

## Tips for great conference calls

Conference calling is an invaluable tool, especially when it comes to uniting an international team to get the job done. Although much advancement has been made in internet and video conferencing, the phone remains the most simple, inexpensive, and readily available means of connecting a scattered team.

Use this helpful guide to make your next conference call successful. Just follow these easy steps.

### 1 Keep it quiet

Conference calls can be busy and loud, even without extra background noise. Make your teleconferencing in a quiet room, with the doors and windows closed. Avoid music, air conditioning vents, hallway chatter, paper rustling, and keyboard tapping. If you can, turn off your call waiting service temporarily, to avoid alerts and interruptions.

### 2 Choose a call leader.

Every meeting needs a designated leader, and an online meeting is no exception. Choose one call participant, perhaps the conference call host or a senior member, to set the agenda, organize the speakers, and to keep a handle on noise and chaos that might occur during the conferencing.

### 3 Introduce yourself when you join the conference.

Even colleagues and friends may have a hard time recognizing your voice on the phone. Be sure to clearly state your name as soon as you arrive in the virtual conference room. After that, keep prefacing your contributions to the discussion with a very brief intro, "This is [your name]...", until the other call participants become familiar with your voice.



#### 4 Ask clear, direct questions

In face to face meetings, you can sometimes get your answer with a nod or a look. On an online meeting, however, you must be very specific. Speak to other conference participants by name, and ask for direct answers, such as “Joe, would you like to move forward with this?” Or “Susan, do you have something to add?”

#### 5 Don't speak over others

Even if the statement you want to make is of the utmost importance, always wait your turn to speak. On a teleconferencing meeting, as in face-to-face conversation, interrupting is considered rude and disrespectful. Also, when you speak over someone on the phone, words become garbled easily, and no one is heard.

#### 6 Stick to the agenda?

Your conference call is a meeting, like any other meeting. There is probably a list of topics that need to be discussed, so don't get sidetracked by timewasters. If you are hosting the conference call, be sure to send the agenda to all of the invitees beforehand, so that everyone can come to the call prepared to get the job done.

#### 7 Address each person in turn.

Direct your statements to a specific person, and ask simple, clear questions. If you ask a general question of the entire group, you are unlikely to get a useful answer. Instead ask one person at a time for a response, and then move to the next person, in turn

#### 8 Use the administrative controls available to you as the host.

Give all of your conferencing invitees the regular participant access code, and keep the conference administrative code for yourself. This enables you to use keypad shortcuts to mute/unmute participants and control call volumes. Also, once all participants have joined the online meeting, you can lock the virtual conference room, to avoid further interruption

Read more about [video conference vs. audio conference call service](#)

