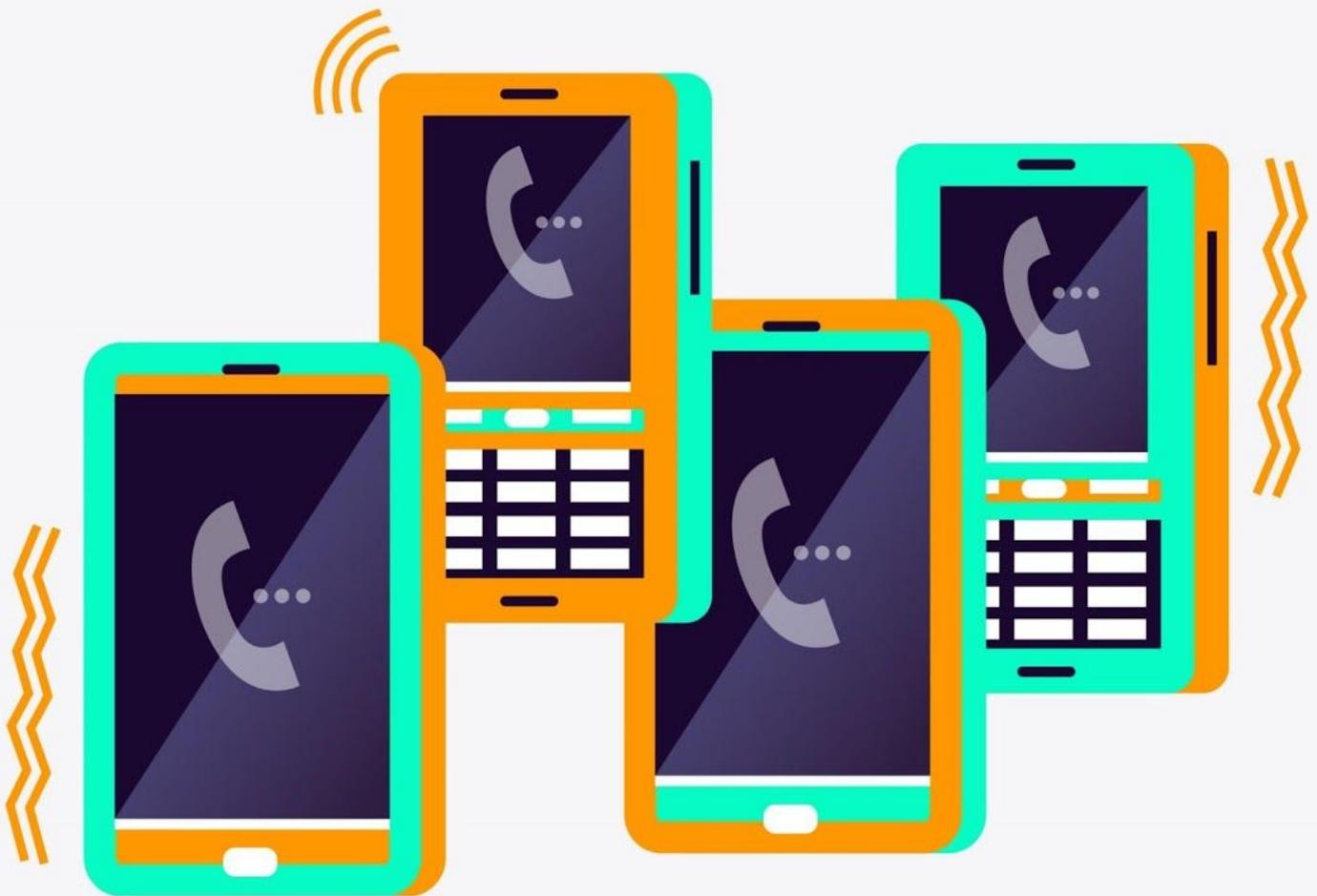




# CALL CENTER HEADSET REVIEWS



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# 1 Abstract

The purpose of this resource is to compare and organize information about the leading [call center headsets](#) that are available for purchase. These headsets are utilized in call centers and offices to provide hands free operation and crystal-clear communication.

There are hundreds of available headsets (Sennheiser alone makes dozens), which means there are ample choices when it comes to equipping a call center with these units.

## 2 What Exactly Are Call Center Headsets?

Headsets are headphones that have been combined with a microphone and come in two main variants: single or dual ear. This device gives the exact same functionality of a speakerphone but with superior call quality. It was designed to allow call center employees to be able to utilize their hands while talking on the phone. Ergonomics have been kept in mind as the headsets stop individuals from having to cradle the device in their neck.

Originally developed in 1910 at Stanford University, the inventor was utterly unsuccessful at selling the headsets to anyone and it wasn't until WWI that the US Army purchased 100 for their pilots. Later Plantronics, a popular headset manufacturer still around today, was founded by two pilots who wanted to create headsets that were light and comfortable for pilots to use. As call centers became popular, the demand for headsets increased until they became readily available at both the consumer and business levels.

It is normal for most headsets to have only a single speaker driver, though some have drivers for each individual ear. If a headset only has one earpiece, it is known as a monaural headset. These are useful because they allow one ear to be free and allow an individual to interact and be aware of what's going on around them. Since the telephone uses a mono signal, it is helpful if there are two earpieces for software based call centers that utilize stereo sound.

The microphone is normally located externally and is placed close to the speaker's mouth for clarity. Some headsets use an internal design, placing the microphone near the earpiece, where a tube carries sound to the mic.

Advanced headsets make use of noise cancelling technology. A call center is typically a very noisy place and chatter can be transmitted to the person calling – not very professional and not great for the person on the other end trying to understand what the call center employee is trying to say.

A modern trend in call center headsets is wireless technology allowing for cordless operation. The most common standard is the DECT, which uses the 1.88 to 1.90 GHz (or 1.92 – 1.93 GHz in the US). Other standards include the popular 2.4 GHz and Bluetooth.

### 3 How to Select a Call Center Headset

Selecting which call center headset to purchase is not particularly difficult though there are several things you should keep in mind:

- How much do you want to pay per headset?
- There is a correlation between the amount you pay and the quality you get, especially in headsets with wires. Where is your value point?
- How long of a cable do you need per headset or is wireless the better choice?
- How much padding should each headset have?
- Does it need two speakers or just one?
- Will the device be used just for call centers or also for listening to music?

Be certain to keep these questions in mind as you consider the many available headsets. Be sure to take the time to prepare a formal document describing your needs, which can then be matched against our comparison chart. If you're unfamiliar with the language used to describe headsets, we've included the definitions of common terms below.

#### 3.1 Standard Features of Call Center Headsets

The vast majority of call center headsets have some kind of noise cancelling technology in them (a necessity in the average crowded call center). Most of them are quite durable and they all come in some variant of single or dual earpiece.

You'll be able to choose whether you want a wired or wireless headset. No manufacturer we compared makes cables under 3 feet and the wireless signal is typically strong enough to cover the entire floor of an office building, especially when placed centrally.

#### 3.2 Definitions

Noise cancelling – A technology used in microphones to reduce background noise transmitted to individuals on the other end of the line

Bluetooth – A popular wireless standard with a shorter range

Cable Length – Headsets with cables come in a variety of lengths, it's important to select a headset with a long enough cable for your uses.

Distortion – The amount of loss in the sound

Frequency – Short for frequency response, is a measure of the range of sound outputted. A higher frequency gives more realistic and detailed sound.

Comfort Features – Some headsets have a lot of foam and padding, others have none at all.

Durability Rating – Not all headsets are created equally, some are not nearly as durable. On the matrix, durability is rated out of five as relative to other headsets – a low rank doesn't mean low durability, just less durable than the competition.

Single or Dual Earpiece – Headsets come in two main types, single and dual. Dual is your standard pair of headphones while single only has only one earpiece.

### **3.3 Headset Models**

#### **3.3.1 Sennheiser CC510**

*Pros*

Extremely durable, provides excellent sound and is comfortable to wear

*Cons*

Cord only 1 m long

*Conclusion*

Sennheiser has a reputation for providing top quality headphones. The CC510 was specifically created for call centers – when you think of the standard call center headset, this is it.

This device has numerous advanced features. With ActiveGard technology to protect against acoustic bursts, a noise cancelling mic, and ergonomic features, this unit should be heavily considered for a call center. Highly recommended.

#### **3.3.2 Sennheiser DW Pro 2**

*Pros*

Wireless, very comfortable

*Cons*

This premium quality headset must be well cared for

*Conclusion*

The DW Pro 2 was built for call centers that operate in noisy environments and utilizes wireless technology. Built to be extremely reliable, this wireless headset is both comfortable to wear and easy to use.

Packed with technology and a battery that lasts through 8 or 12 hours of talk time (depending on the mode selected), this device is exceptional. Even if the battery should die, it can be charged up to 50% in only 20 minutes. Highly recommend for firms that could take advantage of wireless technology.

### **3.3.3 Sennheiser SH230**

#### *Pros*

This entry-level headset provides good quality sound

#### *Cons*

Entry level has minimum comfort, not particularly durable with the thin metal band

#### *Conclusion*

This is the entry-level headset from Sennheiser and compared to others, it shows. With minimal amounts of technology and comfort this device should only be utilized for those call centers who want to spend as little as possible on headsets – but keep in mind you might be replacing these more often.

Not particularly comfortable and not as durable as other headsets, we'd recommend passing on this item unless cost is the only thing that matters to you.

### **3.3.4 Plantronics EncorePro**

#### *Pros*

Thick padding on ears, noise-cancelling mic, comes in single or dual earpiece models

#### *Cons*

Very pricey for what you get

#### *Conclusion*

The EncorePro was created to be as comfortable as possible. Operating on wideband audio for clear conversations, there is a noise cancelling mic and a reinforced headband.

Of particular note is the amount of plushness on the ear pads and the quick disconnect cord, which allows employees to walk away from their phones without having to remove the headset. Final verdict, a little pricey for what you get.

### **3.3.5 Plantronics Mirage**

#### *Pros*

Extremely lightweight and comfortably hangs on a single ear

#### *Cons*

Some individuals will not appreciate that this headset hangs on the ear as opposed to going over the head. Very pricey.

#### *Conclusion*

The Mirage by Plantronics hangs off a single ear (think of a Bluetooth earpiece that sets up with mobile phones, only with a wire). This extremely light headset has a speaker and a microphone and your choice of a noise-cancelling mic or a noise tube. The cable quickly disconnects to increase freedom of movement.

As long as your users won't have a problem with the fact that this earpiece hangs from the ear, this piece is recommended. That said it is extremely expensive for what you get – you can likely find a more cost effective solution.

### **3.3.6 Plantronics CS500**

#### *Pros*

Exceptional wireless signal strength

#### *Cons*

Extremely costly

#### *Conclusion*

The big issue with Plantronics is that the value is normally not there. They make good products don't get us wrong, the issue is just that they're extremely pricey for what you get. Other manufacturers provide the same technical specs at a drastically lower price. The CS500 does look very nice and the sound is of high quality. The bottom line is that because of the high price, we recommend avoiding it.

### **3.3.7 Logitech H330**

#### *Pros*

Stereo sound can be used for music and movies, much higher frequency response than Sennheiser headsets.

*Cons*

USB connection will not be compliant with all call center configurations

*Conclusion*

Many modern call centers link directly to computers which means you have the freedom to use any kind of headset you desire. Logitech makes a wide range of quality products, including the H330 which connects via USB. Recommended as an entry level USB headset.

**3.3.8 Logitech H540**

*Pros*

Volume controls on the earpiece, stereo sound

*Cons*

USB connection will not be compliant with all call centers

*Conclusion*

This highly comfortable USB headset will be perfect for employees who work at PCs. With on ear controls and detailed stereo sound, this device comes highly recommended.

There are no drivers required with this device so using it is as simple as taking it out of the package and connecting it to a computer.

**3.3.9 Jabra GN9120**

*Pros*

Excellent noise reduction, wireless range of up to 150 meters, allows for secure conversations

*Cons*

Not as durable as other headsets

*Conclusion*

Jabra has been steadily building a name for themselves with their high quality products. The GN9120 has a very large wireless range of 150m and comes in multiple different variants. With

multi-unit conferencing available plus security features that enable secure calls, this headset is of the highest quality. A noise reduction microphone is optional. Highly recommended.

### **3.3.10 Jabra Pro 9400**

#### *Pros*

Packed with technology, comes with a touch screen that enables easy call control

#### *Cons*

Not as durable as some other manufacturers

#### *Conclusion*

This is the cream of the crop when it comes to headsets. With touch screen control (it sits on the desk), and technology that makes for great sound, this device is amazing. You're able to link multiple phones together (including a cell phone) and your purchase is future-proof – there will be constant upgrades available through Jabra PC Suite.

With a massive range of 150 meters and many different headsets available for you to choose from, nothing beats this device. Our only concern is that the over the headpiece is manufactured from a slim metal band. While no doubt it can take some damage, there are more durable options available.



## 4 Call Center Headset Matrix

	<b>Sennheiser CC510</b>	<b>Sennheiser DW Pro 2</b>	<b>Sennheiser SH230</b>	<b>Plantronics EncorePro</b>	<b>Plantronics Mirage</b>
<b>Noise Cancelling Mic</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Optional
<b>Cable Length</b>	1 m	Wireless	1 m	10 feet	3 feet
<b>Distortion</b>	Under 1%	Unlisted	Under 1%	Unlisted	Unlisted
<b>Frequency</b>	300 Hz - 3.400 Hz	Unlisted	300 Hz - 3.400 Hz	Unlisted	Unlisted
<b>Comfort Features</b>	Yes	Yes	Bare minimum	Yes	No
<b>Durability Rating (of 5)</b>	5	4	2	4	3
<b>Single or Dual Earpiece</b>	Single	Dual	Single	Both available	Single, hangs on ear

	<b>Plantronics CS500 (on ear edition)</b>	<b>Logitech H330</b>	<b>Logitech H540</b>	<b>Jabra GN9120</b>	<b>Jabra Pro 9400</b>
<b>Noise Cancelling Mic</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Optional	Yes
<b>Cable Length</b>	Wireless	6.5 feet	6.15 feet	Wireless	Wireless
<b>Distortion</b>	Unlisted	Unlisted	Unlisted	Unlisted	Unlisted
<b>Frequency</b>	Unlisted	50 Hz to 15 kHz	20 Hz to 20 kHz	Unlisted	Unlisted
<b>Comfort Features</b>	No	Bare minimum	Yes	Bare minimum	Bare minimum
<b>Durability Rating (of 5)</b>	4	3	4	2	2
<b>Single or Dual Earpiece</b>	Single, hangs on ear	Dual, stereo sound	Dual, stereo sound	Both available	Both available