

Client Profile

Learn how real businesses achieved success in their industries through innovative strategies such as expansion into new markets, new and differentiated product and service offerings, enhancing operations and cash flow management.

The faster route to a perfect smile

Edmonton-based SmileSonica uses advanced dental technology to help patients achieve the perfect smile sooner

Anyone who has ever worn braces knows how wonderful it feels to have them removed. Orthodontic patients can now achieve that perfect smile sooner, thanks to ultrasonic dental technology developed by a company in Edmonton.

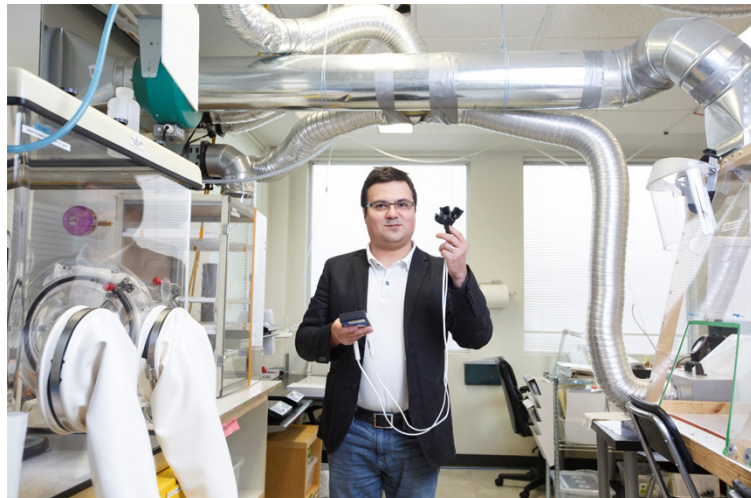
SmileSonica – a dental and medical technology company founded by Cristian Scurtescu – has designed a device that uses low-intensity pulsed ultrasound, or LIPUS, to stimulate cells in the bone surrounding the roots of the teeth. The technology, known as the Aevo System, reduces the time required to wear braces by an average of one third.

The Aevo System is similar to a hockey player's mouth guard and connects to a handheld electronic device. The mouth guard is placed over the teeth and braces for 20 minutes a day. Safe and easy to use, it's also non-invasive and painless.

"We accelerate the natural process – and the patients don't feel anything," says president and CEO Mr. Scurtescu, who launched SmileSonica in 2008. "The product we've built, and I'm not exaggerating, is the most technologically advanced therapeutic ultrasound medical device – and the only one on the market that is used in the mouth."

Mr. Scurtescu's penchant for fixing things extends well beyond teeth and began when he was a young boy growing up in the small city of Calarasi, in southeastern Romania, near Bucharest. When he was 13 years old, his parents bought him an old motorcycle that kept breaking down. When he couldn't find motorcycle parts to fix it, Mr. Scurtescu made his own. From there on, he started repairing other things, such as appliances, cars, and even the electrical heating system in the family home.

Naturally, Mr. Scurtescu went on to study electrical engineering at the University Politehnica of Bucharest in Romania, with a specialty in microelectronics. He then worked for a multinational microelectronics firm in Bucharest, before going back to school, at the University of Alberta in 2004 at the age of 24, to get his master of science in electrical and computer engineering. During his final year there, Mr. Scurtescu was asked by his academic supervisor to join a team of researchers working on a new dental technology that used ultrasound to stimulate the regeneration of damaged and shortened roots of the teeth.



Founded by Cristian Scurtescu, SmileSonica has designed a device that uses ultrasound to stimulate cells in the bone surrounding the roots of the teeth.



That led to the creation of SmileSonica two years later. Mr. Scurtescu jokes that his credit card was the first official investor in the company, followed by family and friends, and support through provincial and federal government grants. And then the angel investors came on board.

SmileSonica first began selling its Aevo System in the U.K. in the fall of 2015, and then in Australia and other countries in Europe. The technology was approved for sale in Canada last fall. Meanwhile, the company is preparing to seek approval in the U.S. to sell the Aevo System within the coming months.

In the countries where the device has been approved for sale, patients require a prescription through their orthodontists. The actual cost of the treatment depends on several factors, but the Aevo System costs about 20 per cent of what braces typically cost, which, in Canada, ranges from \$7,000 to \$9,000.

SmileSonica currently has 18 employees in Canada and the device continues to be manufactured in Edmonton. Given the growing demand for the Aevo System, the company is planning to expand in Canada as well as globally, says Darryl Lesiuk, vice-president of corporate development. As well, SmileSonica is working on obtaining regulatory approval in more countries while developing its existing product line. It also has other products in the commercialization pipeline, details of which are being kept under wraps to protect them from competitors.

“There are a number of things happening,” notes Mr. Lesiuk. “We’re excited. We have a growing team. We have energy and innovation – and we have lots of work to do.”

CIBC Tips – Investing in Innovation

Understand Your Industry: For companies seeking a competitive advantage, staying up to date with industry trends or leading new developments is essential. You can do this by staying in touch with client needs, knowing what your competitors are doing or even looking for developments in other industries that can be applied in yours.

Leverage the Many Facets of Innovation: Innovation is not limited to having the ‘first to market’ product or utilizing the latest technology to stay ahead of the curve. You can change your entire product to meet market needs or fine-tune it to affect ease-of-use for your client. You can also optimize internal processes to enhance both client and employee experience or apply innovations in your business model to create cost efficiencies. Innovation can span all aspects of your business and can be applied to impact both inward and outward activities and results.

Financing Innovation: Whether starting, growing or managing a business, having access to capital to run your business and invest in innovation is key. Your financial partner can offer you the expertise you need to find the right cash flow management solutions to help you and your business through growth and change.

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