

GOING GLOBAL WITH THTWEB WORLDWIDE BUSINESS CONFERENCING: TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL AUDIO CONFERENCING CALLS WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS

Overview

Set expectations regarding what you want to achieve on the conference call.
Minimize the possibility of participants' misunderstanding.
Provide clarity with visuals by using web conferencing.
Record the call and have someone note comments, questions, actions.

Before the Audio Conference Call

1) Inform all participants who will be present on the call. Provide name, phonetic pronunciation (if appropriate), title, and role. For example:

YEVEGENY ADAMOV (yehv-GAY-nee ah-DAHM-off) – Vice President of Marketing, Carson Group - needs to approve the business case to fund the project

TONY LEON – President, Starone Industries - will be presenting proposal and business case to MSSRS. ADAMOV AND MESA

CARLOS MESA – Vice President of Operations, Carson Group - needs to provide resources and timeline for all aspects of the project

SOARES SAMBU – Managing Consultant, Sambu Consulting - will offer input budgets for similar recent projects in support of Mr. Leon's proposal to the Carson Group personnel

2) Publish the agenda, so participants will know who will speak when and who is expected to comment. For example:

9:00 AM GMT - MR. LEON will present proposal and business case

9:45 AM GMT - MR. SOARES will present supporting documentation

10:15 AM GMT - MSSRS. ADAMOV and MESA will provide feedback, question assumptions

10:45 AM GMT - MR. LEON will summarize outstanding issues and actions

11:00 AM GMT - Conclusion of call

3) Provide a glossary of acronyms and technical terms that might be used during the call. Not everyone knows what an “API” is and why you would want to use “XML” to transfer data. To help your participants follow the conversation and provide meaningful feedback, send a list of terms in advance. For example:

ASCII - American Standard Code for Information Exchange

COOKIE - block of data a web server stores on a client server

LED - light emitting diode

During the Audio Conference Call

- 1) Have everyone introduce himself so participants can begin to associate a voice with a name. Request that everyone state his name before speaking.
- 2) Minimize the use of slang, idioms, sports analogies. Your participants may understand the literal translation, but not your intended meaning. For example:

“The whole nine yards”

“That’s a sticky wicket”

“We need to get on the same page”

“We’re starting with a clean slate”

- 3) Speak a bit more slowly than usual, and a lot more slowly if you are a “speed talker.” Ask frequently if there are questions.
- 4) Assign someone to write down key points and action items. Review these aloud for concurrence before the call concludes. Have the audio portion of the call recorded.
- 5) Use web conferencing to add clarity – your audience can view your presentation (including diagrams, timelines, charts) on their computers while you control the pages on from your PC.

After the Audio Conference Call

- 1) Circulate the meeting minutes and action items with owners assigned and requested response dates. Provide your participants (and anyone who may have missed the conference) with information on how to access the recorded call.
- 2) Schedule a follow up call if necessary.

Additional Sources of Information

Pronunciation

Voice of America Pronunciation Guide - <http://ibb7.ibb.gov/pronunciations/index.cfm>

Pronunciation guide for 10 languages - <http://www.fonetiks.org/>

Basic Spanish words with pronunciation - <http://members.aol.com/alvareze/spanish/frame.html>

Asian name pronunciation guide - <http://www.csupomona.edu/~pronunciation/>

The sounds of English and the International Phonetic Alphabet - <http://www.antimoon.com/how/pronunc-soundsipa.htm>

International Business, Culture, and Etiquette

Business and law guides for 34 countries - <http://www.hq.org/guides.html>

Business culture guides for 43 countries - <http://www.executiveplanet.com>

International business etiquette and manners in 31 countries and 6 regions - <http://www.cyborlink.com>

Excerpts from "Put Your Best Foot Forward" series by Mary Murray Bosrock for 44 countries - <http://globaledge.msu.edu/ibrd/offsite.asp?URL=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Ewindowontheworldinc%2Ecom%2Fcountryprofile%2Findex%2Ehtml&ResourceCategoryID=17&CategoryTitleText=Reference%3A+Culture&ResourceLinkText=Country+Profiles+from+Window+of>

Current information on the business climate, news, history, political structure, economic landscape, statistical data, and links covering 196 countries - <http://globaledge.msu.edu/ibrd/CountryList.asp>

Cultural interviews with Latin American and Spanish Executives - <http://globaledge.msu.edu/ibrd/offsite.asp?URL=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Elaits%2Eutexas%2Eedu%2F%7Eorkelm%2Flaexec%2Flaexec%2Ehtml&ResourceCategoryID=17&CategoryTitleText=Reference%3A+Culture&ResourceLinkText=Latin+America%3A+Cultural+Interviews+with+Latin+American+Executives&GRPPage=GR%5FCulture%2Easp>

Doing Business in India – A Cultural Perspective - <http://globaledge.msu.edu/ibrd/offsite.asp?URL=http%3A%2F%2Fstylusinc%2Ecom%2Fbusiness%2FIndia%2Fbusiness%5FIndia%2Ehtm&ResourceCategoryID=17&CategoryTitleText=Reference%3A+Culture&ResourceLinkText=India%3A+Doing+Business+in+India%2C++A+Cultural+Perspective&GRPPage=GR%5FCulture%2Easp>

City profiles – economy, business etiquette, local companies for 33 global cities – <http://www.usatoday.com/marketplace/ibi.htm>