



Company gets noticed with stress-busting technology

By CHRISTINE MCMANUS
ChristineMcManus@coloradoan.com

Originally published May 31, 2006

Helping people learn how to better cope with stress at the office has earned Logisens Corp. industry recognition.

The Fort Collins company is one of three finalists in the "Spotlight on Innovation" award presented by the Colorado Software and Internet Association at its annual event June 6 at the University of Denver.

Logisens' patented stress sensor - located on the computer mouse - prompts a computer screen to pop up when a user's stress levels get too high.

The software program then advises the person to take several deep breaths, stretch or play a stress-reducing biofeedback exercise. Over the months, software helps users track their progress in managing stress.

"You can go to a stress (prevention) workshop, but when you get back to your desk, it's easy to forget and get back into old habits," said Mik Isernia, chief business officer and vice president of sales and marketing for Logisens, 706 S. College Ave.

"Our technology helps monitor stress levels and helps employees change their core behaviors to manage stress."

Since the startup's incorporation in February 2005, a dozen clients nationwide have bought into the idea of stress prevention - and the technology - as a way to help employees stay healthy and productive.

Although the startup is not out of the woods yet, it has huge potential in multiple markets, said Bill Van Eron, spokesman for Logisens and principal of Headwaters Marketing.

In addition to office and health-care use, Logisens' technology can be used to help students learn faster and athletes perform better.

Boeing Co. tested the technology as an effective way to prevent stress. Stress causes an average of 1 million American workers to miss work daily, according to the Mental Health Association of Colorado.

Overcoming pre-established views of biofeedback and stress reduction activities is Logisens' challenge, Van Eron said.

"Managers' ways to reduce stress, such as like having an office party or celebrating success, were established before this technology existed," Van Eron said.

While a little stress is normal, too much stress can reduce productivity levels and decrease job satisfaction.

"Though it won't make a bad boss go away or lighten the workload, it helps employees physically prepare themselves to cope with stress," Van Eron said. "The idea is to reduce the physical impact that stress has on employees so they don't miss work."

The technology costs about \$300 per user. Van Eron said employers can typically spend \$5,000 per employee a year on sick time, health costs and reduced productivity related to stress.

Clients in Colorado, southern California, Ohio and Massachusetts are using the local company's technology to measure, monitor and reduce stress. The company's sales team has expanded locally and nationwide, Isernia said.

The company last year sprung out of the Fort Collins Technology Incubator. Since leaving the Incubator, Logisens has secured out-of-state business and is looking into international sales.

One target market is Britain, Isernia said. Having recognized the societal toll of workplace stress, companies in the United Kingdom are required to make efforts to reduce workplace stress. Logisens' salespeople are also establishing contacts in Japan and China.

"Logisens contributes to the overall incubator value in Fort Collins, which is emerging as a place that is birthing its share of innovative new companies," Van Eron said.