

Challenge:

Knight Ridder's challenge was to move more than five hundred employees from three buildings into one new building. The company CEO had decided that the entire space (135,500 square feet) would be open office, including the executive offices. This was a substantial corporate culture shift from the previous space that had nearly 90% of the staff in enclosed offices. The company's primary concern was noise and in particular, speech noise from adjoining office spaces.

“Sound masking was by far the most important aspect of the successful implementation of our project.”

— Paul DeGroot
Facility Manager
Knight Ridder

Lencore Acoustics Corp. listened to the challenges Knight Ridder faced in making the transition from closed plan to open office and focused on their dual objectives: to provide privacy and to make the shift to the new environment a more pleasant and satisfactory experience.

Solution:

After careful consideration, Lencore was chosen for its industry experience and expertise to handle Knight Ridder's speech privacy needs with its Spectra® Sound Masking System. Knight Ridder's Facility Manager, Paul DeGroot chose this system in particular for its ease of use, sound quality and customization capabilities.

Lencore designed the sound masking system for Knight Ridder to achieve both privacy and acoustic comfort within the space. The resultant effect was a space that was able to balance privacy and interaction while opening up lines of communication within the workplace for greater productivity and efficiency.

Result:

Knight Ridder was able to cut their space requirements by one-third and achieved success through a balance of carefully chosen and engineered systems, finishes, and layouts. The facility manager cited seven key components that enabled him to provide a successful shift in their corporate design philosophy, while still providing a quality and private environment. The top three—all addressed acoustics (see side bar at right).

The successful corporate shift from closed plan to open plan contributed to an increase of more than 20% in productivity. This proved possible for a number of reasons including the addition of Lencore Sound Masking and its ability to address and control unwanted noise.

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Courtesy: Michael Gatti (www.michaelgatti.com)

Knight Ridder's Seven Key Objectives for the Design of Successful Corporate Facilities

1) Sound masking must be incorporated into the environment.

2) Noise control and privacy for individual workstations are functions of design layout, office size, barrier height, degree of closure and the orientation of the primary work area.

3) Acoustical ceiling tile must be top rated.

4) Commercial carpet must be above average.

5) Ambient lighting must be high-efficiency; use with the best fluorescent lamps for correct color rendering.

6) Task lighting within the workstation must be provided.

7) Climate/temperature must be controlled efficiently for maximum worker comfort and productivity.