

# Office Depot

UK Head Office, Leicester



## Primary objective

- Comfort

## Product used

- LogiSon sound masking

## Scope of work

- Open plan office

Office Depot wanted to create the best open plan working environment for staff in a call centre handling in excess of 10,000 calls every day.

This international company is the UK's leading retailer in office products, and customers include many of the UK's best-known companies across all market sectors as well as central and local government, utilities, educational institutions and the NHS.

The focus of their 4,300 square-metre office development was to create the best working environment for staff. Aesthetic aspects included constructing the building from American eco-friendly Kalwall bricks that allow natural light into the building and retain heat. Office Depot also understood the importance of the acoustic environment.

Acoustic Comfort recommended the use of Screen Solutions' 1600 high desk screens and the LogiSon Sound Masking system throughout the building to aid concentration in the open plan areas and speech privacy in the meeting rooms. This solution was essential in the open plan call centre, where in excess of 10,000 calls are handled every day.

The system comprised 252 speakers that were fitted in the ceiling voids over the three floors of the building, and by incorporating the PA module announcements can be made to the entire building or to any specific area.

As well as benefiting staff by maintaining a comfortable level of ambient sound, the environment improves their customers' experience.



## From the client

*"We have found the sound masking so successful that we now actively advertise Acoustic Comfort to our customers."*

**John Horan**  
Head of Facilities,  
Office Depot UK & Ireland

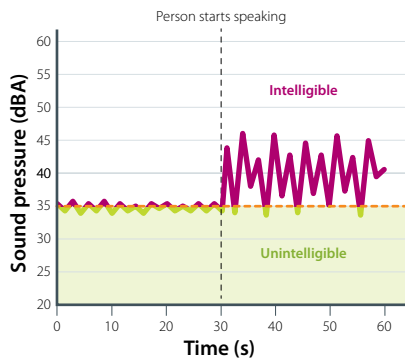
# Sound level tests

## Illustrative tests

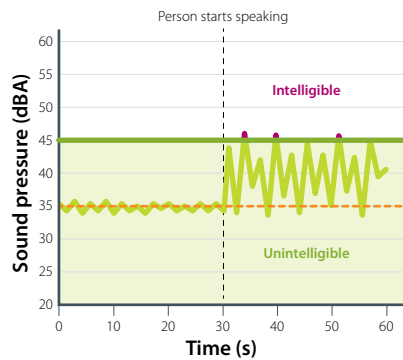
These example test results measure sound travelling across an open plan space.

- For both tests, a person was positioned at the same desk.
- Sound pressure measurements were taken at a distance of 12 metres from the desk.
- For the first half of each test, there was no speech.
- For the second half, the person at the desk spoke with a 'telephone speaking' voice.

### Before treatment



### After treatment



- Key:**
- Intelligible sound
  - Unintelligible sound
  - Noise floor
  - Masking level



# How sound masking works in open plan spaces

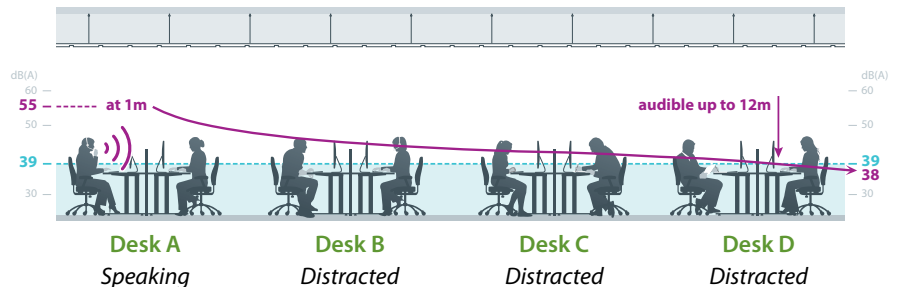
## The problem

### Low background noise level

Noise from an employee on the phone at desk A is distracting to employees at desks B, C and D who are trying to concentrate.

With no one talking background noise is measured at 39dB(A). Sound levels from the employee speaking at desk A are recorded at 55dB(A) at 1m distance and heard over 12 metres away at desk D at 38dB(A).

### Without sound masking



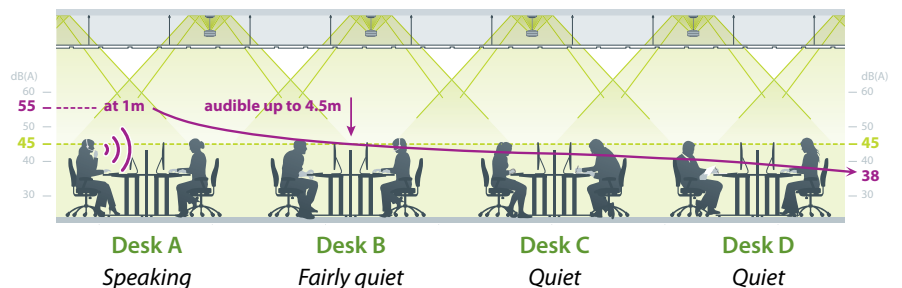
## The solution

### Raise the background noise level

To prevent conversations from travelling across the space the background noise level must be higher than the disruptive noise coming from desk A.

Adding sound masking raises the background noise level to 45dB(A), making conversations from desk A inaudible beyond desk B. In this example the distance at which conversations can be heard is cut from 12 to 4.5 metres.

### With sound masking



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#### London showroom

45 Gee Street,  
Clerkenwell,  
London EC1V 3RS

#### Head office and factory

Beaufort House, Greenwich Way,  
Peacehaven, East Sussex BN10 8HS  
T +44 (0) 1273 589922  
E [sales@screensolutions.co.uk](mailto:sales@screensolutions.co.uk)

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