

# ACOUSTICS AND YOUR WORKPLACE

DID YOU HEAR THAT?



Noise is normally defined as a sound which is unpleasant and/or a disturbance. In a modern office environment, noise can not only have an adverse affect on performance and productivity, but can also affect the health and safety of your staff. Particularly now in the 21st century, with an emphasis on open plan office design, the working environment has evolved to create a platform of communication, flexibility and teamwork. But with all the advantages of open plan design, factors such as noise, can still affect your staff wellbeing and performance.

Varying levels of noise can affect communication, concentration, performance and productivity. In addition to this, noise can contribute to stress and illness, affecting your staffs' mental wellbeing, which can, if not dealt with appropriately, lead to high levels of absenteeism.

## **KEY CONSIDERATIONS:**

### **1. How noise can affect your staff?**

### **2. The science of acoustics**

### **3. Why acoustic privacy is important?**

### **4. The ABC's of office acoustics**

- Absorption

- Blocking

- Cover

### **5. Your needs, Our solutions**

## 1. How can noise affect your staff?

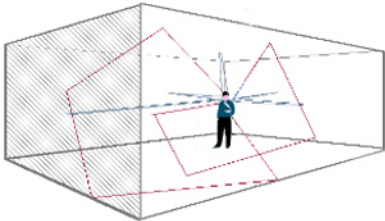


Distractions in the office will affect concentration, which in turn affects staff performance and productivity. Noise is also one of the leading factors contributing to increased levels of stress, low morale and poor employee satisfaction.

Creating an effective acoustic environment will reduce the levels of noise within an office space, and create a better working environment for your staff.

## 2. The Science of Acoustics

When a sound is created in the office i.e. a telephone ringing or staff communicating with each other, it travels until it reaches a surface. Once it reaches, for example, a wall or ceiling, part of the sound is absorbed by the surface and part is reflected back into the room. The reflected sound then continues to travel until it reaches another surface, in which case it is reflected again.



*'The build up, or persistence, of reflective sounds is known as sound reverberation. When designing an open plan office, architects and designers focus on reducing the level of reverberation. Reducing these levels within an environment, through the use of sound absorbing materials applied to office walls, ceilings and floors, while also utilising acoustic screens to block travelling sound, is known as creating a state of acoustic privacy.'*

## 3. Why acoustic privacy is important?

Particularly with open plan office design, privacy is one of the most significant factors affecting staff performance. Providing your staff with an individual work area can only do so much, as noise penetration will still remain a problem.

Ensuring acoustic privacy, by reducing the levels of noise disturbance i.e. distracting conversations, office equipment, telephone calls, can significantly decrease the level of noise distraction, this leads to an increase in employee focus, task completion, productivity and overall performance.



## 4. The ABC's of office acoustics

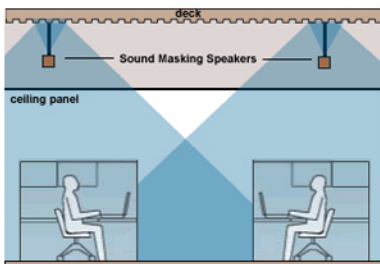
The best way to achieve an effective acoustic environment is through a carefully balanced combination of absorption, blocking and cover techniques. This is called the ABC's of acoustics and it forms the basis of reducing sound reverberation, creating a more comfortable working environment.



**Absorption** - Absorptive materials and surfaces in the work place are designed to reduce the amount of reflection caused when a sound interacts with the material. This can be applied with the use of floor coverings, acoustic ceilings and soft furniture. The use of these materials lowers the levels of ambient noise in the office, thus creating a more comfortable environment.



**Blocking** - Blocking normally occurs between open plan workstations with the use of acoustic screens. The acoustic screen will normally be placed between two workstations at a suitable height, creating a barrier that effectively blocks sound from travelling past, offering a degree of privacy for the workstation opposite you.



**Cover** - The covering technique involves introducing an artificial low-level background noise into a particular area with the use of sound masking. Sound masking involves placing audio speakers into various areas of the office, which provide a steady ambient low-level noise that covers other noise disturbance, adding additional acoustic privacy.

## 5. Your needs, Our solutions

At Office Interior Solutions, we offer a wide range of acoustic privacy solutions which can be tailored to fit your needs and requirements. All our partitioning systems are designed to maximise the acoustic performance required in your office, with our range including single / double glazing and solid partitions.



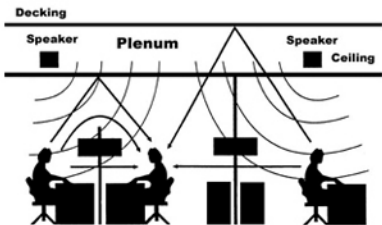
1. Firstly, we identify key areas of your office environment such as meeting or conference rooms, private offices, open plan work space and communal areas, and use a mixture of glazed and solid partitioning to divide these areas to your requirements.



2. For communal or reception areas, free standing acoustic screen can be used. This can create an effective acoustic barrier within open plan designed areas which is also offers an aesthetic and contemporary approach to providing the appropriate privacy necessary.



3. Through the use of workstation cubicles and desk mounted acoustic screens, we can create individual and personal work spaces for your employees, offering effective acoustic privacy within the open plan environment, reducing the level of noise disturbance.



4. By utilising sound absorbing materials on the floor, ceilings and walls, such as carpets and acoustic ceiling tiles, this effectively reduces the amount of sound reflection and noise disturbance within an office space. Sound absorption is also obtained through the use of soft furnishings, such as sofas within the reception area.



5. For increased acoustic privacy, sound masking systems can be used to provide low-level background noise within areas (such as meeting rooms) where confidential conversations may take place.

At Office Interior Solutions, we will provide you with professional advice and guidance, and offer solutions that will meet all your business needs and budgetary requirements.

## Need help with your office acoustics design?

call us ...

**028 9077 0019**