearing assessments for all age groups.</p> <p>Early detection and intervention as a key factor in maintaining lifelong sound health.</p> <p>Testing protocols adapted to different age demographics.</p>	<p>Educate each generation on the importance of hearing health.</p> <p>Create awareness about risks and protective measures.</p> <p>Early education for younger generations on the dangers of loud noise.</p>	<p>Encourage the adoption of healthy listening habits across all age groups.</p> <p>Promote the use of hearing protection in high-risk environments.</p> <p>Advocate for the long-term benefits of preventative care.</p>	<p>Address issues of auditory fatigue, particularly in working families and older adults.</p> <p>Strategies to maintain optimal auditory performance throughout the day.</p> <p>Techniques for reducing auditory strain in different environments.</p>	<p>Provide information and access to Over-the-Counter (OTC) hearing aids as a viable option for enhancement.</p> <p>Target younger adults and those with mild to moderate hearing loss.</p> <p>Focus on affordability and accessibility.</p>	<p>Emphasize the role of prescriptive hearing aids in improving communication for those with significant hearing loss.</p> <p>Tailored solutions for older adults and those with advanced hearing needs.</p> <p>Integration with modern communication technologies.</p>

People want to be proactive, yet don't know where to start.

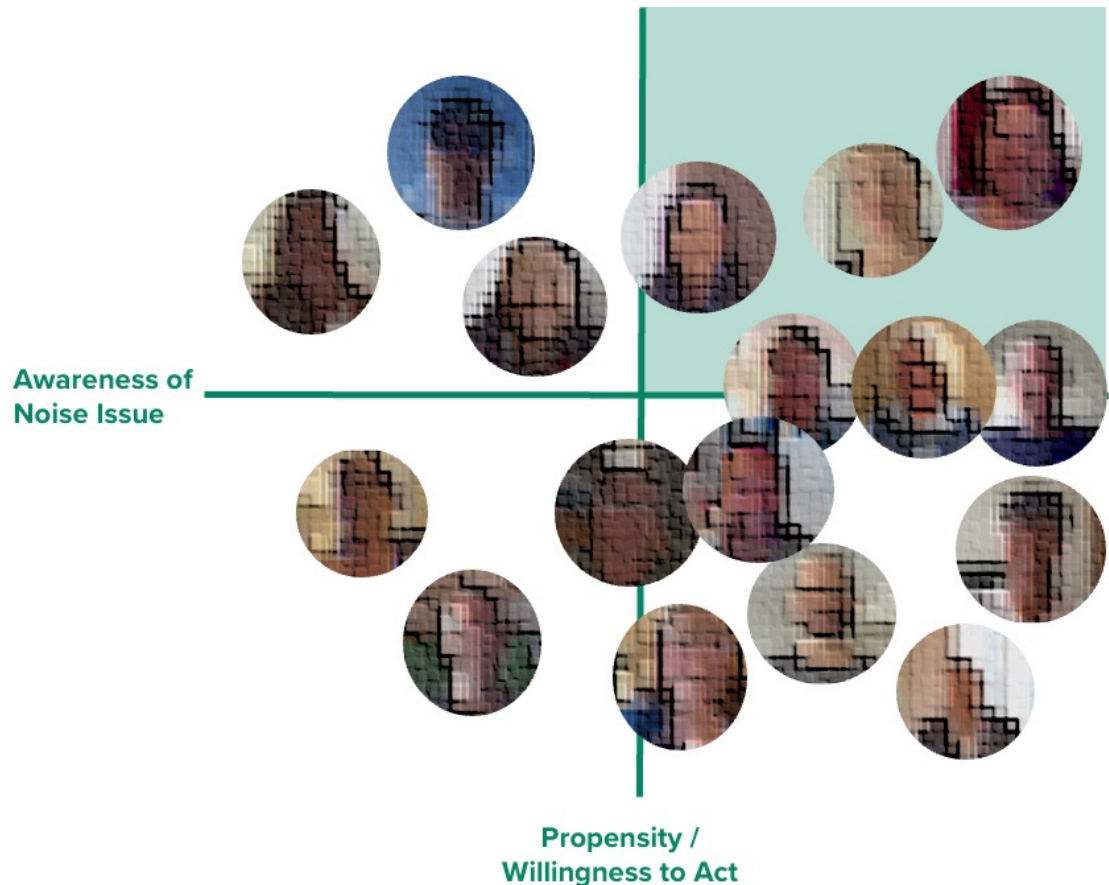
60%

More aware of sound health
in the last year.*

33%

Akoio subjects willing to act
on sound health.*

* Akoio Voice of the Customer
research, 2023, n= 30



Begin with meeting people where they are at.



© Getty Images

Beyond Awareness

Embracing Lifelong Sound Health is doable and sensible – designed to accommodate changing auditory needs as we age.

Our next steps must focus on cultivating healthy habits that support this journey. Acknowledging the importance of auditory health is not enough. We must actively engage in practices that sustain it over time.

Healthy Habits

Early adoption of protective behaviors and age-appropriate hearing check-ups lays the foundation for a future where auditory health is a natural part of everyone's wellness routine.

Akoio, Conquer Life®

Akoio, the thought leader and pioneer of *Lifetime Sound Health*, is your partner in devising effective strategies to implement sound health initiatives within your organization.

Together, we can turn awareness into action, ensuring that auditory health becomes integral to healthy living for generations to come.

Akoio Offerings

Is your organization ready to take the first step toward enhancing auditory health and productivity?

At Akoio, we understand that auditory health is not just a wellness issue—it's a business imperative. From mitigating workplace noise to providing tailored auditory solutions, our services help create environments where employees thrive and stay connected.

Investing in auditory health fosters engagement, reduces distractions, and improves overall performance. Let Akoio guide your organization in developing a strategy that benefits your team and the bottom line. Akoio is driven by data that tell compelling stories.

Take the first step toward auditory and accessibility initiatives and business success with Akoio. **Contact us today.**

The Akoio Guides™

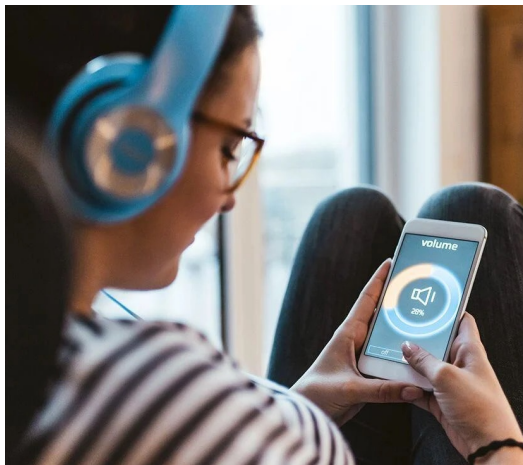
Getting started with Lifelong Sound Health.



[Click here for the Akoio Guides.](#)

Services

Product & Service Delivery



We enhance customer segmentation and messaging through generational insights and consumer behavior analysis. Drawing from our extensive experience in product delivery, retail, and consumer behaviors, we bring unique business insights to brands, ensuring they resonate with diverse customer needs and preferences.

The Akoio Network



Leverage our network to collaborate and connect with companies dedicated to reshaping accessibility and auditory thinking and gaining deeper insights into the realms of noise, sound, and hearing across the healthspan.

Workplace Productivity



We leverage our expertise to improve workplace environments and employee well-being through sound wellness initiatives that help businesses create healthier, more productive spaces and stronger employee connections.

Contact us: akoio@akoio.com

FIND OUT MORE.

akoio[®]

akoio@akoio.com

www.akoio.io

