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## **Spinoff Revolabs looks to rock the wireless mic space**

Entrepreneur Martin Bodley heard the call for a better conferencing mic system, and his answer is Maynard-based startup Revolabs Inc. and its self-contained, wireless mics.

In familiar entrepreneurial form, Bodley spent some 10-plus years slugging it out in the corporate world in a variety of consumer-based wireless product development firms before venturing out on his own in 2003 to start his own wireless development company, Maestro Inc.

The company has had relative success over the past three years, generating about \$2.4 million in revenue in 2005 via development deals with several customers, including an OEM agreement for headsets with Motorola Inc.

But last summer, Bodley and his team came up with a wireless microphone system for audio- and videoconferencing that features individual mics for each participant.

The initial response was so promising -- particularly from early investor and beta tester Fidelity Investments -- he decided to spin out Revolabs as a separate entity to launch the product.

"(Maestro) always has a stake in the product and revenue stream," he said. "But I always had a bunch of products in my back pocket that I wanted to move forward on, and the Revolabs mic was one."

After an undisclosed amount of early development funding from Fidelity, and \$2 million in venture funding from Finger Lakes Capital in August 2005, Revolabs launched the first incarnation of its Solo Executive wireless microphone system two weeks ago.

"There is a fuller product road map moving forward, moving from just a single product to a system, that would include (conference) transcription, data mining, archiving and SOX compliance issues in the future," said Bodley.

Fidelity remains a beta tester, as does Cisco Systems Inc., Amgen Inc., Merrill Lynch & Co. Inc. and Intel Corp.

"The reason we looked at this technology is that at every conference or teleconference, you have three choices regarding where you can put a mic -- on the table, on the ceiling or use a boom mic," said John Mason, a senior audio visual technologist for Fidelity. "With every case, there is considerable interference. A personal mic (for each participant) doesn't have that."

The system allows for up to 24 microphones to run simultaneously in a single room. They are also compatible with Internet protocol-based applications, and contain 128-bit encryption for security, according to Bodley.

The mics also operate on individual channels, which Bodley said will make future applications, such as transcription, easier.

While the Solo is the first personal mic that does not require a belt-back transmitter pack that Fidelity has used, Mason suspects other companies will develop the technology in time.

The market, however, could sustain other players. In a report released last week, Frost & Sullivan found the world videoconferencing infrastructure systems market earned revenue of \$206.4 million in 2004, and is estimated to reach \$682 million by 2011. That doesn't include the audio-conferencing segment, which, while losing ground to video, is estimated in the billions, according to less recent reports.