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05/09/2022

Reasons to Soundproof Your Office.

What's the most annoying sound in the world? Is it the beeping seatbelt alarm in your car? Maybe it's the sound of nails on a chalkboard? Or maybe it's the incessant sniffing of your colleague next to you who really should have called in sick.

If the thought of someone's normal bodily functions fills you with a blinding rage, congratulations! You're not alone! Around one in five adults suffer from misophonia, a debilitating condition that causes individuals to experience intense anger and disgust when confronted with sounds made by other human beings.

Lip-smacking, chewing, even breathing – all these sounds can trigger even the most mild-mannered of colleagues.

Misophonia is just one of the many reasons businesses choose to add soundproofing to their workspaces. But what else prompts people to seek out acoustic treatments for their offices?

At OLG, we've been incorporating soundproofing into our office products for a while now and we're proud to be an industry leader in this space. One thing we've learned is that while there is no shortage of companies offering acoustic treatments – there's a severe lack of product expertise and placement advice.

For this reason, we've compiled a list of the most common reasons people seek out soundproofing in the office. By the end of this article, you'll know where all that noise is coming from!

Protection of Private Information

Think back over the past year at work. How many phone calls, quick catchups and private conversations can you remember having? Now think about how many would you be happy to have broadcast to your colleagues?

Now flip that argument around. How many of your customers would be happy if their private information could be heard by everyone on the office floor?

Certain industries are required by regulation to ensure speech privacy in both phone calls and face-to-face meetings. This includes the health industry, finance, education, and construction.

Effective sound masking and soundproofing of specific areas can help businesses become compliant with speech privacy regulations.

Reduction of Noise Pollution

Even in an open-plan office, people need a certain level of quiet. It's not just about keeping private conversations private, either. There's nothing worse than trying to lead a serious sales call while the rest of the office is loudly shouting, swearing, or laughing in the background.

Talk to any call centre employee. They'll likely have several anecdotes about times when background noise bled into their phone call and negatively affected the conversation.

So how much does a noisy work environment affect your productivity?

In a recent study, researchers found that on average, [employees lose 21.5 minutes per day due to noise-based distractions](#). At 4% of a normal working day, it may not seem like a lot. But for a company that has 100 employees with a salary cost of \$75,000, that 4% in loss of productivity adds up to \$300,000 a year.

Aesthetic Appeal

One of the best things a professional acoustic treatment is how good it can make your office space look. You're able to transform your dreary office space with a splash of colour that not only looks fantastic but are completely functional as well.

Acoustic treatments for offices are limited in the amount of sound they can install, especially if the premises is being rented or under contract. To remedy this, many [soundproofing solutions](#) are either temporary or removable.

Healthier Sound

It's not just your mood that can be affected by working in a continuously loud environment will eventually take a toll on both your mood and your health!

Ignore for a second the profound disability of noise-induced hearing loss, there are way more things to be concerned about. Exposure to loud noise can also cause high blood pressure, heart disease, sleep disturbances and stress. Other studies have [linked noisy environments with impairments](#) in memory, attention level, and reading skills.

But probably the most concerning health problem resulting from being in a chronically loud environment is the effect on pregnant women. A [Canadian study performed in 2018](#) found that preeclampsia, a serious condition that causes high blood pressure during pregnancy, was more common among pregnant people exposed to higher levels of noise pollution.

Ok, so we know a noisy office can be to the detriment of both your health and your business. But how loud is too loud?

How Loud is too Loud?

Normal conversation registers around the 60 dB(A) to 65 dB(A) decibel mark, around the same volume as an air conditioner. At 85-90 dB(A), or the equivalent of a revving motorcycle, you're going to need to raise your voice or shout to be heard.

At 100 dB(A), most people can expect to start experiencing hearing loss after being exposed for just 15 minutes. If you want to avoid this, I'd recommend not listening to a car horn up close for 15 minutes straight.

There's an easy way to see if your office space is too loud. Download any noise metering app on your smartphone and measure the various levels of sound around different locations in the office. We recommend [Sound Meter on Android](#) or [Decibel X on iPhone](#). Both are free to use and will give you a good idea of where the noise hotspots are.

No Need to Whisper!

Despite the doom and gloom, this is by no means cause to implement a whisper-only policy in the office. These are just some of the reasons why office managers decide to apply soundproofing and various acoustic solutions to their offices.

If one or more of these reasons is stopping your office from being as productive as it could be, feel free to reach out to our friendly sales team on 02 8188 2732 or email us at info@olgooffice.com.

Still not convinced? These are just some of the reasons OLG is the preferred office furniture supplier for so many Australian resellers. If you need help choosing the best furniture wholesaler for your business needs, feel free to drop us an email at info@olgooffice.com or give us a call on (02) 8188 2732.