

CONFERENCE CALL ETIQUETTE CHECKLIST

As the underlying technology improves, many of the technical problems associated with conference calls in the past have been overcome. But, it is essential that individuals innate dislike of not being face-to-face for this form of communication is overcome.

This checklist provides a basic guide that all within your team or organization should adhere to when taking part in conference calls to ensure that they are an effective forms of communication and a positive aid to decision making.

Make sure everyone knows who is Chair of the call

All discussion need one person to be responsible for controlling the communications to ensure all items on the agenda are discussed fairly, allowing everyone to have a voice.

Remove any Distractions from your Call area

Before starting a conference call ensure that wherever you are that people know you aren't to be interrupted, your PC screen is off to one side (laptop closed) so you're not tempted to read emails etc whilst on the call. The only way to get a positive outcome is to be 100% focused on the call.

Actively Listen to What is being said

By actively listen to what is being said you can grasp the *true meaning* of the words spoken. Even if you are able to see a video of the speaker's face the device you are using may be too small for tiny facial changes to be easily identified.

Always Identify yourself before beginning speaking

By identifying yourself before you beginning speaking everyone involved in the call knows who you are and can ask any questions they may need to clarify your role in the call.

Do not use a 'hold' facility

Avoid putting your phone on hold during a teleconference because if you do the others left on the call will become irritated but the holding music!

Do not use a sub-standard handset

The static interference others can hear from users of poor quality handsets. Some speakerphones tend to "clip off" parts of the conversation as you cannot speak and hear at the same time.

Do not use 'call waiting'

Turn off your this facility whilst on your conference call. This prevents irritating beeps from being heard by other participants as they have been blamed for losses in train of thought.

Use the mute facility

To get the most out of a conversation put your phone on mute when you are listening as this removes unnecessary distractions and background noise.

When calling in a room with others

When calling from a room with multiple participants, utilize a polyphone or other technology that allows everyone to hear and participate.

Preparation is the key to how successful your conference calls will be.

The better you plan for the call by setting an agenda, providing a list of other participants and their roles and organizations as well as sending out any background information, the better everyone involved can prepare. This enables each person to have the notes required and their own comments to hand when that agenda item is being discussed.