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Speech Privacy Options for the Open Ceiling Office Environment

Dana Hougland
Shen Milsom Wilke, Inc., 1822 Blake Street, Suite 2A, Denver, CO 80202, USA

The popularity of the open ceiling and loft office environment continues to grow. The design and effectiveness of sound masking systems in an open office environment are well established for traditional office spaces with acoustically absorptive ceilings systems. Aesthetic preferences for open ceilings with minimal ceiling treatment popular in the creative reuse of older buildings and more minimalist industrial spaces limit the sound masking options available to achieve an acceptable level of speech privacy in an open office environment. Traditional sound masking systems are often subjectively viewed as harsh, unpleasant or visually inappropriate. Several options for alternative designs are evaluated as to the evenness of coverage, effectiveness in achieving an appropriate level of speech privacy, aesthetic integration into the environment and subjective impression of the occupants.