Title:
Toll Free Conference Calls

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577

Summary:
Conference calls are a convenient method of communicating with a lot of people all at once. Technologies today allow many different types of conference calling.

For a small business, simple 3-way calling may suffice. This feature is available through your telephone company and whatever long-distance rates you have on the phone that originates the call will apply.

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Keywords:
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Article Body:
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For a small business, simple 3-way calling may suffice. This feature is available through your telephone company and whatever long-distance rates you have on the phone that originates the call will apply.

When several people located in many different places need to access conference calls, a conference call company can provide this service.

A basic conference call service offers audio conference calls (also called teleconferencing) over the telephone. Usually, you have the option of toll-free calls or flat-rate calls.

"Toll-free" is sort of a misnomer because "toll-free" does not mean it's entirely a free call because the person or business that hires the conference call company pays for the service.

Toll-free conference calls are free for the participants. With toll-free

packages, participants use a toll-free number to dial into the call via the conference call company.

The charges for the calls are usually by the minute for the length of the call. In many cases, the more minutes used, the less money per minute it costs. For instance, one package may offer 1,000 toll-free minutes for $70 or 7 cents a minute. If you go over 1,000 minutes, each additional minute would cost 7 cents. Another package may offer 10,000 minutes for $400 or 4 cents a minute and 4 cents for each minute over 10,000 minutes. You can see the cost goes down with the larger packages.

A flat-rate conference call package requires the participants to pay their own long-distance charges. They dial a regular phone number to access the call via the conference call company. The company who hires the conference call company also pays a flat fee to set up the service.

The conference call companies always offer features that augment their basic service. For example, you can have the conference call company record your conference calls and then provide a playback. The playbacks can even be on-demand so people can hear them at any time 24/7.

As you might imagine, conducting a live conference call with dozens of people on the line at once could get a bit out of hand with everyone talking at once and noise in the background as well. Technology comes to the rescue with mute buttons that allow the moderator and/or operator to control what is broadcast on the call.

The operators at the teleconferencing companies can assist you in many ways. In addition to connecting participants as they call in to access your conference, operators can even call participants and then connect them to your call. Operators can attend the entire conference call, providing opening announcements, introductions for host and speakers, moderating question and answer sessions and making closing comments at the end of the call.

Audio conference calls are not the only options available to you. Web conferencing is another type of conference call that utilizes access through participants' computers. Participants are able to view PowerPoint and whiteboard presentations and to share documents. Communication among participants can be audio or via chat formats. Upgrades of web conferencing services include application and desktop sharing, remote control and video conferencing.

As you can see, there are many ways that businesses today can communicate effectively via conference calling. There are lots of conference-calling

companies to choose from and the competition among them drives good bargains for business owners who will take the time to do a little research to find the best bargains.