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Conference Calling Evolved

By Richard Keir

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Originally the conference call was limited to businesses paying exorbitant fees to the telcos. For business, it still made sense economically because the costs were less than the travel costs involved in bringing the people together. Additionally, significant time savings are involved, both in terms of travel time and in being able to communicate fairly rapidly to an extended group.

Telcos then extended their market by providing conference calling services to home consumers for an added fee. For some, it made sense to be able to bring a family or group with common interests together easily, usually to plan some physical event.

With the expansion of the internet, and in particular, the increasing availability and decreasing pricing for high speed internet access, conference calling has expanded far beyond its original uses.

For business, it remains a vital tool and has, actually, become far more useful as prices fall and the ease of use increases. Real time audio/video conferencing is already in use (and in some organizations has been for quite some time). As the cost of bandwidth decreases and the technology underlying audio-video transmission over networks improves, true real-time video conferencing will increase dramatically.

With the growing sophistication of the typical surfer and the expansion of internet marketing, audio and video have become hot items. Within the internet marketing community, conference calls – usually known as teleseminars, have become a standard feature. Offering the opportunity to reach a large group of interested prospects in a relatively simple and inexpensive format, teleseminars also offer the marketer an opportunity to create an instant product. A recording of a teleseminar can either be sold as a stand-alone product or used as a marketing tool for back-end products.

Marketers are using both free and paid teleseminars. Generally there is a higher level of injected sales content in free teleseminars, but it does vary a great deal.

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Solutions available now range from the rather expensive to essentially free. Your choice is going to depend on exactly what level of service you require. There are a number of providers which offer an introductory pricing scheme (I've seen it as low as a \$1 for the first month), which gives you the opportunity to see firsthand how their service works at a very modest cost. You do need to make sure you understand just how your users will access the conference. Solutions which use telephone call-ins are generally more restrictive and/or expensive than those utilizing an internet connection or VoIP softphone connections.

True real-time audio/video conferencing hasn't arrived yet for most. The bandwidth requirements remain excessive and the quality of the video, in particular, is fairly low. If you ever done live chat with audio and a web camera, you've seen the limitations.

Most online presentations which involve both audio and video generally use static images which

change either rarely or slowly, such as charts, website images, topic outlines and so on. This can be extremely useful for teleseminars, of course, because it makes it easier to demonstrate certain points and provides a visual as well as an audio focus for participants.

The combination of audio and visual elements is particularly useful in training situations where one can reinforce the other. Plus, you have the advantage of reaching those who learn better through visual means, as well as those partial to audio.

For those of you doing eCommerce the evolved conference call can be an incredible tool. Consider how much impact regular teleseminars about your area of expertise could have on future sales. You can provide buyers with instructional teleseminars. You can introduce new products. And in each instance you'll be generating recordings which you can either sell or make available on your sites, or use as added viral marketing tools.

With the increasing sophistication and usability of the tools for conference calling, the possibilities are virtually unlimited and well within the reach of every entrepreneur. You'll be hard pressed to find another tool that offers you the impact and potential of the conference call.

Richard writes, teaches, trains and consults on business and professional presentations and eCommerce related matters. For more on conference calling, web conferencing and related subjects visit

<http://altaglobal.com>

– for wireless and cellular subjects see

<http://www.altaglobal.org>

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networking and security check

<http://www.altaglobal.net>

International Conference Calling

By John Furnem

When you are in business, you realize that keeping the lines of communication open are critical. When you conduct your business worldwide, it is even more important. Your business relies on sales people, clients, and colleagues, and if that are scattered all over the world, holding weekly meetings can be difficult.

This is where international conference calling can be critical to your business. It is imperative that you keep in contact with your staff and clients. With international conference calling, you can hold meetings anytime, and with anyone even if they are on opposite sides of the world. If you have a client in another country, by using international conference calling, you can still give a presentation as if they were sitting right next to you in the conference room.

With international conference calling, you can provide training to new employees that reside in different countries just as efficiently as if they were right in front of you. The world today offers new and innovation methods of conducting business. Conference calling has been around for years. But with the Internet came global trade, making it necessary for business and website owners to make themselves available virtually twenty-four hours a day.

In the past, weekly meeting meant the staff would have to go through the process of booking airline tickets, securing a hotel room, travel thousands of miles to attend the meeting and then return to their country, just to do it over again the next month. With technology developing everyday, there is no need to travel. International conference calling eliminates all that, giving the employees more time to be productive.

Even if your company is not on the Forbes 500 list, international conference calling is an affordable option for saving time and money. Setting up a time and date for the international conference call is fast and easy. Create an email with the time and date of the conference call and send. That's it. The Internet is evolving everyday, and with it, new business tools are being developed. An alternative to international conference calling is one of these tools.

Internet conference calling is a service where a company acquires a "conference room" by telephone. They then dial into the conference room using a telephone number and a special pin number. The company is considered the "host". Those who are involved in the conference call are also given a telephone number and a special pin number. All numbers are pre-assigned and can be used again. A special recording notifies the host when all parties are present on the phone line. There is also an option to record the conference for those who require a transcript.

Although international conference calling has been around since the 1950's, many businesses of that era did not take advantage of it because of the time and expense it took to set up the call. Email was not available, and neither was fax machines. In order to set up a call, the notifications would have to go

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out by mail. The operators had to connect the calls, one in each country; there was also the dilemma of time zone differences.

International conference calling started to become popular and more versatile in the late 1980's and with the rise of the Internet, International conference calling was taken to a whole new level. Today, the

Internet contains many tools that can assist you to succeed in business; it is necessary to avail yourself of all of them.

Depending on the service that you use, the basic rate for international conference calling is anywhere for 1.2 cents to 12 cents per minute. If there are multiple people on the line, certain companies will charge an additional per person fee. Nevertheless, the use of International conference calling has become a vital part of communication worldwide and has evolved into something that even the average person can afford to use.

John Furnem is a dot com veteran, specializing in human resources and work psychology he has written articles about stress management and business themes. John writes Conference calls articles at

<http://conferencecallit.com>

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