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## FRONTROW BACKGROUNDER

### What does FrontRow do?

FrontRow employs sound technology to maximize learning in the classroom. Its audio systems are intended to clarify and evenly distribute the teacher's voice throughout the classroom. A teacher using FrontRow wears a wireless microphone, and his or her voice is broadcast through a receiver and speakers.

This simple concept lets students more easily understand teachers regardless of where they're seated. Key research studies have shown significant improvement in reading and spelling scores, comprehension, behavior, and attention in classrooms using FrontRow technology. In addition, teachers experience significantly fewer episodes of laryngitis because the sound systems allow them to teach while using a normal voice level.

### Why is FrontRow needed?

Many adult gatherings — lectures, conferences, even parties — use amplification to improve communication. Even so, adults unconsciously rely on context to fill in the gaps when they miss words or parts of words in noisy environments or over distance. Children, however, are not able to do this as successfully as adults. They lack the brain development, vocabulary, and world experience to compensate for the often hostile acoustic environment of most classrooms. FrontRow can help by ensuring that the teacher's intended message is delivered to children intact.

With clearer communication, children simply perform better academically. In particular, they're more easily able to recognize phonemes (discrete speech sounds), thereby accelerating their language and literacy development. Because it's easier to pay attention, they're less likely to misbehave as well.

### What is different about FrontRow?

"The concept of improving verbal communication in the classroom is simple," says FrontRow President Jens Holstebro. "What's difficult is implementing the technology in such a way as to be effective while presenting as little burden as possible for the teacher." FrontRow uses its significant technological resources to design products that are:

- simple to use (e.g., one-touch operation)
- money-saving (e.g., fail-safe battery charging, EnergyStar)
- more effective (e.g., OptiVoice speech clarity technology, feedback suppression)

In addition, the company prides itself on a distinctive child-oriented, curious, and energetic culture that resonates with educators.

### A brief history of FrontRow

Scott and Ruth Holden launched HC Electronics in Palo Alto, California in 1963 with the design of their first product, the Phonic Mirror. Ruth, a speech-language pathologist, enlisted Scott, an engineer, to design this ground-breaking tool which let speech- and hearing-impaired children hear and correct their own speech.

With the use of radio technology in the late '60s, the Holdens introduced a wireless device called Phonic Ear. The product became so successful that they adopted Phonic Ear as their company name. The product's success allowed the company to quickly expand to Canada and Europe in the early 1970s.

In 1990, Phonic Ear began developing products specifically for general education classrooms. These were so successful that the company created a division in 2005 called FrontRow, playing on the technology's ability to allow children in the back of the classroom to hear just as well as students in the front. It is now the only ISO-registered and FDA-cleared supplier of classroom amplification technology in the market. In addition, Educational Underwriters has vetted the research behind FrontRow products.

Today, Jens Holstebro leads the Petaluma, CA based company and its 140 employees. There are additional FrontRow offices in Toronto (Canada), Copenhagen (Denmark), Brisbane (Australia), Wellington (New Zealand), Dortmund (Germany), and Shenzhen (China).

FrontRow is part of the William Demant Group, founded in 1904 as a hearing aid company. Listed on the Copenhagen Stock Exchange (CSE3247), William Demant comprises a group of international companies that develop, manufacture, and sell innovative and highly advanced technological solutions in the hearing healthcare and educational field. Through 45 Group companies located in over 20 countries, consolidated group sales exceed US\$1 billion.