



# TED Talks

Monterey, California



## One-of-a-kind microphones for TED speakers

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Mina Sabet  
Director of Production

**To ensure that the audio technology behind TED Talks is as cutting edge as the content that the brand is known to deliver, Sennheiser has built a headset microphone that reliably delivers top notch sound, while maintaining a sleek and minimalist aesthetic.**

TED, the global organization devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading, is a nonprofit organization hosting short talks delivered by leading thinkers and doers. Many of these talks are given at TED conferences, intimate TED Salons and thousands of independently organized TEDx events around the world. Videos of these talks are made

available, free, on TED.com and other platforms.

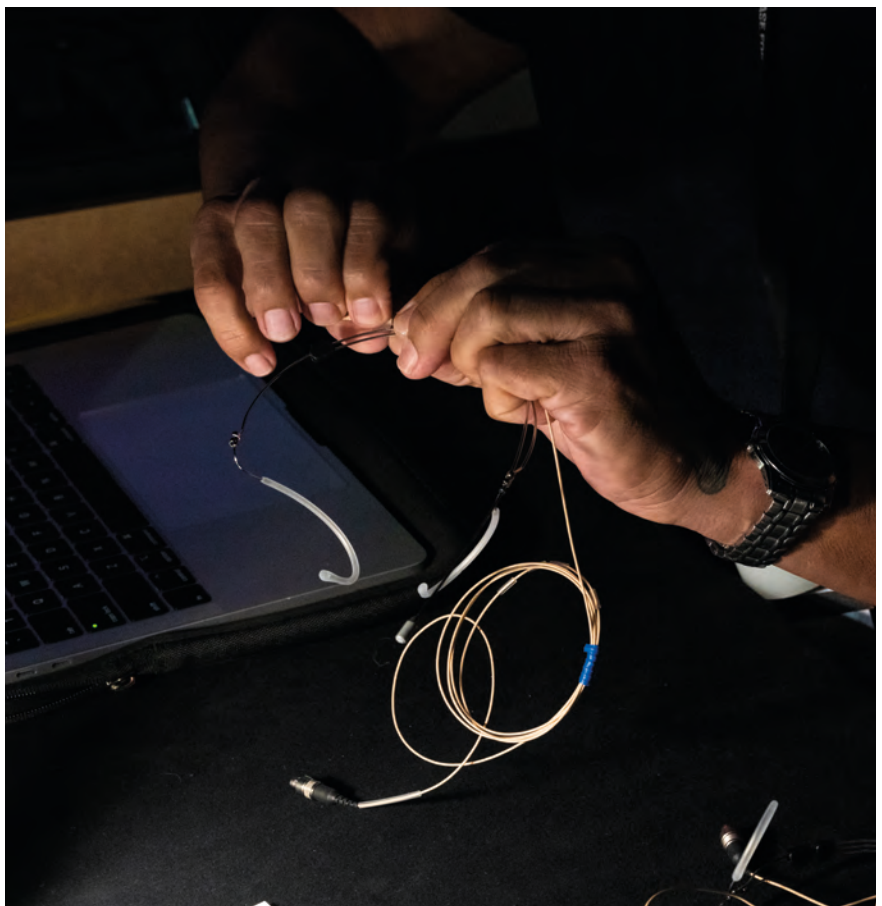
Sennheiser was first approached by TED in 2018 as they were looking for a better solution than the headset microphones they were using at the time. “We ran into many issues from both an audio and aesthetic perspective. The previous microphones were clunky



## Sennheiser developed what TED was looking for

and obtrusive,” says Mina Sabet, Director of Production and Video Operations at TED. Mina was determined to design and build the first ever custom microphone for TED that would solve these challenges, and after much research, she set her sights on Sennheiser as the ideal partner. “I wanted to work with Sennheiser to create the perfect microphone for us that is beautiful, modern and sounds great, without taking away from the performance visually – and I wouldn’t take no for an answer because I knew they were the best in the business.” Mina got in touch with the team at Sennheiser, spearheaded by Volker Schmitt, Technical Application Engineering Manager for Pro Audio.

In their design partnership, which involved various prototypes, Sennheiser developed what TED was looking for in a headset microphone. The final design took elements from a few of Sennheiser’s top products, melding them together in a stylishly streamlined package. The short boom arm and tiny microphone leveraged the transducer from the MKE 1 to give it the same top-of-the-line clarity and excellent frequency response found in musical and broadcast applications. The thin neckband allowed comfort for long wears, and the silver color gave it a mod-





## Digital 9000 at TED Monterey 2021



ern yet subtle edge. While the design is unique to TED, it takes inspiration from Sennheiser's popular headset microphones that can be found all over Broadway productions and broadcast news studios.

"The project with TED was outstanding and refreshing because Mina came in with a clear vision for the microphone. During the development phase, it was fantastic to have a partner so involved in the creative process," says Volker Schmitt. "Both Sennheiser and TED are all about pushing boundaries and delivering the best possible performance, so there was a lot of synergy in this

partnership. We both maintain equally high standards for ourselves, so I am very proud of what we created together."

The new headsets debuted alongside the Sennheiser Digital 9000 Wireless Microphone System at TED Monterey 2021, the first in-person TED conference since 2019 featuring such speakers as Adam Grant and Lizzo.

The four-day conference featured 63 performers and speakers, with hundreds of attendees joining in-person and remotely. According to Mina, "The energy at the conference was off the charts, everyone was so excited, and the content was

fantastic. From a production standpoint, it was extremely smooth," she continues, "the Sennheiser mics sounded crisp, sharp and looked perfect on all of the speakers. A few times, I even thought that the tech teams had forgotten to mic up the presenters because the headsets are so sleek and low-impact!"

TED used the Digital 9000 Wireless System to bring the custom headsets to life and ensure fantastic and consistent sound throughout the sessions. The robust system featured 4 channels of wireless, 15 belt packs and was paired to all 50 headsets and 50 handheld microphones used throughout the event.



## The organization will continue the momentum

According to Volker Schmitt, “the Digital 9000 was an advantageous choice for TED thanks to its analog and digital outputs for audio, its Wireless Systems Manager software that enables the AV team to access live performance data, as well as its equidistant channel spacing allowing for easy set-up and frequency coordination without calculations.” In Mina’s words, “we’ve used the Digital 9000 before, and as

usual the wireless system was wonderful. It is so reliable, easy to use and sounds great.”

After a successful first in-person event with TED-Monterey 2021, the organization will continue the momentum with important flagship conferences in the coming months. The TED calendar for the remainder of the year will feature “The Countdown Summit” on climate change in Edinburgh,

Scotland from October 12-15, and “TEDWomen: What Now?” taking place in Palm Springs, California from December 1-3. “Those Sennheiser mics will go with us everywhere,” says Mina.

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