

CASE STUDY

Plantronics Awareness Day and Expertise Adds Value to Noise Health Promotion Activity in Shell

OVERVIEW

Shell is a global group of energy and petrochemicals companies with around 92,000 employees in more than 70 countries and territories. As one of the world's leading energy companies Shell plays a key role in helping to meet the world's growing energy demand in economically, environmentally and socially responsible ways.

Headquartered in London, Shell employs around 6,500 people in the UK. In the London-based headquarters the company focuses on supply, trading and shipping crude oil worldwide; as well as the manufacture of a range of products with petrochemicals for industrial customers.

PLANTRONICS AWARENESS DAY HELPS SHELL HEALTH IN NOISE HEALTH PROMOTION ACTIVITY

As a global organisation Shell has a long-standing relationship with Plantronics deploying headset solutions throughout the business. Shell Health is the Occupational Health component focusing on the overall well-being of its entire people within all offices and sites. Shell Health London is aware of Plantronics research, development, advice, services and support in understanding the impact and implication of excessive noise exposure for everyone, not only for the personal care and well-being, but also in line with health and safety directives and legislation.

During 2014, Shell Health London instigated an idea for an activity focused on 'noise health

promotion' designed and focused on personal noise exposure and which would work in parallel with the Shell Health policy and diligence for health and safety at work. This activity would help raise awareness and advise all staff on some of the implications of excessive noise level exposure and the level of sound emitted by many of today's technology devices, for example smartphones and tablets when wearing earphones, particularly when worn or used for long periods of time.

Shell Health explained: "We worked in conjunction with Plantronics who supply Shell globally with headsets for the

"Participants were many and varied. The majority are quite young and like so many in their age range use smartphones, earphones etc. not only in their work but also in their leisure time or when travelling to and from work. The health promotion activity fitted perfectly with Shell's Culture of Health".

World-class communications

Shell
shell.co.uk

LOCATION
UK and Global

INDUSTRY
IT Services

SERVICES
A global energy company playing a key role in helping to meet the world's growing energy demand in economically, environmentally and socially responsible ways

- BENEFITS**
- Awareness Day helped increase education and understanding of the risks of noise-induced hearing damage
 - 75.5% people set their stereos at 80 decibels or less
 - 71% saying they would reduce the level of their stereos, particularly when wearing for long time periods
 - 89% would inform family, friends and colleagues about the health risks

workplace. For the noise health promotion activity we wanted to work with Plantronics as we knew they had both the proven knowledge and expertise in areas of noise-level testing, and the health effects of high levels of noise exposure. To support this, Plantronics came into our London offices for an awareness day and brought a special manikin nicknamed "Jo" for this activity. Jo would help us demonstrate and illustrate how we can measure the sound levels experienced in his ear drums and how this translates for a human being and in this case, our Shell staff."

The activity was conducted in Shell's locations in London. A total of forty-nine participants took part from different business areas and represented a 60:40 percentage split between male and female. This provided quite a balanced approach to the insight recorded and results analysed.

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Participants were asked to set their own devices or one supplied to the sound level they would normally use, for example, listening to music. They would then put the earphones onto Jo, who in turn, would read the actual decibel level. The readings were shown on a computer as graphs and bar-charts so that everyone could visualise the exposure very clearly. The level of noise recorded was then discussed and demonstrated with the participant, illustrating what was a safe level or how higher levels could be listened to but for shorter periods of time. Information was also given on noise-induced hearing loss and protection, for example, how to make sure they were using and controlling volume to best effect. The participant was then given a questionnaire to complete to test the understanding of the promotion and its usefulness to them as an individual and in the workplace.

Shell Health considered the awareness day as being both useful and encouraging. The feedback gained from the completed questionnaires provided meaningful insight for noise health, and commented: "Working with Plantronics with their ideas for set-up and provision of Jo close to working areas, Shell Health was able to promote the activity and easily engage with participants to illustrate the risk of sound levels and raise awareness for protection."

THE RESULTS INFORMED PEOPLE ON REDUCING THE RISK OF NOISE-INDUCED DAMAGE

With the noise level results and illustrations, along with the feedback gained from the questionnaires, Shell Health London has also been able to deliver advice that can be shared with the wider audience within Shell.

Shell Health added: "We generated and published a leaflet advising on the risks of noise exposure, with hints & tips on how to avoid it as well as links to health-related organisations to find out more information. With this we could advise on making sure people use good quality earphones to cut out background noise and reduce the need to turn up the volume in the first place. We made recommendations, such as setting the volume to a comfortable level, and how this makes a difference to how long you can listen to music without causing any harm or damage to ears; also to take regular breaks – at least five minutes every hour – to give your ears a rest."

Following the awareness day with Plantronics and the success of the noise health activity, other Shell sites are looking to run similar sessions, for example, in Scotland.

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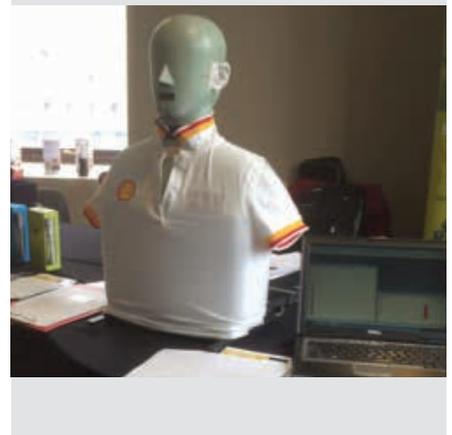
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Jo all set and ready to go for the noise exposure and the measurement of results



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