Rockfon®

Part of the ROCKWOOL Group

ROCKWOOL®'s own ceiling systems enhance its new offices in Ontario

ROCKWOOL Office Building, Milton, Ontario

Not every company that produces building materials has the opportunity to experience those materials in action. The newly built office in Milton, Ontario, brings together four divisions' people and products into one office. Each day, members of the North American ROCKWOOL team gather with their colleagues from ROCKWOOL, GRODAN® and ROCKWOOL Technical Insulation (RTI).

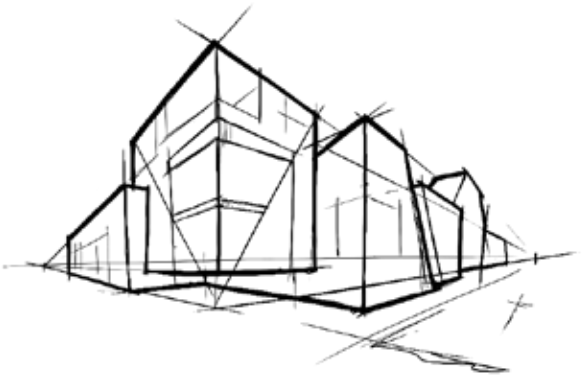
Products in use

- Rockfon Sonar®
- Rockfon Alaska®
- Rockfon® Color-all™
- Rockfon Sonar® dB
- Rockfon® Island™
- Rockfon® Infinity™ Z
- Rockfon® Planar®
- Rockfon® Intaline™ V-Base
- Rockfon® Cubegrid®
- Chicago Metallic® 4000 Tempra™
- Chicago Metallic® 1200
- Chicago Metallic® 4600 Ultraline™

Designed by SRM Architects and Lorelie Ratz, every space in the two-story, 24,000-square-foot office strives to enhance the work environment on a visual, acoustic and energy-efficient level. Demonstrating its commitment to these goals, the building is pursuing LEED® Gold certification from the Canadian Green Building Council.

"Living with these products every day, we truly see, hear and feel how they improve the workplace – our workplace. We more deeply appreciate the comfort, health, safety and environmental qualities that they bring to every building project," says Chris Marshall, Rockfon's vice president of marketing and business development.

He continues, "When you're the owner and building new, you have the opportunity to design a space that best represents your product and company without the constraints of an existing structure. We had a blank canvas, which allowed us to get creative. We used a full range of products, sizes, colors and materials, ceiling systems for open and closed plenum, and feature a breadth of aesthetic options. We want to use this as a living, working showroom."



Collaboration in comfort

"Our new office building brings together seven separate locations, positioning us directly across the highway from ROCKWOOL's factory in Milton, Ontario," explains Marshall. "All of the previous locations were in the same geographic area, but there are obvious cost savings and efficiencies gained by being in a combined space. Collaboration is easy when everyone is under one roof."

Combined in one place for the first time, the teams potentially faced a busier, more distracting work environment in their new, roomier space. Marshall acknowledges, "More people typically means more noise. With thoughtful design, smart construction and high-performance products positioned properly, we can manage the acoustic experience for comfort and productivity."

Rockfon worked hand-in-glove with the architect and the interior designer to develop a contemporary office plan that plays to the strengths of its products' performance and aesthetics. "The layout is based on a traditional format, with closed offices around the perimeter and open offices on the interior," observes Ratz. The exceptional aspect of this layout is that each area's ceiling could be specified to exacting requirements, depending on the room's use, each performing in its ideal environment.

"Their office is a showpiece for their products, and we incorporated as many varieties as possible, while still making it a cohesive space," describes Ratz. "They now have a building they can use as a working showroom that gives their staff a comfortable work environment and enables them to show clients the difference Rockfon products can make."

From a design standpoint, Ratz appreciated the visual impact of Rockfon's attractive, varied ceiling products. She created a cohesive look and feel across the building, integrating the ceilings with lighting, furniture and finishes. The architects also noted that in this project, the ceiling took an unusual front-and-center role in the building's final aesthetics, becoming a focal point and even adding a dramatic element to some of the rooms.

Ryan Hicks, project manager, SRM Architects, elaborates, "From an architectural point of view, there is more of a design aspect to Rockfon's products than most acoustical ceiling panels. They add a very polished, elegant finish to the space, and we were able to achieve certain looks that I'm not sure you'd be able to do with a traditional system. The main lobby, for instance, is quite striking, with linear lighting alternating with the panels. They are definitely a unique product and not just another iteration of the standard ceiling system."

This was not SRM's first encounter with Rockfon's products. "We actually have them in part of our own offices, so I came to the project with an appreciation for their ceiling products," shares Hicks. "They add a lot of dimension to a space, they are very attractive. It was exciting to work with the company on their own offices and use their products."

Tight timelines

From the initial concept through completed construction, the design-build team partnered with Rockfon to incorporate a full range of its ceiling systems throughout the building, while staying on schedule and on budget.

Involved early in the project's development, Canaan Construction Inc. installed the drywall and ceiling systems. This was their crew's first experience with Rockfon's ceiling systems. Because Rockfon's stone wool ceiling panels are humidity-resistant, they could be installed before the building was weather-tight, which expedited the construction timeline. Construction began in May 2014 and was substantially completed in December 2014.

SRM's Hicks notes that the installation method for Rockfon's products also differs slightly from other ceiling systems. "The concealed system is new to some contractors, so we worked closely with the installation teams to make sure they had the know-how needed. Rockfon provided great support and the end result is well worth it."

"We love it," says Bruce Wilbee, Canaan's project manager. "It cut well and has a nice edge. It was easy to work with and looks good. I hope we have more opportunities to work with Rockfon's products on future projects."

"More people typically means more noise. With thoughtful design, smart construction and high-performance products positioned properly, we can manage the acoustic experience for comfort and productivity."

Fine-tuned functionality

SRM Architects designed a floor plan that would direct foot traffic away from workspaces and provide separate greeting, meeting and project spaces. Rockfon's extensive product line enabled the architects and designers to evaluate the location, light, furnishings and performance needs of each room and specify ceiling systems calibrated to give the occupants their best possible environment.

"In developing our new offices, we had a systematic approach," states Rockfon's Marshall. "We considered the performance of the whole room with respect to its function, its position within the building and its connection to adjacent rooms. This perspective allowed us to consider the best design options for carrying natural light into the building's core, as well as for managing noise within and between adjacent rooms."

As examples, Marshall says, "We were able to use ceiling panels with a very high light reflectance coupled with glass partition walls to help direct the natural light from the building's exterior through the closed office along the perimeter and into the open offices at the center of the floor plan. We also were able to specify that the walls go all the way to the roof deck, which helps isolate noise and reduce its transmission from room-to-room and floor-to-floor."

To inhibit office noise from traveling through an open space and disturbing people, a highly sound absorptive ceiling typically is required. Due to its open porous structure, stone wool is a high-performing, sound-absorptive material used to manufacture Rockfon ceiling panels, baffles and islands and imbued with excellent noise reduction capabilities.

Rockfon's ceiling panels and systems take a variety of forms, from a traditional wall-to-wall grid to floating islands or clouds, baffles, atypical sizes, color variations and creative combinations. Ratz was able to select from this breadth ceiling products to optimize aesthetics and acoustics for the office lobby, classrooms, private offices and community spaces.

"We considered the performance of the whole room with respect to its function, its position within the building and its connection to adjacent rooms. This perspective allowed us to consider the best design options for carrying natural light into the building's core, as well as for managing noise within and between adjacent rooms."

In nearly all of the private, closed offices, Rockfon Sonar dB 2-by-4-foot panels with a square tegular narrow edge are installed in Chicago Metallic 4600 Ultraline 9/16-inch suspension system. Sonar dB offers an elegant, lightly textured surface, high sound absorption and minimizes sound transfer between adjacent spaces to enhance privacy.

"Sonar dB has a very high acoustic performance, a good aesthetic and is a good value, economically speaking," says Ratz. "Most of the meeting rooms have 2-by-2 Sonar dB panels with concealed grid. This gives it a sleek, monolithic look with no visible grid system. It also has a higher acoustic performance than the open office areas, which is especially important in the video conference room."

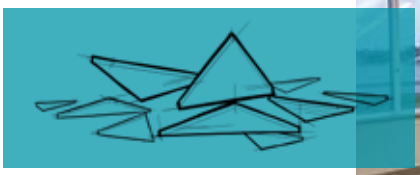
Marshall adds, "In rooms or areas where small to large groups of people gather to hear a presentation or videoconference with colleagues on another continent, efficient communication can only be accomplished with low reverberance, lack of echoes and high speech intelligibility. In other words, sound control with high-performing, sound-absorptive ceilings. Rockfon ceiling solutions reach the highest class in sound absorption for optimum speech intelligibility."

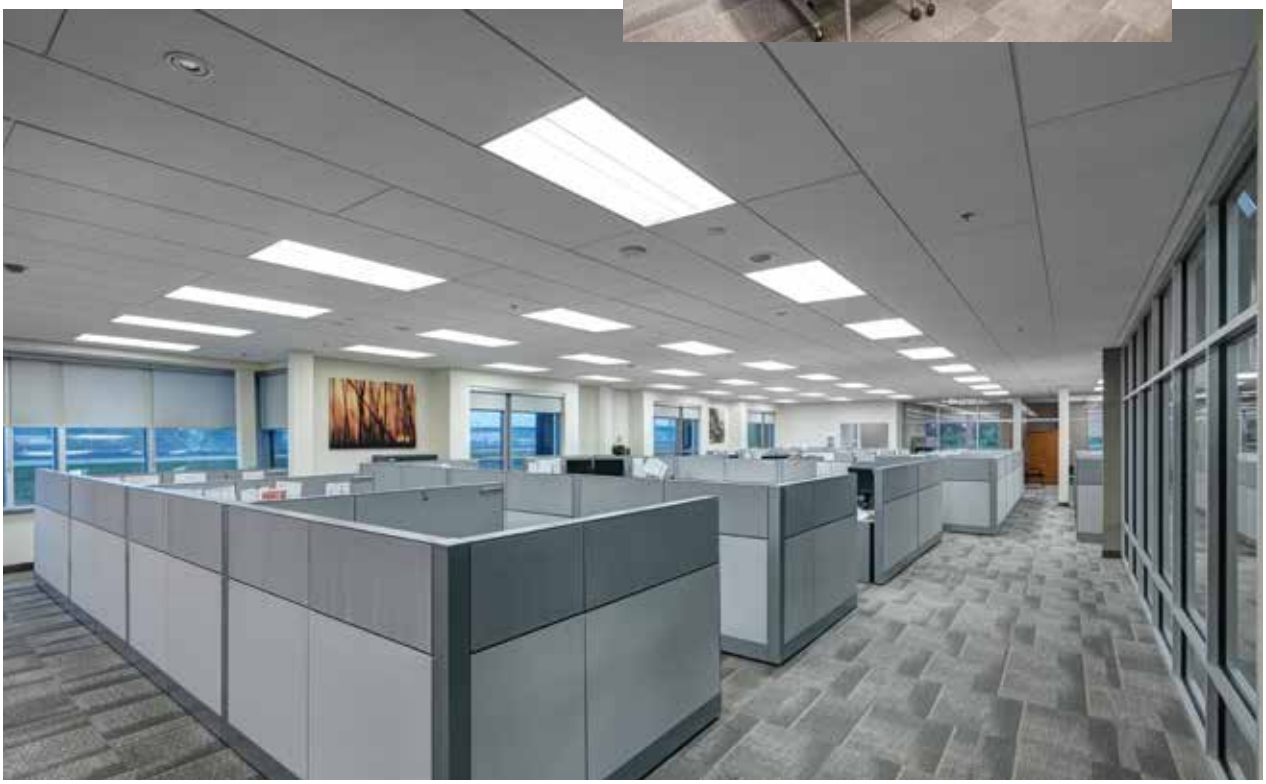
Distinctive designs

Along with acoustic performance, Rockfon's ceiling systems also enhance the office's contemporary design. The president's private office features Rockfon Sonar 1-by-6-foot panels set in a staggered, brickwork pattern for distinctive, distinguished look.

Creating a sense of unity, the ceiling design continues the rectangular format between the closed and open workspaces. Varying from the other closed offices' 2-by-4-foot ceiling panels, a 2-by-8-foot panel appears in the open plan office area. The ceilings in these areas incorporate both a Chicago Metallic 4000 Tempra 9/16-inch exposed suspension system and a 4600 Ultraline 1/8-inch reveal Bolt Slot system.

"A 2-by-4 grid is the type of look that you will find in many office spaces," comments Ratz. "We have altered that standard format in the open office area by using 2-by-8 panels with an exposed grid, in a staggered pattern. It's still typical of an office, but uses a non-typical size. It's nice to see something different and still works very well with the 2-by-4 recessed lighting."





Clouds, color, Cubegrid

Lighting also was key in making the reception area a welcoming space. Presenting an impressive introduction, Rockfon Alaska 2-by-2-foot panels are installed in 4000 Tempra 9/16-inch exposed suspension system. Infinity perimeter trim surrounds sections of the panels and grid to present a neatly finished edge. Above the reception's waiting area, Rockfon Island 4-by-8-foot frameless, sound-absorbing, stone wool ceiling products create a cloud-like design feature within this exposed structure ceiling area.

"The Alaska panels convey a cool elegance with a smooth surface that enhances and reflects the light. The custom Islands are positioned perfectly to allow the pendant lighting to delicately drop between them," praises Marshall.

In the "Escarpment" large group training room, Rockfon Island products and Alaska ceiling tiles formed into clouds to deliver the acoustic performance essential to training. They assist in controlling ambient sound level, improving speech intelligibility and preventing echoes.

Floating in a dramatic display, the training room's islands and clouds are finished in different colors and hung at different elevations to create a three-dimension, asymmetrical array against a recessed dark background composed of Rockfon Color-all panels in Clay. Chicago Metallic 1200 15/16-inch concealed suspension system supports the stone wool panels, complemented by a variety of Rockfon Infinity Z Razor 6- and 10-inch perimeter trims finished in Satin Silver. "It's intended to showcase the combination of multiple systems in a single room," says Ratz.

Understated in comparison to the training room, the boardroom also uses Color-all Clay panels and Islands for privacy and comfort. "The board room is one of my favorite spaces with its dark, earthy gray ceiling panels and suspended white islands," shares Marshall. "Throughout the office, our palette of clay, grays, white and beiges tie everything together with the occasional pop of color."

In the second floor cafe, the Color-all ceiling panels' Chili color and bright white Sonar panels match with the corporate brand colors of ROCKWOOL, an affiliate company to Rockfon. In the main cafeteria, where employees from all four affiliated companies gather, Rockfon Intaline 4-inch V-Base metal baffles finished in Satin Silver give the room a focal point that seems to raise the height of the ceiling by drawing the eye upward.

The majority of the cafeteria's ceiling showcases the same white Sonar panels as the cafe, as installed in 4600 Ultraline 9/16-inch suspension system. Rockfon Cubegrid metal ceiling systems, finished in black, conceal portions of the cafeteria's plenum.

The atrium also features Rockfon specialty metal ceiling panels. Here, Planar 4-inch square-edge linear planks finished in Satin Silver crown the space. Filler strips were installed between the planks to enhance visual interest and minimize maintenance.

"Throughout the office, our palette of clay, grays, white and beiges tie everything together with the occasional pop of color."

Green for gold

Rockfon's metal ceiling panels and suspension systems can be specified with recycled content, contain no reportable volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the finished products, and are 100 percent recyclable at the end of their lifecycle. Rockfon's stone wool ceiling products also are made with up to 42 percent recycled material. The Canadian Green Building Council's LEED scorecard recognizes these environmental benefits under Materials and Resources for recycled content and regional materials.

Along with recycled content, LEED criteria also acknowledge the environmental and health benefits associated with acoustic comfort, light reflectance, energy-efficiency, indoor air quality (IAQ) and durability. Stone wool outlasts most typical building materials, including steel, when subjected to fire. It withstands temperatures up to 2150°F (1177°C). It does not melt, burn or create significant smoke, which improves overall fire safety and limits building damage.

Further protecting workers' health and safety, Rockfon's stone wool ceiling panels help improve IAQ in offices. Stone wool offers no nutritional value, making it naturally resistant to harmful bacteria and molds that cause skin infections, pneumonia and other airborne illnesses. Rockfon's extensive portfolio of stone wool acoustic ceiling solutions has earned UL® Environment's GREENGUARD Gold Certification for low-emitting products.

"The health benefits of improved IAQ and increased natural light in the workplace include higher productivity and fewer lost workdays, as well as a more positive morale," says Marshall. "Compared with traditional, porous-surface acoustic ceiling panels that absorb and trap light, the surfaces of Rockfon's ceiling panels are exceptionally smooth. Extending the amount of natural daylight available across the building minimizes demand on electrical lighting, lowers potential emissions, preserves diminishing natural resources and reduces energy cost for us as the building owner."

Rockfon's new offices are calculated to perform with an energy target of <100 ekWh per square meter, which is approximately 75 percent better than a typical Canadian office building.

"As the owner and the occupant, we are fortunate to have a long-term perspective with consideration to wanting what's best for the people who work in the office and for the community around us," adds Marshall. "We're proud to provide our employees with exceptional comfort, health and safety. It's a genuine pleasure to welcome visitors to a building where they can see how impressive our products look and experience how they perform. We are fully living our brand promise to 'create and protect' every day we come to work."

Find out more by visiting **www.Rockfon.com**