

Design and technology evolution go hand in hand

Author

Corey Banham

Senior Product Manager

Favourite sound: rollerskate wheels on a wooden floor

Setting the standard in advanced hearing instrument design

We all rely on various devices and technology to enhance our lives. Most of us have integrated technology like smartphones seamlessly into our daily routines to be productive, stay connected and entertained. Similarly, people with hearing loss rely on their hearing aids all day, every day, to connect them with the people, places and technology in their lives.

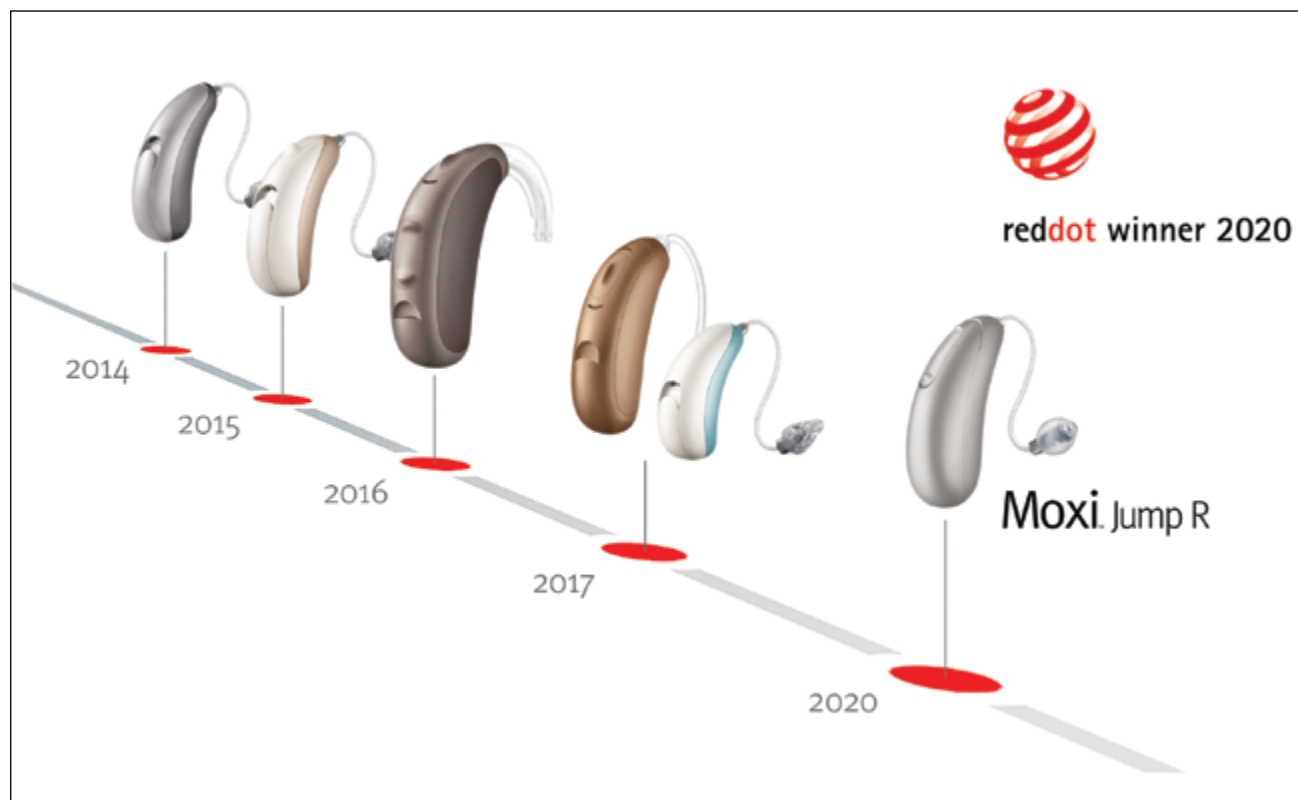
It's important to learn from those with hearing loss to design simple and enjoyable experiences that solve the real-world problems they encounter during their day. Unitron does this by employing a guiding user-centric design philosophy that has resulted in increased client satisfaction, as well as many product design awards.

The design philosophy informs each of our new styles in the areas of aesthetics, comfort and ease of use. This three-pillar approach helps us to evolve our products to be beautiful in the hand or on the ear, representing

the high quality of the technology. Wearing comfort is another of the most important factors when choosing a hearing instrument, so that the physical technology remains transparent when worn all day, while the wearer benefits from the technology inside. Ease of use is the final area that allows for easy adoption of the technology, where the instruments are easily charged and controls on the instrument and in applications are easily found and used without much effort.

Our design revolution began in 2012 with the introduction of Moxi™ Kiss, addressing the problems that hearing aid wearers had with older hearing instrument designs. Beautiful aesthetics were characterised by organic, smooth shapes with flowing lines that proved most comfortable to wear and integrated details that are both attractive and luxurious as well as comfortable on the ear.

Further, for instruments with physical controls, ease of use is paramount in hearing instrument use throughout the day. Controls need to be easily accessible when the hearing instruments are on the ear and when pressed must have a positive tactile response. The possibilities of new technology also requires new ways of easily interacting with the devices.



New technology requires design evolution

Since the Discover platform, we have advanced our product experience to include easy-to-use rechargeability and convenient direct connectivity. The Discover platform with direct connectivity introduced the need for an easy multi-function user interface that is used to access functions like hands-free calling and adjusting streamed sound volume. Rechargeability required an easy-to-use charging system, while the charge contacts, push button and other details on the hearing instruments were designed to achieve an IP68 rating against debris and moisture ingress.

Three different RIC styles with direct connectivity to Apple and Android smartphones provided an optimised wearing experience to suit individual client needs. Our first Li-ion rechargeable gave clients the power of all day amplification, with streaming and the option of telecoil functionality, all on a single charge. And for those who wanted the smallest option, a standard 312 battery device gave users our thinnest direct connected device for maximum wearing comfort and discretion.

Product design optimised for the Blu platform

The Blu platform provided another opportunity for evolution of our three RIC hearing instruments with advancements in aesthetics, comfort and ease of use. We've taken what we learned from our Discover and Discover Next designs and improved on them again.

Aesthetics

Appearance in the hand is an important factor when clients are presented with hearing instruments for the first time. This is the first impression of device quality and discretion. In this moment, clients judge their investment in the quality of the hearing instruments and try to imagine themselves wearing the hearing instruments.

The high quality look of the Blu instruments is characterised by the flawless finish with G2 curvatures, which allow the instruments to appear as if carved from a single piece. The newly designed multi-function control is integrated into the top of the instruments, for a modern, seamless, premium appearance.

Instrument size and discretion is important, especially for new wearers. The new Blu RIC styles have been designed for a narrower appearance. The slimmer profile on the top of the instrument is achieved by sculpting the shell inwards from the top, helping reduce the overall size of the instrument. Tucked behind the ear, the slimmer profile decreases the visible area for a more discreet appearance. (figure 1).

Figure 1



Moxi B-R



Discover Next Moxi Move R

Comfort

Hearing instruments must be comfortable enough to be worn all day. The curved, organic shape of the bottom of the hearing instruments allows for optimised wearing comfort without any hard edges to cause discomfort against the skin.

All day wearing comfort is improved with the Blu platform instruments, especially for those wearing glasses, through the slimming of the top shell. The new design thoughtfully allows glasses extra room to fall to the side of the hearing instrument shell.

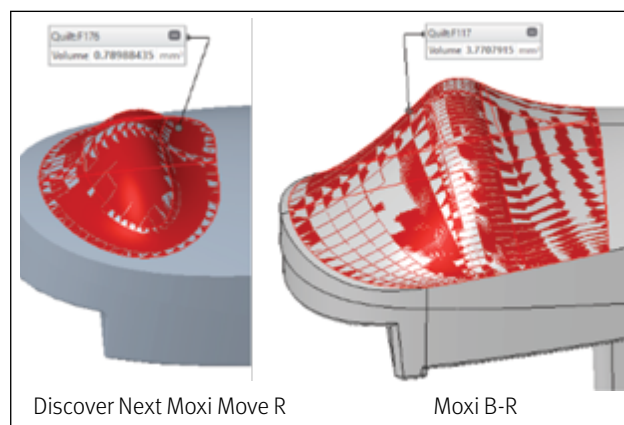
Ease of use

Hearing instruments can now be controlled with less effort through both technology and design enhancements. The new tap control on the Blu platform, enabled by the built in triaxial accelerometer, gives clients easy access to virtual assistants and connectivity functionality without having to touch the hearing instrument in an exact spot.

In addition, for volume and program adjustments, a new larger multi-function button has tactile areas that are 30 to 60% taller, depending on the style. The overall button area has been enlarged by approximately 4 times the size compared to the previous generation on all styles (figure 2). The more pronounced tactile areas fall to hand easier than the previous Discover Next generation of products, especially improving usability for those with dexterity challenges.

Figure 2

Moxi B-R shown



These enhancements were designed to improve the wearing experience for all clients, especially those with dexterity issues.

Blu product technology and design enhancements for all

All three of our RIC styles; Moxi B-R, Moxi B-RT and Moxi B-312, have received these design enhancements for Blu. The fresh new look is a nice design update, but design is about more than just great looks. Our RIC hearing instruments are more comfortable than ever. And Blu enhancements to direct connectivity technology go hand in hand with our new styles to ensure a life enhancing, simple and enjoyable wearing experience for all clients.

At Unitron, we empower people with life-enhancing hearing experiences that fit seamlessly into their world. Our sound performance technology, experience innovations and intuitive design work perfectly together for unmatched personalisation and optimisation. Because everyone deserves to **Love the experience.**[™]

unitron.com/au

sonova
HEAR THE WORLD