

Bose launches sleepbuds based on tech from EvoNexus startup

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In June, Bose launched a new line of noise-canceling smart earbuds based on technology it discovered at the EvoNexus startup incubator in San Diego.

Hush, launched in 2014 by undergraduate students at the UC San Diego Jacobs School of Engineering, spent nearly two years in EvoNexus developing its earbud technology to help people sleep.

Bose quietly acquired Hush last year and refined its wireless earbud concept, which delivers rain, ocean waves, wind and other sounds that block out unwanted noise and lull users to sleep. Bose has rolled out the earbuds at its own stores, Best Buy, Amazon and other outlets. They retail for \$250.

"It is very difficult for a startup to launch a consumer electronics product," said Rory Moore, chief executive of EvoNexus. "Bose was on our board of directors. They had been tracking EvoNexus companies for some time and found this [company](#)."

Hush is one of the latest success stories for EvoNexus—a longtime San Diego incubator and mentorship programs for startups.

Moore highlighted the company last week at the non-profit's annual meeting, where it named eight new board members that include representatives from Cubic Corp., InterDigital, ID Analytics, InBrace, Torrey Pines Bank, Union Bank and Ansys Inc.

The incubator runs in partnership with Southern California real estate powerhouse the Irvine Co., which donates office space in University City and Irvine to house EvoNexus startups. Qualcomm, Viasat, Cubic Corp. and other firms also support the incubator with funding.

Brian Modoff, executive vice president of strategy and acquisitions for Qualcomm, said the cellular technology giant is considering spinning out more engineering teams to develop ideas that are unlikely to receive funding inside the company, which is facing pressure from investors to improve its financial performance.

"We definitely want to keep most of our projects inside, but if there is a situation that is a better fit out here, this incubator is a really good place to do that, and we encourage it," said Modoff.

Cisco has implemented a similar strategy for two decades, Modoff said.

"They spin these guys out. They give them money. They go incubate. Cisco lets them develop and then brings them back in," he said. "They buy the company back and that becomes the next platform."

Obsidian Sensors, which has developed micro-electro-mechanical thermal systems that cost less to manufacture than existing sensors, is now based at EvoNexus. It is headed by a team of engineers from Qualcomm who worked on its non-abandoned Mirasol low-power display technology.

EvoNexus seeks to stand out from other incubator programs by allowing young firms to remain for up to two years—which is longer than most other programs.

Until recently, young firms admitted to EvoNexus paid nothing. But earlier this year, EvoNexus began requiring 1 percent to 5 percent

ownership stake in new startups entering the program, with the aim of reducing the fundraising burden and eventually being able to offer seed funding to admitted companies.

Since it was founded in 2009, 191 startups have gone through the program. Twenty-three have been acquired for a total of \$781 million—with the latest being Edico Genome. It was bought by Illumina earlier this year for \$100 million.

In addition, EvoNexus companies have raised \$732 million from 170 venture capital and angel investors over the years.

After Bose acquired Hush, it moved the founding engineers to its headquarters in Massachusetts. They are still there today.

"So here is a team of undergrads who got paid for their [startup](#), and they got great jobs at Bose," said Moore.

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