

# Fine-tuned office space for wellness and collaboration

Anthem Technology Center  
Atlanta, Georgia



Anthem Technology Center's new LEED Silver-certified, 21-story, Class A, build-to-suit office tower in Midtown, Atlanta, serves as a hub for approximately 3,000 professionals dedicated to creating new capabilities that will enhance the consumer health care experience. The 352,000-square-foot office is 100% leased to Anthem, Inc., which operates Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia.

## Products in use

- Rockfon Sonar®
- Chicago Metallic® 4000 Tempra™
- Rockfon® Infinity™

Developed by Portman Holdings, the building's exterior was designed by Portman Architects and its interiors by Nelson Architects. The design team selected Rockfon ceiling systems as the basis of design for the majority of Anthem's office ceilings. Rockfon's combination of stone wool panels with metal suspension grid and perimeter trim provided the design flexibility, acoustic optimization and sustainable attributes required for the high-tech, highly collaborative setting.

The office tower's interior design encourages employee wellness and impromptu interactions. A double-height central atrium with staircase connects every two levels. Informal gathering areas and formal conference rooms promote group collaboration within the largely open floorplan. Amenities are provided on the 8th and 16th floors with dining options, a catering/prep kitchen to support hosted events, fitness centers, outdoor patios and indoor game rooms.

Adding to the interiors' openness, the office ceiling designs seem to float above the spacious floorplans. Conveying the desired appearance, Rockfon Sonar® stone wool ceiling panels feature an elegant, lightly textured, white surface. The 9/16-inch exposed Chicago Metallic® 4000 Tempra™ suspension system defines the visible grid pattern and showcases the square tegular narrow edge profile. Enhancing the sense of buoyancy, the ceiling system is framed in Rockfon® Infinity™ 4-inch perimeter trim.

Respecting the variety of individual workstyles and tasks, private offices and quiet nooks designate separate areas for concentration and one-on-one conversations. Optimized acoustics was an important consideration within this interconnected office environment. Nelson and Newcomb & Boyd guided the acoustic performance requirements throughout the interiors.



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To ensure the best sound experience and productive workspace for Anthem's associates, a sound-absorbing ceiling system with a high Noise Reduction Coefficient (NRC) was specified. Rockfon Sonar acoustic stone wool ceiling panels deliver a high NRC of 0.95. "Many acoustic standards require or recommend that ceilings be minimum NRC 0.90. In group workspaces where people are talking and noise levels and distractions are potentially high, a ceiling NRC over 0.90 is very important," explained Rockfon's acoustic specialist, Gary Madaras, PhD.

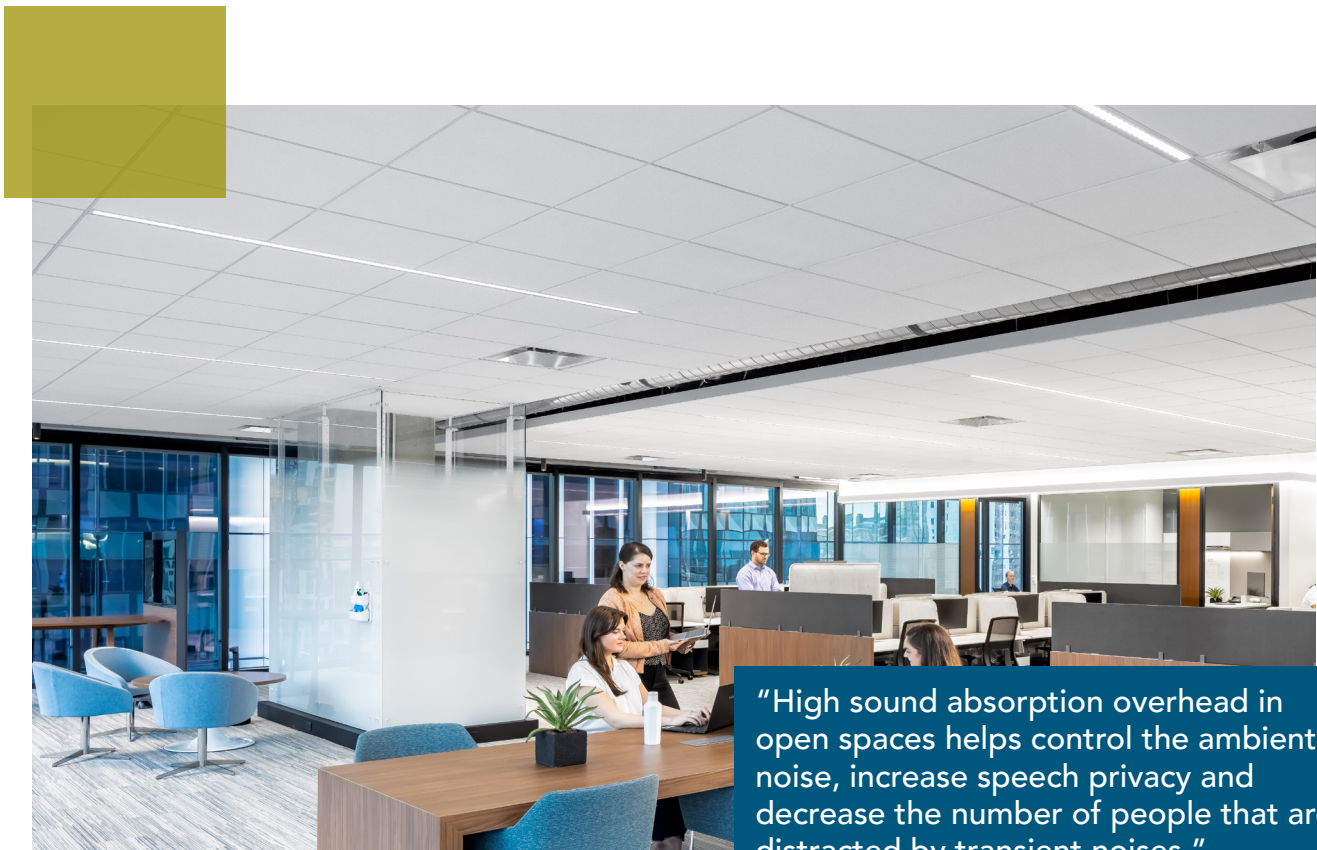
He continued, "High sound absorption overhead in open spaces helps control the ambient noise, increase speech privacy and decrease the number of people that are distracted by transient noises. In enclosed rooms, it prevents excessive reverberance. This increases speech intelligibility."

"Performance is off the charts, noise reduction is phenomenal and it looks beautiful, too.," praised Carlo Grohovac, Rockfon's district sales manager.

Acoustic comfort is an essential characteristic in designing spaces that support wellness, health and sustainability. In Dec. 2020, the U.S. Green Building Council awarded Anthem Technology Center a Silver certification for LEED v4 Building Design +C: Core and Shell. Certification also is in progress for LEED v4 ID+C: Commercial Interiors.

Supporting LEED v4 ID+C criteria, Rockfon's three-step approach to optimized acoustics recommends:

1. Selecting the appropriate NRC rating for ceiling panels, absorbing sound and controlling reverberation and noise.
2. Selecting the appropriate sound transmission class rating for wall and floor-to-ceiling assemblies, preventing noise transfer between rooms using full-height walls.
3. Selecting the proper background sound levels, masking annoying or distracting noise.



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Along with acoustic performance, Rockfon's ceiling systems support sustainability by maximizing the ample Atlanta sunshine radiating through the floor-to-ceiling windows with views overlooking the city. Rockfon Sonar panels' white surface reflects up to 85% of light, extending the daylight more deeply into the office's core. Relying on more natural light reduces the building's electrical and HVAC loads, energy use, and the associated emissions and costs.

Supplementing Anthem Technology Center's natural lighting, Rockfon worked closely with the ceiling design and installation team to accommodate 220 LED light fixtures. These continuous flush-mounted, linear fixtures ranged in length from 4 to 26 feet.

"Basically, our technical services team had to custom-build a system around each light," explained Grohovac. "These long linear lights were carefully positioned in the middle of the ceiling grid layout. Our standard 2-by-2-foot Sonar panels were custom-sized to 22.5-by-24-inch sizes to flank the light fixtures. The fixtures themselves are held up by two main runners of our Temptra suspension system. These are yoked together with our custom bridging brackets to stabilize the grid and support the fixtures."

The ceilings conceal the electrical, security and air exchange systems. Contributing to healthy indoor air quality and LEED criteria, Rockfon's acoustic stone wool ceiling panels are GREENGUARD Gold certification for low-VOC emission. Both the panels and the metal suspension system are manufactured with recycled content and are inherently resistant to mold, mildew or other potentially harmful microorganisms. Easy to clean and maintain, Rockfon's stone wool ceiling panels have a 30-year limited warranty.

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"The systems were engineered to go together with ease and achieve the precise requirements," added Grohovac. "The job turned out beautifully!"

The new Anthem Technology Center replaced a 1970s two-story building. A groundbreaking event was held in Feb. 2018 and the project was completed as scheduled in Spring of 2020. Total construction costs were estimated at \$150 million.



"The vision for the Anthem Technology Center is the product of a successfully coordinated effort of client aspiration, entrepreneurial spirit, design inspiration and contractor pragmatism," remarked Pierluca Maffey, OAR, Int. Associate AIA, former principal and vice president of design at Portman Architects.

Anthem Technology Center has been honored with awards from The Construction Management Association of America's South Atlantic Chapter, ENR Southeast "Best Projects" and NAIOP Georgia.

The completed project improves the area's business capacity, capabilities and amenities to attract and retain talented people to the community. Anthem's new office building is conveniently located near two MARTA rail stations, several restaurants and entertainment centers including The Fox Theatre.

"The progressive spirit of Midtown is carrying our city forward," remarked Jack Portman, FAIA, the late chairman and CEO of Portman Architects. "It is exciting to play a such a major role in this next chapter of Atlanta's growth."

Portman Architects concluded, "Design thinking can help address critical issues within the city, and can stimulate economic growth, improve the built environment, and create new goods and services. Simultaneously, the efficiency of local architecture and development projects has been optimized to further enhance people's lives."



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