

# CEILING SYSTEMS

Between us, ideas become reality®

## Call Centre Acoustic Ceilings “Sounds of Silence”



**Armstrong**

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## Call Centre Acoustic Ceilings What's noise got to do with it?

**Noise** – you can't see, touch or taste it but it can affect the work environment dramatically. According to a major US study\* into open-plan office layout of major corporations, noise was cited as the **number one workplace problem** affecting productivity.

Call centres, with their "open-plan" floor layout, can be significantly affected by this "hidden" element. Yet the type of acoustic treatment in call centres, such as the ceiling and wall finishes, can assist in improving staff **productivity**, and reducing stress levels and churn rate, which are all current issues of concern. Basically, more sound absorptive ceilings and walls result in reduced noise levels within the work area providing an environment more conducive to productivity.

Standard acoustic ceilings are routinely used by architects, designers, builders, developers and property managers. However, with the explosion in the call centre market, the **special acoustic needs** of these open-plan spaces are often not considered when fitting out such spaces.

These open-plan offices, with low height work stations and higher workspace densities of up to 8 to 12 square metres per person (this compared to around 15 to 25 square metres which was standard in the 1980's), can give rise to high noise levels: a negative to worker productivity. Closed office settings have changed to open plan environments that promote team building. Lots of people talking simultaneously is the major contributor

to noise levels in call centres. Noise from workers' overheard conversations that can be clearly understood, are the most disruptive of all office noises.

In Australia, most standard office accommodation uses standard performance acoustic ceiling tiles, with a typical sound absorption rating expressed as an NRC (Noise Reduction Coefficient) of 0.55. This means that, of the sound within a room that strikes the ceiling, 55 per cent of that sound is absorbed (the higher the figure, the more absorption). To put this into perspective, flush plasterboard absorbs only 5 per cent, with an NRC rating of just 0.05. A room with a flush plasterboard ceiling in a call centre would be very noisy and acoustically uncomfortable. Ceilings with an NRC of 0.55 are still not ideal for call centres which have special acoustic needs.

A new generation of **high performance acoustic ceilings** is now available to help control the overall reverberate noise levels in today's open-plan offices, with NRC ratings of 0.85 – 1.00 (85% – 100%). For existing call centres, in most cases, the existing tiles can be easily removed and replaced with the new, more acoustically absorptive tiles with a minimal disruption. The existing suspension system, lights, heating and air conditioning infrastructure remains in place to minimise costs.

**NEW ACOUSTIC TILE FIT-OUTS RECENTLY COMPLETED: Telstra, Vodafone, National Australia Bank, Office Works, United Energy.**



**Call Centre Open Plan:** Sound is reflected at a single angle over the partial height divider, causing distraction and loss of privacy. Absorbing this angled sound requires a ceiling with a minimum 0.85 NRC.



**Traditional Closed Office:** Sound is repeatedly reflected off all surfaces and absorbed at the ceiling with NRC 0.55 minimum – but these standard ceilings are unacceptable for effective open plan design/call centres.

**Call us for an OBLIGATION FREE demonstration.**

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