



Comparing Apples to Apples in the Competitive World of Hearing Aids



By Pat Fournier BC-HIS

This past summer I was working with a gentleman on a pair of open fit hearing aids. I chose for him our premium Starkey Zon. However, he decided to travel about 200 miles and buy a much less expensive “advanced” hearing aid from Costco. Those two hearing aids aren’t in the same class. But I learned something.

Rexton is the number one brand Costco carries. I’ve carried Rexton hearing aids for a few years. But I hadn’t done much with Rexton in the past few years because of some quality control problems I had with them in 2004.

None the less, Rexton, which uses Siemens chips in their amplifier, is an advanced hearing aid manufacturer. So I called Rexton, got their latest hearing aid offerings and went to school learning their software again and added their brand to my active recommended list of products. Some of their new products are very good and are an excellent value for the money.

Hearing aid brands, classes, models and styles can appear to be a jungle of confusion until you are familiar with some of the basics. Let me try to simplify this a little for you.

Most hearing aid labs have been acquired by some major electronic firms because of the high cost of research and development. The major reasons why so many brand labels remain today is mainly because brand names are marketed differently.

SIEMENS acquired **Rexton** and **Electone**. **Miracle Ear** also uses Siemens chips in their hearing aids.

PHONAK acquired **Unitron**, **Argosy** and **Lori Medical Labs**. Only the Phonak and Unitron are made today.

GN RESOUND owns **ReSound** and **Beltone**.

STARKEY wholly owns **Audibel**, **NuEar** and **MicroTech**. These hearing aids are almost identical even down to the model numbers.



Each manufacturer produces six different styles of hearing aids (See above picture) They are: In The Ear (ITE), In The Canal (ITC), Completely In Canal (CIC), Behind The Ear (BTE), Open Fit BTE, and Receiver In Canal

Each style can be produced at different technology levels. Those levels are defined as: Entry level, basic level, business level, advanced level and premium level. Price of a hearing aid is most aligned with the technology level than any other single factor.

The Hearing Place offers six major brands. Phonak, Starkey, Unitron, ReSound, Rexton and Siemens. We offer all styles and all classes. We are the only business in North Central Montana doing this. Because each brand is trying to do something better than their competitors, it gives us the ability to give you the best technology available for your particular hearing loss. It is difficult to keep up with all these advancement but is also very exciting!

When you buy hearing aids you want to get the most for your money. When you compare apples to apples, you’ll find that our prices at The Hearing Place are very competitive. Because of all the new technology in hearing aids they need to be set correctly for you. We have 20 years of experience which helps us to do the very best job for you we can. Our clinics are set so we can be available to service the needs of our clients. Because a hearing aid fits inside an ear and must co-exist with moisture, earwax and body chemistry it takes our service to keep them working properly.

Hearing aids aren’t as perfect as normal hearing, but they’re getting better all the time.

