



## Integrated Listening Systems invests in growth plans

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Kathleen Lavine | Denver Business Journal

Sam Stoker, 9, winds his way through different levels of fabric while listening to music as an exercise at the STAR Center in Greenwood Village. STAR Center is a research-based treatment facility for Sensory Processing Disorder. The treatment combines movement, listening and visual stimulation in order to re-train the brain to process information effectively.

Ed Sealover, Reporter - *Denver Business Journal*

Typically, when a company decides to hire its first salesperson, it marks the start of getting its name out and increasing revenue.

When Integrated Listening Systems LLC (iLs) brought on its first full-time salesperson in August, the maker of sound-and-movement therapy systems already had products in 15 countries and annual sales of \$2 million a year, all of it, its founders said, coming through word of mouth.

Now the Denver company, which has expanded to employ two salespeople, is in the midst of a \$1 million investment offering and is planning for more rapid growth. After three straight years of revenue growth of at least 50 percent, that funding could take a company that started in 2007 with three non-salaried owners and make it a force in an emerging field of therapy for afflictions such as autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

“It’s not mainstream yet,” said co-owner [Randall Redfield](#). “But with the results they are getting, I think you could be confident saying it could become mainstream.”

Dr. [Ron Minson](#) was a private-practice psychotherapist in the 1980s when his daughter was diagnosed with dyslexia. The normal speech and language therapies of the time didn’t work, and by age 19, she became a high school dropout.

Minson’s daughter finally began to read, write and remember math at a normal level after undergoing a rare sound therapy known as the “Tomatis method.” Dr. Minson then traveled to France to study under Dr. [Alfred Tomatis](#). After that, he returned to the United States and concentrated on this new form of treatment in his practice.

He developed his own sound therapy equipment in 2000 — albeit one that scared away therapists because of its \$50,000 price tag. A few years later, Minson and his wife, [Kate O’Brien Minson](#), met Redfield while he was working for a movement-therapy company. When the trio found that the combination of sound and movement had what Redfield called an “exponential effect” on patients, they teamed up to develop a system of their own — and one that cost just \$1,500.

The iLs system combines iPod technology with an amplifier that conducts music both through the patients’ ears and through their bones via a vibrating speaker resting on the skull. The system is worn while patients are performing physical activities such as bouncing a ball or holding themselves up on a balancing board.

Minson knew that the science behind his system — strengthening connections behind various systems in the body when they are required to work simultaneously — would catch on with other therapists. But he was not aware of how well the therapy would work or how well the iLs kit — which includes the technology, physical tools and an activity book — would catch on with therapists.

In 2008, the first year of sales, the Minsons trained about 100 therapists. That number rose to 300 in 2009 and 800 new therapists in 2010. With a surge in interest this year that necessitated the hiring of six part-time trainers across the country, some 2,500 therapists have learned to use the system.

Occupational therapists and neurotherapists in places like Denmark, the Netherlands and Australia are now using the iLs therapy, Minson said. When the company held a Spanish-language training session in Denver in late 2010, 22 therapists from seven countries attended.

Operating without a sales staff, iLs grew its client base by presenting the technology to some of the most influential therapists in the field and having them recommend it to peers, Redfield said.

Initial sales were made to therapists who used the equipment. But after patients had progressed past a certain point, they could buy a new kit and take it home with them to continue their treatment on their own.

Clients include [Beate Hybinette](#), the former owner of a computer security company who went back to school to become an educational consultant and neurotherapist because her daughter suffered from an auditory processing disorder.

Hybinette began using iLs therapy on patients with dyslexia or other learning difficulties in early 2011, and, by this fall, saw students who had needed constant intervention return to class and blend in with their peers, she said.

“From an educational perspective, when you have children with learning disabilities or disorders ... you can throw all sorts of academic tutoring at them, but it won’t make a difference because they’re just not developmentally ready,” said Hybinette, who operates the Education Wellness Research Institute in Morrison. “Attention, balance and coordination are sort of the three points I really like to focus on before we go into education.”

The \$1 million that iLs officials are raising currently from investment firms will go both to sales and marketing and to further research on the tangible benefits of the therapy. While the treatment has thrived on the word of therapists, it can gain much more popularity and usage if iLs officials can offer specific sets of data on its success, Redfield said.

Minson said he is overjoyed at the growth so far.

“It has blown my expectations out of the water,” he said. “It has exceeded my hopes of how it would work.”