OWNERS’ GOALS FOR THE BUILDING
Owners increasingly challenge you to compress schedules and “value engineer” wherever you can.

For example, exposed structure and open-plan layouts have gotten popular with owners of office buildings for their aesthetics and flexibility. But, did you know that...

69% of employees are dissatisfied with noise levels at their primary workspace?

42% percent are creating workarounds, such as wearing earbuds, to block out distractions and focus?

Balancing Project Efficiency with Building Performance

To balance owner and occupant needs, you have to be ultra-efficient—which often means starting from baseline schedules, standards, and specifications that worked before:

Indoor Environmental Quality
MEP
Code Requirements

The problem is, once these boxes are checked, many project specs prioritize aesthetic elements above all else. This means either:

Acoustics is addressed too late in the design process—after budgets have been fixed.

Or, acoustics that go beyond minimum standards get value engineered in later stages.

The Impacts of Noise on Human Comfort

So, what happens when acoustical performance is overlooked or not driven by codes, standards, or guidelines?

HEALTHCARE: When noise disrupts patients’ sleep in healthcare settings, it can have adverse impacts on blood pressure, weight gain, heart disease, pain stress levels, and inflammation.

EDUCATION: Students perform worse on standardized tests in locations with high “ambient” noise levels. To account for this, Chicago had to retrofit 124 schools at a cost of $350 million.

OFFICE: High noise levels decrease worker productivity by up to 86 minutes per day—which means almost 1 day of work lost by each employee per week.

When noise disrupts patients’ sleep in healthcare settings, it can have adverse impacts on blood pressure, weight gain, heart disease, pain stress levels, and inflammation.

Evidence-Based Design Meets Evidence-Based Medicine: The Sound Sleep Study, The Center for Health Design.


When does Acoustics Become Critical in Design?

With every new project, you want to deliver a visionary design that reflects your firm’s brand. But you can’t do that in a vacuum. You also need to address:

Incorporate acoustical performance considerations earlier in design.

Balance acoustics with aesthetic, budget, and code requirements throughout the design process.

Select acoustically absorbent materials that meet third-party tested and documented standards for use in a variety of environments.

When you partner with USG, you won’t just ensure that your design meets owners’ and occupants’ expectations for sound in a given space. You’ll also increase their comfort and happiness within it, while evolving your project plans to include proven acoustical solutions that demonstrate your expertise in this critical aspect of design.