EDUCATED CONSUMERS HEAR BETTER

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President

ABRAM BAILEY, AUD

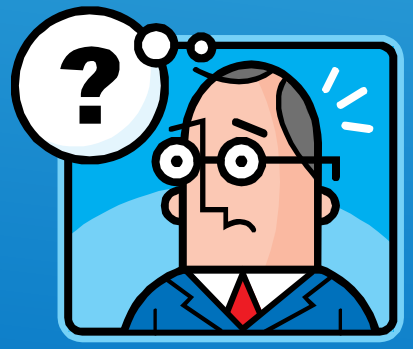
- Doctor of Audiology
- Graduated Vanderbilt University in 2009
- Founder and CEO, Hearing Tracker, Inc

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- The problem with hearing care
- How to find a hearing provider
- Understanding hearing aid features
- **Find better care using Hearing Tracker**
- Discussion

THE PROBLEM WITH HEARING CARE

- *Consumer Reports* estimates that as many as **two-thirds** of hearing aids in the US are misfit
- A large percentage of audiologists still fail to provide "essential services"
- Receiving essential services greatly improves the chances for success with hearing aids



"…consumers can be satisfied with a hearing aid, but significantly more satisfied if all best practices are employed…" – Sergei Kochkin

MORE PROBLEMS WITH HEARING CARE

- Many audiologists and hearing instrument specialists focus on hearing aids and forget about other **hearing assistance technologies**
- Not enough focus on the **needs assessment** and the provision of comprehensive solutions

"It could be as simple as hearing aids equipped with telecoils (so you can, for example, access hearing loops in your community) and some instructive counseling. It might be as intricate as hearing aids, telecoils, ALDs and formal training in speechreading and other strategies. How simple or involved depends upon your particular needs." – Cynthia Compton-Conley

HOW TO FIND A HEARING PROVIDER

KNOW **WHAT TO LOOK FOR**

HOW TO FIND A HEARING PROVIDER

KNOW WHAT TO LOOK FOR

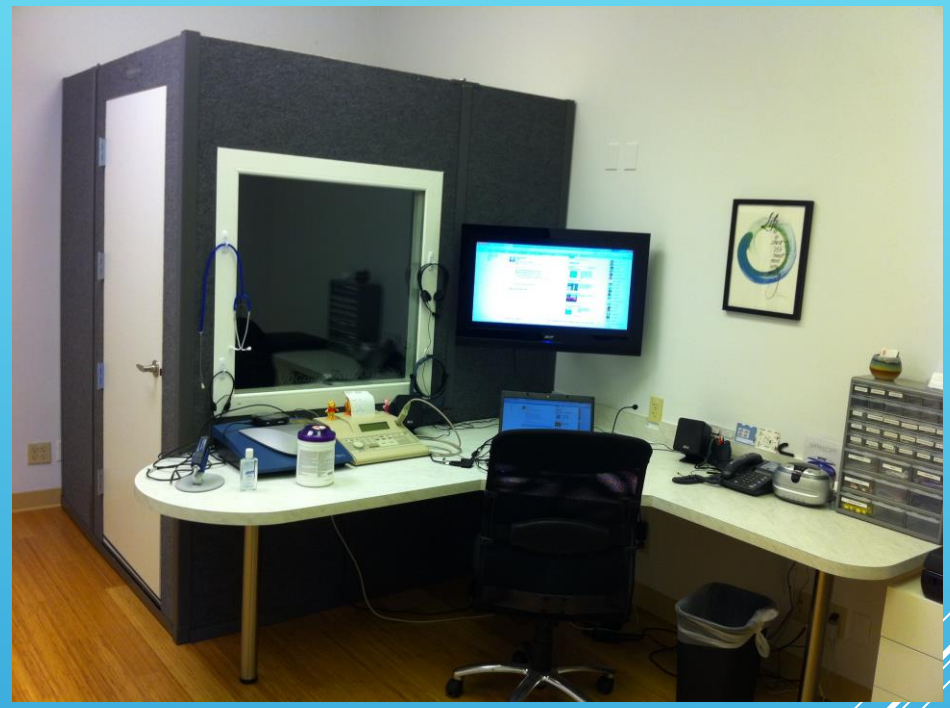
- Provides **essential services**
- Successful patients
- Educational background?

HOW TO FIND A HEARING PROVIDER
ESSENTIAL SERVICES

- What are essential services in audiology, and how do I find them as a consumer?

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Highlights: The **Auditory** Assessment



- Comprehensive case history
- Diagnose hearing loss
- Measure loudness discomfort levels
- Otoscopic inspection and cerumen management
- Counsel patient, family, caregiver on the results and recommendations
- Create strategy to help patient with hearing aids and/or other plan of action

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Highlights: The **Needs** Assessment

- Create set of hearing goals, driven by the patient's hearing needs
- Complete "income measure(s)"
  - Current hearing difficulties
  - Level of perceived handicap
  - Hearing goals and motivation
  - Treatment expectations
- Informal assessment of dexterity, vision, support systems, etc

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Highlights: The **Receptive Needs** Assessment
Consider across home, work, community, other

- **Face-to-Face**: One to-one situations and group conversation.
- **Media**: TV, radio, tablets, phablets, phones, movie theaters, etc.
- **Telecommunications**: Landline and mobile as well as teleconferences using phones and computer devices.
- **Alerting Signals**: We also need to be aware of alerting signals such as the alarm clock, smoke alarm, baby cry, appliance signals, etc.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES FOR **HEARING AIDS**

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

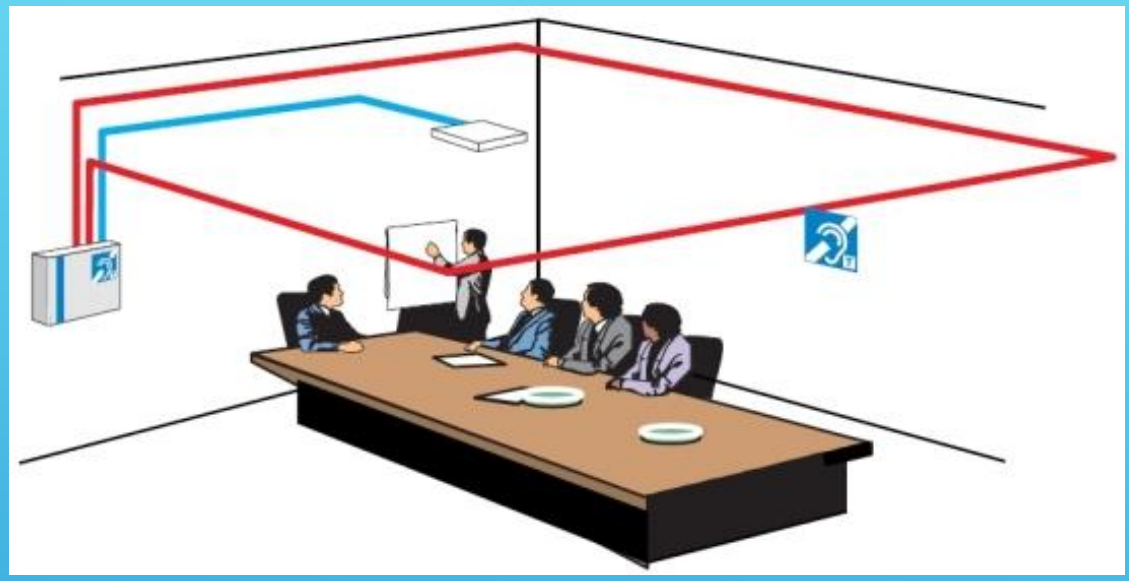
Highlights: **Hearing Aid Considerations**

- Ear canal size and shape
- Ease of insertion and manipulation
- Comfort and skin sensitivity
- Cosmetic concern
- Occlusion

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Highlights: **Hearing Aid Considerations**

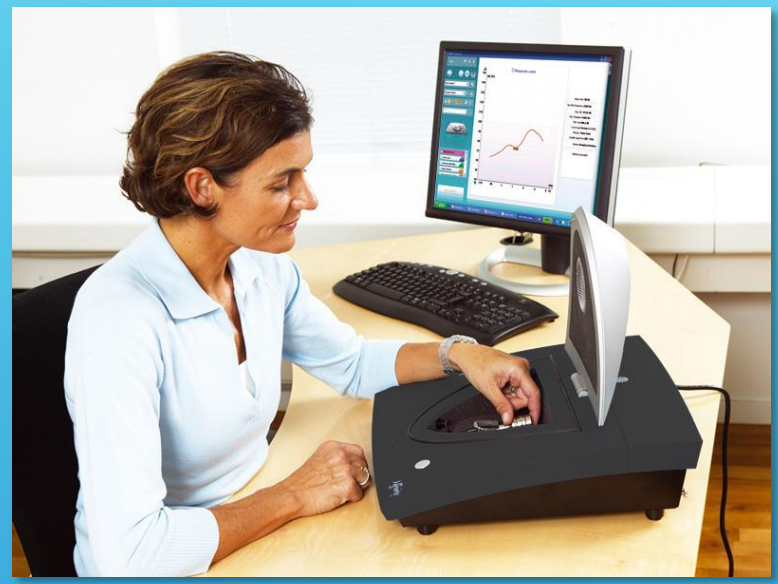
- Volume
- Frequency range
- Need for specific features
  - Telecoil, DAI, FM, smartphone and remote mic, frequency shifting, tinnitus program, music program
- Patient budget
- Product warranty period
- Rechargeability



ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Highlights: **Quality Control**

- Performs electroacoustics:
  - Verify new devices
  - Verify repaired devices
  - Verify after evaluation
- Attaches electroacoustic measurements to patient file



ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Highlights: **Hearing Aid Fitting**

- Verify that the hearing aid is meeting your prescription
- Verify that hearing aid is not too loud
- Verify features such as telecoil and directional microphones

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Highlights: **Orientation – Instruction and Information**

- Hearing aid features
- Insertion and removal
- Battery use
- Care and cleaning
- Comfort and feedback
- Telephone use
- Warranty information
- Accessory training

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Highlights: **Counseling and Follow-up**

- Wearing schedule
- Adjusting to amplification
- Goals and expectations
- Environmental issues (background noise, etc)
- Listening and communication strategies
- Hearing assistance technology
- Speech-reading

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Highlights: **Assessing Outcomes**

- Complete the second half of your "income" measurement to establish the effectiveness of your treatment
  - Hearing Handicap Inventory (HHI)
  - Abbreviated Profile of Hearing Aid Benefit (APHAB)
  - Client Oriented Scale of Improvement (COSI)

HOW TO FIND A HEARING PROVIDER
SUCCESSFUL PATIENTS

- Talk to friends
- Attend local advocacy meetings

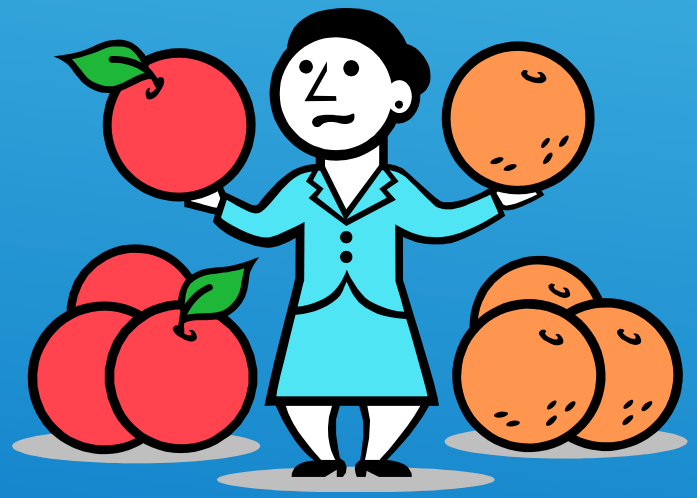
Hearing Loss Association of America

- Look online

HOW TO FIND A HEARING PROVIDER
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

- Less important but worth considering
- Top educational backgrounds in the USA:
  - **Masters of Science in Audiology** (MS)
    - 2 year clinical/academic program
  - **Doctor of Audiology** (AuD) (replaced MS in 2007)
    - 4 year clinical/academic program
  - **Doctor of Philosophy in Audiology** (PhD)
    - May have a clinical focus, a research focus, or both
    - May be combined with an AuD

UNDERSTANDING HEARING AID FEATURES



APPLES AND APPLES
VS
APPLES AND ORANGES

UNDERSTANDING HEARING AID FEATURES

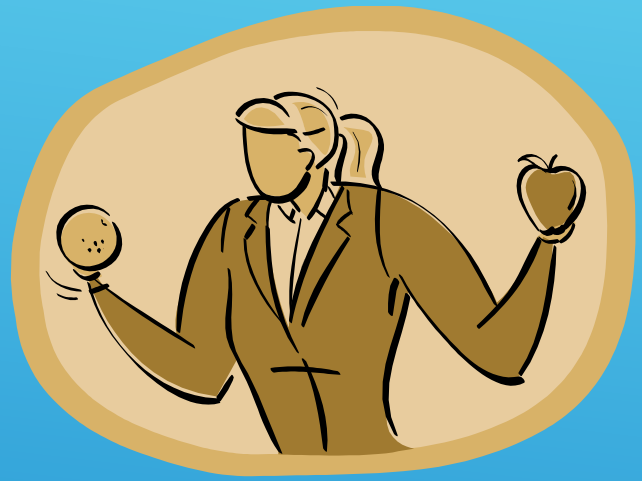
APPLES AND APPLES – **YES** OR **NO** FEATURES

- Telecoil
- Volume control button
- Push button
- Directional microphone
- Synchronization / Streaming
- Smartphone compatibility
- Music program
- IP rating
- DAI
- FM system
- Manual Programs
- Battery size/life (recharge)
- Microphone Array
- Bandwidth
- Channels
- Accessories

UNDERSTANDING HEARING AID FEATURES

APPLES AND ORANGES – ALGORITHMS AND STRATEGIES

- Digital noise suppression
- Feedback suppression
- Reverberation suppression
- Wind suppression
- Frequency compression/shifting
- Adaptive directional microphone settings
- Automatic program switching
- Automatic acclimatization
- Tinnitus and music programs



FIND BETTER CARE

WITH HEARING TRACKER

INTRODUCTION TO HEARING TRACKER

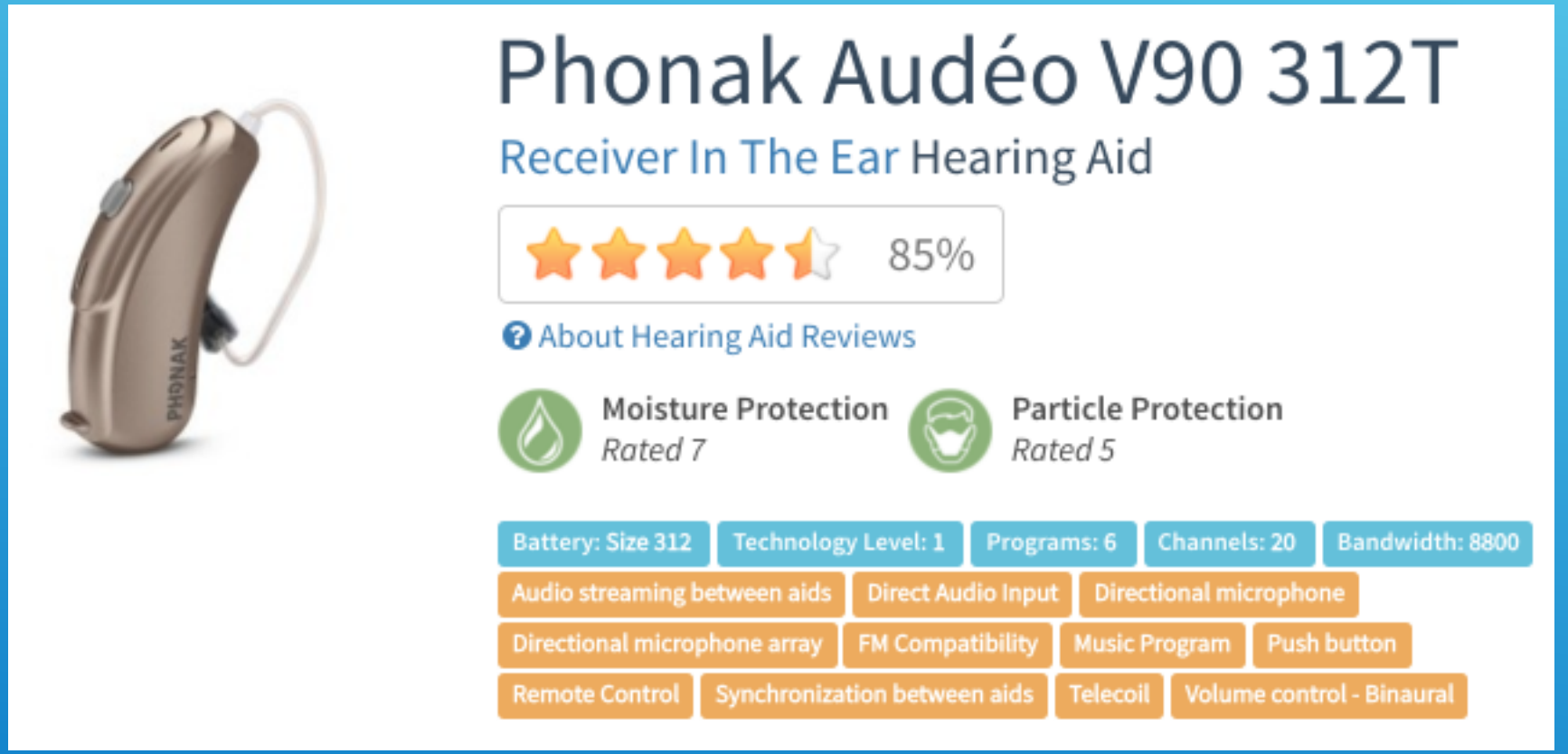
- Hearing provider listings and customer reviews

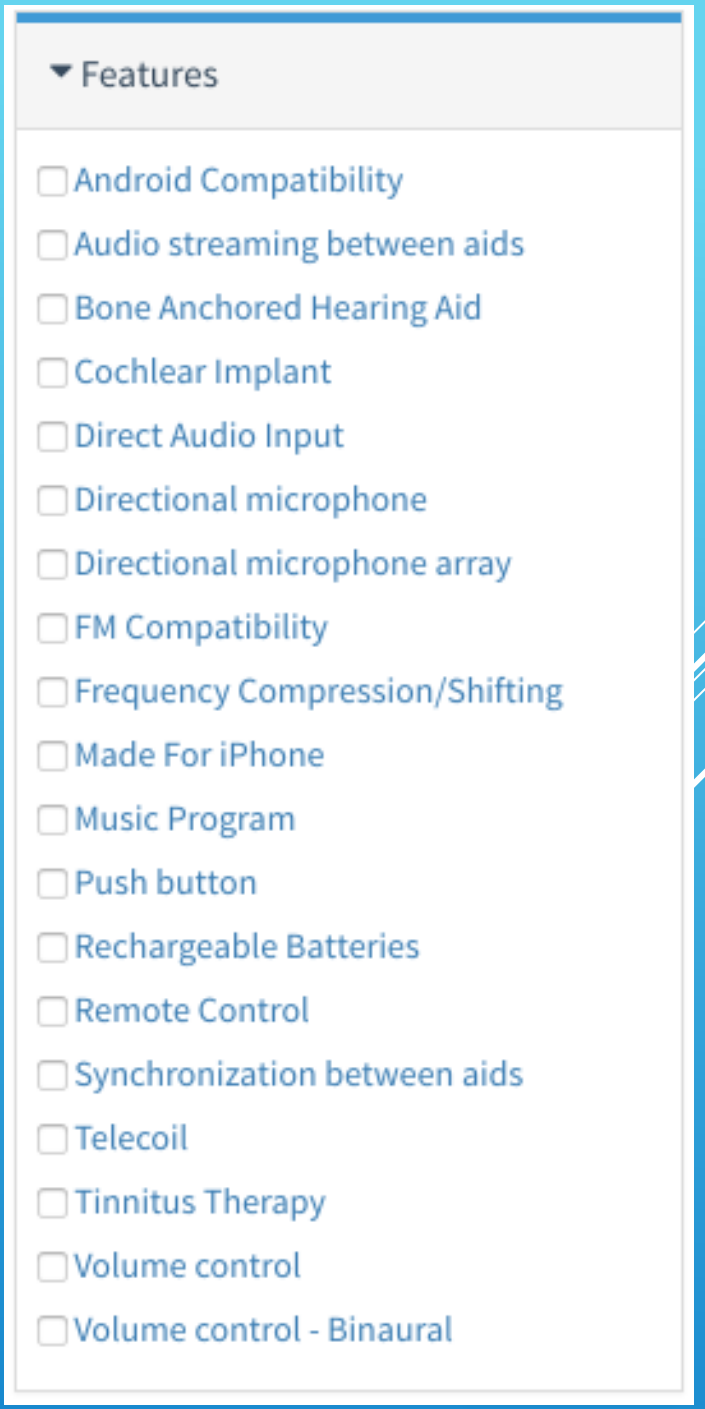
INTRODUCTION TO HEARING TRACKER

- Advanced provider searching
  - Ratings and reviews
  - Location searching
  - Hearing Tracker Awards
  - Services
  - Hearing aid brands
  - Education
  - Qualifications

INTRODUCTION TO HEARING TRACKER

- Hearing aid products and customer reviews



INTRODUCTION TO HEARING TRACKER

- Advanced hearing aid searching
  - Ratings and reviews
  - Features
  - Tech/Price level
  - Verified reviews