**Want happier, more productive workers? Turn the music on**

Words – 410

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**Listening to music at work can help office workers relax, improve their mood and make them feel happier, according to research from the University of Sheffield's Department of Music.**

Dr Anneli Haake's study, which was recently published in the journal Musicae Scientiae, surveyed 300 people and found that music could fulfil a range of important functions for employees, including providing relief from stress and improving concentration.  
  
The study found that the most common reasons for listening to music at work were to improve mood and relaxation.

Music could also help employees to engage in work tasks, through blocking out distracting noise in the office.

Employees listened to all kinds of music at work with the most popular genres being classical, pop and rock.

Interestingly classical music was not considered more relaxing at work compared to other types of music.  
  
Dr Haake found that new technology has made it easier for employees to listen to their own music at work.

Many employees now have access to music in their offices through MP3 players and via the internet, whereas in the past employers had more control over what music, if any, to broadcast to everyone, for example in factories.

"This change in music access at work, and the fact that employees today can choose their own individual music at any time, was what made me decide to look into the effects of music in offices," said Dr Haake.  
  
However, the survey found that having music playing in the office has its drawbacks too. Loud music can irritate co-workers and headphones can isolate listeners from their team.

"The most important thing is to have control over the music," said Dr Haake.

"If music is forced upon people, the music can be irritating and annoying, and we know from research that office noise can have severe negative effects on employee health, well-being and productivity.

But when employees can have control over when, where and what to listen to, music can clearly bring about real benefits to individual employees, and ultimately to the company."  
  
The research suggests that companies who want happier, more productive staff might do well to invest in a library of CDs, or other music listening solutions.

"There are several options for music listening at work today, and many software solutions allow constructing and sharing of playlists," said Dr Haake.

"We know that listening to your own music makes people happy – and a happy worker is likely to be a more productive one."

**Notes for Editors:** For further information on the study please visit: [Music at Work](http://musicatwork.net/)

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