

= Noel Lee (executive) =

Noel Lee (born December 25 , 1948) is the current CEO of Monster Inc . Lee graduated from California Polytechnic State University with a bachelor 's degree in mechanical engineering , before doing work in laser fusion for the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory . He quit his engineering job in 1974 to play drums for a country rock band . After the band separated , he founded Monster Cable Products in 1979 based on loudspeaker cables he invented and manufactured in his garage .

Lee 's audio cables met resistance at first , because most audio cabling at the time was zip cord provided by audio vendors for free . Sales improved as retailers witnessed audio demonstrations and saw that his Monster @-@ branded cables offered better profit margins than other electronics products . Lee is credited with building the Monster business and shaping today 's audio components market .

= = Early life = =

Noel Lee was born in San Francisco , California on December 25 , 1948 to Chein @-@ San and Sarah Lee . His parents named him " Noel " because he was born on Christmas Day . His father worked for China 's Central News Agency and Lee had four sisters . Lee 's parents moved to San Francisco around the same time the Communist party took power .

Lee took an interest in music as a child ; he described himself as having a more diverse taste in music than other kids his age . Lee 's senior project was an effort to improve the quality of audio from electronics . According to Lee , his High School experiences were " rough " due to the level of discrimination against Asian @-@ Americans at the time . Lee attended San Francisco City College , then California Polytechnic State University , where he earned a degree in mechanical engineering in 1971 .

= = Engineer and drummer = =

Noel Lee 's first job out of college was as a laser fusion design engineer at a government @-@ run nuclear research center called the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory . On nights and weekends he played drums for an Asian country rock cover band called Asian Wood and worked on his home audio equipment .

In 1974 , Asian Wood was given an opportunity to go on a world tour . Lee quit his job as an engineer in order to be the band 's drummer . Asian Wood 's members moved to Hawaii to start their tour , but it was cancelled two weeks later . The promoter wanted a straight rock band without country influences . This left Lee and his family stranded in Hawaii until they could earn money for travel back home . The band reinvented itself , covering Top 40 popular songs in order to attract work . Asian Wood took on other gigs around Hawaii for 18 months before breaking up . Lee continued doing solo gigs for six months after that , before returning to the Bay Area for an engineering job with Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory . He also worked as an independent salesperson for several small speaker companies in San Francisco .

= = Monster = =

Noel Lee is credited with turning the audio cable market into a " profitable cottage industry " and with changing the consumer mindset to see audio cables as a way to improve sound quality . He was awarded the Plus X Lifetime Achievement Award for his role in shaping a market and was named Northern California Entrepreneur of the Year by Ernst & Young . The company he founded became a household name and market @-@ share leader . Monster does not disclose its financials , but industry analysts estimate the company is " hugely profitable . " Lee calls himself the " Head Monster " and calls the company culture the " Monster Attitude . " The company , while still best known for audio wiring , now carries 6 @, @ 000 different products , such as headphones and home theater components . Its products are sold in more than 15 @, @ 000 stores and it owns over 375

patents . Monster became one of the largest employers in the Bay Area .

== Origins ==

In the late 1970s , Noel Lee wanted to improve the sound quality from his home audio equipment . He didn 't have very much money , so Lee experimented with ways to create a better sound by improving inexpensive cabling . At first he worked out of his family 's apartment and later in his in @-@ laws ' garage , which they rented from family after moving to the Richmond district in 1978 . Lee experimented with different widths , winding methods , and qualities of copper and insulation in audio cables to find an alternative to the zip cord audio vendors gave out for free . He compared different wire constructs , while listening to Tchaikovsky 's 1812 Overture .

Lee called the 12 @-@ gauge audio cable he created " Monster " due to its size . According to Vision Magazine , the first Monster cable was " a low @-@ resistance twin @-@ axial stranded design . " Lee manufactured the cable by hand on a ping pong table and sold it door @-@ to @-@ door . According to Lee , Pacific Stereo was the first electronics retailer to give him a chance to sell Monster cables in their store .

Lee spent \$ 50 @,@ 000 in personal savings to demonstrate the cables at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Chicago in 1979 , using a borrowed portion of someone else 's exhibit area . Lee received a positive response at the event and founded Monster , Inc . (formerly known as Monster Cable Products) later that year . Lee received an order from a Canadian distributor for 30 @,@ 000 cables . The distributor wouldn 't pay until the products were shipped , so Lee took out a \$ 250 @,@ 000 bank loan to pay for the production of the cables . According to Lee , he started the company without business experience or a strategy .

Lee was met with resistance , because the audio industry at the time didn 't believe cables made an audible difference in the sound and wire was something that was normally provided for free . Lee did demonstrations at retailers comparing Monster cables to zip cord to convince consumers that expensive equipment was wasted on cheap wiring . Sales picked up as retailers saw the wiring as an opportunity for higher profit margins . This led Lee to provide incentives to retail salespeople to sell the cabling , rather than spend money on advertising . This led to criticisms that his business model creates aggressive salespeople .

== Establishment and diversification ==

Within six years from when it was founded , Monster had \$ 50 million in annual revenues and 400 employees . The company 's growth was primarily due to Monster training sales staff at electronics stores to bundle the cables with other electronics purchases , an effort the company spent 15 percent of its revenues on by 1998 . Lee kept the company private and grew the business , despite pressure to go public .

In connection with his background as a musician , Lee founded the record label Monster Music in 1999 , signing Van Morrison 's daughter Shana . Monster created numerous divisions as it diversified into other products , such as Monster Performance Car , Monster Game , Monster Photo and Monster Computer . By 2003 , Monster produced more than 1 @,@ 000 products , including power cords , gaming accessories and cooling products . According to a 2005 USA Today article , Lee and his company were developing furniture with high @-@ end electronics built @-@ in , wireless products to replace audio cords and a user interface to consolidate the consumer 's control of their electronics . Lee and his son worked with Dr. Dre to collaborate on the Beats brand of headphones , which was later acquired by Apple for \$ 3 billion in 2014 . According to Business Insider , Beats Electronics denies that Monster had a role in the design of the headphones . Lee said Beats had no engineers on staff and it spent millions in research and development to get the product started , but that their contract was poorly constructed , giving all the intellectual property to Beats when it wasn 't renewed .

In 2004 , Lee bought the rights to the San Francisco 49ers football stadium , which was renamed to Monster Park . Citizens and local government protested that a public facility adopted a corporate

name and a local ballot was passed to revert the stadium name after the four @-@ year deal with Monster expired . The sponsorship was partially contentious due to a recent layoff of 120 local employees .

= = Personal life = =

Noel Lee is married with two children and two step @-@ children . His son Kevin Lee , sometimes referred to as " Little Monster " , started working for the company and developed the M @-@ Design product line of high @-@ tech furniture . Lee 's son later quit Monster and started his own audio company Sol Republic in 2010 . At the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory , Lee was exposed to toxic doses of radiation , which caused a degenerative nerve disorder that prevents him from walking without a wheelchair or Segway .

Lee enjoys collecting gadgets and has a collection of old sports cars . He enjoys socialising with musicians and counts Carlos Santana and George Benson among his friends . He is a member of the Asian Business League of San Francisco . He donated \$ 75 @,@ 000 worth of audio cables to the Los Angeles Unified School District . Lee describes his business ethic as " 24 / 7 ; sleep when you 're dead . " He lives in Hillsborough , California . Lee is also known for throwing large parties at the Consumer Electronics Show and spending time with celebrities at the event .