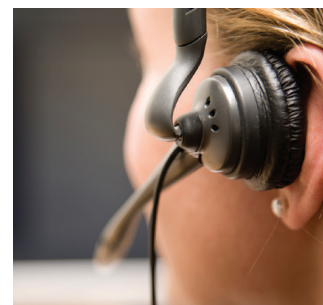




Sound Masking Solutions for Call Centers



The Call Center Challenge: Maximize Worker Density While Maintaining Productivity and Privacy

Open floor plans are commonplace in call centers. These layouts allow facility managers to maximize their existing space while keeping construction costs to a minimum. Call center workstations are typically small, arranged in 4 ft. by 4 ft. (1.22 m x 1.22 m) sections with short partitions. This translates into a space with a lack of acoustic blocking and absorption, creating an environment full of distractions and privacy concerns.

In their presentation at a recent ICBEN conference, Drs. Valtteri Hongisto and Annu Haapakangas presented the results from their acoustic environment and work performance survey. The survey included 689 employees from 11 companies ranging from customer service call centers to general open offices. 48% of respondents reported speech as the most distracting source of noise.¹ In addition, the survey found that employees on average wasted 21.5 minutes per day due to noise distractions.¹

In addition to providing a more comfortable working environment, sound masking can help protect privacy at the workplace. Call centers have an additional obligation to maintain client confidentiality. In addition to noise canceling headsets and other acoustic treatments, call centers have a need for employing sound masking technology to meet their obligation of providing their clients privacy. Cambridge Sound Management Systems can provide a budget friendly option to increase the privacy level within your space.



CALL CENTERS USING CAMBRIDGE SOUND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Cambridge Sound Management has installed sound masking systems in hundreds of millions of square feet of space, including call centers for:

AT&T	Macy's	Target
Bank of America	Manulife Financial	TD Bank
Capital One	Mastercard	TJX Companies
Citibank	Nike	Toyota
Costco	QVC	Walmart
Harley Davidson	Reebok	Wells Fargo
Home Depot	Scottrade	Hundreds more...

WHAT IS SOUND MASKING AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

Adding sound to a space actually makes the space seem quieter. It sounds counter-intuitive but it's true. This is because the added sound reduces the intelligibility of speech. When you can't understand what someone is saying, their words are less distracting — in fact, you probably don't even notice them.

Here's an example of sound masking in everyday life. Have you ever had a conversation with someone while you are washing dishes and they are on the other side of the kitchen? When the water isn't running, you can hear the other person's words perfectly. When you turn the water on it becomes much harder to hear them and understand what they are saying. The person isn't speaking more softly, but they sound as if they are. This is because the noise of the running water is "masking" the sound of the person speaking to you.

Sound masking mimics this phenomenon on a much more sophisticated and effective scale. By adding ambient sound to an environment (such as professionally engineered sounds that sound similar to airflow) you help mask the other noises in the environment, making them less distracting.



Sound Masking: A Simple Solution To Increase Productivity And Privacy

Sound masking is the process of adding a low level, unobtrusive background sound to an environment to reduce the intelligibility of human speech and reduce noise distractions in that environment.

Acoustic consultants use the Privacy Index (PI) to measure the effectiveness of various forms of sound dampening. The range for PI scores is 0% (No Privacy) to 100% (Confidential Privacy).

Drs. Hongisto and Haapakangas conducted a series of laboratory experiments focusing on the effect of speech intelligibility on task performance.² This two-year study measured participants short-term memory recall in a variety of speech privacy environments. The environments ranged from a typical open office environment (PI: 35%) to an environment with sound masking fully deployed (PI: 90%). The researchers found a 8.7% increase in the participants' ability to recall a series of numbers and a 7.8% increase in recollection of words.² This study highlights the effectiveness of sound masking in decreasing distraction and improving worker performance.

References:

1. "Perceived Acoustic Environment, Work Performance And Well-being - Survey Results From Finnish Offices," A. Haapakangas, R. Helenius, E. Keskinen, Valtteri Hongisto. Performance: 9th International Congress on Noise as a Public Health Problem (ICBEN) 2008 Foxwoods, CT

2. "Effect of Speech Intelligibility on Task Performance- An Experimental Laboratory Study," A. Haapakangas, M. Haka, E. Keskinen, V. Hongisto. Performance: 9th International Congress on Noise as a Public Health Problem (ICBEN) 2008 Foxwoods, CT

21.5 

Minutes per day wasted on average by noise distractions

8.7 

Percentage of increase in worker's ability to recall a sequence of numbers correctly after soundmasking installed

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Bank of America's National Helpline site in Boston houses over 200 associates. Even with all that talking, our work environment is private and productive thanks to sound masking from Cambridge Sound Management. Their solution is straightforward and effective. I wouldn't open a call center without it.

- Edward (Ted) Klemm, Vice President,
National Helpline, Bank of America



ADVANTAGES OF CAMBRIDGE SOUND MANAGEMENT'S SOUND MASKING SYSTEMS

- The most advanced and widest portfolio of sound masking products and solutions
- The largest network of professional and certified installers and field engineers
- The most effective sound masking systems available
- The lowest impact installation and the best solution for both new construction and retrofits
- Completely scalable solutions suitable for any size space
- Office paging, background music, and sound masking capabilities all from a single loudspeaker
- Network capabilities for easy control, customization, and system integration
- An affordable alternative to expensive construction projects or sound blocking materials
- GreenSpec listed and the most energy efficient sound masking systems available
- Helps contribute to LEED Certifications



ABOUT CAMBRIDGE SOUND MANAGEMENT

Cambridge Sound Management, Inc., the world's largest provider of sound masking solutions, manufactures QtPro and DynasoundPro sound masking systems to help organizations across multiple industries protect speech privacy, reduce noise distractions, and increase workplace productivity. Cambridge Sound Management's proprietary sound masking technology works by emitting a uniform, barely perceptible background sound at the frequencies of human speech. Cost effective and easy to install, their sound masking, office paging, and background music systems are deployed in hundreds of millions of square feet of space throughout the world including commercial organizations, healthcare facilities, financial services, government agencies, and educational institutions.

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