

# SMARTER WORKING

**plantronics**  
Simply Smarter Communications™





“Only 56% of people work at a fixed desk for more than three days each week.”

# SEE YOUR WORKPLACE IN A NEW LIGHT

## **The way we work has changed forever and, in many cases, beyond recognition.**

Driven by employees, technology and the organisation itself, there is now much greater flexibility with more and more people working off-site. According to one study\*, only 56% of people work at a fixed desk for more than three days a week.

And people are working in different ways too, with increased virtual collaboration and more widespread use of audio and video conferencing. Indeed, 83% of people regularly use audio conferencing, while more than 44% use web based tools to work together\*.

But while our working practices may have changed dramatically, often our workspaces have not.

Although walls may have come down to create open-plan offices, just putting everybody in one room hasn't necessarily improved communication. In fact, as background noise has increased, productivity has declined.

Different kinds of work activities require different kinds of workspaces, while the human touch – voice and personal contact – remains crucially important.

\* 'How we work: Communication' Trends of Business Professional, Plantronics 2010



**The result?** We need to change the way we approach the office environment.



# INTRODUCING THE SIMPLY SMARTER OFFICE

Even with all the benefits of modern, flexible working, the office is still the best place for tasks, such as idea-generation, consensus building and decision-making. It is also the place to establish collaboration between corporate functions and where your workforce looks for its sense of identity.

**Accommodating your employees more effectively calls for a new way of thinking about their needs:**

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**BRICKS** – what physical spaces do you actually need to support business activity?

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**BYTES** – what tools can you provide that promote greater productivity?

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**BEHAVIOUR** – how can your people make the most of their resources?

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We believe that the answers to these questions will provide you with the foundations of the Simply Smarter Office.



“The foundations of a Simply Smarter Office implementation are bricks, bytes and behaviour – allowing associates to work where and when they are most productive, cost-effective and environmentally respectful.”

Philip Vanhoutte, SVP and MD – Plantronics EMEA

# BRICKS

By radically improving the function and flexibility of your office workspaces and providing the most appropriate resources for your employees, you can cut floor space requirements and dramatically reduce real-estate costs.

At the Plantronics Office in Royal Wootton Bassett, operations previously spread across three buildings were reduced to one, cutting floor space from **47,440 sq ft to 21,154 sq ft**. As well as a **cutting energy costs by 30%**, its Simply Smarter Office initiative recently won a British Institute of Facilities Management award for having a positive impact on the organisation and workplace.

Those who come into the Simply Smarter Office will have more productive and fulfilling experiences, using better configured, shared workspaces.

“With rising fuel costs and ever increasing difficulties of fitting family obligations around work demands, there has never been a better or more crucial time for simple flexible working options.”

**Norma Pearce**, Human Resources Director EMEA, Plantronics

**BIFM**  
AWARDS 2012  
WINNER

For Impact on Organisation  
and Workplace



Real estate costs a great deal of money and when you add on overheads such as heating and lighting, managing phone lines and IT infrastructure, the traditional workspace becomes a strain on budgets.

**Shifting away from the 1970s era open-plan office to purpose-built work zones will enable your employees to:**

**concentrate**



**Quiet, private, enclosed spaces** to **concentrate** on focused, individual work tasks.

**collaborate**



**Meeting areas** to **collaborate** with other people – brainstorming, discussing, presenting and developing ideas.

**contemplate**



**Comfortable, inspiring places** to **contemplate** and re-energise.

**communicate**



**Fixed or flexible desk spaces** to **communicate** in different ways – mixing face-to-face and virtual collaboration.

**How your organisation benefits:**

- Cost savings from reduced real estate
- Greater employee wellbeing
- Safeguarded business continuity



# THE ABC OF ACOUSTIC SHIELDING

Studies over the years have proved that office noise has a detrimental effect on staff productivity and performance. Poor office acoustics ultimately result in a lack of efficiency and a less profitable business.

Within the office, the average human voice will travel for 12 feet and if it hits a hard surface will simply bounce back – generating an almost continual level of background noise in most busy workplaces, especially those that are open-plan.

**The ABCs of acoustic shielding can substantially reduce background noise and help create multiple, optimal working environments in close proximity to each other:**

**ABSORPTION** – using specialised products to absorb background chatter

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**BLOCKING** – deploying vertical sound barriers to create different zones

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**COVER** – playing computer-generated audio to mask unwanted noise

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**Sound absorbing ceiling tiles reduce noise by up to 80%**





**Different areas of an office can be isolated, helping improve employee comfort and concentration. The acoustics in other spaces can be improved by using sound absorbing ceiling tiles (shown to reduce noise by up to 80%) or injecting carefully tuned random sounds.**

Plantronics headsets are another critical element in cancelling out any background noise that may affect productivity by ensuring maximum voice clarity and speech impact on every call. The latest Plantronics headsets improve reception and transmission performance and clean up voice packets from any white noise disruption to ensure every user can operate effectively with no acoustic disruption.

# BYTES

## **New technologies encourage new ways of working.**

By providing your workforce with the best tools available for collaborative working, you can promote improved productivity both within the Simply Smarter Office and beyond. Realising these benefits is all about sounding professional, whether a call is made at the desk or on the go.

## **Unified Communications (UC) provides this.**

It means that employees can contact each other more effectively, saving time. Headsets with smarter presence show when colleagues are available to take calls and also whether they can be reached on their desk phone, mobile or at their PC. Unified telephony headsets can even manage calls seamlessly across those multiple devices for easier call management.

The Plantronics Simply Smarter Office provides wireless access to enable people to find their space, whilst staying connected. With people working from the office, at home or on the go, Plantronics uses Unified Communications to stay in touch, utilising smarter presence to know each person's availability, whilst at the same time allowing teams to collaborate effectively without the need to be in the same place.

## Looking to introduce Unified Communications?

Plantronics has devised a UC toolkit – a package of assets designed to help you more easily adopt UC audio devices and headsets across your organisation.

Based on the collective experience of existing UC users and Plantronics customers, it includes a comprehensive portfolio of FAQs, guidelines for success, checklists of recommendations, user surveys, set-up guides and other useful tools.

The resources are grouped together so you can go straight to the most relevant information and advice for your own UC deployment.

Find out more at  
[plantronics.com/uctoolkit](http://plantronics.com/uctoolkit)



### How your organisation benefits:

- Employee collaboration made easier with Unified Communications which provides wideband audio
- 80% net reduction in conferencing costs via Unified Communications
- 100% Softphone, no desk phones

# THE POWER OF THE VOICE

## **The continued importance of human contact within the workplace means that voice remains a critical component in the full spectrum of collaboration tools.**

But background noise is the main problem in almost all studies of modern offices. As well as acoustic shielding, we need to consider how to maintain voice performance over time, whatever the environment.

With the rise of flexible working, in business it remains true that even if you cannot be seen, it is vital that your voice is heard.

That is why Plantronics headsets combine the practical design that enables employees to work more freely with the advanced audio technology to ensure their message always gets through.

## **The Plantronics audio device advantage**

### **Multi-device capability**

- “Unified telephony” seamlessly manages calls from a desk phone, mobile or PC
- “Smarter presence” and “Contextual Intelligence” provide a more accurate availability status

### **Ergonomics**

- Comfortable design enables more natural upper-body and head movements to reduce neck and back pain

### **Efficiency**

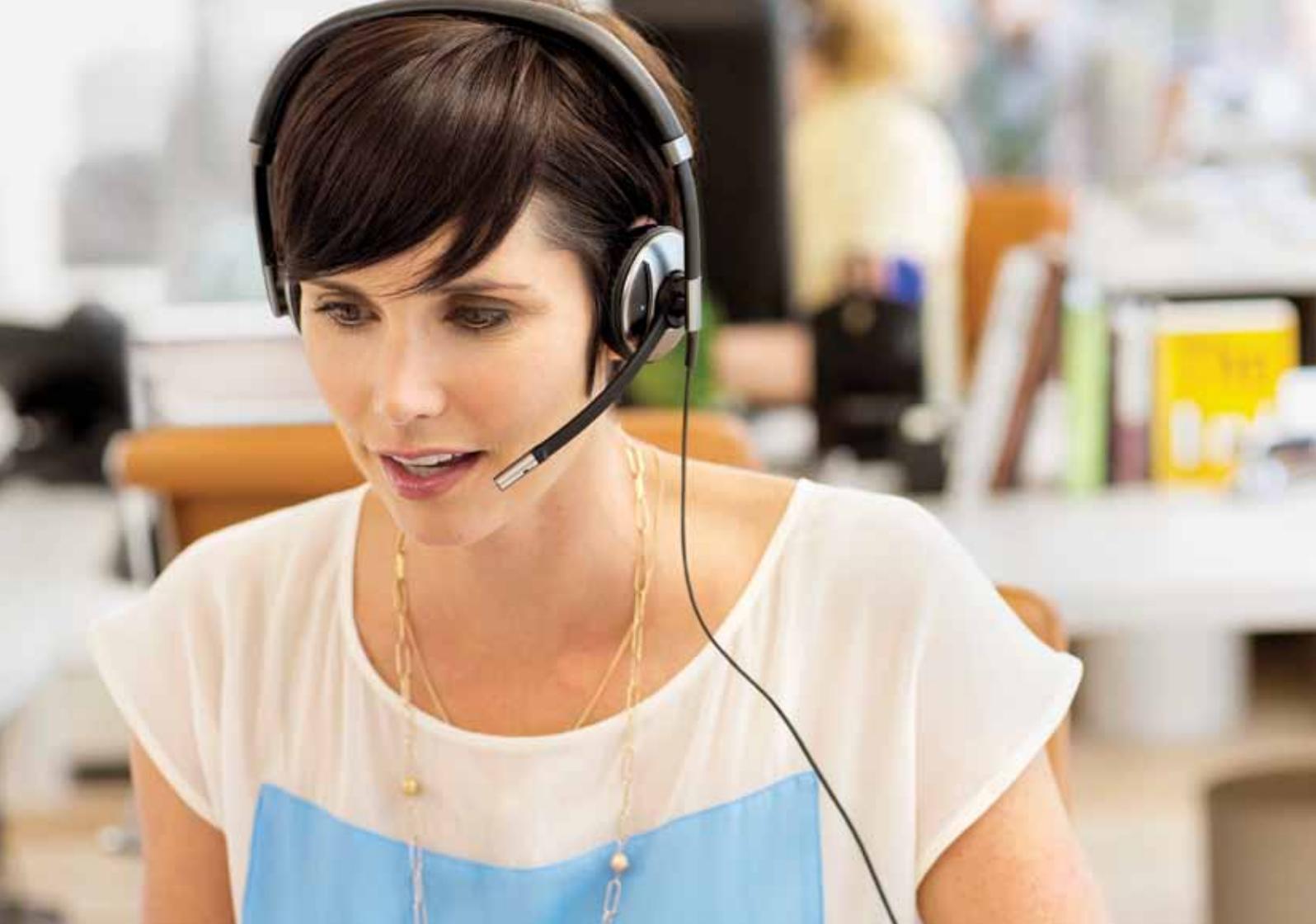
- Hands-free multi-tasking with wireless roaming capabilities improve productivity and encourage adoption by users

### **Audio experience**

- Noise-cancelling microphones eliminate background sounds for enhanced intelligibility
- High-definition voice (wideband audio) offers more natural-sounding calls

### **Mobility**

- The capacity to continue conversations away from the office improves collaboration with colleagues
- Being able to roam free from the desk means confidential calls can be taken in private



“The ability to work flexibly should stop being a matter of employee relations and start being an element of business transformation. It has the power to improve staff attraction and retention, reduce attrition, reduce absenteeism and create a more satisfied workforce.”

**Norma Pearce**, Human Resources Director EMEA, Plantronics

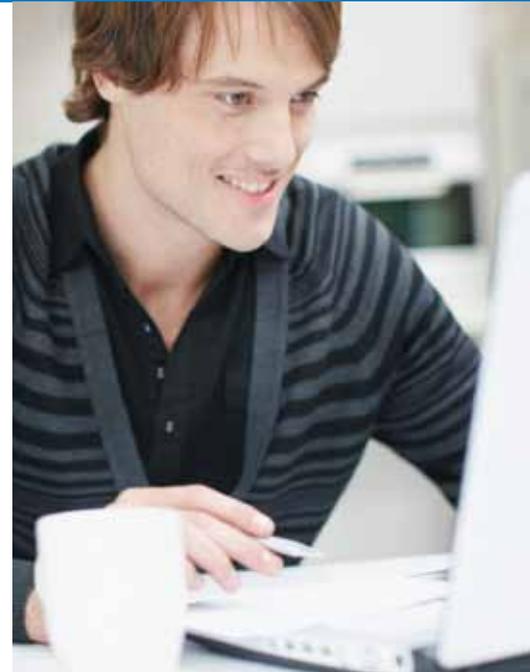
# BEHAVIOUR

## **The benefits of the Simply Smarter Office environment and Unified Communications audio technology are clear.**

Taking advantage, however, requires behavioural change. At the heart of the Simply Smarter Office approach is management commitment and staff engagement.



At the new Plantronics office, people chat to each other more readily, no longer isolated behind office walls. The design of every area was driven by the needs and working habits of end users. It is this focus on people rather than place that led to the Family and Parenting Institute and Daycare Trust presenting Plantronics with the prize for Innovation at its inaugural Family Friendly Awards.



## Training is crucial to success by encouraging employees to embrace and adopt the shift to the new, more flexible patterns of the Simply Smarter Office.

Guidance on the use of new technology and the redesigned office environment can be combined with a demonstration of the benefits of being able to work around traditional 9-to-5 hours so that it feels like a natural progression. Plantronics uses a comprehensive array of tools to help other organisations that want to experience the benefits.

- **Unified Communications Toolkit** – to assist the adoption of UC audio devices
- **Leesman Index** – to evaluate employee workspace requirements
- **E-Work Training** – to encourage staff to embrace new ways of working
- **Speech Impact Training** – to maximise voice presence

### Making it happen.

Plantronics collaborated with leading experts to realise the vision of the Simply Smarter Office. They investigated what Plantronics associates did and did not like about their existing workplaces and analysed how they worked away from the office. By developing a training programme for Plantronics associates and managers, these independent advisers made sure that everyone was comfortable with the new transition while helping staff maximise speech impact to make remote collaboration as effective as possible.



### How your organisation benefits:

- Upgraded management culture
- Attraction and retention of talent
- Future-proofed for changing needs

# A LIVING EXAMPLE OF THE SIMPLY SMARTER OFFICE

Plantronics wanted to give all its employees the freedom to work how they wanted. At the heart of this vision was a revolutionary approach to its existing office in Royal Wootton Bassett – **the Simply Smarter Office**.

By combining the needs of an increasingly mobile, flexible workforce and the clear benefits of a workplace that would remain the central hub of activity, three major offices were combined into a single site.

**By focusing on the three core elements of the Simply Smarter Office, both the organisation and employees saw the benefits:**

## BRICKS

- **55%** reduction in floor space and 50% reduction in the number of desks
- **45%** saving in heating and air conditioning and 30% lower energy costs

## BYTES

- Employee collaboration made easier with Unified Communications which provides wideband audio
- **80%** net reduction in conferencing costs via Unified Communications
- **100%** softphone, no desk phones

## BEHAVIOUR

- **40%** increase in employee satisfaction
- **60%** reduction in sick leave



“Everything you see in our office, even down to the plants and the graphics on the walls, is an idea from a Plantronics associate. We didn't have someone to design it for us. We came up with the ideas – these are all spaces that the associates wanted to work in.”

**George Coffin MBE**, Facilities Manager EMEA, Plantronics

The approach has also been adopted overseas, with Plantronics offices in Germany, the Netherlands, China, Santa Cruz, Paris and Spain all upgrading to the Simply Smarter Office.

In these Plantronics offices, there are now vibrant, busy areas for communication; zones that enable effective collaboration; peaceful spaces for concentration; and time-out areas for quiet contemplation.

All employees have benefitted from new technology infrastructure that has enabled the swift adoption of Unified Communications.

Combined with UC-optimised Plantronics headsets, employees can now roam from their desks, work in and out of the office and even communicate from home – with the same level of audio quality wherever they are.



A blurred photograph of two women walking down a modern office hallway. The woman in the foreground is wearing a light-colored blazer and a grey skirt, carrying a bag. The woman behind her is wearing a purple top and blue jeans. The hallway has large windows on the left and a clean, bright atmosphere.

## IN SUMMARY

**Smarter Working is being able to react to the changing way we are working: decreased desk time and increased use of remote collaboration and conferencing tools. The answer to coping with these changes, whilst boosting employee satisfaction and productivity, is the Simply Smarter Office.**

Follow Plantronics' example by implementing the bricks, bytes and behaviour behind the Smarter Working idea, in your office. Updating the physical structure, technologies and employee interactions in your workplace allows for dynamic transitions between private and collaborative working. In addition, Unified Communications mean employees will maximise productivity working alone or in a team, in their Simply Smarter Office or at home.



At Plantronics, Smarter Working is not theoretical. It's how we work every day. By putting what we've shared into practice, we've empowered and enabled our team to more fully engage, enjoy and produce great work. And we'd love to do the same for your company.

For more information on our products, services, to visit one of our offices or to speak to one of our experts, please call **+44 1793 842426** and one of the team will be pleased to assist.

**plantronics**<sup>®</sup>  
Simply Smarter Communications™

