



PLANTRONICS
SOUND INNOVATION™

Choosing the best direct connect headset solution for your contact center.

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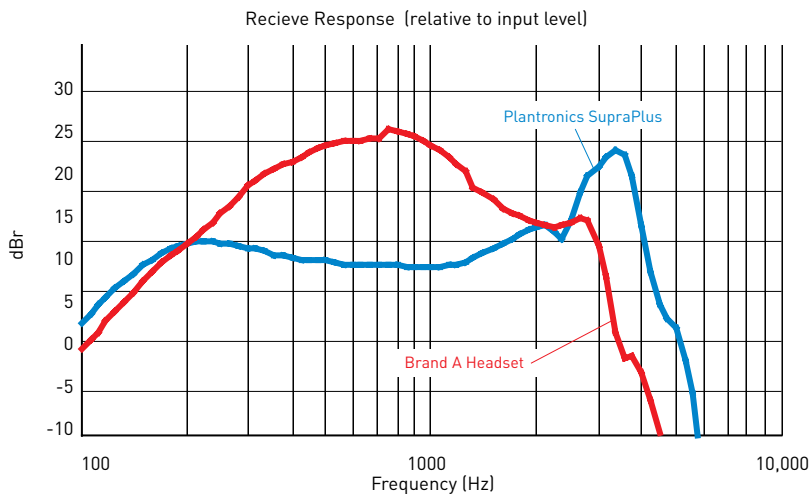
→ ● ● ● → **INTRODUCTION**

In 1961 a pilot in Santa Cruz, California conceived of a small, lightweight communications headset as an alternative to the bulky headphones of the era. Today, headsets have become indispensable tools everywhere from outer space to office space. In busy contact centers and other voice-intensive applications, high-quality headsets can improve operator productivity, increase customer satisfaction, and reduce employee turnover.

However, not all headsets are created equal, and making the right choice is critical because contact centers require headsets with superior comfort, sound innovation and reliability. Additionally, choosing a manufacturer with the proven reliability, service and support is a critical component in getting a good return on your investment.

TAILORED SOUND

Many people assume that, along with advances in other technologies, overall voice quality of telecommunication networks has gradually improved. In fact, with the proliferation of mobile phones, voice over IP, and other network variables, audio quality has become increasingly unreliable, and as a result the critical high-frequency signals in calls can often be lost.



For contact center agents this presents a particular problem, because high frequency loss limits intelligibility and makes the audio sound muffled. The agent listening is prone to repetitions and data input errors, decreasing customer satisfaction and aggravating the agent. Thus, when choosing a direct connect headset it pays to make sure the design will compensate for the loss of high frequencies. This can be tricky because as consumers we have become trained to think of speakers and headphones that emphasize the “bass” as having better audio quality. However, in contact center applications, where intelligibility is critical, an emphasis on the bass range will cause problems such as the agent straining to hear the so-called fricatives—S, F, Z, V sounds—in which most of the speech energy is at the higher frequencies.

This graph shows the frequency response of a Plantronics SupraPlus® headset compared to another major-brand headset—taken from a direct connect headset port at identical volume settings. At most frequencies, the major brand headset will appear to sound louder at the same volume setting, but the SupraPlus will do a considerably better job of providing full intelligibility, by boosting the higher frequencies.

A good headset will have a frequency response curve that compensates for the losses by boosting the “lost” high-frequency signals to produce a clearer call. On the other hand, headsets from other headset manufacturers fail to do this, emphasizing instead a frequency response curve similar to consumer audio equipment. Because of this, Avaya, Cisco, Nortel and other partners have selected Plantronics as their headset standard.

On a high-quality call, the headset with the more bass-like frequency curve may initially sound like the better choice but, in fact, will not deliver the service required by contact center agents. Testing different headsets side-by-side over several shifts with real world calls will demonstrate how the high frequency boost that Plantronics uses to compensate for poorer quality landline and mobile calls—with their diminished initial loudness—will eliminate agent fatigue and improve customer satisfaction.



Plantronics designers create the perfect headset for every ear. A proprietary statistical database comprised of measurements made on the ears of thousands of individuals—of both genders and different ages and ethnicities representative of the world population—aids in the design of comfortable, ergonomic headsets.

RELIABILITY

Another key factor governing the choice of a direct connect headset is reliability. Contact centers are stressful environments where agents can be tough on their equipment, so the reliability of headsets affects uptime, productivity, ROI and daily operating costs.

Plantronics reliability engineers draw on over 40 years of field performance data to develop detailed performance specifications for every headset adjustment and articulation. For example, they designed the headband of the Plantronics SupraPlus headset to withstand 10,000 extension-retraction-extension cycles without deviating from its specified detent holding force.

Additionally, each Plantronics headset undergoes more than 100 tests to ensure it meets the highest standards, while 100% unit testing ensures that the advanced performance designed into Plantronics headsets is delivered consistently in every unit built. Plantronics products are also the only headsets in the world that are manufactured entirely in ISO 9000-certified plants.

COMFORT

It's no secret that comfort is critical to contact center agent productivity and job satisfaction. As a dedicated maker of communication headsets, Plantronics conducts the industry's most comprehensive research into the human ear. The result is headsets with superior comfort—and the enhanced productivity that comes with it.

Comfortable agents are happy agents, and happy agents improve customer satisfaction. The higher morale and lower fatigue associated with using Plantronics direct connect headsets also benefits the bottom line, as the sound of a smiling face on the other end of the line improves customer satisfaction.

THE RIGHT MANUFACTURER

Choosing the right direct connect headset means choosing the right manufacturer. The same heritage that started with a pilot's innovative idea in 1961 traveled all the way to the moon in 1969, when those now famous words were sent back to Earth from a Plantronics headset.

This reputation for world-class innovation and reliability is why the Federal Aviation Administration standardized on Plantronics headsets some 40 years ago to equip air traffic controllers, and why they continue to rely on Plantronics headsets for this critical job today. It's also why key telecommunication equipment manufacturers like Avaya, Cisco, and Nortel Networks work with Plantronics to develop standards for their products. In fact, when you purchase a Plantronics direct connect headset, you can be assured it is optimized for these makers' equipment, because they designed their ports around the industry leader—Plantronics.

Choosing the right manufacturer also ensures continued reliability. Plantronics backs its products with the industry's most extensive network of field support and customer service agents. Comprehensive service programs can also guarantee that in the unlikely event a Plantronics headset fails, we will ship a replacement within 24 hours.

SUMMARY

As the worldwide leader in lightweight, professional-grade headsets, Plantronics offers features and service that other headset makers cannot match. Unlike offerings from generalized audio manufacturers, Plantronics direct connect headsets are specifically designed for the audio environment of contact centers and other call-intensive applications. Plantronics also invests in the research and development required to create products with superior audio quality, comfort and reliability. The result is improved productivity, less operator fatigue, and greater customer satisfaction.

You can also count on Plantronics for superior service and support, which is another key reason why most contact centers around the world rely on Plantronics headsets and accessories.

All of this makes Plantronics direct connect headsets the best return on your investment.

Sound innovation for missions to the moon. And for everyday life on this planet, too.

In 1969, a Plantronics headset carried the historic first words from the moon: "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." Today, we're the headset of choice in mission-critical applications such as air traffic control and 911 dispatch. This history of proven sound innovation is the basis for every product we build—whether it's for work, for home or on the go.

