



# SOUND MASKING IN CALL CENTER ENVIRONMENTS

## CASE STUDY — Bank of America National Help Line Call Center



Open office layout in Bank of America's National Helpline Call Center

**Space:** A 38,000 sq ft open office workspace with low, 42" partitions, no interior walls and large dome skylights

**Challenge:** Create a highly productive, private and pleasant office environment for 200 employees.

**Solution:** Qt Quiet Technology™ sound masking system covering open cubicle spaces and corridors

**Result:** An aesthetically pleasing, productive environment for employees, free of distractions

## Challenge

### Creating a comfortable space for a newly merged call center

After the merger with Fleet Bank, Bank of America consolidated its National Help Line Call Center under one roof. Created from renovating 38,000 square feet of leased space in a low-rise office building in Boston, Massachusetts, the call center houses over 200 associates who are on phones all day answering calls from branch personnel throughout the United States. The topics range from sensitive customer information to internal system how-tos. With plenty of experience running call centers, Bank of America Vice President, Ted Klemm set a goal, an environment where associates could collaborate, but have privacy in their phone conversations.

Several of the planned design elements from the renovation would contribute to workplace comfort and visual appeal, but would be detrimental to workplace acoustics. One such element was hard,

“ The Bank of America 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 Klemm**  
Vice President, National Helpline



Bank of America

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sound-reflecting windows to provide as much natural light into the open plan area as possible. Walls and new domes, fashioned to look like skylights, also reflected sound. The requirement to re-use existing 42" cubicle partitions, while facilitating worker collaboration, would further degrade workplace acoustics.

## Solution

Bank of America hired an acoustical consulting firm, to evaluate the space and make recommendations. Several noise reduction techniques were suggested along with the inclusion of a sound masking system. Bank of America installed the appropriate building materials, (e.g. fiberglass ceiling tiles) to absorb sound, arranged the placement of workstations and walls to block as much sound as possible and installed a Qt Quiet Technology™ sound masking system from Cambridge Sound Management to cover-up distracting conversations and other workplace sounds.

## Result

### It is very quiet

The addition of a Qt Quiet Technology™ sound masking system, along with incorporating the consulting firm's noise reduction recommendations, created a pleasant and highly-productive work environment at Bank of America's National Helpline Call Center. While most associates do not even notice the system, when probed they offered comments such as "it helps me concentrate," "I am much less self-conscious of my voice," and "even though there are a lot of people talking, my cubicle is very quiet."



Employees working in their quiet call center

“ We don't even notice the system. Our call center associates love this space. They find it bright, comfortable and remarkably quiet. ”

**BoA Administrative Assistant**