

Advantages and Disadvantages of Conference Calling

As businesses evaluate the type of conference calling that is right for them they will need to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each. In this article we will evaluate and compare the three major types of conference calls including audio, web, and video conferencing.

The biggest advantage, for many companies, in choosing audio or web conferencing over video conferencing is the cost. Audio conferencing tends to be the cheapest. Virtually the only costs involved when choosing audio conferencing is the cost of a telephone and then the charge of a long distance call. Many companies already have phones with a built-in speakerphone and if not they can be purchased for as little as \$100.

However there are disadvantages in choosing audio conferencing as well. The first distinct disadvantage is that businesses lose personal relations when all they hear is a colleague's voice. Jokes and remarks can be taken the wrong way or be offending when those involved can not see a caller's smile or facial expression. Another disadvantage to audio conferencing is that the quality of the call declines as additional locations are added. When several parties are involved the chance of two of them talking at the same time are great and neither of them will have their thoughts heard.

Web conferencing offers its rewards and shortcomings as well. While web conferencing can be free, it is usually in the companies best interest to choose to pay a little more to avoid annoying ads and pop ups. Web conferencing is especially useful for business calls that involve viewing digital files because these files can be sent in an instant via email to all parties involved. Documents can be viewed, analyzed and returned so they can be discussed all at once rather than waiting and communicating through mail or several phone calls. Web conferencing also allows more than one person to talk or type at once without going unheard.

Like any type of conference calling though, web conferencing also has its disadvantages. One of these down sides is that, again, it is difficult to gauge a person's seriousness or humor in a comment. There is no personality in a typed sentence. It is also difficult for those who are uncomfortable with technology to use web conferencing efficiently.

Finally the biggest advantage to video conferencing is that it offers a visual connection with the other attendees. When using video conferencing callers are able to view each other on a TV screen and hear each other through the speaker system. Associates are able to hear each other's voices, put a voice to a face, and understand each other's joke and comments. Financially, the cost of video conferencing is quite a bit higher due to the equipment that is involved. If equipment is not high quality it can also be limiting because the video feed can be jerky or delayed. Whatever type a business chooses, every type of conference call has its ups and downs.

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