



Audiological care business

A service almost fit for a king

Audition Santé's specialist audiology store in Versailles is a shining example of the success that has been achieved in the audiological care business in France. The secret? Bespoke service that offers customers comprehensive solutions.

There is never a dull moment at Audition Santé's specialist audiology store in Versailles, located in the middle of the Old Town in a small, bustling square lined with cafés and restaurants just a few hundred yards from the famous royal palace. Jacques Lillioz is leaning on the welcoming reception desk. Now 77, he spent more than two decades as mayor of a small town before volunteering in adult education and working in schools, where he teaches children about human rights. "I'm still active, so I need to be able to hear well." He has recently started to wear the latest generation of Phonak hearing aids.

Another customer strolls in. Walburg de Vernisy is 74 years old. Her hearing was damaged when a generator supplying electricity to pasture fences exploded near the budding showjumper and former horse-breeder. Her hearing had deteriorated over the years and eventually, she says, "I could no longer make out what they were saying on stage at the theater." She likes dropping by the Audition Santé branch: "I get very good advice here. Karin Beuchot, who looks after me, is patient, charming, and puts her heart and soul into her work. She really pulls out all the stops to ensure her customers hear better. She's a professional."

She has hit the nail on the head: Karin Beuchot has been working as a professional audiologist for more than 25 years and has managed the branch in this upmarket suburb of Paris since 2013, having previously spent many years working in other regions of France. "When I started in Versailles, I noticed that things are a little different here straight away." She doesn't just mean the area's rich history, which is woven around Louis XIV's world-famous chateau; the town has a high concentration of specialist audiology stores and there are many long-established and well-off families living here. "The clients have high expectations, so it's important for us to be able to address their wishes on an bespoke basis. Customers who have bought something from us once almost always come back again at some point in the future."



Walburg de Vernisy, customer and Karin Beuchot, audiologist at Audition Santé in Versailles

Eight staff work at Audition Santé in Versailles, and business is brisk. The key to this success is the consistent consultation and customer experience offered by Audition Santé in its network of specialist audiology stores across France. The reception area of each store houses the first surprise: as customers enter, they leave the noise of the street behind them completely. They are met with peace and quiet, not to mention a comfortable armchair to relax in until their turn is called.

With over 1,800 square feet of retail space spread over two levels, the audiology store on the rue Saint-Simon is currently Audition Santé's largest branch in the country. There are three sound booths for hearing aid fittings, two repair desks, two waiting rooms for customers, and a spacious meeting room that is also used for the company's regional in-house education and training sessions. Branch manager Karin Beuchot thinks that the secret to its professional customer support lies in generous opening times, cutting-edge technical equipment, and a strong team. She deals with some 50 appointments a week herself: "People once used to go to the audiologist that was around the corner from the doctor's; nowadays most of them do some internet research first. They are really well-informed before they even arrive at the store." And, ultimately, customers end up making purchases where they get the best service and special offers.

This is why the branch in Versailles is one of the few specialist audiology stores in France to offer Phonak's Lyric™, the only 100% invisible hearing aid, which can be worn for several months at a time and provides a unique sound. "Lyric is especially popular with customers who are still actively involved in the world of work and want a discreet device." Among other things, special fitting equipment had to be installed in order to be able to offer Lyric.

The branch has also been successful in acquiring new customers: "Some people find us through word of mouth. You can test new devices here on special open days. A lot of people turn up for these and then often buy a hearing aid on the spot. Accessories for the TV or for meetings, such as Phonak's Roger™ external microphone, are also very popular," explains Beuchot. Their in-house repair and cleaning service is likewise a key touchpoint for maintaining customer relations: "We check devices every three months and use the appointment to fine-tune the settings. This ensures we stay in constant contact with our clientele."