

Challenge:

Duane Morris LLP is a full-service law firm with more than 700 attorneys in over 24 offices around the world. Based out of Philadelphia, PA, Duane Morris has centralized most of its business operations – including their facility and construction functions.

Ferd Boisvert, Facilities and Construction Manager for Duane Morris LLP outlined several challenges that the law firm faces as they approach the design for each of their offices.

“Confidentiality is obviously the most critical component of our space design – for our clients and even between other lawyers and assistants within the firm. Managing the design of all the offices out of one location means that the design choices need to deliver a space that provides a consistent brand and experience for our employees and our clients regardless of which office you visit. Then there are the actual construction costs that must be considered when implementing the space’s design elements. And, last, because we are centralized in Philly, our operational structure needs to be accounted for.”

With the firm’s continued growth and expansion, in the U.S. and abroad, it became increasingly important for Boisvert to have a way to remotely manage the building

systems and privacy levels for multiple properties with centralized controls from his Philadelphia location.

Solution:

In order to address the challenge of providing consistent privacy as well as centralized operational control, Duane Morris LLP selected the Lencore Spectra i.Net® Network Sound Masking System. Construction for Duane Morris’ private offices uses two-walls constructed floor to deck, a perimeter wall and then a facing wall which extends only 6 inches above the acoustical ceiling. Boisvert realized that the introduction of sound masking throughout the standard design would “solve a potentially significant problem with noise while managing cost.” The international facility construction specification was tested and designed around the Philadelphia, PA location, setting the private offices at 46.0 dBA and the open offices at 48.0 dBA.

Boisvert was confident in Lencore’s ability to demonstrate its sound quality and total value delivered. He added, “I find that the masking’s cost per square foot is a great value whenever privacy and acoustics is a concern.”

The next challenge was Duane Morris’ operational structure. Since all functions such as Billing, Operations, IT and Facility Management were centralized in the Philadelphia location, the Spectra i.Net® System was a perfect solution for Duane Morris.

Beyond the sound quality, Spectra i.Net® provided network capabilities, intuitive technology and flexibility on an open-platform system. The system’s use of off the shelf browser software allowed for full manipulation of the system without the need for any proprietary software. This allowed Duane Morris to maintain their centralized operations as it related to sound masking levels throughout all facilities as well as handle system diagnostics and ongoing tuning and adjustment needs.

Result:

Real time access, enables Duane Morris to manage the system’s volume, contour and EQ settings and adjust any zone around the world as necessary. The system’s ability to provide reporting and diagnostics gives Boisvert an online view of all system activity, function and performance.

“Lencore’s open-platform, non-proprietary system allows total design flexibility through secure remote access and didn’t mess with my IT guy’s system. I am able to raise the decibels (sound level) in London or turn the system off in a single private office in San Francisco, all from my office in Philadelphia,” says Boisvert. The Lencore solution provides a superior, global employee experience while allowing the facility manager to more efficiently and effectively manage the sound masking in multiple locations.

Duane Morris LLP Remote Access Adjustments

The network has proven its value at the local level where unseen adjustments were necessary.

- In London, a concert tour took over a square that the local facility overlooked and even though the band “was really quite good” it was distracting. Instead of calling in a local contractor, Boisvert was able to access the London system and increase the decibels (dBA) to a level that was appropriate to provide additional privacy for the firm during the event.
- When Duane Morris installed Spectra i.Net® in their Singapore location, there were some issues with the local installation crew and the system’s recommended settings were not initially adhered to. When the office called Boisvert to discuss the masking levels, he was able to adjust the system to their exact specifications - over the phone and through the user interface - saving significant costs in time, travel and expenses.

“Any external or proprietary system software which is installed behind a firewall concerns me. I worry about how it will affect infrastructure and system operations; most importantly, I find that software upgrades are slow and cumbersome or don’t keep up with the platforms most organizations operate off of.”

*Eric Crump,
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