

Launch of the telephone voice hearing aid device "Sound Arch" developed by Meiji Yasuda Life

— Creating Social Value by Promoting Financial Inclusion and Solving Social Issues —

Meiji Yasuda Life Insurance Company (Hideki Nagashima, President and Group CEO) would like to announce that we have launched telephone voice hearing aid device "Sound Arch" developed by Meiji Yasuda. This device converts the telephone voice into sound that is easy to hear for those worried about hearing. "Sound Arch" is set up at contact points for elderly customers at our call center while planning to be provided to local governments nationwide that conclude partnership agreements with us.

To realize our corporate vision "A long-respected life insurance company that cares about people first", we have promoted initiatives to resolve inconveniences for elderly people and other customers with a variety of attributes as an "Easy Access to Insurance for Everyone"^{*1}. And as we have inherited our philosophy of valuing our customers, we have provided various services^{*2} based delivering "peace of mind" for elderly customers such as "MY Longevity Policy Checking Scheme". "Sound Arch" is a telephone voice hearing aid device which is developed and commercialized by our senior employee who was involved in the operation of these services while pursuing after-sales services that are close to elderly customers.

Since January 2023, as part of our initiative "Easy Access to Insurance for Everyone", we have installed the device approximately 100 units at our call center, including a contact point dedicated to our elderly customers, and have implemented telephone services that are even more closely connected to customers who are worried about hearing. In addition, to contribute to solve the social issues of social isolation for people worried about hearing, we are planning to gradually donate the device to local governments nationwide that have concluded partnership agreements with us since April 2023 as part of our efforts to spin relationship with local communities.

We have continued to provide lifelong support to our customers so that they can live in good health and with peace of mind. Furthermore, we thus contribute to the creation of a sustainable and hopeful society by supporting the health promotion of each individual, the development of local communities, and expanding the circle of mutual aid.

Corresponding SDGs Goals	    
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(*1) Individuals and businesses have access to useful and affordable financial products and services that meet their needs-transactions, payments, savings, credit and insurance-delivered in a responsible and sustainable way. (Cited from the definition set by The World Bank)

(*2) For details, please refer to the “Launch of Easy Access to Insurance for Everyone” released on April 28, 2022.
https://www.meijiyasuda.co.jp/english/newsroom/pdf/20220428_01.pdf

Introduction to "Sound Arch developed by Meiji Yasuda Life"

"Sound Arch developed by Meiji Yasuda Life" ("Sound Arch") is a telephone voice hearing aid device developed and commercialized by our senior employee. The developer's hope that we want to be a "Bridge of voice" for those who are worried about hearing and support their enriched lives is being incorporated into the product name.



1

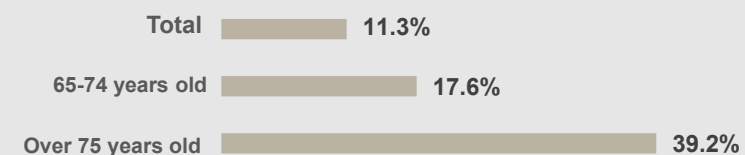
Background and history leading up to the development

It is said that one in nine Japanese people is worried about hearing and the rate rises to about 40% especially among those over the age of 75. In particular, telephone calls are a vital means of communication for the elderly, but those who are worried about hearing tend to refrain from using telephone calls and it is pointed out that there is a risk of dementia arising from social isolation^{*3}.

"Sound Arch" was developed by senior employee who was involved in the operation of "MY Longevity Policy Checking Scheme", a follow-up system for elderly customers. He came up with the idea of product based on the voice that "people who are worried about hearing tend not to get on the phone and have interaction with society" in our community contribution activities (interaction with meetings for the aged society). The product was commercialized after about six years of trial and error together with a manufacturer who developed the product with an idea for a hearing aid device to be installed in the phone from our hope that "we would like to care about customers who are worried about hearing".



Percentage of hearing-impaired person



Source: Japan Trak2018 Survey Report by Japan Hearing Instruments Manufacturers Association

(*3) In 2020, the medical journal "Lancet" announced that "40% of dementia is considered to be caused by 12 preventable factors and the largest risk factor is hearing impairment." If people can't communicate well because of hearing impairment, there is a risk of depression or social isolation by avoiding conversation with others. They are also considered as a risk factor for dementia (from the website of Japanese Society of Otorhinolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, Inc).

2

Strong points of "Sound Arch"

① Clear speaker voice with reliable technology

With the "Neat processor"^{*4}, an internationally patented voice-clarifying circuit, the system has achieved clear hearing effects in a natural fashion, making a low tone voice clear and a high tone voice not uncomfortable. In addition, we have obtained a domestic patent as a mechanism for voice processors, which converts voice of a caller to voice that is easy for a hearing and leads to a telephone line.

(*4) Voice-clarifying circuit that can analyze frequencies that differ depending on gender, etc. in real time and amplify each frequency according to the degree of influence on audibility.

② Achieve telephone service that helps people who are worried about hearing

By installing it on the telephone on the speaker side (fixed-line telephone connected with the receiver and cable), we can achieve smooth communication with people who are worried about hearing. In addition to enabling telephone service for the elderly, it also reduces call time

③ Easy installation and compact design

It is very compact and can be easily installed by simply connecting it between the receiver and phone with the attached cable. It can be easily turned on and off by its switch button.

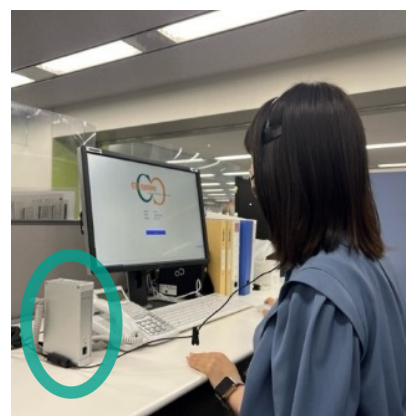


3

Work in practice at Meiji Yasuda Life's call center

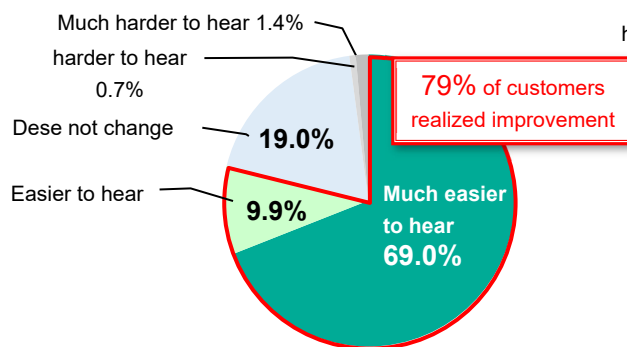
We are promoting initiatives to reduce inconveniences for the elderly and other customers with a variety of characteristics as "Easy Access to Insurance for Everyone."

As a part of these efforts, we have installed approximately 100 units in inquiry desks for the elderly customers (inbound) and after-sales follow-up desks (outbound) at our call centers and utilizing them when calling with our customers.

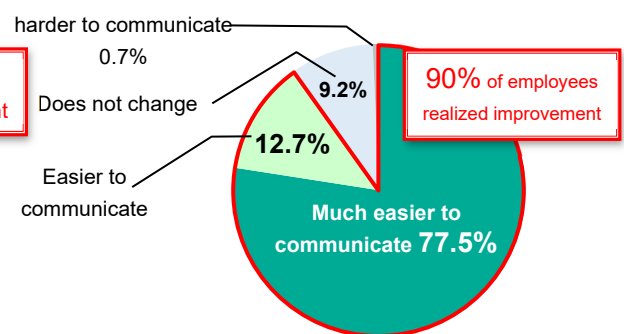


Under the supervision of experts, our call center confirmed the effect of improving hearing with the use of "Sound Arch" for customers who may be suffering from hearing problems. Approximately 80% of customers answered that it was easier to hear, and approximately 90% of our employees at call center answered that it was easier to communicate. These responses were recognized as being useful in terms of practical applications.

●Evaluation of the customer



●Evaluation of our employees at call center



(*5) Survey period: November 2022 to January 2023. Survey methods: Among outbound calls from our call center, 142 customers aged 65 or older who may be suffering from hearing problems, such as frequently asking back during the call, were interviewed with their consent. Both the caller and the receiver evaluated the improvement in hearing and communication through the use of the "Sound Arch" on a scale of 1 to 5.

Customer feedback



Feedback from customers who have cooperated in our survey



I can hear clearly with "Sound Arch", without using hearing aids.

This is a big help for elderly people.

I was pleasantly surprised to be able to hear clearly without noise.

Dr. Jin Narumoto

Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Graduate School of Medical Science, Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine



Telephone is an essential communication tool for the elderly, who are not familiar with the operation of smartphones and PCs. However, it tends to be difficult to understand the voice of the phone because it is unclear and the other party's oral movements and facial expressions are also unknown. I hope that "Sound Arch" will serve as a bridge with society and help prevent isolation.

Dr. Kiyoko Iiboshi

Professor, Faculty of Humanities, Shigakukan University. Certified Public Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist, and Speech-Language-Hearing Therapist



While Japan is a longevity country, 84% of men and 73% of women aged 80 or older have difficulty in hearing. Living with connections to people and society is very important for the happiness of life, as well as contract and negotiation. I hope that the quality of life of elderly will rise dramatically with "Sound Arch" that provide solid support for hearing.

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"Sound Arch developed by Meiji Yasuda" is based on the proposal by our employee and manufactured by radius Co., Ltd. We do not sell this device to customers.