

Noise - Dealing with it at source

One of the biggest challenges in workspaces of today is controlling noise transfer across and between spaces. It would seem obvious that open-plan space is a perfect place for noise to travel and, whilst this is true, meeting rooms are also an acoustic challenge.

When noise is generated in a meeting room, it can be easily transferred from room to room through:

- » Floor and ceiling voids
- » Services such as air conditioning pipes and ducts
- » Wall junctions and gaps
- » Doors and windows.

In simple terms, this means there is a possibility that sound generated in Room A could be heard in Rooms B, C and even D. Not to mention the area outside of the meeting rooms too.

In these situations, basic procedures such as implementing acoustic baffles in ceiling and floor voids, applying acoustic sealing to junctions, ensuring glass partitions are double-glazed and double-boarding plasterboard partitions will all assist in blocking the transfer of noise

A Common Challenge

A common challenge, though, is where you have a moving wall between rooms – a moving wall has vertical seals between panels and horizontal seals at the top and bottom – a significant acoustic weakness!

And whilst it is possible to obtain very expensive moving walls with acoustic ratings (measured in decibels) that are extremely high, it gets to a point where the moving wall will only stop as much noise transfer as the surrounding environment – after a certain point, the extra cost spent on a high dB moving wall will not yield any greater benefit than a lesser dB wall as its rare for the environment to achieve an acoustic integrity that's at the same level as what we see moving walls claiming to achieve today.

The emphasis of today therefore is on creating a meeting room environment that contains as much sound blocking material as possible. We see plasterboard baffles in ceiling voids, acoustic flooring, baffled floor voids and partitions that are double/triple board to stop as much sound transfer as possible. We see moving walls that are 125mm thick with semi-electric seals for maximum sealing pressure... but all of this in isolation is not good enough.

BEFORE Creatif reverb control products applied



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Address the Source

Treating the issue at source is a far more effective method of dealing with noise transfer. Implementing acoustically absorbent materials into rooms means that sound generated within a room is soaked up in that room, before it reaches the points that allow it to transfer to the adjacent space.

This means the emphasis on creating a meeting room that incorporates expensive high acoustically rated walls and ceilings can be a thing of the past. This concept is simple: invest money on greater absorption inside the room = less noise reverberated around the room = less noise reaching the flanking paths = virtually no noise heard next door.

And that's not all

Implementing absorption into the space creates acoustic comfort within the meeting room too. Less reverberated noise means people can talk quieter as are not having to raise their voice to cover the ambient levels created by reverberated sound.

Conversation is easier therefore, less noise is generated, less noise reaches the acoustic weak spots and less noise gets to people outside the rooms or in the adjacent room.

