

CASE STUDY:

Reducing Distractions and Protecting Speech Privacy in a Large and Busy Modern Office



Mercy Health

Challenge

Reducing Distractions and Protecting Speech Privacy in a Large and Busy Modern Office

When Mercy Health, the largest health system in Ohio, wanted to move its headquarters to a new space, they wanted the new office to be a special place that employees were excited to work in each day. Each employee would have an adjustable height desk that allowed them to stand or sit at the touch of a button, numerous collaboration spaces at their disposal, and even treadmill desks on each floor. The new 368,000 square foot office would boast copious amounts of natural light due to the fact that the open office areas would get all of the space's windows, while the private offices would occupy the middle of the space. Additionally, there would be fewer walls and private offices than the previous space, and workspace partitions would be shorter.

Although these changes would be great for allowing in natural light and employee well being, there were concerns that noise distractions from conversational speech might increase due to the reduction in the number of private offices and fewer sound barriers such as walls and partitions. To help ensure a smooth transition, Nicole Bellman, Mercy Health's real estate director, created a pilot space in an unused portion of Mercy Health's previous office space prior to the move. This space included open office space, workstations, huddle rooms, and only one private office. Employees were encouraged to utilize the space prior to the move to the new building.

To help mitigate noise, Bellman considered adding a sound masking solution to the space. Sound masking is the process of adding an unobtrusive background noise to an environment to cover up excess speech noise through speakers installed in the ceiling. Bellman asked her technology integrator Premier Network Solutions to recommend a sound masking system and they chose QtPro from Cambridge Sound Management.

“ Sound masking from Cambridge Sound Management allowed us to be true to our architectural vision for our new office without sacrificing acoustical comfort or employee productivity. We love it! ”

Nicole Bellman
Director, Real Estate
Mercy Health

Solution

Qt® 600 Sound Masking System

Premier Network Solutions installed QtPro sound masking from Cambridge Sound Management in the designated open office pilot area. Small, barely visible emitters (speakers) were placed throughout the space. The emitters were connected by cables to an intuitive control module mounted in the equipment room.



Result

The pilot was enormous success. Many employees chose not to work in their private offices anymore and actually preferred the open office space. Employees didn't notice the unobtrusive sound masking noise, but did notice that they could work in the open office area with minimal conversational noise distractions. Due to the success of the pilot, QtPro was added throughout the new Mercy Health Headquarters. Multiple volume zones allow the masking to be louder in the call center area, where conversations are more frequent. "Sound masking from Cambridge Sound Management allowed us to be true to our architectural vision for our new office without sacrificing acoustical comfort or employee productivity," says Bellman. "We love it!"



Case Study Overview

SPACE

368,000 square feet of open office and private office space.

CHALLENGE

Speech privacy concerns.

SOLUTION

Qt® 600 Sound Masking System



RESULT

An office environment where it's easier to concentrate while keeping conversations held in the open area from being overheard.

About Mercy Health

Mercy Health (formerly Catholic Health Partners) is the largest health system in Ohio and one of the largest health systems in the United States, employing more than 34,000 employees in Ohio and Kentucky. With \$6 billion in assets, Mercy Health operates about 450 health facilities, including 23 hospitals, eight senior living communities, five hospice programs and seven home health agencies. Its accountable care organization, Mercy Health Select, is one of the top 10 ACOs in the country for Medicare Shared Savings, generating more than \$15 million in savings in 2014. In keeping with its mission, Mercy Health provides about \$1 million per day in community benefit services. Mercy Health is a founding member of Health Innovations Ohio, which focuses on providing health services that result in higher quality, better health and greater value. For more information, visit www.mercy.com or connect with Mercy Health on Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest and Twitter (@LivingMercyHlth).

About Cambridge Sound Management

The world leader in commercial sound masking, Cambridge Sound Management, Inc. manufactures QtPro and DynasoundPro sound masking systems to help organizations protect speech privacy, reduce noise distractions, and fuel workplace productivity in their offices. Its next-generation sound masking systems work by emitting a uniform, barely perceptible background sound at the frequencies of human speech. The systems also include office paging and background music capabilities to help facilities meet all of their masking and audio needs with one affordable system. Cost effective and easy to install, Cambridge Sound Management's systems are deployed in over 15,000 organizations' spaces throughout the world including commercial businesses, healthcare facilities, financial services, government agencies, and educational institutions.