

## Open Plan Office Dos and Don'ts

There are some positive aspects to working in open plan offices but there are some ground rules which we all need to follow to ensure that the office is productive and everyone feels comfortable. This is a short list of dos and don'ts and is not an exhaustive list.

- **Always read the cues given by your colleagues i.e. a stare may mean 'shut up'**
- **Avoid eating at your desk (or at least avoid eating things that are smelly and crunchy) – we have a kitchen for this. If you do eat at your desk, please clear up after you**
- **Listening to music will annoy others**
- **Do not leave any valuables on your desk or anywhere around your work area**

### **Use a reasonable voice level**

Don't raise your voice, either during face to face conversations or on the phone. At the same time, you shouldn't need to whisper. If you feel you need to whisper, it's a sign that either your space has poor acoustics or that you're talking about something you shouldn't in your workplace.

### **Don't hold meetings in your (or anyone else's) workspace**

If you've got time to schedule the meeting, plan to hold it in an appropriate setting. If you need some peace and quiet to read those all-important documents consider booking a meeting room

### **Impromptu conversations**

Started a fascinating topic or into a heated debate? Move it out of your workspace (and not just to the corridor either). Remember, your conversation may be disturbing others - keep your voice low and do not stand about chatting close to other people's workspace

### **Don't talk/yell past your immediate neighbour**

You have to raise your voice to talk to someone 2 to 3 workspaces away and you know your neighbour and anyone else within earshot isn't going to appreciate it. Get up and go over to the person's desk or phone or communicate electronically.

### **Speaker phones**

Not only will you raise your voice level, but those around you will hear the other side of the conversation as well.

**Manage ringers and notifications**

This applies to your desk phone, mobile phone, tablet and computer. Turn down ringer volumes, limit the number of rings, put your mobile on vibrate, don't listen to voicemail on speaker phone, and turn down (or off) those 'you've got mail' notifications.

**Look before you interrupt**

If someone is visibly occupied (and it can wait), return later or send a message they can reply to at a better time. Enter other people's workspace with due care and attention - look for go away/welcome cues

**Don't create unnecessary noise**

Pencil tapping, finger rapping, singing, humming and playing music over speakers won't win over those around you.

**Respect others' privacy**

Sometimes you're going to hear business or personal information not intended for your ears. Act as if you didn't hear something you shouldn't have (and don't add to the noise level by repeating it).

**General office rules for all and those who desk share**

- Don't leave paperwork containing sensitive information unattended
- Ensure screens are locked when leaving the work station (Press Ctrl-Alt-Delete keys together to select Lock Computer) For staff who desk share or hot desk they should ensure they log out of the computer to enable other staff to log in when they are not using the desk.
- Ensure all equipment and paperwork is collected on leaving
- Keep your desk and work area tidy – empty bins daily, wash up your cups and keep paperwork on desk to a minimum
- Do not remove any standard equipment from a hot desk e.g. keyboard, mouse