



# Sound Masking

**Sound masking is the addition of natural or artificial sound (sometimes less-accurately known as 'white noise' or 'pink noise') into an environment to 'mask' or cover up unwanted sound by using auditory masking.**

The use of sound masking techniques can help to reduce or eliminate awareness of pre-existing sounds in a given area and create a better working environment.

Sound masking can be explained by analogy with light. Imagine a dark room where someone is turning a torch on and off. The light is very obvious and distracting. Now imagine that the room lights are turned on. The torch is still being turned on and off, but is no longer noticeable because it has been 'masked'. Sound masking is a similar process of covering a distracting sound with a more soothing or less intrusive sound.

Quell® sound masking systems, developed by Apple Sound, achieve this effect electronically by generating a pure, smooth and gentle signal and distributing it throughout the roof space by means of stable, high quality amplifiers and specially selected, precisely positioned loudspeakers. The loudspeakers can be

mounted in the plenum above a false ceiling, fitted directly into the ceiling grid or in some cases surface mounted.

## Why use sound masking?

Results from studies point to noise in the workplace environment as a major cause of reduced effectiveness, higher stress and declining job satisfaction.

The modern, often open-plan office environment is particularly vulnerable to factors which contribute to the level of unwanted noise in the workspace, namely:

- Increased workstation densities and decreased workstation sizes for all types of workers, which mean more employees are working in closer proximity to each other than ever before.
- Creation of office 'teaming' areas that increase noise levels as a result of the interactive conversations required in this type of environment.
- More widespread use of speakerphones and the tendency of employees to speak more loudly when using them.

An effective sound masking system can help reduce these sources of stress

and distraction and bring benefits such as improved concentration and productivity to the workspace.

In addition, speech privacy is quickly becoming a concern in a variety of environments ranging from healthcare facilities, where doctor-patient confidentiality is critical, to banks, building societies and post offices where speech privacy is vital in preserving confidentiality and combatting fraud.

Installing a Quell® sound masking system can be a highly cost-effective alternative to major interior refits, as it can adapt to your changing workplace - it's energy efficient too.

## Where can it be used?

Sound masking can be used anywhere to ensure speech privacy or reduce distractions. Sound masking is typically used in selected workspaces and public areas. The most common sound masking installations are:

### Open Plan Offices

Open offices can be either too quiet (where someone dropping a pen in the next cubicle is distracting) - or too noisy (where the conversations of others in the office make it impossible to concentrate). Open offices can

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benefit from sound masking because the added sound covers existing sounds in the area - making workers less distracted and more productive.

## Public Spaces

Sound masking as a speech privacy system is useful for reception areas, pharmacies, waiting rooms and financial institutions. The system is provided in the area where conversations should not be heard - not necessarily in the area where the conversation is taking place. For instance, a solicitor does not want those in the waiting room to overhear private conversations with a client so sound masking is provided in the waiting area.

## Private Offices

Private offices and other enclosed spaces often appear to provide privacy but actually do not. Walls are often lightweight and do not extend to the ceiling deck - only to the ceiling tile. In these cases, sound can easily travel through partitions or over the walls. Sound masking can be provided in adjacent private offices, or in hallways outside of private offices, to ensure that confidential conversations remain confidential.

## What does it sound like?

Nothing: correctly installed, the resulting ambient noise is not normally detectable by occupants. When heard in a very quiet environment, the sound can be compared to a gentle sound like air flowing through a vent. During the commissioning process, Apple Sound's technicians ensure that sound masking levels are effective yet unobtrusive.



## How can Apple Sound implement a sound masking system for me?

Much more than simply an equipment vendor, Apple Sound is the developer and sole provider of the full range of Quell® products and services and as such offers site surveys, acoustic advice and technical expertise to their customer base.



As a fully-scalable solution, Quell® sound masking systems can be implemented in a wide range of environments, from a bank counter to a multi-floor open-plan office building.

Apple Sound provide a complete specification, supply, delivery and installation service with long-term after sales service support, with guaranteed response times if required.

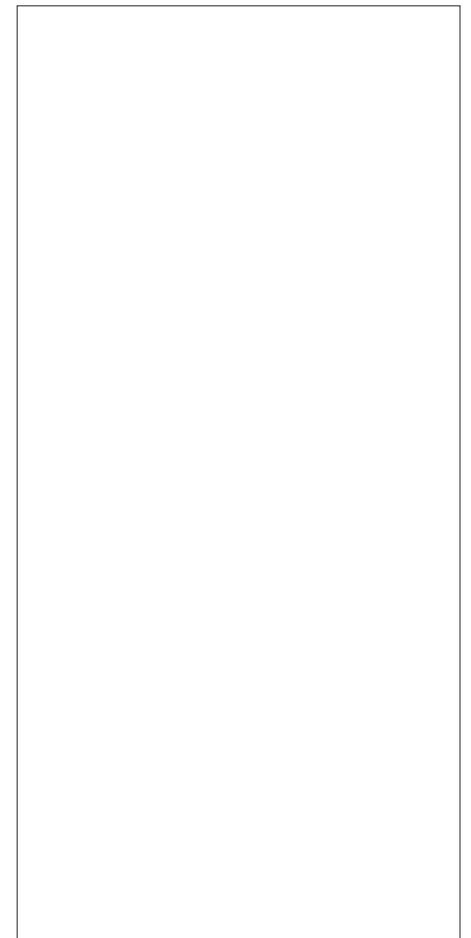
## More information

For information on the full range of Apple Sound products and services, and case studies of completed sound masking projects, contact Apple Sound directly on:

**0870 741 0123**

or visit the Apple Sound web site at:

[www.applesound.com](http://www.applesound.com)



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