Sector
Professional services

Case study

CAPITA

Capita

B1, Birmingham

Primary objectives
- Reduce distractions
- Comfort

Product used
- LogiSon sound masking

Scope of work
- Call centre

Capita required their staff to hold clearly understood conversations in an open plan environment.

Capita is the UK's leading outsourcing company. Service Birmingham at B1 is a joint venture with Birmingham City Council. The aim of the project was to provide staff with the best ITC, improve service, cut costs and increase staff job satisfaction.

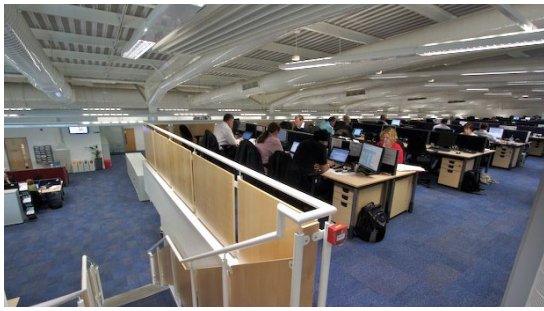
From the client

"The best comment that summarizes the result achieved by Acoustic Comfort came from a member of staff, who said they could no longer hear colleagues' phones ringing and this had previously been a huge distraction."

Dave Stanley
Head of Facilities

The building is predominantly open plan, with 500 staff handling hundreds of calls a day. Each operative spends 90% of their time working on their own, making concentration and low stress a priority. The very high standard of interior fit out provides a light and airy environment.

Acoustic Comfort installed LogiSon sound masking throughout the building, including all open plan areas, meeting rooms, training rooms and reception. The system comprised of 201 speakers largely visible in the open roof space 6 metres above the desks. The public address component allows reception staff to address specific areas or the building as a whole. The system can also be used for emergency evacuation.



The improved acoustics now make the building feel calm and peaceful. Telephone conversations can't be heard clearly from distances over 5 metres, enabling staff to give their full attention to callers.

acoustic comfort
by screen solutions

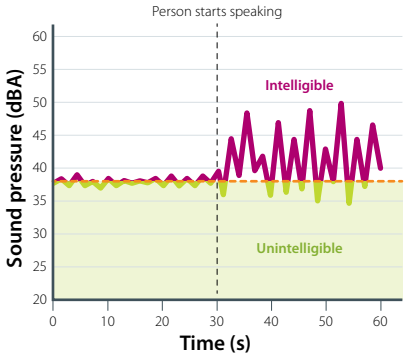
Sound level tests

Illustrative tests

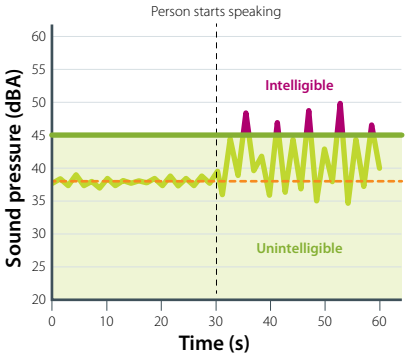
These example test results measure sound travelling across an open plan space.

- 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

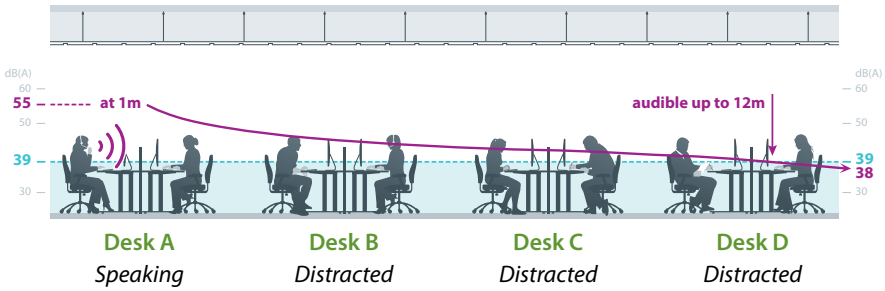
The problem

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



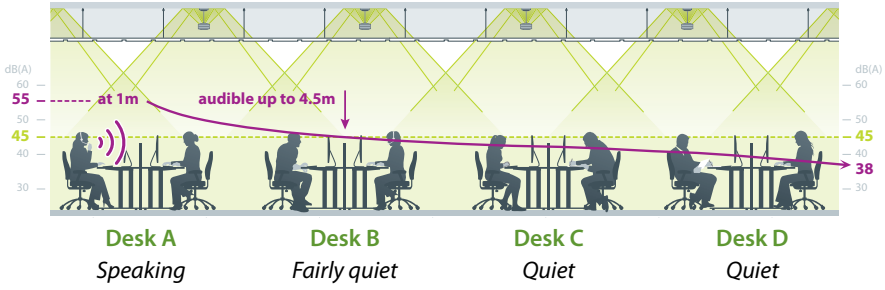
The solution

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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