



# SOUND MASKING

## For Law Firms

The acoustic performance of law offices is significant for both staff and clients.

The conversations taking place within these facilities often involve highly confidential information. Though they usually occur in private offices or meeting rooms, closed doors and even deck-to-deck walls typically aren't enough to ensure speech privacy.

Poor door seals, gaps between the wall and the window mullion, breaks in plenum barriers, and improperly designed or treated HVAC components can provide clear paths for overhearing discussions. When two or more independent occupants share the same building, poor acoustical conditions can be an even greater liability.

Noise is yet another acoustic concern. Numerous studies show that it disrupts concentration, reduces productivity and increases errors, which can be highly detrimental to a profession that requires attentiveness, good listening skills and detailed information to be taken. Ultimately, these issues can impact client satisfaction and even affect the legal proceedings.

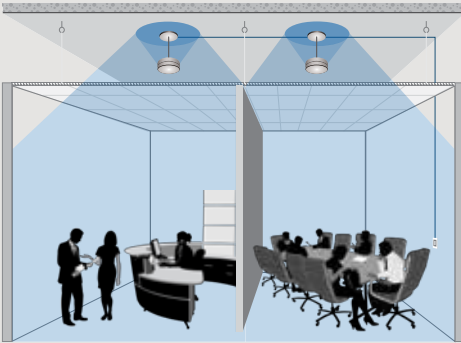
Taking steps to protect speech privacy and create a positive acoustic ambience is a sign of control and professionalism. As such, it can reinforce clients' confidence in the firm's ability and strengthen its image. It can also enhance communication. When clients' fear of being overheard is reduced, they're more inclined to speak freely.

Employees also benefit from an environment that enables them to work without being disrupted or disrupting those around them.



### **Meet Michael.**

He's noticed that he can hear the client who just stepped into your reception area. And he knows that means she can overhear what he's saying too. Now he feels uncomfortable discussing the issue that brought him to your firm in the first place.



## The LogiSon® Solution

The LogiSon Acoustic Network distributes a comfortable background sound throughout the facility. Though most compare it to softly blowing air, this sound is actually engineered to mask the frequencies in speech, increasing privacy. It also covers up incidental noises that would otherwise impact concentration.

This technology is vital for open plans. However, it's also needed in closed rooms because, whether built from deck-to-deck or floor-to-ceiling, walls only address part of the speech privacy equation.

An open door, one that doesn't meet the wall's STC rating, or even minor penetrations in the door's or wall's structure can seriously compromise the room's acoustic performance. If the background sound level in adjoining spaces is lower than the speech passing through the wall, conversations will still be heard and are potentially intelligible. The LogiSon Acoustic Network maintains the background level at an appropriate volume, which is typically 42 to 48 dBA.

This solution has been installed in law offices, libraries, bar associations, courthouses, jury boxes, police stations and correctional facilities across North America and Europe.

It's easy to retrofit and can also distribute paging and music where needed.

For more information about the system's advanced features, see our brochure or contact your local LogiSon Representative.

## Using Sound Masking in Other Judicial Facilities

### Courthouses

Courthouses are complex buildings that provide spaces geared towards judges, jurors, court personnel, defendants and the public.

Most judicial administration and support areas have the same acoustical needs as other office environments and benefit from the enhanced speech privacy and noise control provided by sound masking.

Courtrooms can also benefit from this technology. There must be high speech intelligibility from the judge's bench and witness stand to ensure that participants can accurately hear and record the proceedings. However, sidebar conversations and bench conferences require speech privacy. Installing sound masking above the jury box can help satisfy these competing requirements. As recommended in the *U.S. Courts Design Guide*, the judge can activate the system using a switch, which simultaneously mutes microphones.

Speech privacy is also important for jury deliberation rooms. The discussions occurring in these areas, as well as in waiting rooms and judges' chambers, should not be overheard. Privacy is not only vital to the integrity of the proceedings, but also to jurors' comfort and ability to candidly discuss the case.

### Law Enforcement Agencies

Law enforcement agencies require speech privacy in processing areas and interview rooms, as well as between holding cells. These security-related concerns not only apply to persons of interest in a case, but to the potential for infringement of the speech privacy of a witness.

If necessary, sound masking's benefits can be augmented by connecting the system to transducers that transfer the masking sound to physical structures, such as windows, impeding the use of audio surveillance equipment. Because it's critical to protect this type of system from unauthorized access, the LogiSon Acoustic Network is equipped with both physical and electronic security. For more information, see our *Security Features* brochure.

## Case Study

### ORRICK HERRINGTON & SUTCLIFFE, LLP • San Francisco, California • USA

Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe is one of the oldest and most well-respected law firms in the world.

With more than 170 lawyers in its San Francisco office, the firm has played an important role in shaping the city, helping guide the financing of landmarks such as the Golden Gate Bridge, Candlestick Park, the Bay Area Rapid Transit Authority (BART), and the Moscone Convention Center.

### Problem

The acoustical requirements for many legal spaces, including attorneys' offices, conference and deposition rooms, boardrooms and other special spaces dictate that walls, floors and ceilings meet a high degree of air tightness, sound absorption and constructability.

### Solution

This project integrated the requirements for speech privacy and control of unwanted noise and vibration from the HVAC system with



the high design aesthetic and sustainability concepts of the architectural team.

After providing a series of demonstration and mock-ups for the client, Shen Milsom & Wilke recommended installation of the LogiSon Acoustic Network throughout selected open plan, closed office and support spaces requiring acoustical privacy. SM&W preferred the LogiSon system because of the ability to control each loudspeaker's sound level and frequency balance from a laptop.