HAWORTH

Acoustic Design Guide

2026

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Acoustics shape how a workplace feels, functions, and performs. They influence concentration, conversation, privacy, and comfort across the full range of workplace settings. Open work areas, enclosed rooms, social spaces, and circulation zones all place different demands on the sound environment.

Robust acoustic performance does not come from a single product. It emerges through the symbiosis of multiple acoustic elements working together across the workspace.

Acoustic planning belongs in the design process from the beginning. It helps organise the floorplate, support intended behaviours, and improve the overall experience of the workplace.

Understanding the Acoustic Ecosystem

Symbiotic Acoustic Spaces

- Individual Work
- Collaborative Work
- Social & Restorative Activities

Acoustics Fundamentals:

- Absorb
- Block
- Contain
- Displace

Understanding the Acoustic Ecosystem

Symbiotic Acoustic Spaces

Acoustic performance emerges from a coordinated system of elements working together across the workspace. Different activities – focus, collaboration, and social interaction – require distinct balances of clarity, comfort, and control.

This guide frames these environments as symbiotic acoustic spaces, where multiple solutions combine to create balanced sound conditions.

A Multi-Brand Acoustic Ecosystem

Within this ecosystem, each brand contributes specific expertise to the overall acoustic performance:

Haworth contributes to the structuring of space through workplace planning, zoning strategies, and furniture that help organise acoustic conditions across the floorplate.

BuzziSpace contributes acoustic elements that enhance absorption, comfort, and atmosphere, including lighting, furniture, and design-driven solutions that reduce background noise and support well-being.

Hushoffice contributes enclosed acoustic solutions that enable privacy, focus, and hybrid work, providing dedicated spaces for calls, meetings, and concentrated individual work.

These contributions support four key acoustic functions:

Absorb	reduce sound within the space
Block	limit sound transmission
Contain	define zones of acoustic privacy
Displace	redistribute sound to maintain overall balance



Together, they create more balanced, controlled environments that support focus, collaboration, and well-being.

Individual work includes routine daily tasks, focused work that requires concentration, and video or phone calls that depend on speech clarity and privacy.

Each of these activities places different demands on the sound environment, and each benefits from a setting with the right level of acoustic support.

An individual work setting can take different forms. It may be an open workstation for daily work, a more protected setting for concentration, or an enclosed pod for calls and hybrid meetings.

Individual Work

77% of employees want quieter spaces for deep work.

Source: The Leesman Review, Issue 17, 2015 Q2.






03
Focus




Flint Magazine
Issue №1+2

Collaborative work brings people together to exchange information, develop ideas, build understanding, and make decisions. It can take the form of a short briefing, a project meeting, a workshop, a training session, a presentation, or an everyday conversation.

Across all of these activities, the quality of the acoustic environment shapes how easily people can listen, contribute, and stay engaged as a group.

Some settings are designed for quick exchange and informal discussion. Others need stronger enclosure, longer attention spans, or better support for one speaker addressing many listeners.

Collaborative Work

To ensure speech privacy in a typical office, an acoustic booth should reduce speech by at least **25 dB**

Source: ISO 23351-1:2020 speech level reduction classification (DS,A)















Social and restorative activities create space to step away from focused work, reconnect with others, or recover individually. They include social breaks, community gatherings, shared events, and quieter moments of individual pause.

Across all of these activities, the acoustic environment influences how easily people can relax, interact, and experience a clear shift in rhythm within the workplace.

A social and restorative setting should feel comfortable, welcoming, and appropriately buffered from more task-driven areas. Some settings support conversation and shared energy. Others support calm, privacy, and a greater sense of retreat.

Social & Restorative Activities

Only **30%** of office workers are satisfied with their office's sound atmosphere.

Source: The Leesman Review, Issue 17, 2015 Q2.






Where silence sings.

Acoustics Fundamentals:
Acoustics 101

Whether you're considering the ceiling, floor, walls, or products in between, it's important to understand terms commonly used in acoustics. Sound waves have two fundamental properties:

Frequency

The number of wave cycles per second, expressed in Hertz (Hz). We experience this property as tone – the higher the frequency, the higher the tone. The frequency range audible by humans is between 20 and 20,000 Hz.

Low Tone
Long wave – Low frequency
(50 – 250 Hz) e.g. heating systems, ventilation, lifts, copy machines, server rooms



Mid Tone
Mid-length wave – Speech frequency **(250 – 2500 Hz)**
e.g. speech, vowels, consonants



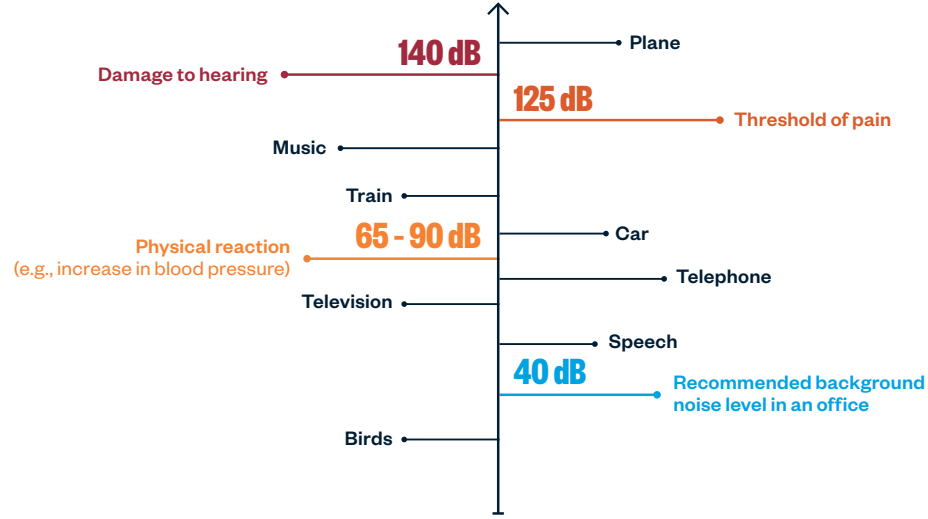
High Tone
Short wave – High frequency
(2500 – 12000 Hz) e.g. ringtones, typing sounds, clicking sounds, kids



Level

The size of the pressure wave, typically expressed using decibels (dB).
We experience this property as loudness.
The human ear can detect sounds between 0 and 140 dB, depending on the frequency.

There is no relationship between the frequency and level of sound. A train and a car might emit sounds at the same frequencies, but at different levels, while a violin and a tuba might play at the same levels, but at different frequencies.



Acoustics Fundamentals:
Acoustics 101

How Sound Travels

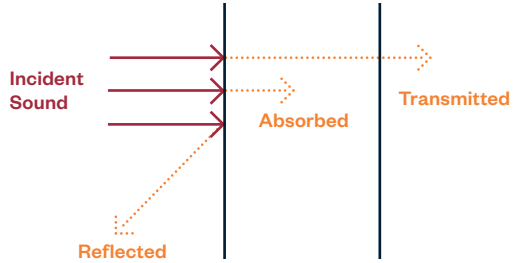
As a sound wave spreads from a source, the sound level decays with distance. If there are no obstructions, it will eventually fall below the level of the surrounding background sound, where it becomes inaudible.

Room Acoustics Defined

- When the listener and sound source are in the same room.
- Sounds are reflected or absorbed by surfaces.
- Excessive reverberation elevates sound levels and makes understanding speech difficult.
- Adding absorptive materials reduces reverberation, reducing sound levels and improving speech intelligibility.
- Within the room, adding diffusors spreads the sound evenly.

Building Acoustics Defined

- When the listener and sound source are in different rooms.
- Sound is transmitted into the room from adjacent spaces. Intruding sounds may include speech, footsteps, building systems, and traffic or environmental sounds.
- The difference in sound levels between two rooms is the noise isolation, which is the combined effect of the transmission lost in the construction, and the sound absorbed in the receiving space.
- Increasing transmission loss of the construction improves isolation.





Acoustics Fundamentals:
ABCD

A balanced workplace means working on 3 different levels : managing noise, speech clarity and speech privacy.

Design by intent by using the ABCD of room acoustics.

A

Absorb

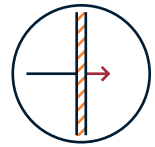
Absorption reduces reflected sound within a space.



B

Block

Blocking reduces the sound transfer in the room/space.



C

Contain

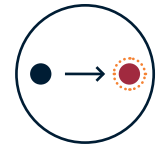
Containment keeps activity sound at its source.



D

Displace

Moving the activity to a more suitable place.



A Absorb



Absorption lowers reverberation, softens background buildup, and creates a calmer base condition. It is the job of ceilings, wall treatments, acoustic lighting, and many upholstered acoustic forms.

Sound waves are absorbed by any acoustically soft material they encounter. Absorb sound waves to reduce reverberation and noise levels in a specific area.

Reverberation time is what's needed for an original sound source to decay 60 dB and is expressed in seconds. In order to generate excellent speech intelligibility and clarity, the reverberation time should be adjusted and balanced with an absorptive material for the specific acoustical issues in a given space. The recommended reverberation time will always have to be adapted to the room volume and the type of activity.

Calibrating the Acoustic Response
The level of absorption depends on the starting condition of the space. Controlled environments need less intervention. Reflective spaces, with hard surfaces or exposed structures, require more. Increase absorption and containment to achieve balance.



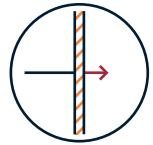
Using Absorptive Materials

Open Areas, Collaborative Spaces
- Minimise reflections
- Reduce overall sound levels

Closed Rooms
- Reduce overall sound levels
- Enhance speech intelligibility
- Minimise 'late reflections'

Solutions
- Acoustic ceiling
- Acoustic lighting
- Acoustic pods
- Acoustic walls
- High back sofas
- Room dividers

B Block



Blocking reduces sound transfer in spaces. Screens, dividers, panels, walls, ceilings, and doors all help interrupt sound paths.

In practice, this is shaped by both material performance and by transmission paths across the workplace. The amount of sound blocked by a wall, floor/ceiling assembly, ceiling panels, room dividers, desk screens, and acoustic solutions is called sound transmission loss – or attenuation. It's a lab-measured property of the wall alone, but in practice, sound travels between spaces through multiple paths. For this reason, field measurements of sound isolation (NIC or Dw) between spaces will normally be several dB lower than the idealised transmission-loss rating of a wall (STC or Rw), and more representative of what people actually experience in the space.

Metrics: Space: Noise Isolation Class (NIC)

Materials: Sound Transmission Class (STC), Ceiling Attenuation Class (CAC)

Transmission: Direct (through walls, ceilings, and floors), Flanking (through gaps and adjacent structure)



Using Blocking Strategies

Open Areas
- Interrupt direct sound paths
- Reduce speech transfer
- Strengthen focus and local privacy

Between Spaces
- Improve acoustic separation
- Support confidentiality
- Limit disruption from adjacent activity

Solutions
- Screens
- Acoustic pods
- Room dividers
- Panels
- Walls
- Acoustic ceiling

C Contain

Containment keeps activity sound within a dedicated setting. Calls, private conversations, hybrid meetings, and focused individual work often require more control than the open plan can provide. Micro environments like booths, pods, enclosed meeting rooms, and partially enclosed retreat settings all support this need.



Using Containment Strategies

Open Areas

- Create dedicated settings for calls and focused work
- Reduce spill from high-value speech activities
- Support local privacy within the wider floorplate

Enclosed / Semi-Enclosed Settings

- Strengthen privacy and speech control
- Improve focus and comfort within the setting
- Reduce disruption to adjacent areas

Solutions

- Acoustic pods
- High-back sofas
- Room dividers

D Displace

Some acoustic challenges are best addressed through the placement of activity across the floorplate. Calls, focused work, quick conversations, and social interaction each require different acoustic conditions. Zoning the workplace around these behaviours helps reduce acoustic conflict and creates a clearer relationship between activity and setting.



Using Displacement Strategies

Across the Floorplate

- Relocate noisy or sensitive activities to more suitable settings
- Reduce acoustic conflict between neighbouring zones
- Support clearer relationships between activity and setting
- Improve comfort across the wider workplace

By Workplace Behaviour

- Place calls in enclosed or semi-enclosed settings
- Move quick conversations out of focus areas
- Locate social interaction in more tolerant shared zones
- Support focused work in quieter parts of the floorplate

Solutions

- Acoustic pods
- High-back sofas
- Room dividers

Synopsys Inc.

Visit case study



Designing Balanced Acoustic Environments

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Acoustic Layers of the Workplace

Haworth Space Model
Elements & Habitats
- Individual Work
- Collaborative Work
- Social / Restorative Activities

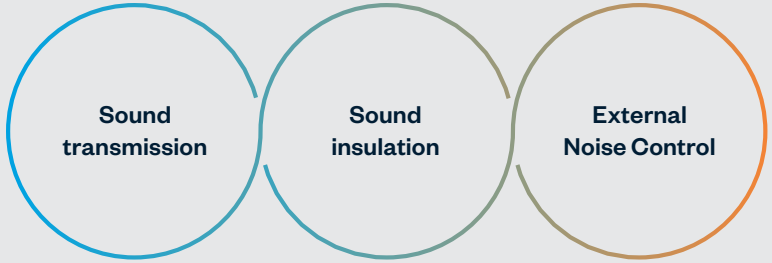
This guide uses habitats as a way to read the workplace. Each habitat supports a specific type of activity and a specific acoustic condition. This helps connect acoustic planning to the needs of the setting and the elements that support it.

Sound Advice for Good Planning

Determine Purpose

Acoustics should be addressed when planning buildings and the spaces within. Construction strategies, materials, and placement of solutions after build-out require understanding the needs of people and the purpose of the space.

Building acoustics is the science of controlling sound in and around buildings – especially how sound travels between spaces and how noise is managed across the entire structure. This can be environmental sounds originating outside the building, as well as activity and speech sounds transmitted between rooms.

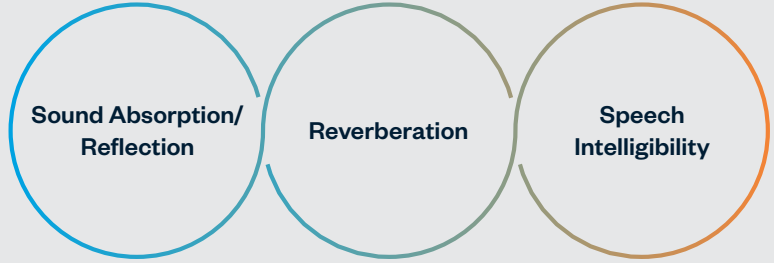


Room acoustics refers to how sound behaves within an enclosed space – how it travels, reflects, is absorbed, and is heard by people in that room.

RT60 indicates how long sound lingers in a space and whether it feels controlled or reflective. Typical targets:

- Open workspace: ≤ 0.5 s
- Meeting rooms: ≤ 0.6 s
- Enclosed offices: 0.6–0.8 s

It provides a simple baseline for shaping the acoustic response.



Sound Advice for Good Planning

Determine Purpose

Step One

Determine Objectives

Do you need to:

- Support individual conversations or group discussions?
- Enhance focused concentration?
- Offer a quiet space for respite?
- Protect the confidentiality of conversations?

Step Two

Align Objectives with the layout of the space

- Collaboration areas can be as free-form as you desire – the key is to contain sound if adjacent zones need quiet.
- Focus work areas need to block out adjacent sights and sound – consider screens, room dividers, acoustic pods, upholstered workstations.
- Respite spaces benefit from distraction-free comfort – room dividers, acoustic ceilings, acoustic lighting, comfy soft seating or even an acoustic pod with lounge furniture.

Step Three

Measure Performance

Performance can be assessed using measures such as RT60. – Good acoustics are measured. Great acoustics are felt.

Subjective:

- How do users feel about the space?
- Is it meeting the acoustic design intent?

Objective:

- NC: Noise Criterion – a measure of background sound
- NIC: Noise Isolation Class – a rating of room-to-room isolation
- RT: Reverberation Time – a measure of absorption within a room

Acoustic Class and Performance

Acoustic classes help translate technical performance into planning decisions. For acoustic pods and booths, the key reference is ISO 23351-1. This standard measures speech level reduction outside the enclosure and expresses it as DS,A in decibels.

ISO 23351-1 Class A

provides the highest level of speech reduction

Class	Speech level reduction (DS,A)	Speech privacy guaranteed?
A+	> 33 decibels / dB	Yes
A	> 30 decibels / dB	Yes
B	> 25 decibels / dB	Yes
C	> 20 decibels / dB	Depends on background noise level
D	> 15 decibels / dB	Depends on background noise level
Unclassified	≤ 15 decibels / dB	No

Acoustic performance standards such as ISO 23351-1 provide a reliable basis for specifying enclosed solutions. They help ensure consistent performance and distinguish tested solutions from unverified alternatives.

DS,A describes how much the voice level inside the pod or booth is reduced for a listener outside. A higher value means stronger speech reduction and greater privacy around the product.

Under ISO 23351-1, acoustic pods and booths are grouped into performance classes. Class A provides the highest level of speech reduction, followed by Class B, Class C, and Class D. In a typical office, Class A and Class B support speech privacy more reliably.

Lower classes depend more on the surrounding background sound to mask what leaves the enclosure.

Acoustic class is an important planning value. It helps determine where a pod or booth can be placed, which activities it can support, and how close it can sit to focus work, collaboration areas.

Introduction to Acoustic Applications

Acoustic planning works at two scales. One is the floorplate, where the concern is the overall acoustic strategy of the workplace. The other is the individual habitat, where the concern is the specific purpose and acoustic intent of each setting.

A balanced workplace brings these two scales together. It supports the overall sound environment while also responding to the needs of each habitat.

This chapter looks more closely at the acoustic topography of the workplace. It shows how focus, collaboration, and well-being habitats sit within the wider floorplate, how they relate to bordering settings, and which acoustic elements support them most effectively.

A

Absorb

Absorption reduces reflected sound within a space.

B

Block

Blocking reduces the sound transfer in the room/space.

C

Contain

Containment keeps activity sound at its source.

D

Displace

Moving the activity to a more suitable place.

Acoustic Elements

Balanced acoustic environments are built from a range of elements working together across the workplace.



Booths and Acoustic Pods support enclosed focus, calls, private conversation, and hybrid meetings.

A B C D



Office dividers interrupt sound paths and create local protection.

A B



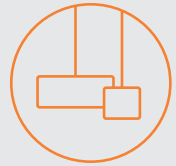
Screens/Desk Partitions reduce and block visual and acoustic distraction.

B D



Lounge and soft seating add absorption and create softer, more sheltered conditions.

A B



Acoustic lighting reduces reflected sound overhead and helps define the setting.

A



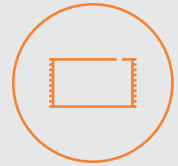
Acoustic ceiling absorbs reflected sound across the room and helps establish a calmer acoustic baseline

A



Wall coverings soften hard surfaces and support clarity.

A



Rugs help settle the sound and feel of a setting.

A

These elements are most effective when they are selected in relation or symbiosis to one another and to the intended use of the space.

Acoustic Layers of the Workplace

Acoustic performance is shaped through the workplace as a whole and through the layers that make up its spatial experience. Ceiling, walls, furniture, and floor each play a different role in how sound is absorbed, blocked, contained, or redirected across the space.

Their effect is symbiotic. Treated together, these layers create the conditions for a more balanced, comfortable, and acoustically resolved workplace.

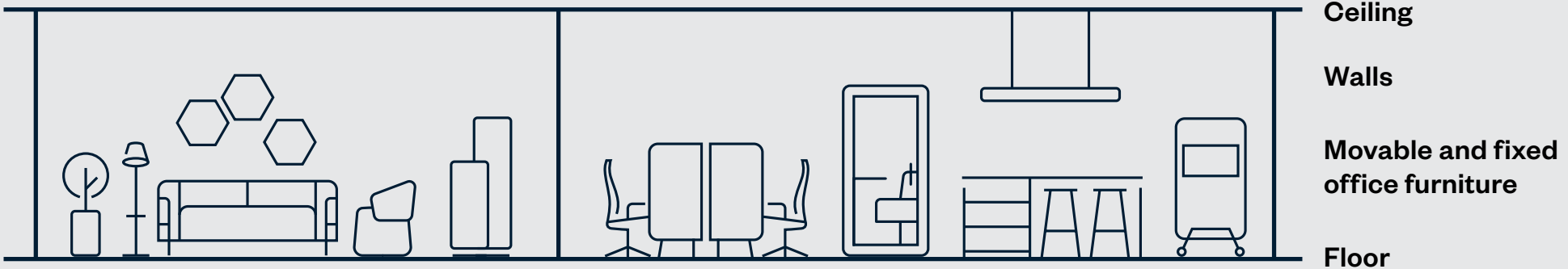
Ceiling
An overhead layer that can be treated to shape the room's acoustic condition.

Walls
A vertical layer that can be treated to control reflection and define separation.

Fixed Furniture
A built-in layer that can be treated to support zoning and acoustic shelter.

Movable Furniture
A flexible layer used to screen, define, and adapt settings as needs change.

Floor
A base layer that can be treated to soften movement and improve acoustic comfort.



Haworth Space Model

The Haworth Space Model provides a framework, complemented by BuzziSpace and Hushoffice solutions to activate each layer.

Individual Work



Routine / Daily Work



Focus Work



Video / Phone call

Social / Restorative Activities



Social Break

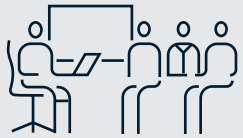


Community / Events

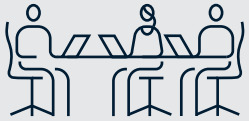


Individual Break

Collaborative Work



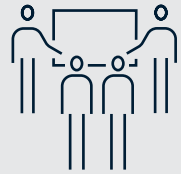
Presentation



Project meeting



Workshop



Briefing



Conversation



Training

Elements & Habitats

Acoustics shape how a workplace feels, functions, and performs. They influence concentration, conversation, privacy, and comfort across the full range of workplace settings.

Open work areas, enclosed rooms, social spaces, and circulation zones all place different demands on the sound environment.

- **Individual Work**
- **Collaborative Work**
- **Social/ Restorative Activities**



Individual Work

Focus Work

The focus work habitat supports individual work that needs to be distraction free and available as needed, depending on the task and the level of concentration required.

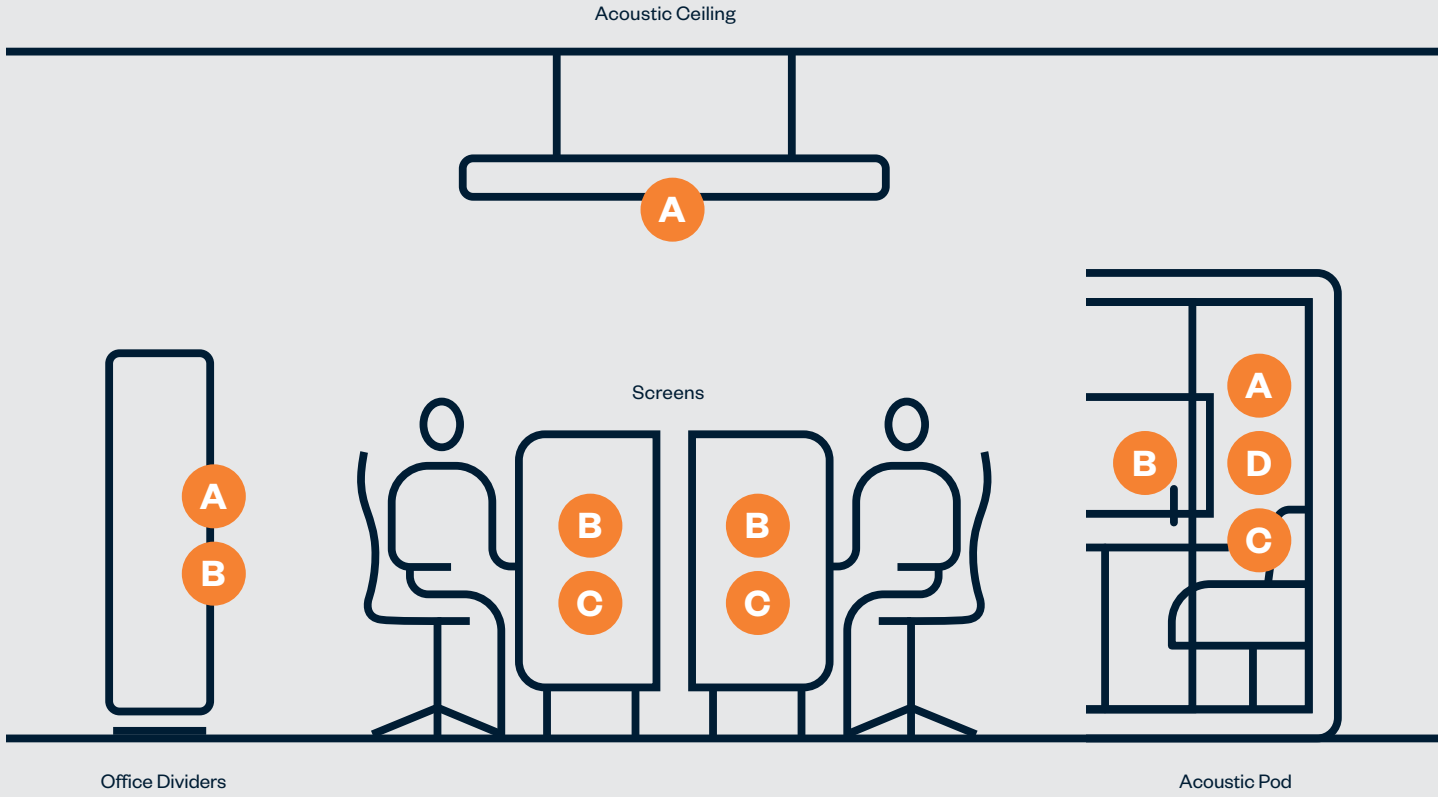
It benefits from a calm acoustic baseline, strong speech control, and a clear sense of individual territory, and performs best away from collaborative and social areas on the floorplate.

Acoustic Elements

- Booths & Acoustic Pods
- Office Dividers
- Screens/Desk Partitions
- Wall Coverings
- Acoustic Lighting
- Acoustic Ceiling

Function

- A Absorb
- B Block
- C Contain
- D Displace



Individual Work

Routine / Daily Work

The routine and daily work habitat supports individual tasks that require some concentration yet can accommodate a moderate level of interruption over the course of the day.

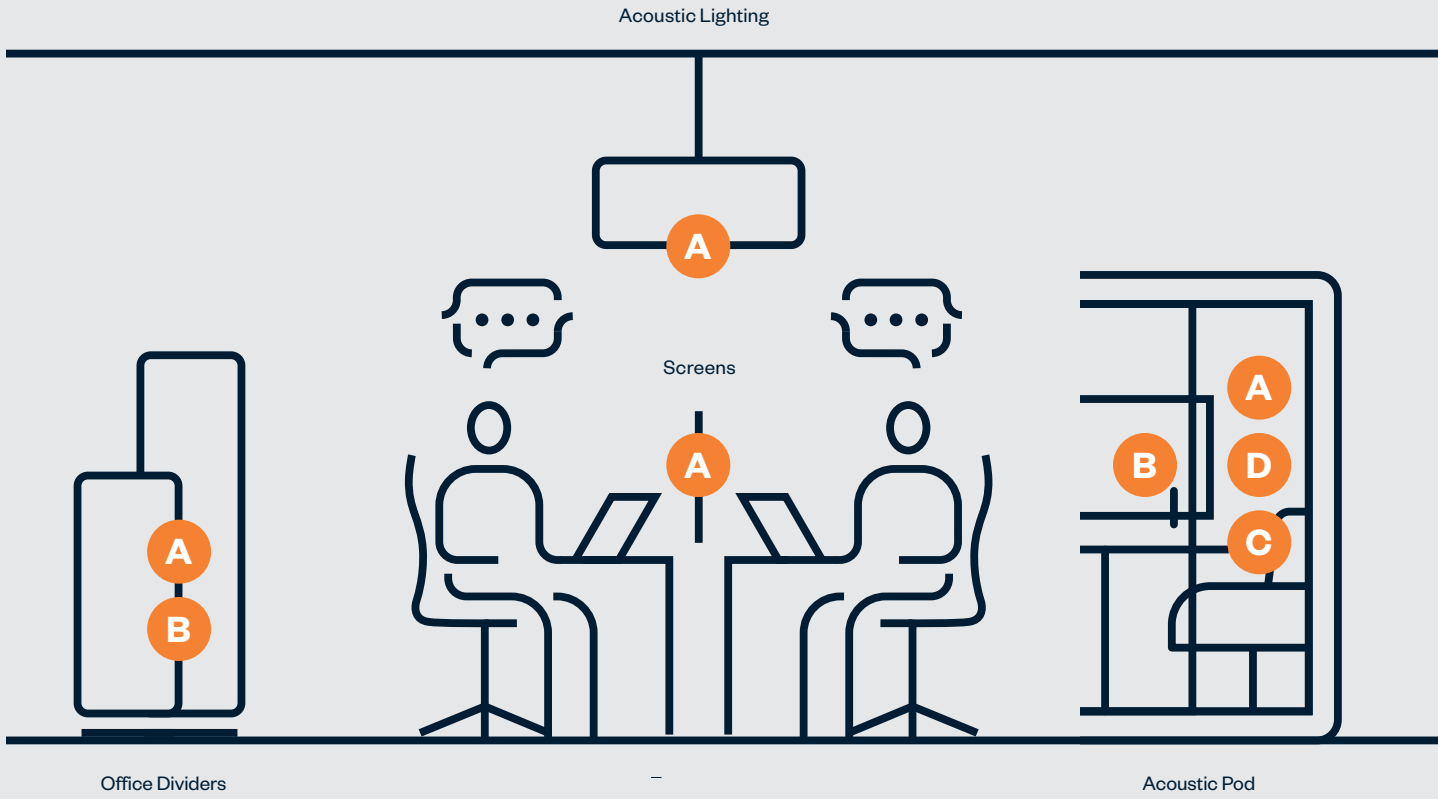
It benefits from a balanced acoustic condition and from proximity to colleagues and everyday work settings, while maintaining enough control to support steady day-to-day individual work.

Acoustic Elements

- Booths & Acoustic Pods
- Office Dividers
- Screens/Desk Partitions
- Wall Coverings
- Acoustic Lighting
- Acoustic Ceiling

Function

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Video Conference/ Phone Call

The video conference and phone call habitat supports shorter or longer remote conversations and hybrid work and conversations and gives individual employees a degree of acoustic privacy as needed.

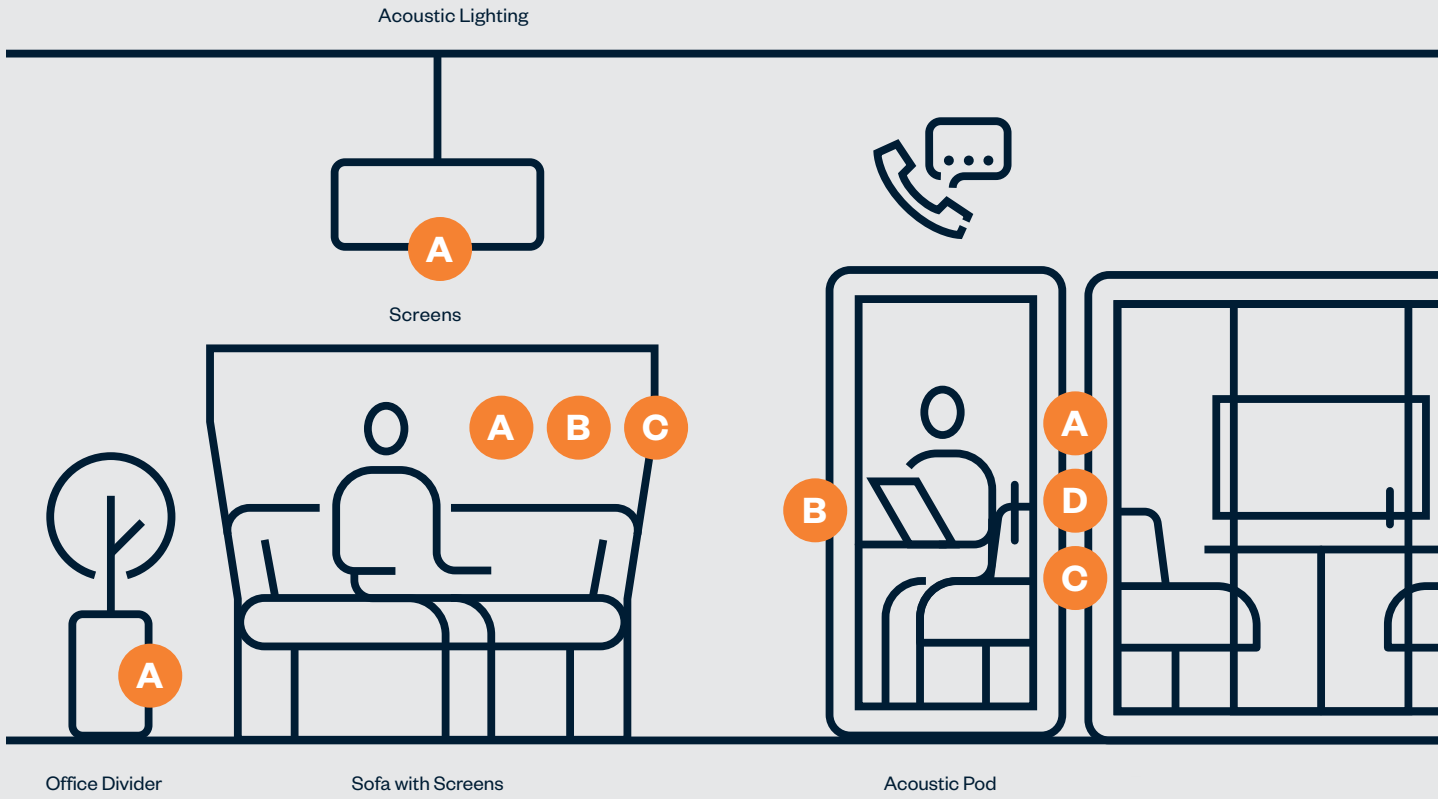
It benefits from strong acoustic containment, clear speech conditions, and a sense of privacy for both speaker and listener, and works best close to individual work zones while remaining acoustically separated from them.

Acoustic Elements

- Booths & Acoustic Pods
- Office Dividers
- Screens/Desk Partitions
- Wall Coverings
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- Acoustic Ceiling

Function

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Collaborative Work

Presentation

The presentation habitat supports structured information sharing and is designed for one or more speakers addressing a group clearly.

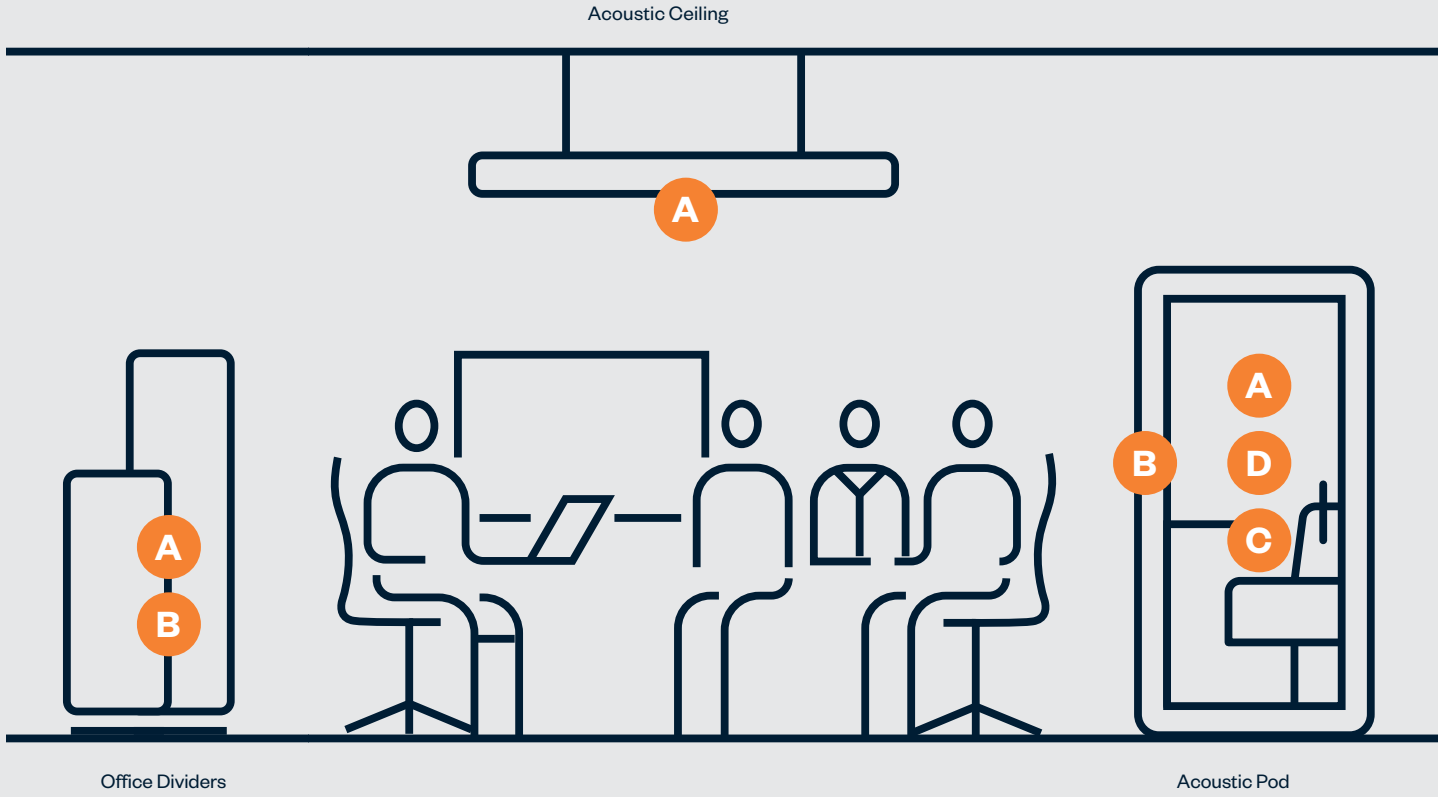
It benefits from strong speech clarity, controlled reverberation, and a layout that supports listening and visual focus, especially where nearby settings also support group or individual work.

Acoustic Elements

- Booths & Acoustic Pods
- Office Dividers
- Screens/Desk Partitions
- Wall Coverings
- Acoustic Lighting
- Acoustic Ceiling

Function

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- B Block
- C Contain
- D Displace



Collaborative Work

Workshop

The workshop habitat supports collaborative sessions that involve shared participation, brainstorming, and evolving discussion.

It benefits from acoustic support that keeps group interaction clear while managing the higher levels of speech and movement that come with active collaboration, especially in more open settings.

Acoustic Elements

- Booths & Acoustic Pods
- Office Dividers
- Screens/Desk Partitions
- Wall Coverings
- Acoustic Lighting
- Acoustic Ceiling

Function

- A Absorb
- B Block
- C Contain
- D Displace



Collaborative Work

Training/Briefing

The training habitat supports seminars, lectures, and group learning sessions that require shared attention over time. It benefits from strong speech intelligibility, visual clarity, and a controlled acoustic condition that supports concentration and helps spoken content remain clear throughout the session.

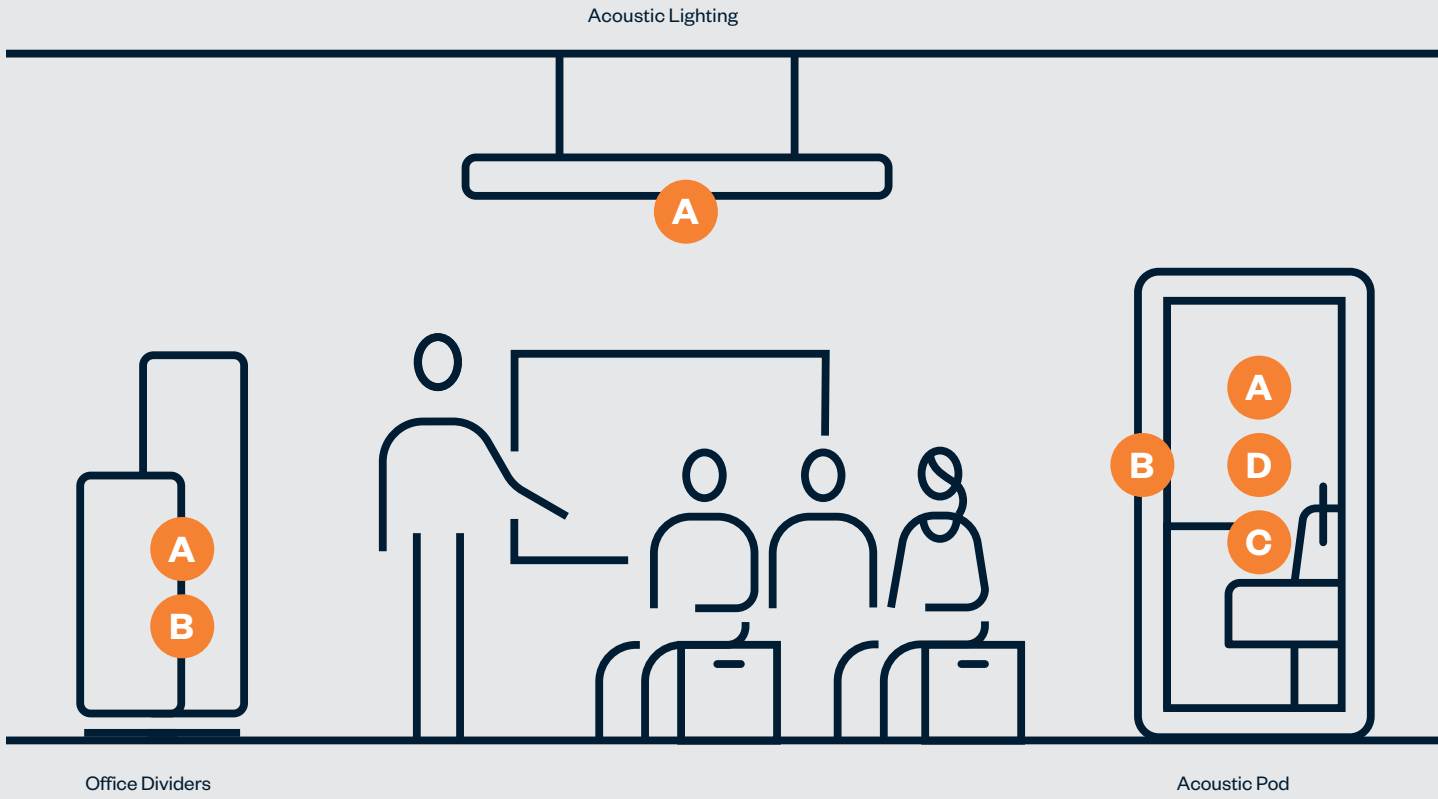
The briefing habitat supports quick catch-ups, project updates, and short conversations that help divide work and decide next actions. It benefits from clear speech conditions and enough acoustic definition to allow brief discussion without disrupting surrounding work.

Acoustic Elements

- Booths & Acoustic Pods
- Office Dividers
- Screens/Desk Partitions
- Wall Coverings
- Acoustic Lighting
- Acoustic Ceiling

Function

- A Absorb
- B Block
- C Contain
- D Displace



Collaborative Work

Project Meeting

The project meeting habitat supports group work focused on a specific task or stage of a wider project.

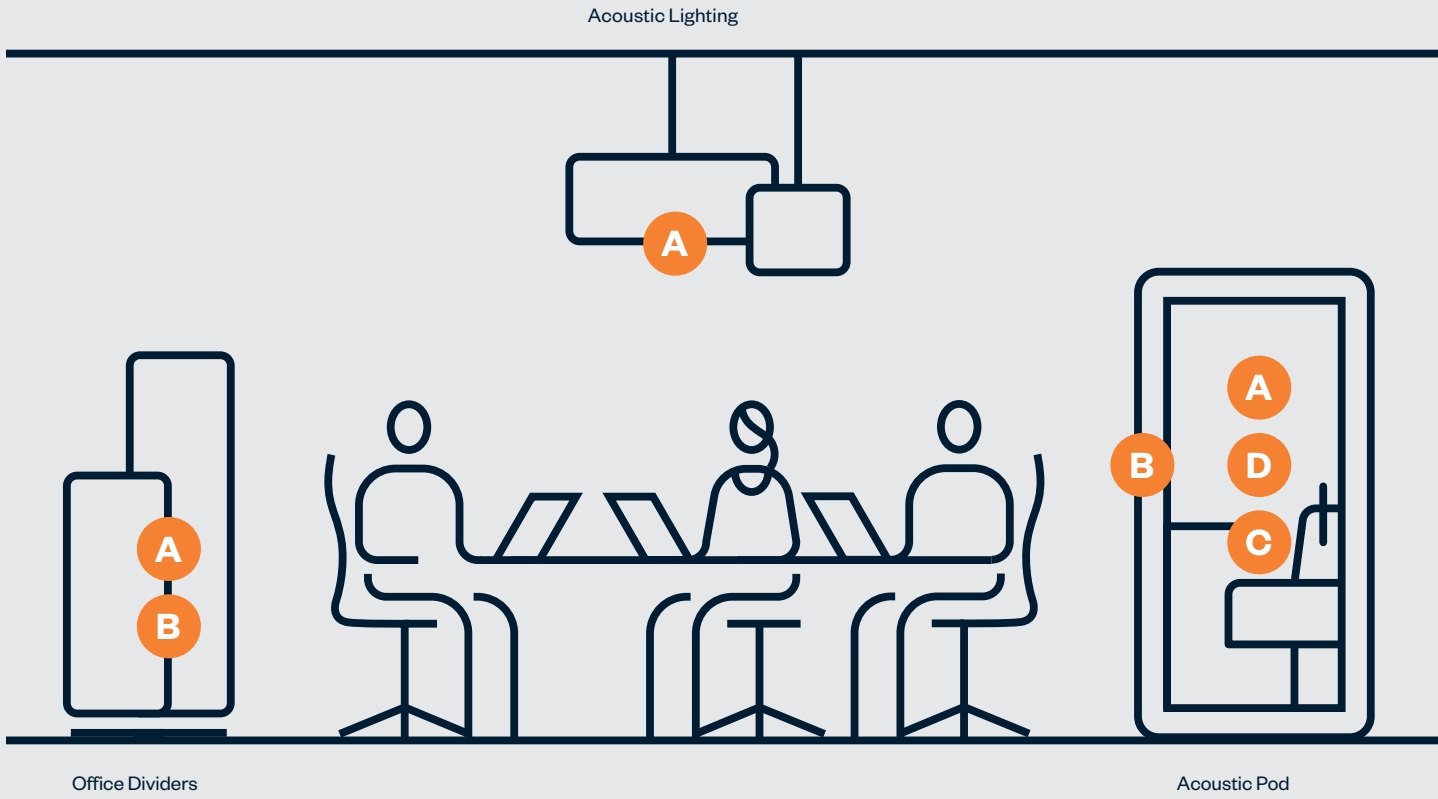
It benefits from good speech clarity and a comfortable level of containment, helping discussion remain clear within the group and controlled in relation to nearby work settings.

Acoustic Elements

- Acoustic Lighting
- Booths & Acoustic Pods
- Office Dividers
- Screens/Desk Partitions
- Wall Coverings
- Acoustic Ceiling

Function

- A Absorb
- B Block
- C Contain
- D Displace



Collaborative Work

Conversation

The conversation habitat supports informal, ad-hoc discussion around projects, processes, or immediate questions.

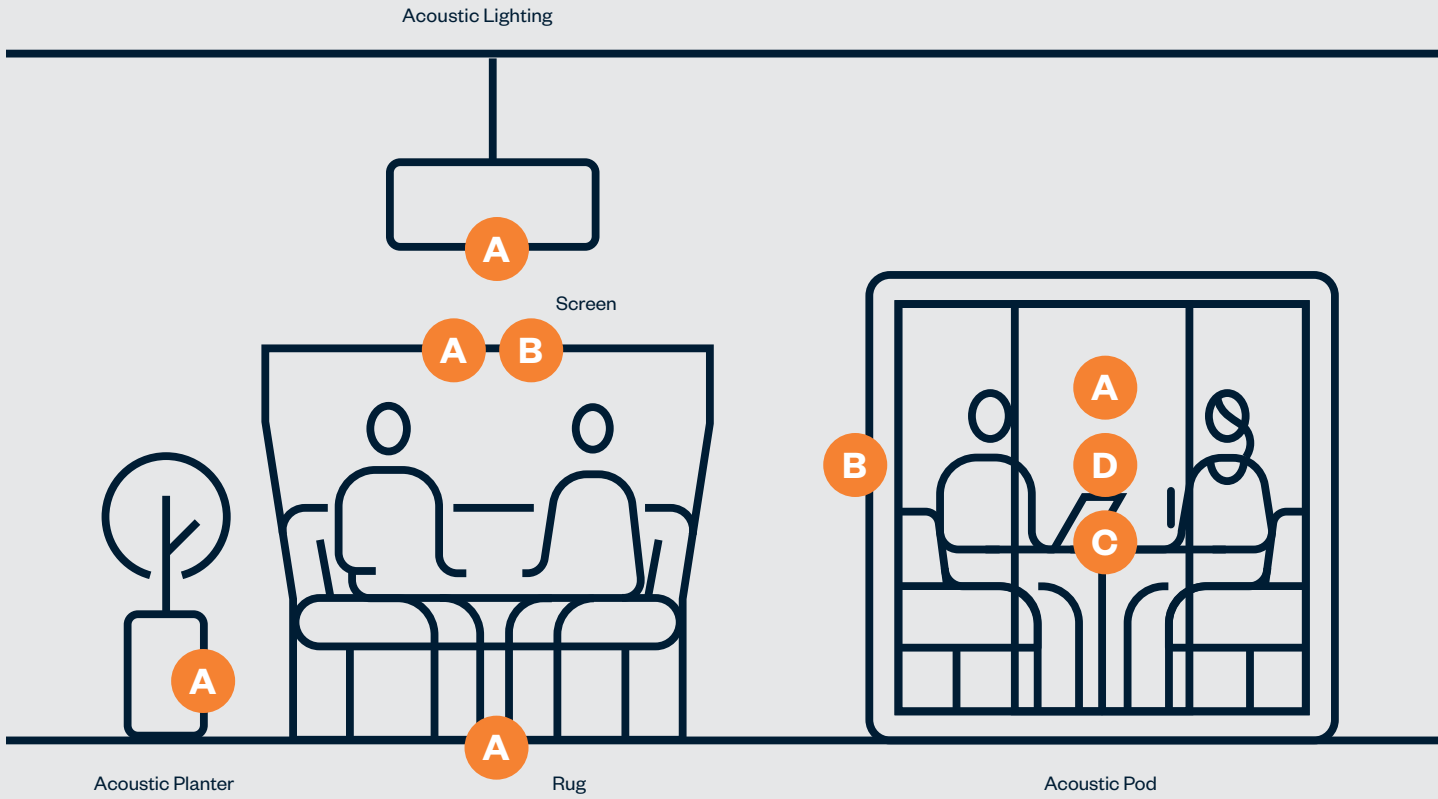
It benefits from a balanced acoustic condition that supports natural speech while keeping nearby settings comfortable, especially where conversation takes place in open areas or near focus work zones.

Acoustic Elements

- Booths & Acoustic Pods
- Office Dividers
- Screens/Desk Partitions
- Wall Coverings
- Acoustic Lighting
- Acoustic Ceiling

Function

- A Absorb
- B Block
- C Contain
- D Displace



Social Break

The social break habitat supports informal interaction and short breaks with colleagues or visitors.

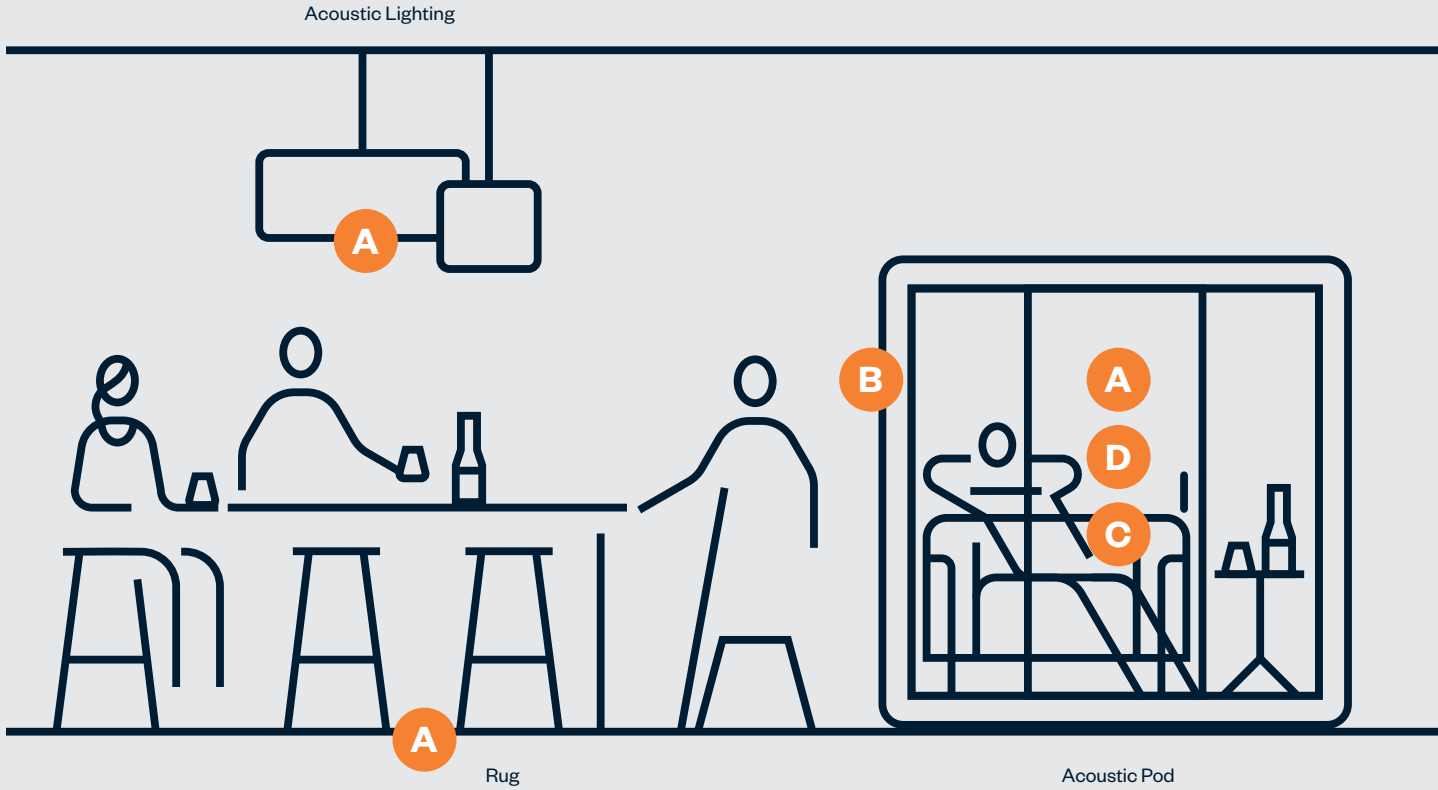
It benefits from a comfortable acoustic condition that supports conversation while keeping the atmosphere relaxed and appropriately buffered from more task-driven settings.

Acoustic Elements

- Booths & Acoustic Pods
- Acoustic Lighting
- Office Dividers
- Screens/Desk Partitions
- Wall Coverings
- Acoustic Ceiling

Function

- A Absorb
- B Block
- C Contain
- D Displace



Social/Restorative Activities

Community/Events

The community and event habitat supports larger social interaction and gatherings with a defined agenda.

It benefits from acoustic support that helps speech remain clear while managing the higher levels of activity that come with larger groups, allowing shared energy without overwhelming adjacent work settings.

Acoustic Elements

- Acoustic Lighting
- Booths & Acoustic Pods
- Office Dividers
- Screens/Desk Partitions
- Wall Coverings
- Acoustic Ceiling

Function

- A Absorb
- B Block
- C Contain
- D Displace



Social/Restorative Activities

Individual Break

The individual restorative break habitat supports stepping away from work to recover alone in a quieter setting.

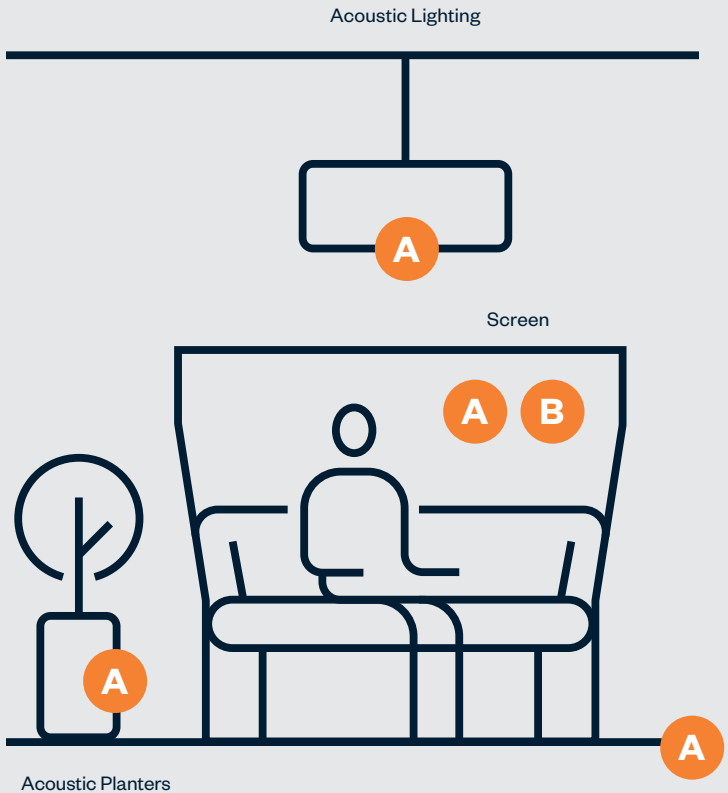
It benefits from a calm acoustic baseline, a greater sense of privacy, and enough separation from surrounding activity to support genuine restoration.

Acoustic Elements

- Acoustic Lighting
- Booths & Acoustic Pods
- Office Dividers
- Screens/Desk Partitions
- Wall Coverings
- Acoustic Ceiling

Function

- A Absorb
- B Block
- C Contain
- D Displace





SEB banka

Visit case study



Acoustic Solutions

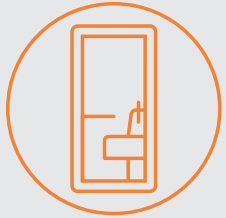
Product categories

- Booths & Acoustic Pods
- Office Dividers
- Screens/Desk Partitions
- Lounge & Soft Seating
- Acoustic Lighting
- Acoustic Ceiling
- Wall coverings
- Rugs

Sustainability & Certifications

Acoustic Solutions

Product categories help organise the acoustic toolkit. They are most useful when they are understood as contributors to a broader spatial strategy.



Booths and Acoustic Pods



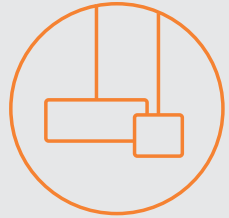
Office dividers



Screens / Desk Partitions



Lounge and soft seating



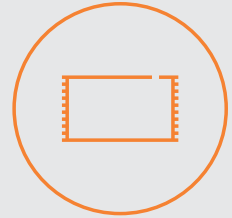
Acoustic lighting



Acoustic Ceiling



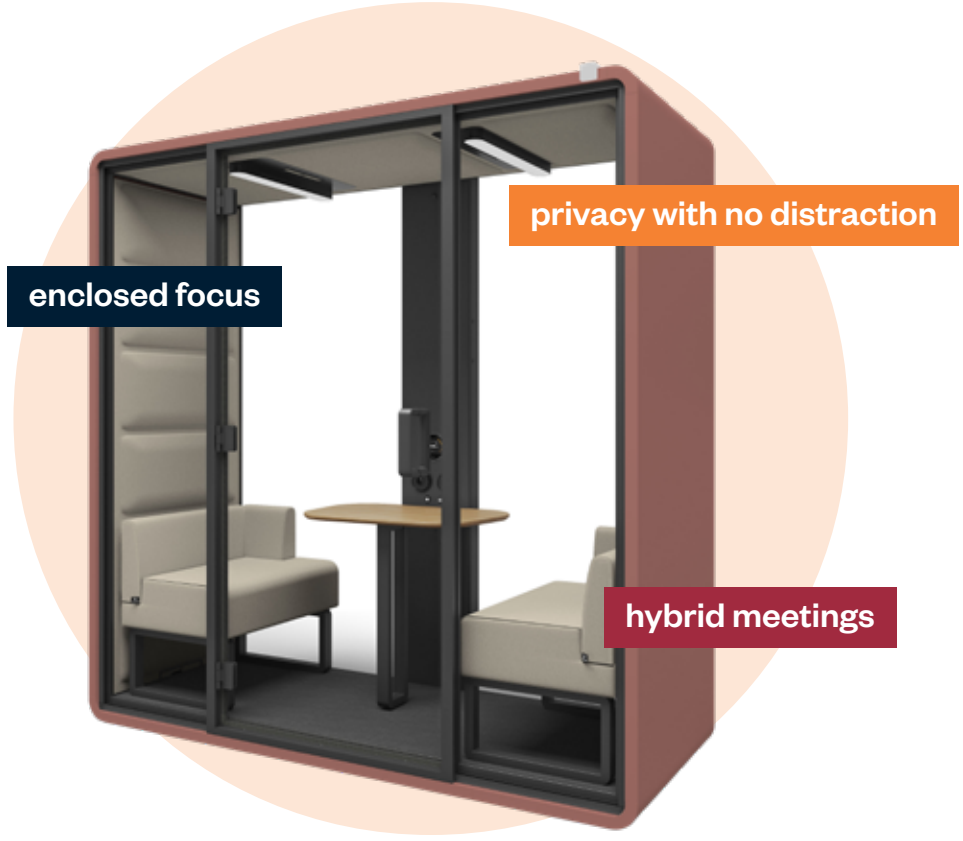
Wall coverings



Rugs

Booths & Acoustic Pods

Booths and acoustic pods support enclosed focus, calls, confidential conversations, face-to-face and hybrid meetings. They provide acoustic privacy and a dedicated setting for speech-intensive activities, helping users concentrate without interruption. At the same time, by containing conversations within a sound-controlled environment, they reduce distractions in the surrounding workspace and contribute to a more balanced acoustic experience for all occupants.



Visit our product portfolio
for Booths & Acoustic Pods.

Office Dividers

Dividers help shape territory, interrupt sound paths, and improve focus while preserving connection. They are effective at the workstation, between neighbourhoods, and in shared settings where full enclosure is unnecessary. Dividers are both acoustic tools and spatial tools. They help organise open space into more legible and comfortable settings.

Visit our product portfolio for Office Dividers.

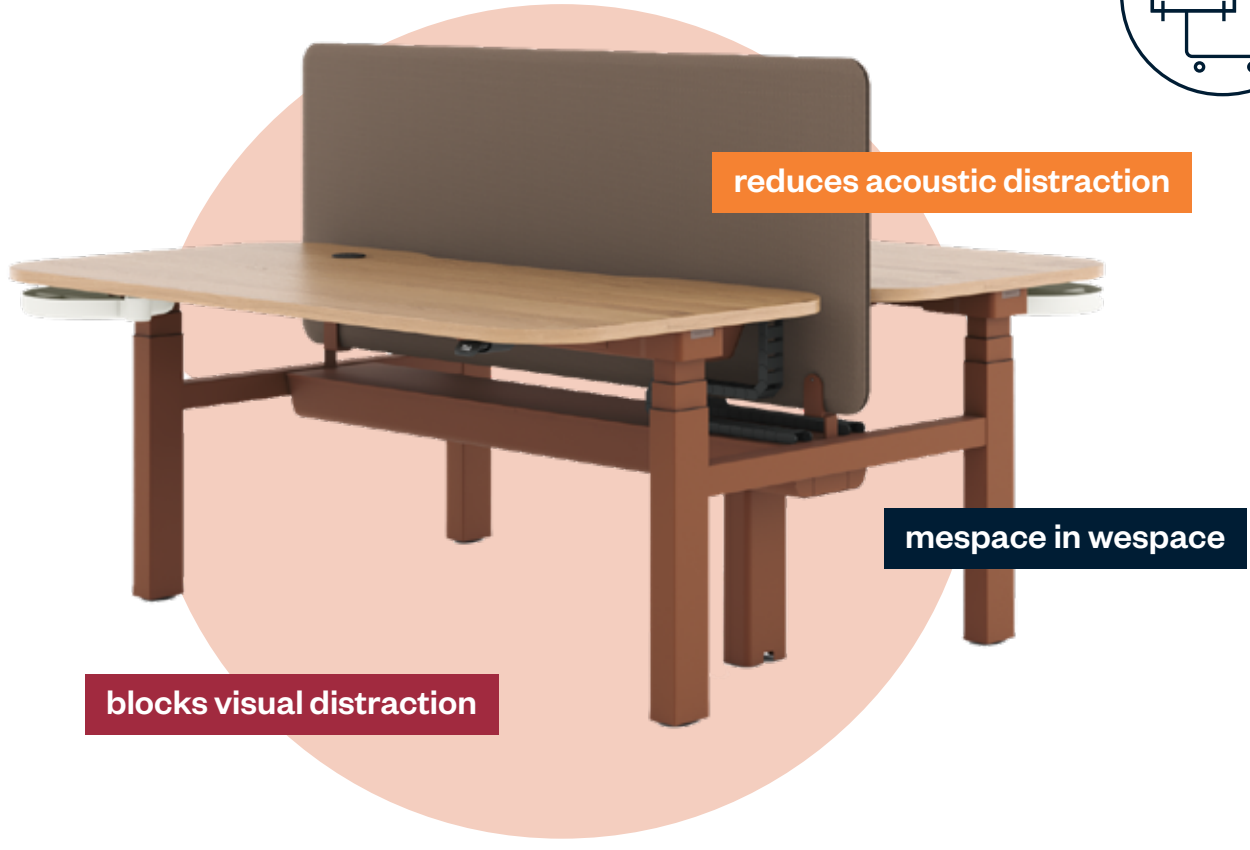


Screens/Desk Partitions

Screens and desk partitions support focus by reducing visual and acoustic distraction at the point of work.
They create local protection, strengthen a sense of territory, and help make open settings more comfortable to use.

This category is especially useful in open-plan environments, where concentration depends on balancing connection with control.

Visit our product portfolio for Screens / Desk Partitions.

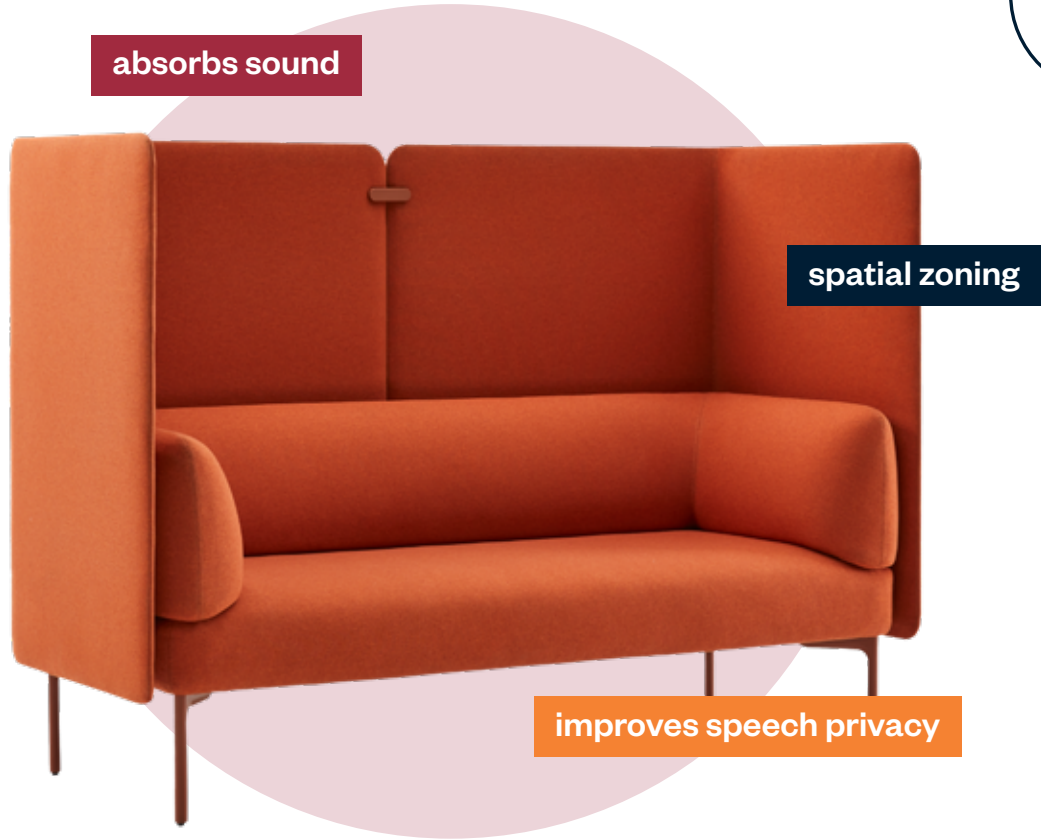


Lounge & Soft Seating

Soft seating contributes through absorption and through atmosphere. It supports more comfortable, lower-intensity settings for informal work, conversation, waiting, and recovery.

High-backed seating and semi-enclosed lounge forms can create sheltered habitats without the visual weight of architectural enclosure.

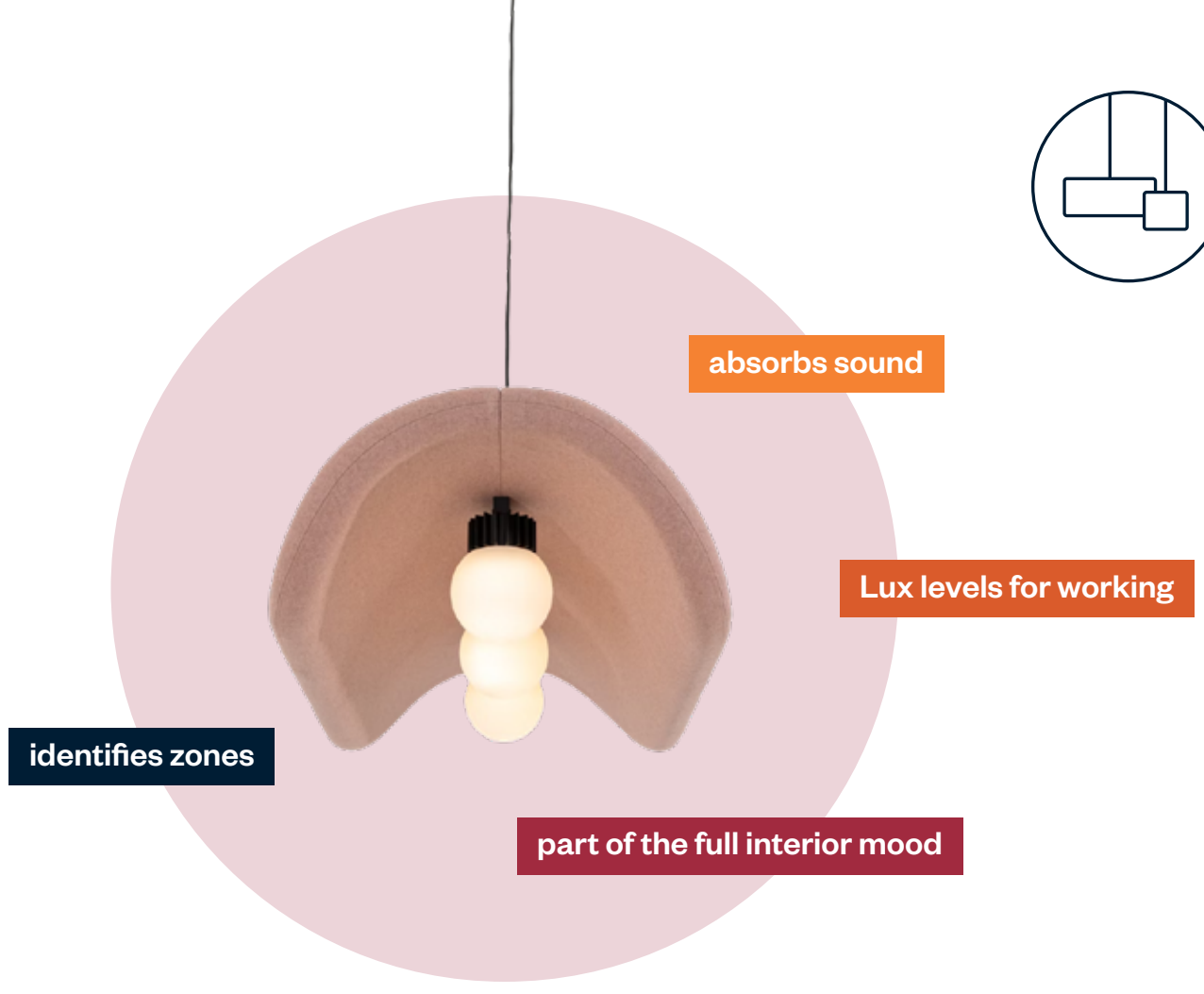
Visit our product portfolio for Lounge & Soft Seating.



Acoustic Lighting

Acoustic lighting supports sound control while contributing to the visual identity of a space. It is particularly effective in collaborative, social, and lounge-based settings where overhead absorption improves comfort and lighting helps define the habitat. This category gives a refined way to integrate acoustic performance into the design language of the workplace.

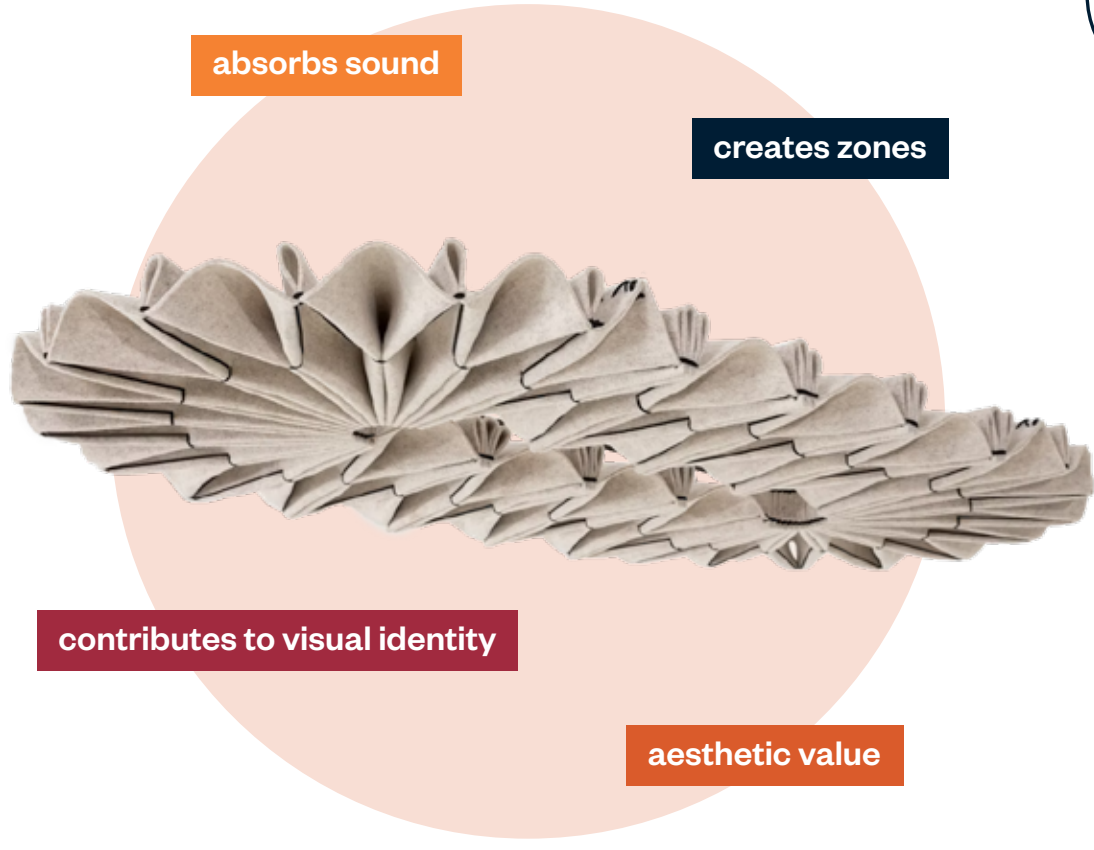
Visit our product portfolio for Acoustic Lighting.



Acoustic Ceiling

Acoustic ceilings contribute through overhead absorption and room-wide acoustic control. They help reduce reverberation, soften reflected sound, and create a calmer baseline for open work areas, meeting spaces, and shared settings. The ceiling is one of the most effective layers for shaping acoustic comfort.

Visit our product portfolio for Acoustic Ceiling.

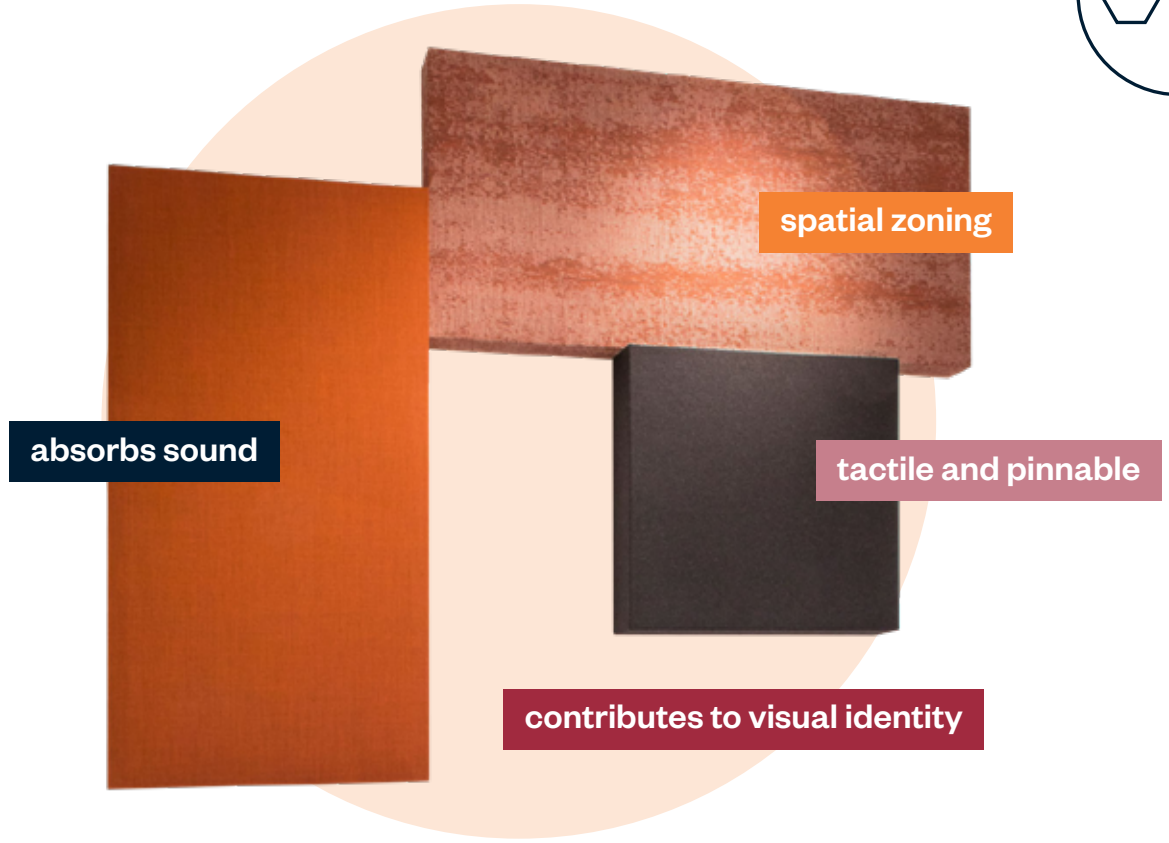


Wall coverings

Wall applications help balance the room by reducing reflections, softening hard surfaces, and improving speech clarity. In corridors, enclosed rooms, social zones, and meeting settings, they can make a substantial difference with a relatively light intervention.

Wall elements also allow acoustic performance to become part of the material and visual expression of the project.

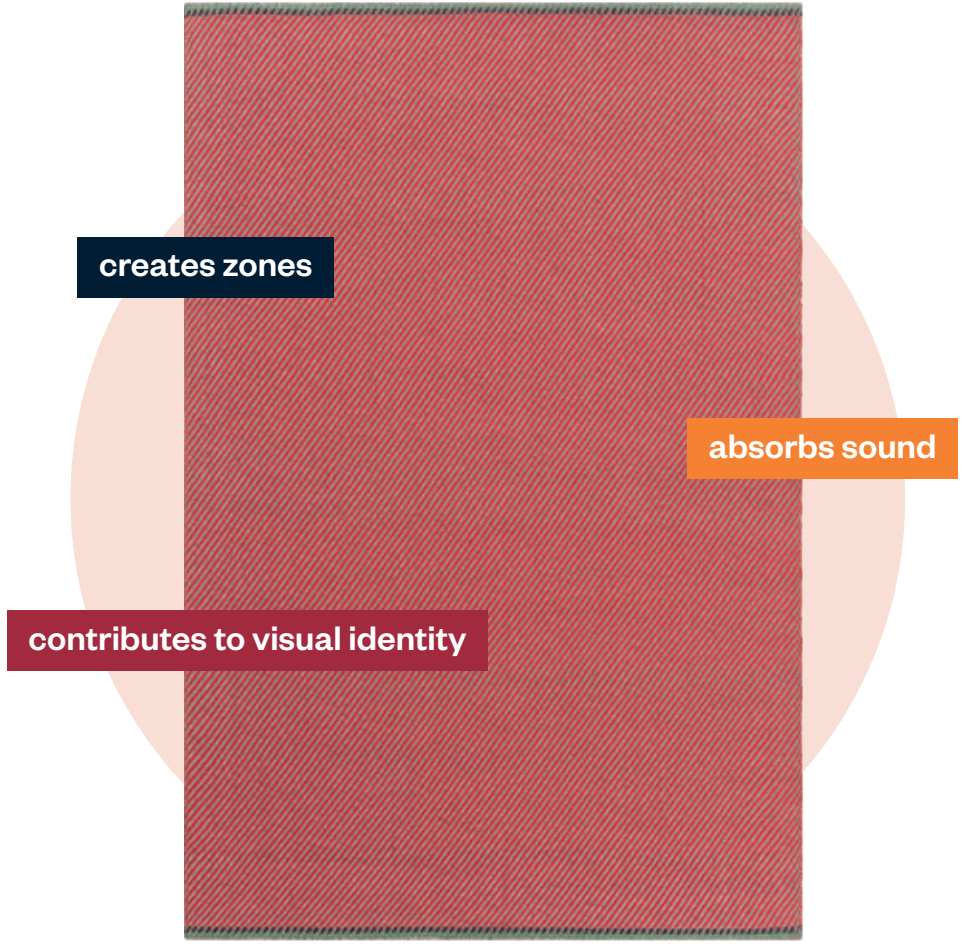
Visit our product portfolio for Wall coverings.



Rugs

Rugs help soften the sound and feel of a space. They reduce perceptual harshness, support comfort underfoot, and strengthen the identity of lounge, retreat, and meeting habitats. Their acoustic contribution is supportive, and they work best as part of a broader combination of soft and absorptive elements.

Visit our product portfolio for Rugs.



Sustainability & Certifications

Acoustic products are increasingly evaluated through both performance and responsibility. Material content, durability, flexibility, maintenance, and measurable testing all matter.

We provide solutions that support comfort and privacy while also aligning with broader project goals around sustainability, health, and longevity.

























Acoustic Ecosystems in Practice

Case Studies

- Synopsys, Portugal
- SEB banka, Latvia
- Henkel, The Netherlands
- ManpowerGroup, Spain
- Lisbon Council, Belgium
- Accenture, Switzerland
- Japan Tobacco, Georgia

Case Studies

Great acoustics rarely come from a single intervention. The projects in this chapter show how interior designers can combine planning, absorption, and enclosure to create spaces that feel calm, legible, and comfortable – while still supporting energy and connection.

Each case study highlights a specific acoustic challenge, the design intent behind the solution, and the key moves worth reusing in your own projects.

Synopsys

Client
Synopsys Inc.

Location
Porto, Portugal

Project scope
Expansion via the acquisition of a new floor in the Porto office

Design firm
Tétris

Design delivery/support
Collaboration with JLL and support from Haworth Portugal

Photography
Miguel Atalaia



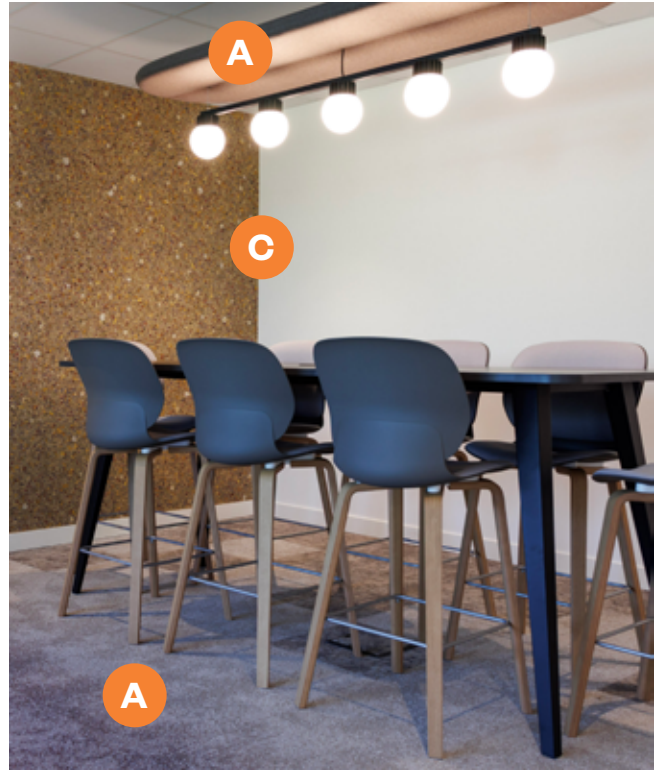
Synopsys

Design intent

As Synopsys continued to grow in Portugal, the new floor was framed as more than an expansion in square metres – it was a chance to rethink how teams work, collaborate, and connect in a future-ready environment. A key ambition was to change how people meet: shifting away from a model where enclosed meeting rooms are the only option, toward collaboration distributed across the floor.

Function

- A Absorb
- B Block
- C Contain
- D Displace





Acoustic challenge

The brief called for an open, visually inspiring space that still feels calm and workable day-to-day – meaning acoustic comfort had to be addressed proactively rather than retrofitted. In an open office setting, managing sound is essential to reduce distractions while preserving the energy and flow of collaborative work.

Synopsys

Acoustic strategy (designer lens)

- Plan for a range of workstyles: Quiet zones, open lounges, and hybrid desks were placed strategically to encourage movement, interaction, and productivity.
- Layer acoustic interventions (not a single fix): Quiet pods, sound absorbing lighting, and greenery were integrated to reduce distractions and support focus without compromising the look and feel.
- Make collaboration more accessible: Distributed collaboration points reduce reliance on enclosed rooms and support more spontaneous connection.





Solutions specified

- Enclosed / quiet spaces: Quiet pods integrated into the open environment to provide retreat spaces for focus and calls.
- Absorption integrated with design: Sound absorbing lighting used as a dual-purpose layer (comfort + visual rhythm).
- Flexible zoning elements (BuzziSpace): BuzziNest (soundproof pods), BuzziChip (acoustic lighting), and BuzziBracks (modular partitions) contributed to acoustic comfort and adaptable zoning.
- A strong “arrival” moment: A striking olive tree at the entrance provides a warm welcome and a nod to local culture, setting the tone for a people-first experience.



Synopsys





Outcomes

The new floor supports modern workstyles through a clearer mix of settings – collaborative zones and flexible workstations complemented by quieter areas for focus. The project positions the Porto expansion as a blueprint for the future: adaptable, people-first, and designed to evolve with changing work patterns.

Designer takeaways

- Start with workstyle variety (quiet, collaborative, hybrid), then use acoustics to make each zone genuinely usable – not just visually defined.
- In open environments, aim for a layered acoustic stack: enclosure (pods) + absorption (acoustic lighting) + softening/zoning (greenery/partitions).
- Distribute collaboration points to change behaviours: when meeting spaces are embedded across the floor, reliance on enclosed rooms naturally decreases.

SEB banka Head Office

Client
SEB banka (Latvia HQ)

Location
Riga, Latvia

Office size
9,100 m²

Year
2025

Design partners
Sarma&Norde Arhitekti; H2E

Photos
Fotomohito



SEB banka
Latvia Head Office

Design intent

The brief emphasised clear functional zoning: fewer traditional desks, more social and collaborative settings, and a balanced mix of individual and team work, aligned to SEB brand values.





Function

- A Absorb
- B Block
- C Contain
- D Displace

Acoustic challenge

With events, informal collaboration, quiet/ library zones, and shared workstations coexisting, the workplace needed speech privacy and call comfort without over enclosing the layout.

SEB banka
Latvia Head Office

Acoustic strategy (designer lens)

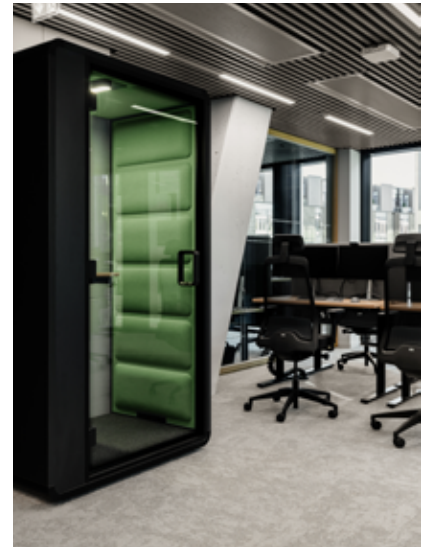
- Zoning first: distinct collaboration and focus environments supported by the right acoustic conditions.
- Enclosure at the right scale: enclosed points for calls and short collaboration placed across quiet and active zones.
- User comfort & control: enclosed spaces designed for frequent use through adjustable environmental settings.



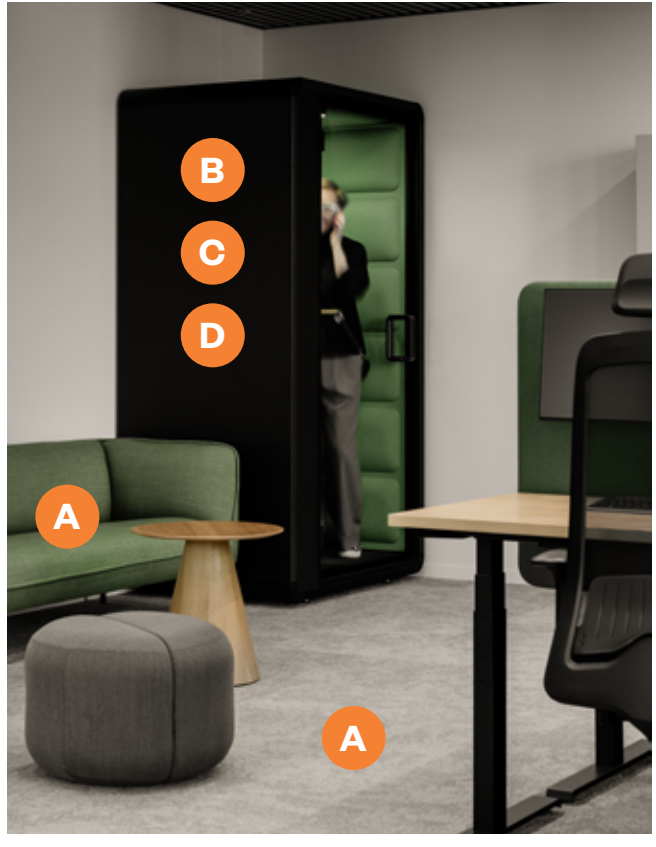


Solutions specified

- 20 Hushoffice pods: hushFree.S (1 person phone/video calls) and hushFree.XM (short meetings/collaboration).
- All pods equipped with hushAssistant for ventilation and lighting control (intensity/colour).



SEB banka
Latvia Head Office





Outcomes

- A legible workplace soundscape where collaboration thrives without overwhelming focus areas.
- Integrated call and meeting spaces support everyday hybrid work needs.

Designer takeaways

- Build a soundscape gradient (lively > neutral > quiet) and reinforce it with strategic enclosed points.
- Comfort controls (air/light) can significantly increase adoption of enclosed spaces.

Henkel Global Supply Chain B.V.

Client
Henkel Global Supply Chain B.V.

Location
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
(Edge Stadium)

Office size
2,350 m² (1 floor)

Design firm
Fokkema & Partners



Henkel Global Supply Chain B.V.

Design intent

Henkel's SmartWork@Office concept set out to create a more engaging, collaborative environment with a warm 'home away from home' feel – while still offering quiet settings for concentration.





Acoustic challenge

A strong community heart can raise sound energy; without acoustic softening and zoning, social areas may spill into quieter work settings.

Function

- A Absorb
- B Block
- C Contain
- D Displace

Henkel Global Supply Chain B.V.





Acoustic strategy (designer lens)

- Soft boundaries with impact: use layered textile elements to shape space and calm reverberation without closing down the office.
- Choice led planning: combine quiet concentration areas with open collaboration and team meeting zones.

Solutions specified

- Community-space ceiling feature using layers of colourful, flowing fabrics forming a three-dimensional patchwork.
- Curtains extending to the floor to create airy open spaces and more private, enclosed pockets.
- A variety of spaces from quiet focus areas to large team meeting zones tailored to workstyles.





Henkel Global Supply Chain B.V.





Outcomes

- Clearer purpose for each space and improved comfort in both lively and quiet settings.
- Positive feedback reported, with more efficient teamwork and collaboration.

Designer takeaways

- Textile zoning can deliver both atmosphere and acoustic softening – ideal for hospitality-inspired workplaces.
- A ‘home-like’ mix of settings works best when acoustic comfort makes each choice genuinely usable.

ManpowerGroup Spain Headquarters

Client
ManpowerGroup

Location
Madrid, Spain

Office size
2,600 m²

Design firm
Q:NØ Architects



ManpowerGroup Spain Headquarters



Design intent

ManpowerGroup aimed to maintain an energetic, connected workplace while adding reliable moments of privacy for calls, meetings, and interviews – without compromising the overall openness of the space.



Function

- A Absorb
- B Block
- C Contain
- D Displace

Acoustic challenge

In a busy HQ, confidential conversations and focused work are easily disrupted when the only available setting is open plan.

Acoustic strategy (designer lens)

- Distributed 'quiet points': place enclosed micro spaces throughout the office so privacy is always nearby.
- Plan for multi use: support phone calls, interviews, and short meetings without interrupting surrounding work.

ManpowerGroup Spain Headquarters

Solutions specified

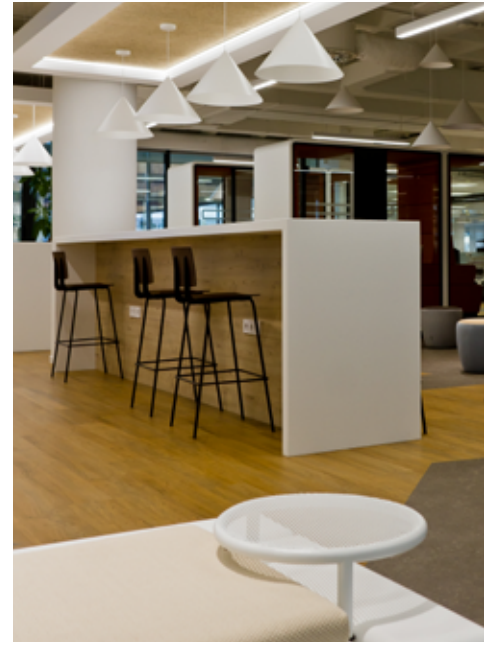
- Enclosed acoustic booths (Hushoffice) strategically positioned across the workplace.
- 26 Hushoffice booths installed across ManpowerGroup locations (18 at Madrid HQ, 5 in another Madrid office, 3 in Barcelona).

Outcomes

- Reliable spaces for confidential conversations and focused work integrated into the daily flow.
- Booths became a staple in routines, supporting well being and performance.







ManpowerGroup Spain Headquarters





Designer takeaways

- Treat privacy spaces like amenities – place them along circulation, not only at the edges.
- When construction is limited, booths offer predictable acoustic outcomes with minimal disruption.

Lisbon Council Offices

Client
Lisbon Council for Economic Competitiveness and Social Renewal (asbl)

Location
Brussels, Belgium (Residence Palace)

Photographer
Isabelle Raemaekers



Lisbon Council Offices

Design intent

The workplace needed to support focused work, collaboration, and clear communication – while respecting and preserving the character of a historic interior.





Function

- **A** Absorb
- **B** Block
- **C** Contain
- **D** Displace

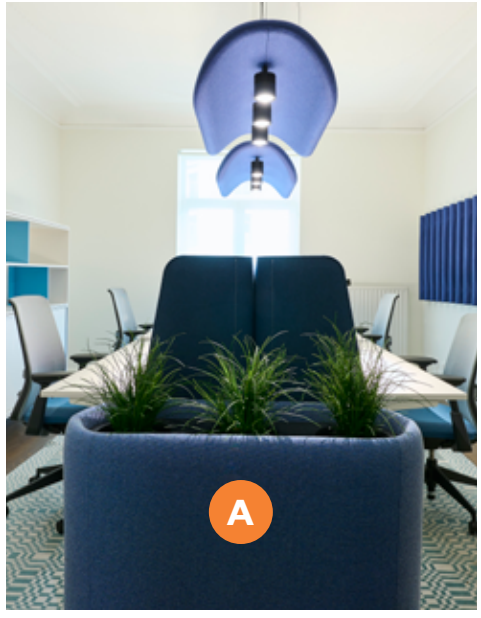
Acoustic challenge

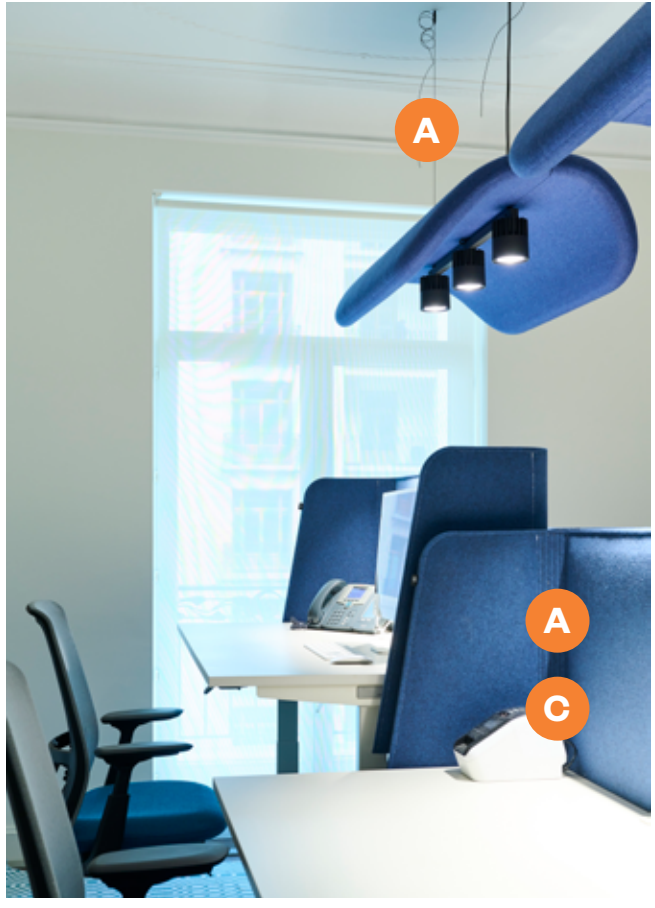
Heritage settings often restrict invasive construction, increasing the value of acoustic solutions that integrate discreetly and elegantly.

Acoustic strategy (designer lens)

- Colour-coded rooms: distinct theme colours improve orientation and subtly guide use.
- Layered acoustic environment: combine acoustic lighting, flexible panels, and desk-level privacy to reduce reverberation and improve speech comfort.

Lisbon Council Offices





Solutions specified

- BuzziChip acoustic lighting to reduce reverberation and add visual rhythm.
- BuzziFold flexible acoustic panels for zoning and absorption.
- BuzziWrap Desk desk-mounted acoustic solutions improving focus and speech privacy.
- BuzziBracks acoustic brackets defining space and enhancing overall sound control.



Lisbon Council Offices





Outcomes

- A calm, adaptable office that supports deep concentration and meaningful dialogue.
- Acoustic comfort integrated without overpowering heritage architecture.

Designer takeaways

- In heritage interiors, furniture-scale acoustic layers can deliver high impact with low architectural disruption.
- Pair colour strategy with acoustic strategy to reinforce wayfinding and soundscape legibility.

Accenture City Campus

Client
Accenture (City Campus)

Location
Zurich, Switzerland

Architect/Interior design
Evolution Design

Campus
two revitalized buildings in the city centre

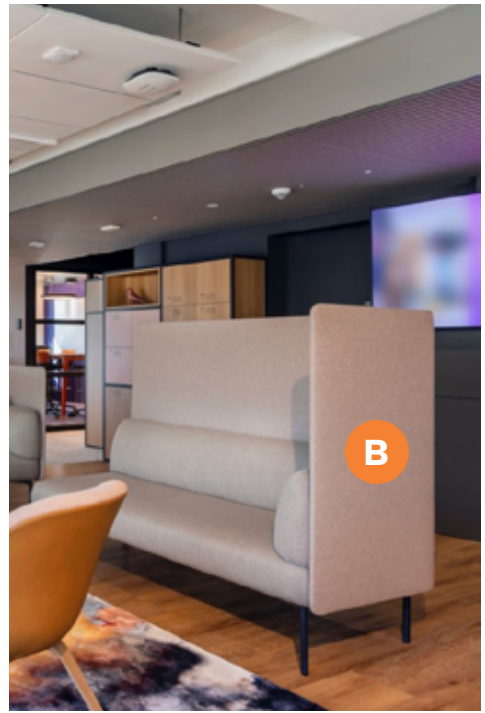
Photographer
Peter Würmli



Accenture City Campus

Design intent

Accenture's campus reflects innovation, collaboration, and well-being through a mix of open collaboration zones, quiet retreat areas, and vibrant social spaces.





Function

- **A** Absorb
- **B** Block
- **C** Contain
- **D** Displace

Acoustic challenge

A wide variety of atmospheres demands acoustic comfort so energy in social and collaborative areas does not become distraction elsewhere.

Acoustic strategy (designer lens)

- Absorb where density peaks: use overhead acoustic elements in café/dining areas to keep conversation clear.
- Zone with intention: meeting and semi-open areas benefit from elements that buffer, define, and support speech privacy.

Accenture City Campus

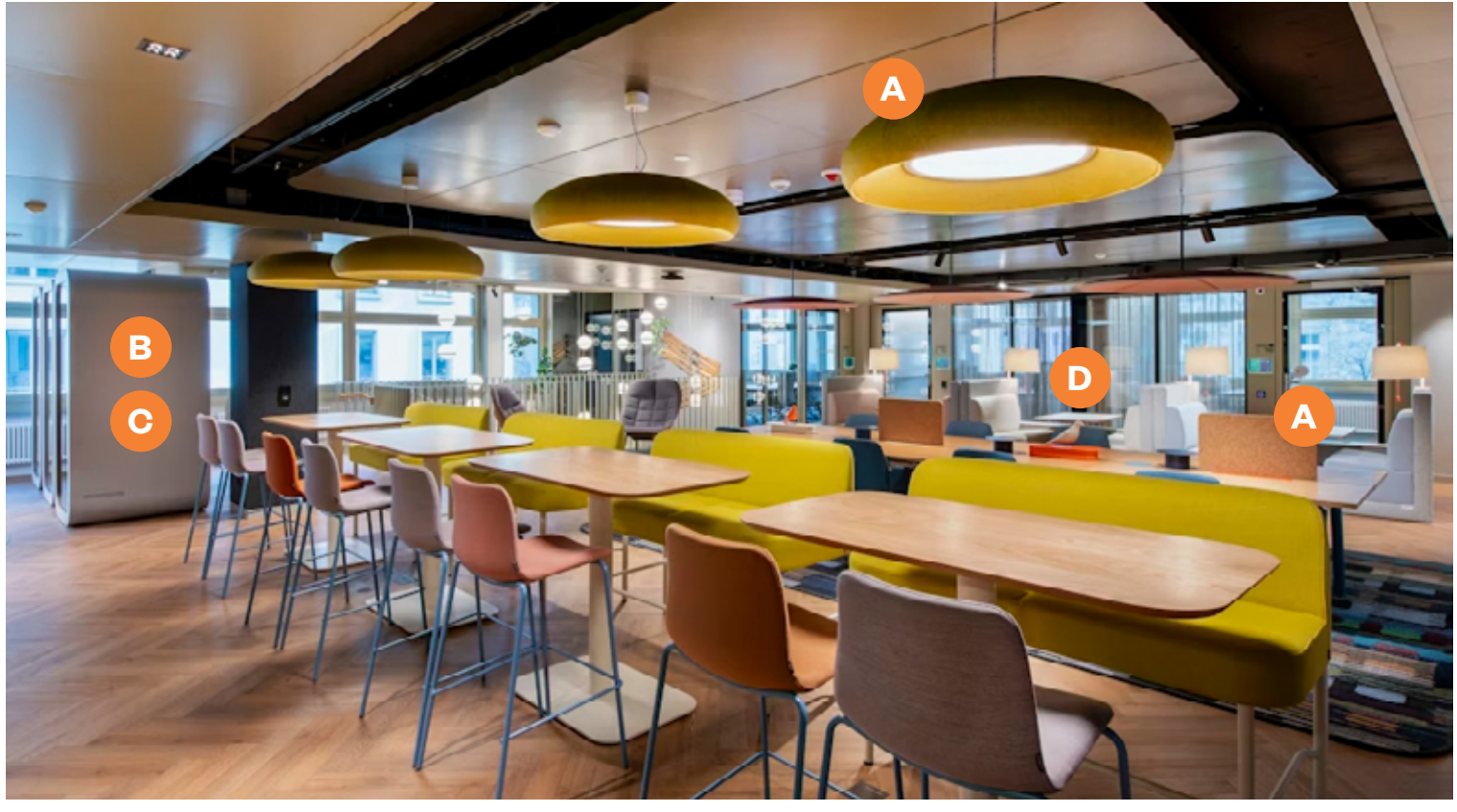


Solutions specified

- BuzziDome and BuzziHat suspended acoustic lights used in café and dining areas.
- BuzziPleat Light as sculptural ceiling/ lighting features to soften reverberation in collaborative zones.
- BuzziGrid deployed in meeting rooms, breakout spaces, and semi-open zones for speech privacy and zoning.



Accenture City Campus



Outcomes

- A healthier sound environment supporting well-being and clearer communication.
- Sustainability alignment through eco-conscious materials and long-life solutions, with flexibility for evolving workstyles.

Designer takeaways

- Social hubs are acoustic hot zones – acoustic lighting can reduce reverberation without visually lowering the ceiling.
- Statement acoustics can deliver identity and performance, making solutions feel intentional rather than corrective.

Japan Tobacco

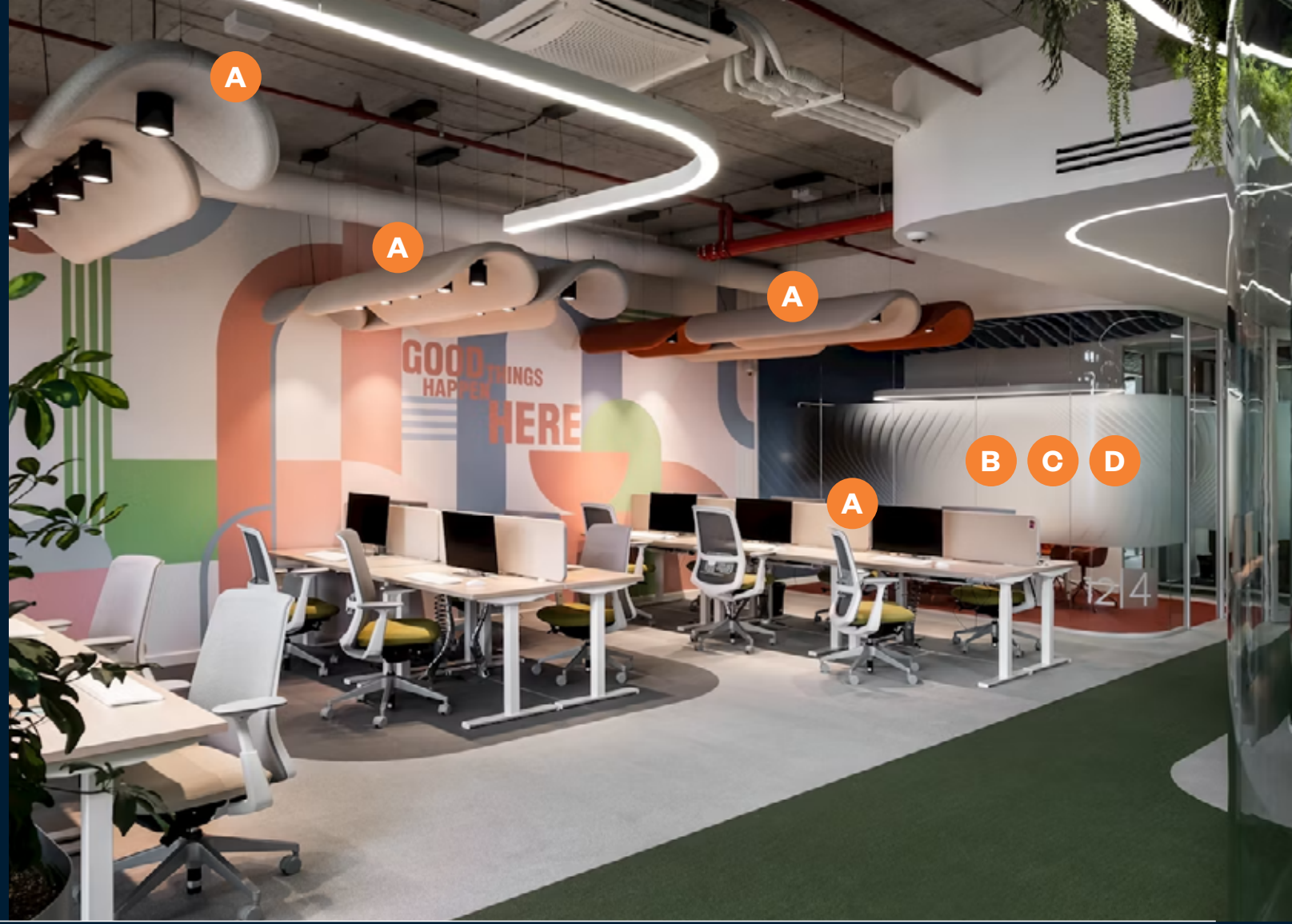
Client
Japan Tobacco International

Location
Tbilisi, Georgia

Office size
1,100 m²

Design firm
Material Editors

Photographer
Sandro Murvanidze



Japan Tobacco

Design intent

The workplace was designed to support collaboration, concentration, and comfort within an open, visually expressive interior.

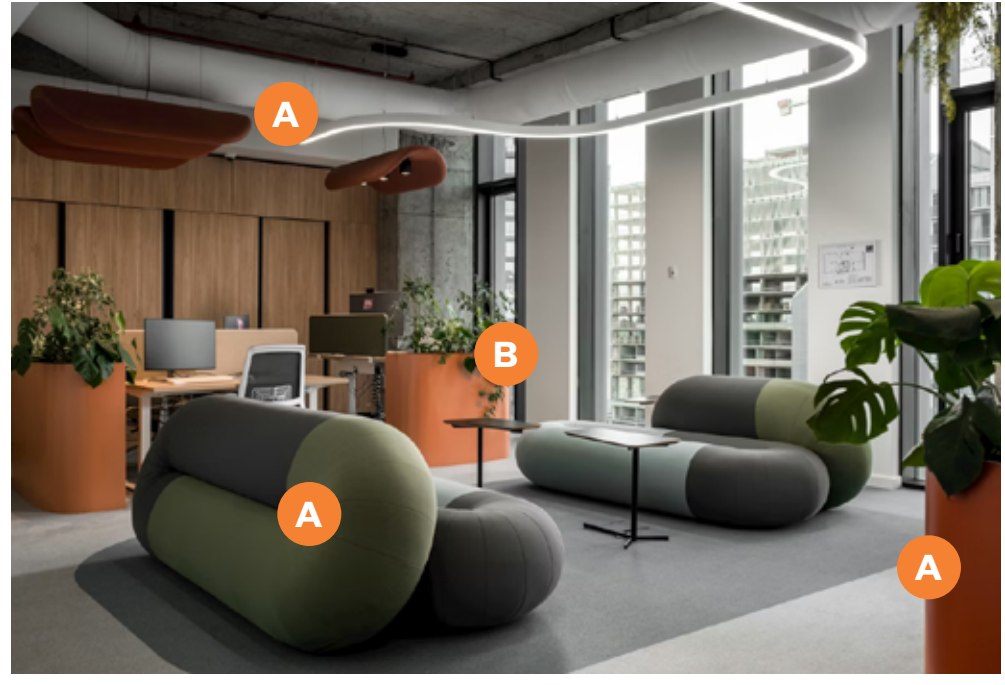
Acoustic challenge

With exposed concrete ceilings, full-height glazing, and generous shared zones, the office needed reverberation control and better speech comfort without disrupting the design concept.

Function

- A Absorb
- B Block
- C Contain
- D Displace

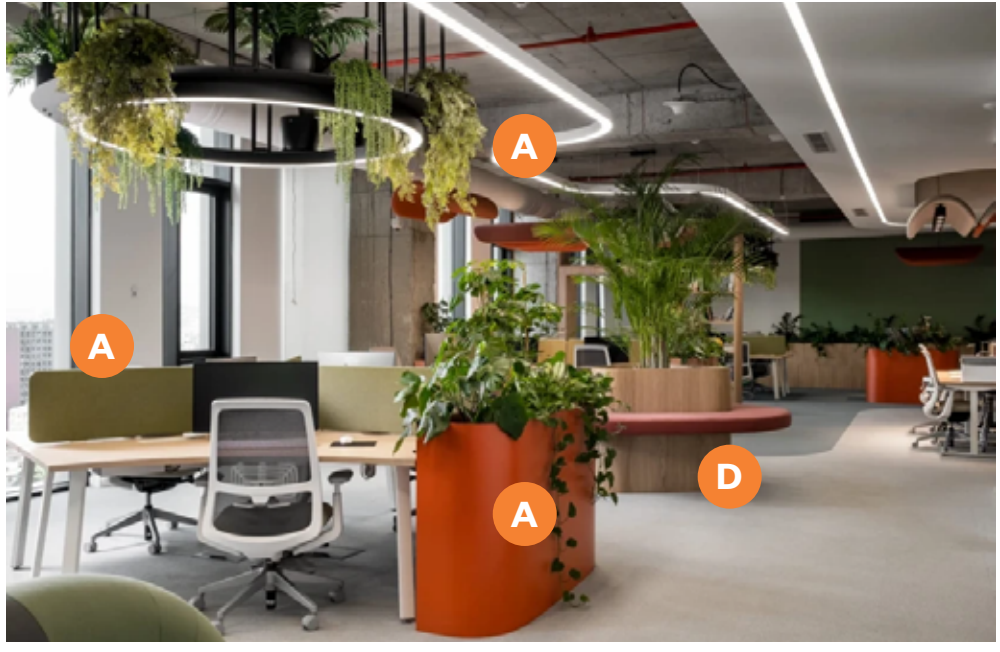




Acoustic strategy (designer lens)

- Use the ceiling as an acoustic layer where wall-mounted treatments would feel too intrusive.
- Combine acoustic function with atmosphere through integrated lighting.
- Support shared settings first, softening reverberation above the most active zones.

Japan Tobacco

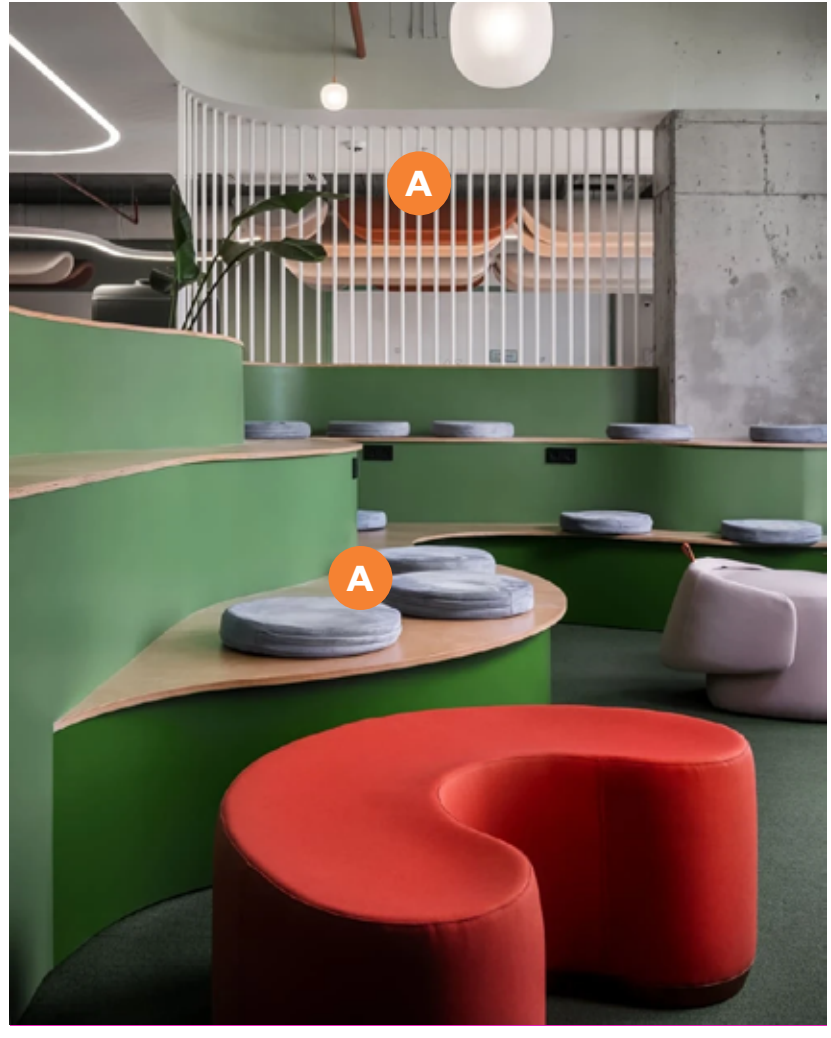


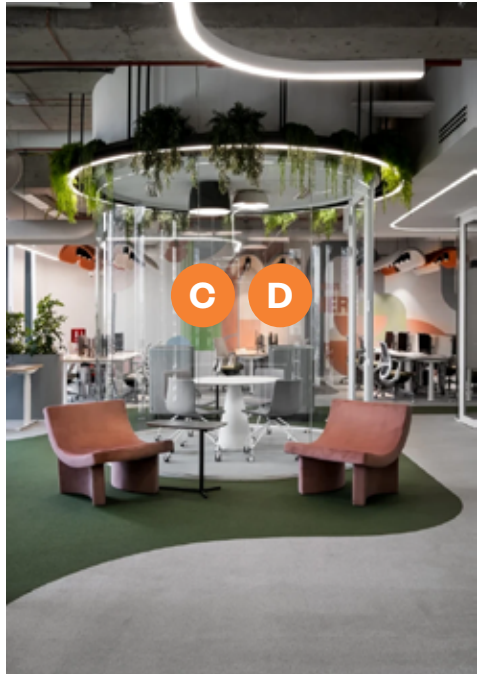


Solutions specified

- BuzziChip acoustic lighting integrated above collaboration and lounge areas.
- Pendants used as a dual-purpose layer, combining sound absorption with warm, even illumination.
- Terracotta-toned elements selected to align with the project's material and colour palette.

Japan Tobacco





Outcomes

- Shared areas feel calmer and more comfortable while remaining open and social.
- Acoustic performance was integrated into the architectural expression rather than added afterward.

Designer takeaways

- In hard-surfaced interiors, acoustic lighting can deliver performance with minimal visual disruption.
- Overhead acoustic elements work well when comfort and visual identity need to be resolved together.

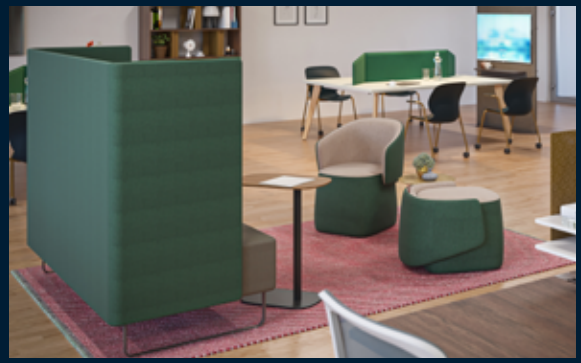
Acoustic Research & Knowledge

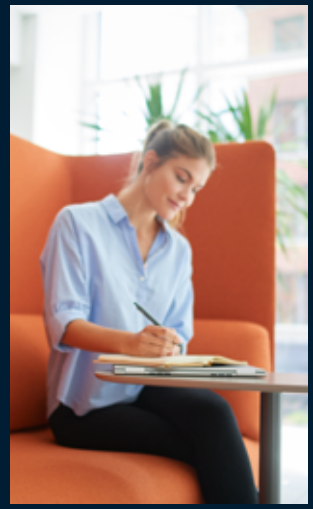
About Haworth
About BuzziSpace
About Hushoffice

Office Acoustics Glossary
- Well-Being
- Privacy
- Focus Work

Basics:
- Speech Intelligibility & Privacy

HAWORTH







Haworth organises sound through space

Acoustic comfort begins with how a workplace is planned. Haworth helps translate workstyles, behaviours and spatial intent into clear settings so focus, collaboration and well-being can coexist more comfortably across the floorplate.

By connecting acoustics to workplace strategy, Haworth aligns zones, adjacencies and furnishings to support the right activity in the right place. The result is a workplace that feels more legible, balanced and effective throughout the day.

Planning, zoning and integrated furniture solutions all play a part in shaping sound conditions. Haworth helps designers create environments where acoustics are considered from the outset, supporting concentration, privacy and a clearer relationship between activities.

Drift Felt by Haworth



Cabana Lounge by Haworth



Riverbend Meeting Box by Haworth



Haworth Collaborate Screen by Haworth



Mangas Rugs by GAN



Openest Chick Pouf by Haworth









BuzziSpace shapes sound and atmosphere

BuzziSpace brings acoustic softness, material richness and visual expression into the workplace. Its solutions help reduce reverberation, improve comfort and define settings in ways that feel tactile, intentional and architecturally refined.

Acoustic performance becomes part of the interior language rather than something hidden behind it. Lighting, partitions, furniture and other elements work together to soften harder environments while adding warmth, character and a stronger sense of place.

This makes sound control feel natural within the design of a space. BuzziSpace helps create workplaces that are calmer and more comfortable, while still feeling creative, welcoming and visually distinctive across collaborative, social and focus settings.

BuzziNest Office by BuzziSpace



BuzziPlanter by BuzziSpace



BuzziJet by BuzziSpace



BuzziPleat by BuzziSpace



BuzziWrapDesk by BuzziSpace

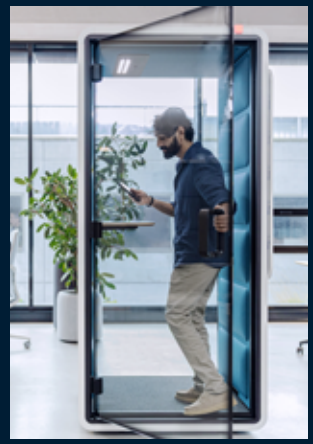


BuzziCee by BuzziSpace



hushoffice







Hushoffice supports focused work, collaboration and well-being with acoustic pods.

Hushoffice adds the enclosed layer of the acoustic ecosystem, creating spaces that support focused work, virtual and in-person conversations, spontaneous collaboration, scheduled meetings, and individual wellbeing throughout the day.

In open workplaces, these environments provide destinations for activities that benefit from greater acoustic control, helping people focus, connect, collaborate, and recover without disruption. By containing speech and activity within dedicated settings, they reduce distractions across the wider workplace and contribute to a more balanced and productive acoustic experience for everyone.

Combining user comfort, flexibility, and proven acoustic performance, Hushoffice helps organisations create workplaces that support a range of work modes and individual needs. From concentration and learning to collaboration and social interaction, these spaces give people greater choice over how and where they work, while helping businesses foster wellbeing, performance, and adaptability. Together, this is how Hushoffice builds for what happens inside: creating acoustic spaces that support the moments behind focus, collaboration, wellbeing and better work.

hushoffice

Hushfree XS



Hushfree S



Hushfree S Hybrid



Hushfree Work



Hushfree XM



Hushfree M
Access version available



Hushfree L
Access version available



Office Acoustics Glossary

A

Acoustic pod / booth: An enclosed, acoustically treated space for calls, focus work or confidential conversations.

Acoustic zoning: Planning the workplace into sound-appropriate zones (focus, calls, collaboration, social, restore).

C

Cognitive load (acoustic): Mental effort required to filter background sound (especially speech), contributing to fatigue.

D

Decibel (dB / dBA): Unit used to measure sound level. Offices typically reference dBA, reflecting human hearing. A 3 dB increase is roughly double the sound energy.

F

Frequency (Hz): Sound pitch. Human speech sits mainly in the mid-range (~250–4,000 Hz) and is typically the most distracting.

I

ISO 23351-1: International standard for acoustic performance of office pods and booths (useful for spec confidence).

N

NRC: Noise Reduction Coefficient (0–1) indicating how much sound a material absorbs. Higher is more absorptive.

R

RT60: Reverberation time: how long sound takes to decay. Lower RT60 generally feels calmer and supports clarity.

S

Sound absorption: How materials soak up sound energy to reduce echo and overall build-up of noise in a space.

Sound blocking / isolation: Preventing sound travelling between spaces through mass, sealing and construction continuity.

Sound diffusion: Scattering sound to distribute it more evenly and reduce harsh reflections.

Sound masking: Low-level background sound used to reduce speech intelligibility and distractions.

Sound reflection: Sound bouncing off hard surfaces (glass, concrete), increasing echo and perceived loudness.

Speech privacy: How well conversations are protected from being understood by unintended listeners.

Speech intelligibility: How clearly speech can be understood. Good for meeting rooms; disruptive in focus areas.

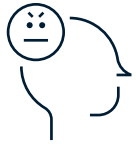
STC / NIC: Ratings describing sound isolation between spaces: STC is laboratory-rated; NIC is measured in real conditions.

Research & Knowledge: Well-Being

What Sounds Good

Sensory skills and stimulation, such as hearing, are often taken for granted in the workplace. There's merit in understanding how sound affects people both positively and negatively. Distractions in the open-plan environment such as video conference calls, spontaneous meetings, and interruptions by coworkers are stressful.

Organisations can unlock the potential of space design with a thoughtful acoustics plan to enhance well-being – leading to healthier, engaged, and high-performing employees.



Workplace Noise

#1 Sound is consistently one of the most important productivity drivers for both neurotypical and neurodivergent users.

Source: https://www.haworth.com/eu/en/knowledge/research/neurodiversity.html



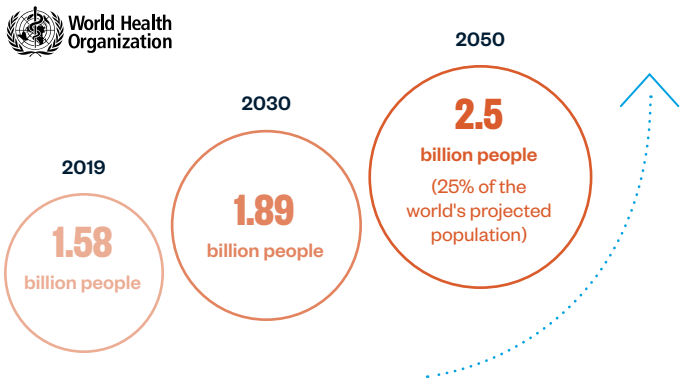
Loud Music & Unhealthy Food

20% In a study, when music was played at a **higher volume** (around 70dB) there was a 20% increase in patrons' orders of unhealthy food.

'Sound Decisions', Peng-Li et al., 2022
https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8888436/



Hearing Loss Is on the Rise



Source: World Report On Hearing, 2021
https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240020481

Silence Is Healthy

From a health standpoint, it seems silence truly is golden. In a 2013 Duke University study, mice who spent two hours in silence each day grew new cells in the hippocampus, the part of the brain central to memory.

Source: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24292324/



Research & Knowledge: Privacy

Balancing Privacy Needs

Privacy and the ability to concentrate are essential for individual focus work as well as private collaboration. People need to be able to hear what they want to hear, when they want to hear it. They also need to know that confidential conversations are protected. Yet, knowledge workers continue to identify noise and the lack of speech privacy as leading sources of dissatisfaction in the workplace.

Appropriately addressing acoustical performance benefits both the organisation and its employees. When construction elements work together to accurately control levels of speech intelligibility and honor privacy, the work environment fosters focus work, improved performance, and – ultimately, innovation.

To foster innovation...

89%

of employees need quiet for focused work

www.leesmanindex.com/articles/noisy-spaces-quiet-consequences/

Only...

40%

of people are satisfied with their workplace's quiet rooms

https://www.leesmanindex.com/articles/the-workplace-why/



Research & Knowledge: Focus Work

Distractions Affect Performance

In the built environment, workspace features that communicate where specific activities take place are essential. We call this legibility – and certain characteristics of the floorplate contribute to it. Designing spaces where people can manage visual and auditory distractions gives them more control over inferences and interruptions.

Science tells us there is no one-size-fits-all solution: Building a workplace strategy to support focus work starts with organisational culture to understand what people value. Then, carefully consider the overall arrangement and adjacency of the various activity zones – from quiet to active – in the floorplate.

Focus Work Defined

- A task requiring sustained (uninterrupted) attention that can vary in amount of mental effort.
- How long to sustain attention depends on the task.
- How much mental effort needed depends on the person.
- The less one knows, the more effort is needed – learning takes more deliberate effort.
- When mastery is achieved, tasks are more automated.





Research shows that after an interruption, it can take **up to 25 minutes to fully regain focus.**

Source: Gloria Mark, 2023

Research & Knowledge: Focus Work

3 Culprits That Sabotage Focus Work



Distractions

When unexpected off-task information captures our attention.

Just because it's unexpected, doesn't mean it's not beneficial to the person – even if it affects task performance.



Interference

When off-task information gets confused with task information.

Unhelpful to the task, but might prompt switching to a new, more important task.



Interruptions

When a distraction or interference pulls us off a task entirely to start a new task.

Oftentimes, these are also useful and necessary.



Basics:
Speech Intelligibility & Privacy

Whether in open plan offices or between closed rooms, achieving privacy requires adequate attenuation and background levels:

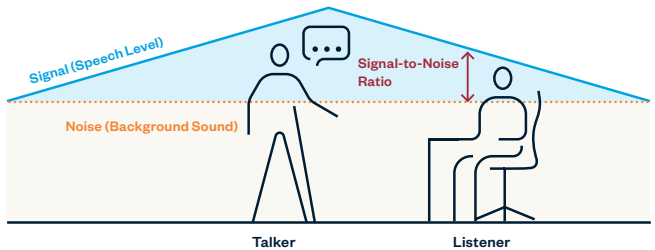
1. The sound must be adequately attenuated between the talker and listener, and

2. The speech sounds at the listener's ear must be well below the background sound.

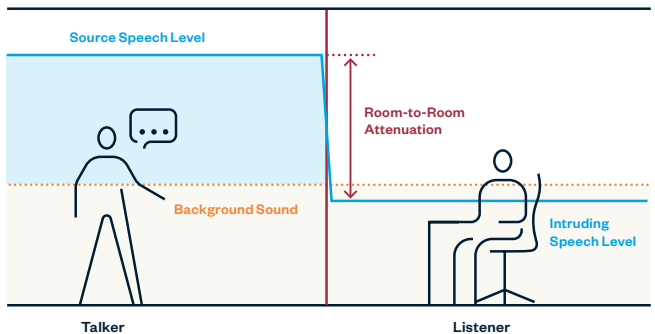
Intelligibility and privacy are determined at the listener's ears.

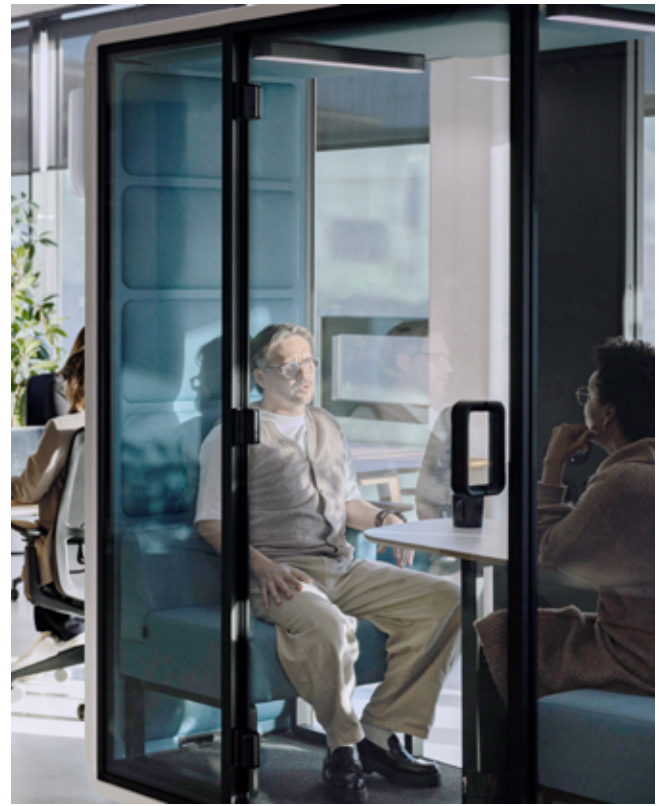
Signal > Noise
Intelligible Speech

Signal < Noise
Privacy/Unintelligible Speech



Privacy





Basics:
Speech Intelligibility & Privacy

Absorption Coefficient (α)

A measure of the fraction of sound absorbed by a material, at a frequency. Values range from 0 to 1.

Ceiling Attenuation Class (CAC)

A laboratory rating of the ability of a suspended ceiling to block sound transmission between adjacent rooms through a shared plenum. Approximately equivalent to STC for ceilings. A higher number reflects less transmission.

Confidential Privacy

A condition where overheard speech is not intelligible, even though it may be audible. Corresponds to privacy index (PI) of 95 or greater.

Decibel (dB)

A unit of measure of sound pressure level, at a specific frequency.

Decibel, A-weighted (dBA)

Weighted average of sound pressure levels across a frequency range, reflecting the sensitivity of the human ear to different frequencies.



Basics:
Speech Intelligibility & Privacy

Flanking
The transmission of sound via paths other than directly through the construction separating two spaces.

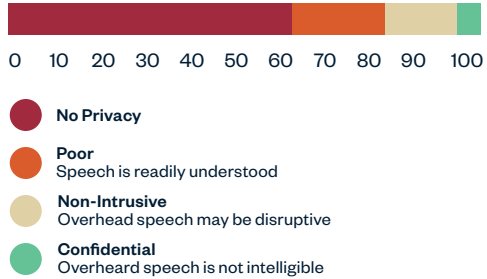
Frequency
The number of cycles of a sound pressure wave, measured per second (1 cycle per second = 1 Hertz). Corresponds to the "tone" or "pitch" of a sound in music.

Impact Isolation Class (IIC)
A rating of the floor assembly's ability to impact sound – like footsteps. A larger number means more impact sound is being blocked. The whole number is calculated based on sound reduction in 16 frequencies from 100 to 3150 Hz.

Noise Isolation Class (NIC)
A rating of the sound isolation between adjacent rooms or spaces. A higher number reflects more isolation. (Used primarily in North America; see Weighted Level Difference.)

Noise Reduction Coefficient (NRC)
A measure of the ability of material to absorb sound, obtained by averaging the absorption coefficients at 250, 500, 1,000, and 2,000 Hz. Values range from 0 to 1, with higher numbers indicating more absorption.

Privacy Index (PI)
A measure of the degree of speech privacy between two spaces. Values range from 0 to 100. Not a measure of fraction of speech understood. Standards define levels of speech intelligibility and speech privacy.



Sound Transmission Class (STC)
A laboratory rating of the ability of a wall to block sound transmission between adjacent rooms. A higher number indicates less transmission. ASTC (Apparent STC) is based on field measurements, which will include flanking transmission. (Used primarily in North America; see Weighted Sound Reduction Index.)

Speech Intelligibility
The degree to which speech sounds are understood by a listener.

Speech Level Reduction ($D_{S,A}$)
A measure, expressed as decibels (dB), of the reduction in the voice level of a talker as perceived by a listener on the outside. May be expressed as a letter-grade Classification, with A+ indicating highest performance.

Weighted Level Difference (D_w)
A measure of the sound isolation between adjacent rooms or spaces, expressed in dB. A higher number reflects more isolation. (Used globally outside North America; see NIC.)

Weighted Sound Reduction Index (R_w)
A laboratory measure of the ability of a wall to block sound transmission between adjacent rooms, expressed in dB. A higher number indicates less transmission. Apparent SRI (R'_w) indicates a field measurement, which will include flanking transmission. (Used globally except in North America; see STC.)

When sound is intentional, work feels easier.

The best workplaces don't eliminate sound; they design it. By planning acoustics early, organisations reduce friction between activities, protect mental energy and create environments where people can focus, collaborate and connect with ease.

Good acoustics isn't about silence.
It's about control, clarity and choice.

haworth.com

buzzi.space

hushoffice.com