

TOP 10

Rules of Open Plan Etiquette

Develop a set of shared expectations regarding noise

The acoustical performance of open plans is by no means doomed. With some conscientious behavior and good design, they can be productive, comfortable—and even fairly private.

Here's a list of the top ten things everyone can do to help:

1 Find a More Isolated Location

Gotten onto an interesting topic or into a heated debate? Move into a more appropriate location. Though collaboration is important, most of us still spend the majority of our time on tasks that require concentration. Overhearing your conversation is more likely to disrupt others' work than augment it.

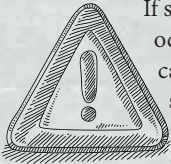
2 Don't Use Speaker Phones

Not only will you raise your voice level, but those around you will hear both sides of your conversation. If you need to use your hands while on the phone, get a hands-free headset.



3 Look Before Interrupting

If someone's visibly occupied and your question can wait, return later or send a message they can reply to at a better time.

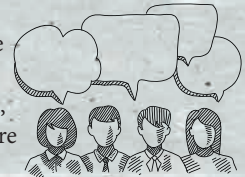


4 Respect Others' Privacy

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

5 Use a Reasonable Voice Level

Don't raise your voice during in-person or phone conversations. Depending on your natural voice level, you might need to pay more or less attention to this recommendation.



6 Don't Hold Meetings in Your Workspace

If you've got time to schedule the meeting, plan to hold it in an appropriate setting.

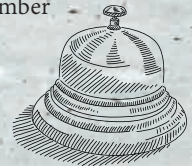
7 Don't Talk or Yell Past Neighbors

To talk to someone two or three workstations away, you have to raise your voice. And anyone within earshot isn't going to appreciate it.



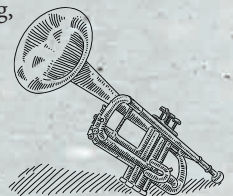
8 Manage Ringers and Notifications

On desktop and mobile phones, tablets and computers. Limit the number of rings and turn down their volume, put your mobile on vibrate, don't listen to voicemail on speaker phone, and turn notifications off.



9 Don't Create Unnecessary Noise

Pencil tapping, finger rapping, singing, humming and playing music over speakers won't win anyone over, so try to break those habits. Also ask that squeaky chairs, drawers, doors and other items in your area be fixed.



10 Respect Others' Concerns

If a coworker approaches you with a noise complaint, odds are they aren't doing it maliciously, but because the noise is genuinely bothering them. Take a moment to discuss if you can reasonably reduce it.