

SONĀRE

The Environmental Acoustics Magazine

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SPAA

Because the majority of our time is spent indoors, the built environment can have a profound impact on physical and mental well-being.

For years, sustainability has been one of the driving forces in building design, construction and management—a road largely paved by the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED®) Green Building Rating System devised by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC).

However, lack of attention historically paid to acoustics was detrimental to the overall performance of sustainable spaces, particularly in light of the increased challenges posed by strategies to improve temperature regulation, energy conservation and daylighting. In fact, evaluations conducted by the Center for the Built Environment (CBE) and others revealed that green building acoustics were generally worse than their traditional counterparts and a leading source of occupant dissatisfaction.





USGBC addressed the deficiency by providing specific LEED credits for acoustics, helping draw attention to this vital aspect of Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ). However, despite numerous credits aimed at IEQ, its primary focus remains a building's impact on the environment. Mitigating a facility's effect on its occupants—and harnessing its full potential to help us work, live, perform and feel our best—is a cause that's largely been taken up by the WELL Building Standard (WELL™), a performance-based standard and certification process introduced by the International WELL Building Institute™ (IWBI™) in 2014.

WELL seeks to marry best practices in design and construction with peer-reviewed medical and scientific research in order to support building occupants' mental and physical health and well-being. The benefits of improving noise control and speech privacy not only include increased comfort and productivity, but reduced error rates, stronger morale and decreased absenteeism. Hence, one of the standard's key criterion involves implementation of an acoustic strategy that aims to reduce exterior noise intrusion and control indoor noise levels in order to enhance social interaction, learning, satisfaction, and productivity. The tools used to achieve those goals include barriers, absorption and sound masking.

WELL recognizes the importance of verifying that the design actually meets its specific acoustic performance criteria. Goals are best discussed with an acoustical consultant, who will measure and verify them upon project completion. They can also provide the 'big picture' view that allows the various elements to be selected such that the combination provides the necessary level of acoustic performance—for example, interior partitions and background sound that together meet minimum Speech Privacy Potential (SPP) ratings, as outlined in the standard. To learn more about this strategy, see *A New Approach to Acoustics*, pg. 34.

The LogiSon Acoustic Network has played a role in several WELL firsts. For example, it's used:

- In the International WELL Building Institute's New York, NY headquarters
- Throughout the 23rd floor (25,826 ft²) of the 55-floor Toronto-Dominion Centre in Toronto, ON, which was the first project in the world to achieve certification under WELL Building Standard v1. It's also installed on many other floors within this facility—the first project in North America to certify its entire building to WELL Gold.
- In the American Society of Interior Designers' (ASID) Washington, DC headquarters (featured here), which was the first space in the world to achieve Platinum Level Certification for both WELL (under WELL v1) and LEED (under LEED ID+C)—the highest recognition awarded by the USGBC and IWBI.*

* WELL is designed to work harmoniously with LEED, and the Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI) is the third-party certifier for both standards. However, complying with WELL doesn't guarantee LEED credits or vice-versa.

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