

## Bank of America National Help Line Call Center Boston, MA

### Space Description

38,000 square feet of renovated open office plan workspace with low (42") cubicle partitions, no interior walls and domes fashioned to look like skylights.

### Challenge

Create a highly productive, pleasant office environment for 200 call center associates.

### Solution

A Qt Quiet technology™ sound masking system: Oasis Qt™ from Cambridge Sound Management.

### Result

A comfortable, highly productive work environment.



*"The Bank of America National Helpline site in Boston houses over 200 associates. Even with all that talking, our work environment is private and productive, thanks to sound masking from Cambridge Sound Management. Their solution is straightforward and effective. I wouldn't open a call center without it."*

**Edward (Ted) Klemm**  
Vice President, National Helpline  
Bank of America



sound-reflecting windows to provide as much natural light into the open plan area as possible. Walls and new domes, fashioned to look like skylights, also reflected sound. The requirement to re-use existing 42" cubicle partitions, while facilitating worker collaboration, would further degrade workplace acoustics.

"We don't even notice the system." Says Bank of America's, Administrative Assistant. "Our call center associates love this space. They find it bright, comfortable and remarkably quiet."

After the merger with Fleet Bank, Bank of America consolidated its National Help Line Call Center under one roof. Created from renovating 38,000 square feet of leased space in a low-rise office building in Boston, Massachusetts, the call center houses over 200 associates who are on phones all day answering calls from branch personnel throughout the United States. The topics range from sensitive customer information to internal system how-tos. With plenty of experience running call centers, Bank of America Vice President, Ted Klemm set a goal, an environment where associates could collaborate, but have privacy in their phone conversations. Essentially, a goal of superior workplace acoustics.

Several of the planned physical design elements of the renovation, while contributing to workplace comfort and visual appeal, would have detrimental effects on workplace acoustics. One such element was hard,

Bank of America relied on Acentech, a premier acoustical consulting firm, to evaluate the space and to make recommendations. Acentech suggested several noise reduction techniques and the inclusion of a sound masking system. As a result, Bank of America used appropriate building materials, (e.g. fiberglass ceiling tiles) to absorb sound, arranged the placement of workstations and walls to block as much sound as possible and recommended Oasis Qt™ sound masking system from Cambridge Sound Management to cover-up distracting conversations and other workplace sounds.

The space was standard and straightforward and so was the installation. Cablenet Systems installed miniature Qt emitters on a 10' by 10' grid into the ceiling tiles of the 10' dropped ceiling. Five Oasis Qt SPS300™ control modules created 5 separately-controlled zones that accommodated different work departments within the space.

Acentech did the final checkout, evaluating the performance of the sound masking sound. Subjectively the sound was quiet, pleasant and unobtrusive. Objectively, the sound quality for sound masking purposes did the job. The sound level in the important speech frequencies from 1000Hz–4000Hz was exceptionally uniform. The spatial uniformity in these frequencies, as measured by the L90 in these octave bands (the sound level exceeded 90% of the time) was measured to be +/- 1.3 dB or better—a difference in level that is imperceptible to most listeners.

### Objectives Were Met

The addition of an Oasis Qt™ sound masking system, along with incorporating Acentech's noise reduction recommendations, created a pleasant and highly-productive work environment at Bank of America's National Helpline Call Center. While most associates do not even notice the system, when probed they offered comments such as "it helps me concentrate," "I am much less self-conscious of my voice," "even though there are lot of people talking, my cubicle is very quiet" and "I thought that was the air conditioner!"

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Cambridge Sound Management, LLC, located in Cambridge, MA, is the developer of Qt Quiet technology™, a low-voltage distributed audio system for sound masking, paging and background music distribution in the workplace. Our systems are sold direct and by select partners worldwide; they are deployed in millions of square feet of space. Installations range from modest home offices to spaces of unlimited size. Applications range from providing acoustical comfort in open workspaces to settings such as doctor's offices, where sound masking is used to ensure confidential speech privacy.

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Oasis Qt™ Sound Masking System based on Qt Quiet Technology™

