

Stone wool baffles optimize acoustics in an open office

Gensler, Tampa, Florida



Global architecture, design and planning firm, Gensler, selected Rockfon's ceiling systems for its new location in Tampa, Florida. The firm's unique workspace spans two floors and 8,702 square feet of the renovated Rivergate Tower, doubling the square footage of Gensler's previous Tampa location. Flexibility and collaboration were its guiding goals for its Tampa open office concept.

Products in use

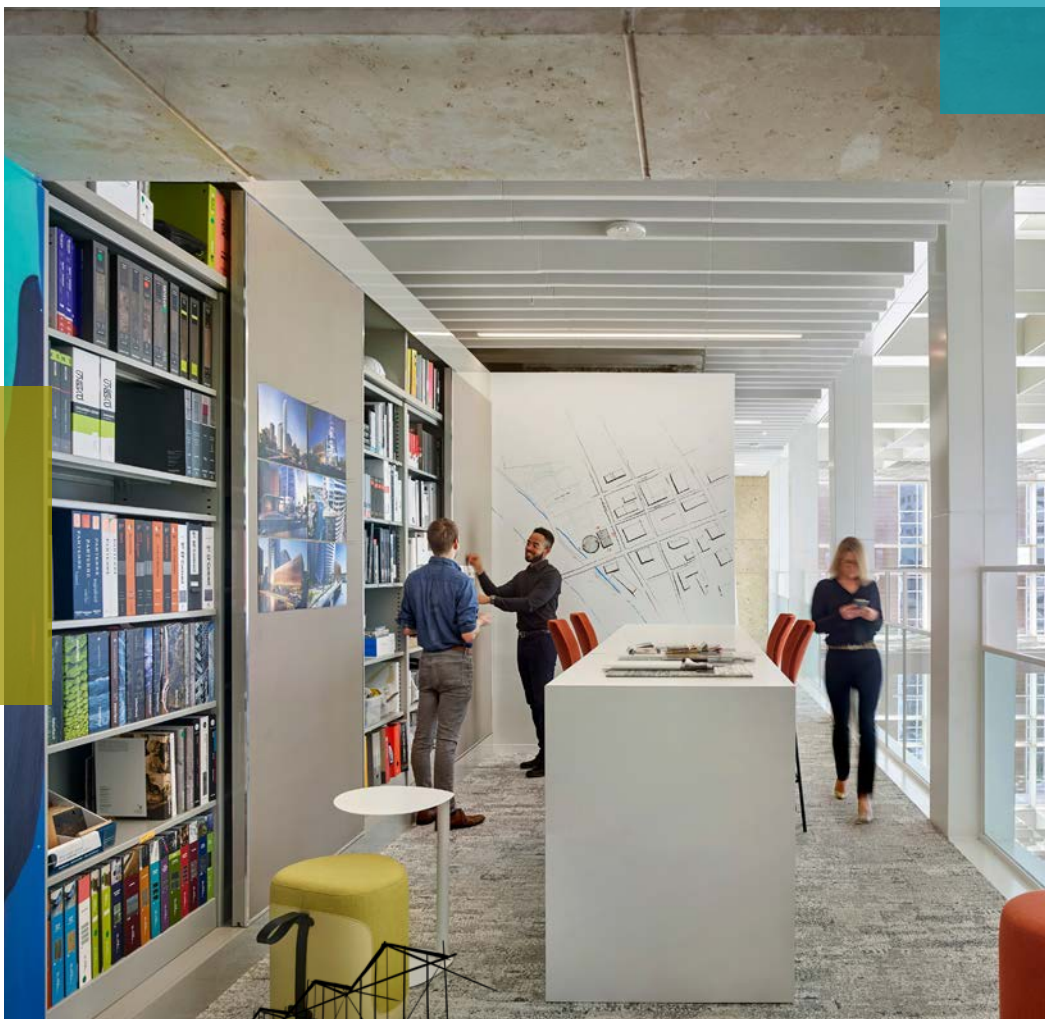
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An adaptive re-use project, Rivergate Tower features a six-story lobby at its core. Renovating an existing space with a full-height open center posed acoustic challenges for the design team. Helping provide solutions, Rockfon's acoustic specialist, Gary Madaras, PhD, reviewed and consulted on the project.

"Normally, walls and slabs separate all of these spaces acoustically," Madaras explained. "Here, sound from one side of the building can transmit through the open core to the other side; sound from one floor can transmit to other floors. This places higher demand on the performance of the overhead absorption than if there were not an open central core."

To optimize acoustics for Gensler's office, Rockfon's acoustic stone wool ceiling baffles were recommended for the shared spaces. These include the main reception area, the interior hallways near the open lobby, the staff cafeteria and kitchen, the workstation zone, and the small group meeting areas.

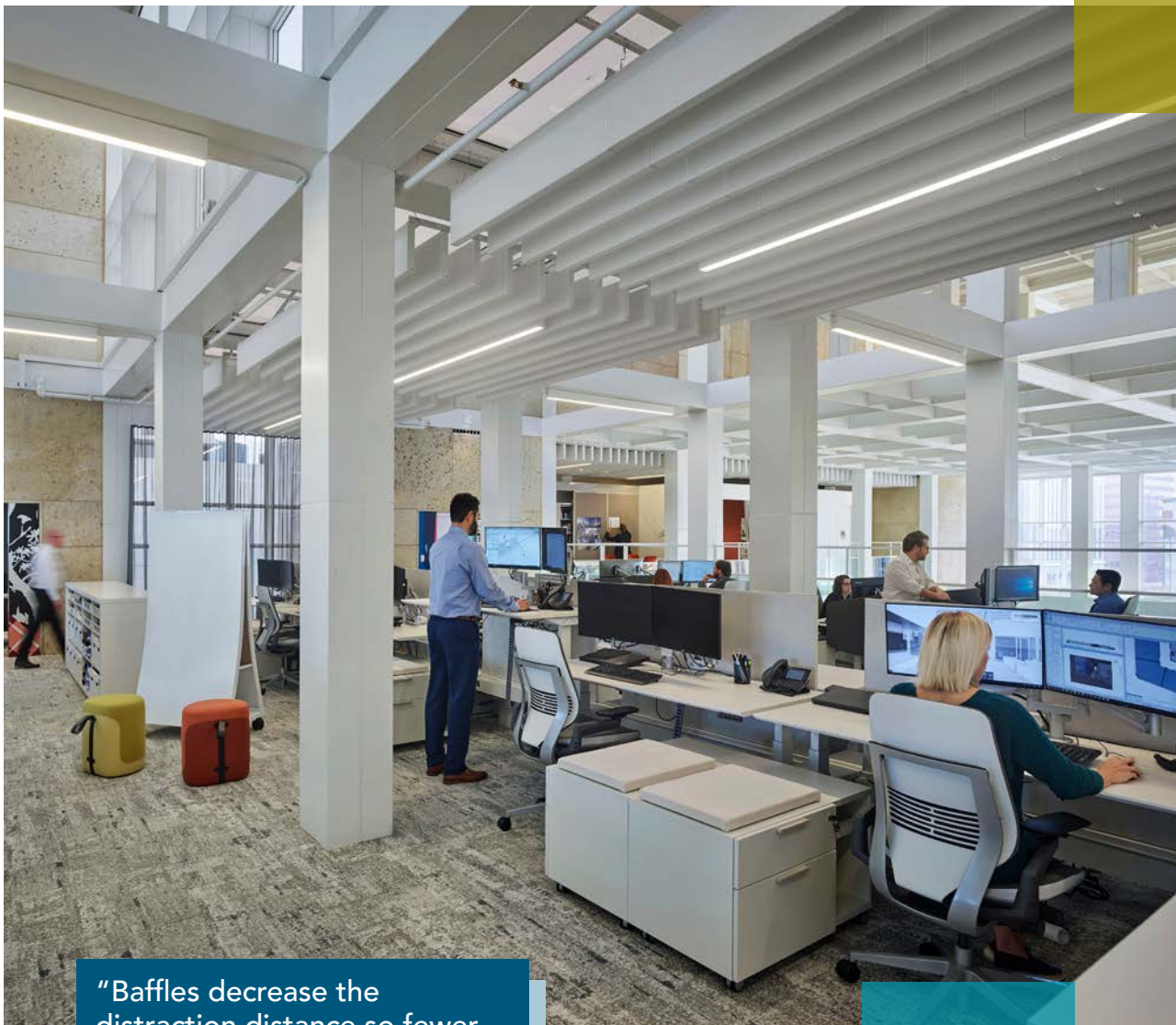
Madaras elaborated, "As sound waves travel from the office areas toward the open core, the energy gets attenuated greatly by the baffles. Each baffle absorbs a little bit of the wave. By the time the wave reaches the open core, it has been attenuated enough so that it cannot be heard on other floors or on the other side across the open core. Baffles decrease the distraction distance so fewer people are taken off-task or annoyed by noises."



While those in enclosed offices and meeting spaces are less likely to experience interruptions, sound-absorbing stone wool ceiling panels were used to further optimize acoustics.

Acousti Engineering Company of Florida installed Rockfon's stone wool baffles and panels, as well as the metal ceiling grid to support the panels. The crew also relied on Rockfon Infinity perimeter trim to provide a neat, crisp edge. Enhancing this clean, bright appearance, white was the color of choice for the visible ceiling materials. In addition to the modern aesthetic, Rockfon's white finish reflects and diffuses the natural light throughout Gensler's offices.

"To optimize performance, we must address effectiveness and experience in tandem," stated the Gensler 2019 U.S. Workplace Survey. "The amenities that deliver the greatest impact connect directly to people's most salient needs and preferences: spaces directly connected to innovation, making and collaboration; and quiet places to perform focused or individual work."



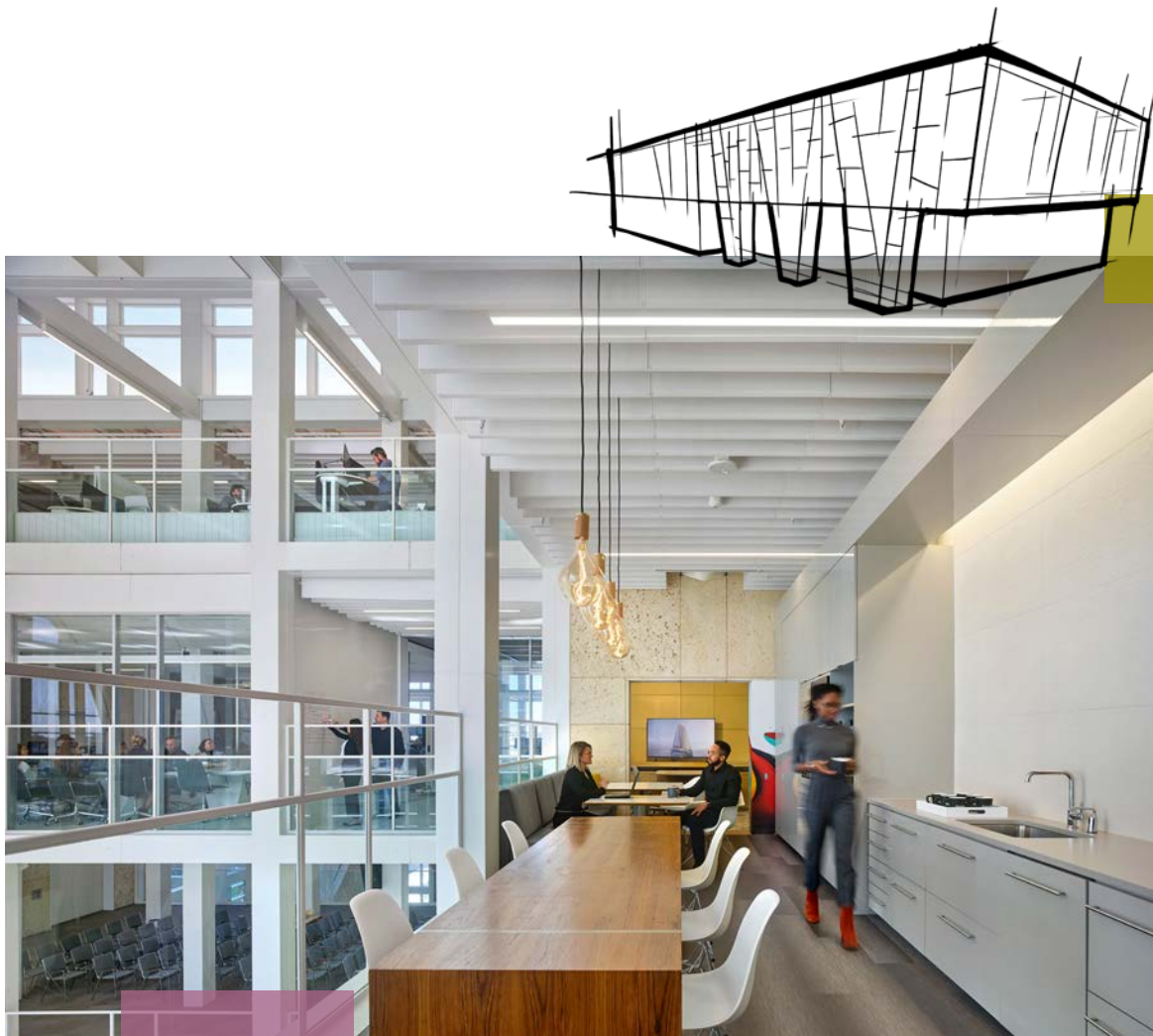
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“Open environments should be private, too,” stated Gensler’s Workplace Survey. “Greater degrees of openness are associated with high performance; but noise, privacy and the ability to focus remain key determinants of workplace effectiveness. A choice-based strategy that provides a variety of spaces and different types of enclosure can reconcile these needs.”

When rating what constitutes the “best” workplaces overall, Gensler’s survey reported “team building and collaboration” is the highest-ranked aspect of a great workplace and “support health and well-being” is the second highest-ranked aspect.

“Although these desires may appear at odds with one another, the best workplaces treat these goals as equal—delivering a variety of spaces that accommodate privacy and focus alongside more open spaces that prioritize connection, collaboration and innovation,” noted Gensler’s survey. “These greater degrees of openness align with behaviors connected to effectiveness, experience and engagement. People working in more open spaces are more likely to report experimenting with new ways of working, taking time to reflect, having fun and getting inspired.”



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