

According to conventional wisdom, to get ahead in today's economy it's wise to do a lot of networking and find ways to make your boss look good. But new research revealed that there is a much less obvious way to boost earnings: get your hearing checked and get hearing aids if it's necessary.

A new survey by the Better Hearing Institute shows that working Americans who ignore their hearing problems are losing at least \$100 billion a year overall in earnings. Even people with a mild hearing

loss, who may miss a consonant or a word here and there, will lose income if they can't completely grasp the latest news at the water cooler or the subtle nuances in a phone call from the boss.

The average amount of income lost by working people who don't get hearing aids ranges from \$1,000 a year (for those with mild hearing loss) to

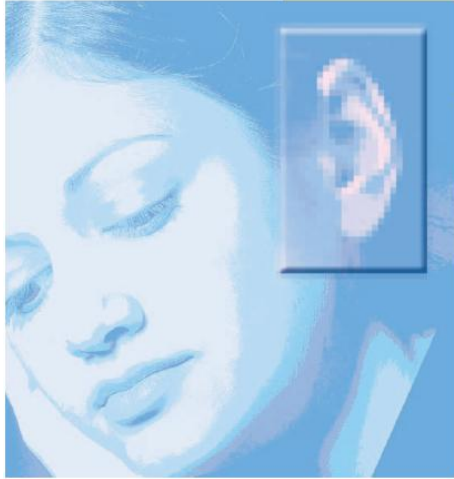
income. You might think of hearing loss as something that happens mainly to older people. But many people with this problem are in the prime of life, including 1 out of 6 baby boomers (ages 41-59) and 1 out of 14 "Gen-Xers" (ages 29-40). Yet, only 1 out of 4 Americans with hearing problems are getting treatment.

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Is Your Hearing Loss Impacting Your Job Performance?

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\$12,000 a year (for those with profound hearing loss). But individuals can lose a lot more.

We've heard of a contractor who blew a \$1 million deal because he misheard job specifications that were conveyed in person (he admitted that he had been "too vain" to wear a hearing aid).

Getting hearing aids at a younger age reduces the chance of losing

People are still embarrassed to admit that they have hearing problems and get hearing aids. Some incorrectly believe a hearing aid will make them seem odd or less able to do the job than their co-workers. But if you don't respond correctly to co-workers or your boss, that will be much more noticeable than a modern hearing device in your ear. In a service economy, good communication skills are critically important.

If you haven't paid much attention to the latest developments in hearing aids, you will be surprised at how much they have changed. This is the age of iPods and hands-free cell phones, when devices in the ear are increasingly common.

Once you try a hearing aid, you'll probably like them. More than nine out

of ten users feel their lives have improved, according to survey findings. The respondents cited a number of specific improvements to their quality of life because of hearing instruments: more effective communications (71%), better social life (56%), better relationships at home (55%), better communication in the workplace (48%), improved emotional health (40%), improved mental/cognitive ability (35%), and even better physical health (24%).

This nation needs to stop treating hearing loss as a minor problem. Other research shows that hearing problems when left untreated can disrupt family life and increase the likelihood of depression and other psychological problems. I hope this convinces you to take hearing loss seriously. Call an audiologist today to schedule your hearing examination.

~ adapted from a press release with permission from Better Hearing Institute, Alexandria, VA