

SONĀRE

The Environmental Acoustics Magazine

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Premiere Issue
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It happens every day. People eagerly move into a new or renovated facility only to discover that they experience more noise disruptions and have less speech privacy than expected.

A lot of effort has undoubtedly been put into planning other aspects of the new facility and it likely exhibits many desirable features, but the organization is now faced with the troubling realization that people are having difficulty working in it. The question is invariably, "Now what?"

If they'd considered acoustics from the start, they would have had the opportunity to apply all of the techniques required for an optimal result, and likely realized savings in the process. However, at this stage of the game, they need to adopt solutions that offer the greatest opportunity for improvement while creating the least upheaval in the already-occupied environment.

In these circumstances, adding sound masking might not be the only improvement necessary, but it's often the most practical choice. Budget pricing for this technology is low relative to retrofitting other treatments and post-occupancy installation can be handled with little disruption. Masking

IMPROVING ACOUSTICS 'AFTER THE FACT'

can be used to improve open-plan acoustics, and to increase privacy for closed offices and meeting rooms. And unlike closing the ceiling or extending walls to the deck, it doesn't require modifications to the lighting, HVAC, sprinkler, or other building systems.

Additionally, because sound masking works 'at the ear of the listener,' it's effective against noises or conversations regardless of how they find their way into the room and may, therefore, eliminate or reduce the need to address other acoustical pathways between spaces (e.g. sealing gaps between the walls and window mullions). This quality also makes it an effective tool against noises originating from outside the building.

In retrofit situations, it's essential to select a system that offers a ramp-up feature. It slowly introduces the masking beginning at a level near the existing ambient volume, allowing occupants to gradually acclimatize to their new acoustical conditions. Over a short period of time, the sound becomes a natural part of their environment. In fact, if handled after hours, occupants are often unaware that the system has been installed. Full effectiveness is achieved once the masking reaches its final level.

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