

# SOUND MASKING IN FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

## CASE STUDY — Citadel Federal Credit Union



Citadel Federal Credit Union Headquarters in Exton PA

**Space:** An 84,000 square feet open office space with 3 floors for 200 employees

**Challenge:** A new headquarters with large windows and short cubicle partitions

**Solution:** Qt Quiet Technology sound masking system covering open cubicle spaces, corridors, and conference rooms

**Result:** An aesthetically pleasing, productive environment for employees with minimal distractions

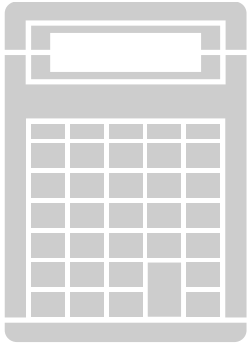
## Challenge

### New headquarters and call center for a growing financial firm

Citadel Federal Credit Union is a not-for-profit banking organization that serves thousands of customers in southeast Pennsylvania. The credit union is a full-service financial institution, with products ranging from insurance and investments to money markets and checking accounts. Citadel strives to provide easy access to a full range of financial and insurance services, while safeguarding client financial information. The newly constructed Citadel headquarters, located in Exton PA, is home to the credit union's Information Technology, Human Resources, Risks Assessment, Collections and Marketing departments in addition to senior administration. Their 84,000 square foot space is spread over three floors and houses over 200 employees.

Several on-site high volume call centers are included in the space to provide member support. As Citadel's member base grows, the volume of incoming calls has increased dramatically, generating a high level of additional background noise and distractions. The work stations throughout the open floor plan space feature low partitions to encourage collaboration and increase the space's aesthetics. The staff in these open office areas as well as workers in private offices expressed concerns about the distracting, unwanted noise level coming from the adjacent call center areas. The increased noise level led to worker distractions and increased the risk of worker error. The possibility of client personal financial information being overheard was also a concern.

Initially, Citadel facility managers attempted to mitigate the noise concern by moving the call center teams to other areas in the building. Unfortunately this did not solve the noise and distraction problem.



Citadel Federal Credit Union

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## Solution

### Safeguarding member privacy

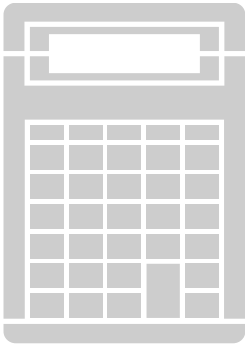
The team at Citadel wanted to maintain the open and collaborative environment within the space and needed a flexible solution that could handle the various acoustic needs in each area. A Qt Quiet Technology sound masking system from Cambridge Sound Management (CSM) was recommended to decrease the conversational distractions throughout the space.

The Qt Quiet Technology sound masking system gave Citadel a solution that was easily installed within the existing open office area, capable of offering multiple zones to address specific area needs and expandable to cover the entire 84,000 sq ft facility. Each floor of the Citadel headquarters features one control module and is separated into multiple zones to allow for different sound levels.

The system is flexible enough to allow for a different sound masking level to meet the needs of each department. The zones were established based on each area's use and requirements including separate zones for each department's open office area, call centers, private offices and conference rooms. Each call center department has their own zone with a higher sound masking level to reduce the distraction from the numerous employees speaking on the phone. The adjacent departments whose responsibilities are more administrative have a slightly lower sound masking level to ensure an unobtrusive background sound while providing speech privacy.

“Citadel Class Service is our pledge that defines our standard for service excellence and reinforces our ongoing efforts to achieve the highest level of customer satisfaction. CSM's Qt Quiet Technology sound masking system has enabled us to achieve an acoustical workplace that empowers our employees to deliver this pledge every day.”

**Michelle Kenworthy**  
Real Estate Projects Manager



Citadel Federal Credit Union



## Result

### **Delivering quality service in a comfortable environment**

The uniform coverage provided by the Qt Quiet Technology system has resulted in a more comfortable workplace environment. Since each department is in a separate zone, the manager is able to set the decibel level for their department's specific needs. Managers are able to adjust the system should the need arise using the system monitoring and control software accessible from any computer or mobile tablet device.

Citadel executives have noted that the sound from the system is unobtrusive and pleasant. Additionally the executive team reports that they feel the system has effectively increased the speech confidentiality in the conference rooms and private offices.

Michelle Kenworthy, Real Estate Projects Manager for Citadel explains, "We attempted to address our noise issue by moving distracting departments [the call centers] to more remote areas. After several ineffective moves, we realized it was futile to address our noise challenges in this way. Once we installed the Qt Quiet Technology system, the results were nothing short of amazing. Our employees saw a dramatic difference in their ability to concentrate because the system effectively masked distracting conversations."