

Noise in the customer service centre

A man in a light green button-down shirt is shown in profile, wearing a Plantronics headset with a boom microphone. He is clapping his hands together. The background is a blurred call center environment with other staff members at their desks.

As our recent noise at work study proves, it is a growing issue. Open plan contact centres only amplify the noise generated by multiple conversations and telephones ringing.

So how big is the problem? Whom does it affect the most? And which headset technologies can you rely on to prevent background noise from affecting the customer experience adversely?

Too much noise

 93%

of enterprise workers are adversely impacted by noise.

4 in 5

employees consider noise in their office to be distracting.



 55%

of workers have brought at least one noise complaint to the attention of their management.

Most common effects of noise:

- Lower productivity
- Stress
- Physical ailments such as headaches

Top 3 biggest noise complaints:

1. Noisy colleagues
2. Phone calls
3. Electronic office equipment

Source: Opinion Matters surveyed organisations employing over 250 employees in the UK, Germany and France (1000 per region) in February 2015.

The true effects of noise...

on your customers

Empirical evidence shows that voice communication is critical to people understanding each other clearly. A good conversation will leave your customers with a good impression, making them feel they are important to you. Yet organisations continue to expect service representatives to deal with customers in noisy environments. If customers have to repeat themselves, especially when relaying basic information, the experience can easily turn into a negative one. Frustrated by the time they are wasting, there is every chance callers will become ex-customers as soon as the call has ended.

“Not all noise is good and not all noise is bad. It’s all about having the right level of speech intelligibility.”

Evan Benway, Product Manager,
New Ventures, Plantronics

The true effects of noise...

on your colleagues

The noise within open-office environments requires employees to strain and raise their voices to be heard. At a time when many customers come to the contact centre with complex queries, this has an adverse effect on the overall experience. Raised voices also mean there is a greater chance that confidential information can be overheard—undermining trust in your colleagues and the brand.

“There are dissatisfactions in these ‘open plans’ because people just put them together, without thinking through the acoustic environment.”

Ken Kannappan, CEO, Plantronics

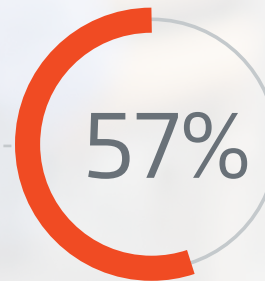


Higher among the hierarchy

Do you believe you would be more productive in a less noisy work environment?



of companies recognise service as a competitive differentiator (up 18% in two years).



YES

of companies can relate improving customer experience levels to revenue/profit growth.

2015 global contact centre benchmarking report. Merchants, 2015.



Solutions exist!

Today, many companies recognise the importance of customer experience to brand experience. Yet not all recognise how a simple issue like background noise during customer calls can undermine all other efforts to improve customer interaction.

By understanding the frustrations and expectations of your customers and employees, you can create a headset strategy to combat unwanted noise.

Knowing which headset audio technologies can help is an important first step.

Active noise
cancelling

Hearing
protection

Microphone
design

Wireless
roaming



Active noise cancelling

Active noise cancelling (ANC) technology removes the surrounding ambient noise (or lower frequency sound) for the user when wearing the headset. It is best at isolating and cancelling out steady ambient noise, such as that in busy contact centres.

Hearing protection

Advanced hearing protection ensures the natural, human qualities of voice calls remain, and safeguards customer service representatives from acoustic shocks and loud noises. Check the average A-weighted decibel limit (dBA) on the headset, so you can provide the right level of audio safety to your customer service representatives.

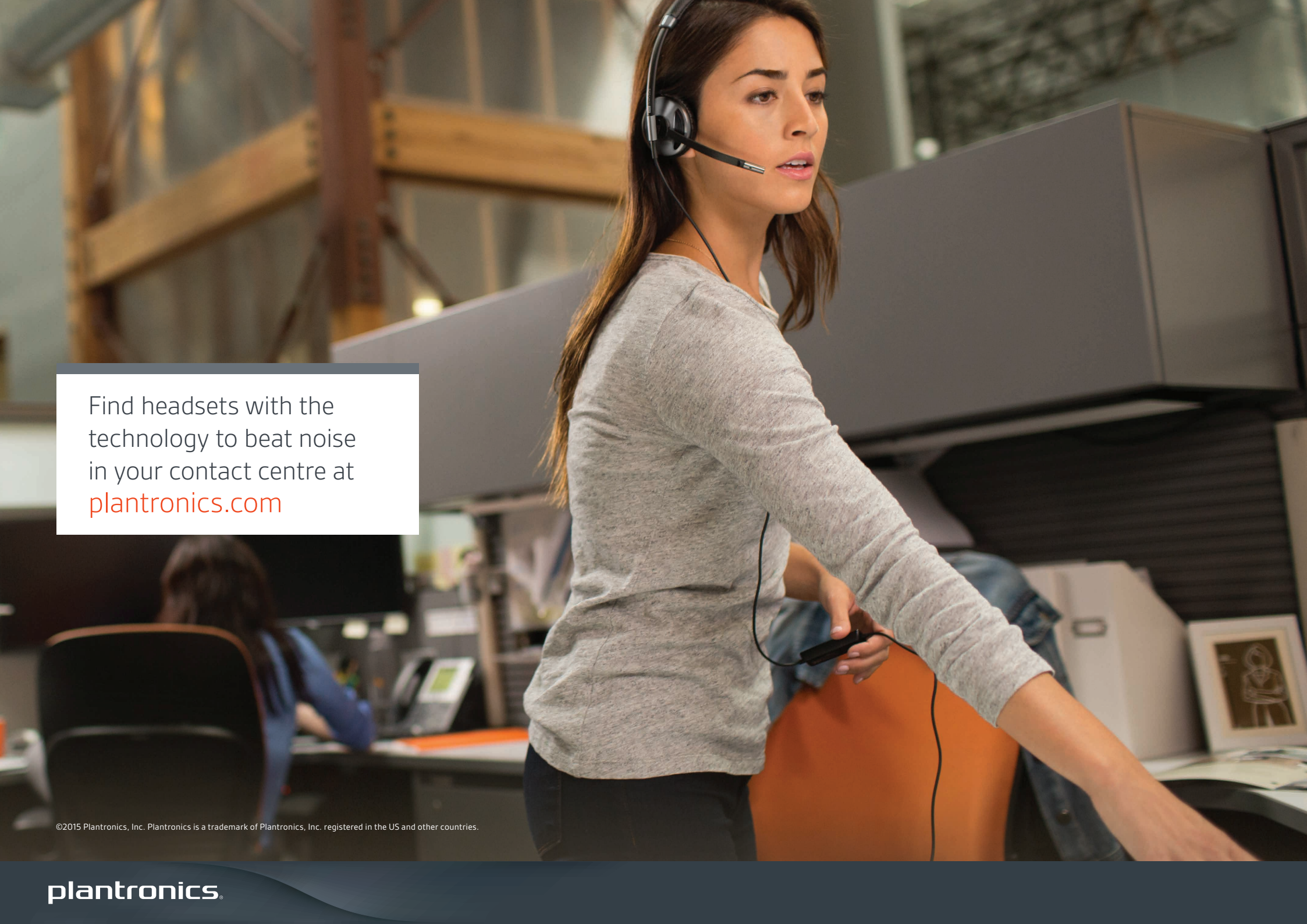


Microphone design

Headset microphones are essential to picking up a user's entire voice range. Look for a multiple microphone array in a single headset device for increased noise cancellation in contact centres. Since everyone is different, the ability to alter the microphone positioning will also increase the chance of capturing a higher level of sound clarity.

Wireless roaming

Some background noise is unavoidable. However, customers still do not want their confidential information repeated loudly within the contact centre. Headsets that offer wireless connectivity allow customer service representatives to move away from their desks, and find a quieter place to continue the conversation.

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and a Plantronics headset, is shown in profile, looking towards the right. She is holding a small black device in her right hand. The background is a blurred office or call center environment with cubicles and desks. Another person is visible in the background, working at a desk.

Find headsets with the
technology to beat noise
in your contact centre at
[plantronics.com](https://www.plantronics.com)

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