



# 5-Point Guide to Choosing & Using Audio Conferencing



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# WHY USE AUDIO CONFERENCING

The benefits to using audio conferencing are to cut down on travel time and be able to easily hold meetings on an impromptu basis. Your organisation will reduce not only travelling time and the cost of travel but be more productive in that these calls can involve between 2 and 100 people and saves the complex problems of planning diary movements.

There is no need to book a time slot and the service is available from any touch phone anywhere in the world. It is also available on a 24 hour 7 day a week basis. You can alert meeting attendees at the meeting start time and the access number via an on line SMS text facility.

When you have had the meeting a record can be played back and made available to parties that were not present at the conference. If necessary an operator can assist your meeting and help the conferences run smoothly. This is all provided via one consolidated bill for your entire organisation broken down by an individual account holder.

# TYPES OF AUDIO CONFERENCING

Telephone systems normally have the ability to audio conference between four and eight people depending on the type of telephone system you purchase. The typical number of conferences that can be held for most telephone systems is four. This means that four people at any one time mainly three external and one internal can be in a conference. This can be limited when you have groups of salesman on a Monday morning wanting to participate in a conference at distances.

Consequently, some manufacturers supply hardware called conference bridges, which can be attached to the telephone system. To make this work you also require ISDN30 lines to dial in on. This can be quite a cost effective solution particularly if you are using audio conferencing on a regular basis as once you have paid your capital equipment cost the service will cost literally a few pence per minute to organise and the large bills that can come in for multiple participants can be eliminated.

The other option is to use networking audio conferencing. A number of network service providers have purchased their own audio conferencing equipment, which is similar to the products that can be brought commercially to put onto a telephone system and because this cost is shared over a large variety of users, the price per user comes down. Typical prices are 15 pence to 20 pence per minute and this is easy to subscribe to and also easy to use.

If your use is less frequent or you have a lot of people that need to audio conference on an infrequent basis, then network studio conferencing is probably the better choice. If you have a small number of users that want to conference every few days then a conferencing bridge is probably the better choice. A conferencing bridge can be connected to any telephone system. and network audio conferencing can be used on any telephone system.

# HOW TO USE AUDIO CONFERENCING

Most audio conferencing services work the following way:

An account holder is provided with an account card, which contains the numbers used for conference calling, the host pin number and the participant pin number. The account holder (host) emails or sends by SMS the conference number, start time and the pin number for the participant. The host dials the number, enters their pin number and states their name. The participant then enters their pin number, states their name and the call commences. When the conference is complete the host and participants hang up. This is a very simple process.

A similar methodology works for audio conferencing bridges, which are connected to the telephone system. The only real difference is that the host owns the equipment and the participants dial in on normal numbers or they can dial in on non-geographic numbers if required.

## WHERE DO I SUBSCRIBE?

Audio conferencing network products are available from most network providers such as BT or Telstra. Audio conferencing bridges are normally purchased from telephone equipment suppliers, if you already have a telephone equipment supplier please ask them for details of either of these methods of audio conferencing. If your existing supplier does not supply these methods please call Actimax on 01268 243903 and we will be pleased to give you more details of both products which we supply.

# ABOUT ACTIMAX

We are a National supplier of IT and Telecoms Infrastructure. We aim to help improve our clients business processes by implementing change, which improves service levels and efficiency while reducing cost.

## How we do it

Our strategy for providing solutions for our customers is split into two components. The first of these is infrastructure and we provide Mitel and Alcatel telephony solutions together with Alcatel Data Switches, WiFi Solutions and Cisco routers, to provide a complete infrastructure for our clients.

This infrastructure is then connected to the network by a variety of methods including, ISDN, SIP Trunks and Wide Area Network connections. We also provide as part of our infrastructure offering, Call Recording and Mobile Telephony.

Actimax are able to provide an end-to-end offering for any customer infrastructure requirements.

The second component of our product solution is providing elements of the solution, which we would regard as value added services. These would include Collaboration and Unified Communications, Video Conferencing and Managed Services such as Least Cost Routing, Maintenance, Fraud Detection and various hosted services to provide the customer with value added services to enable them to manage their business on an ongoing business.

## Our History

Actimax have won a large number of awards for technical innovation. In 2009 we were awarded the contract for Salvation Army to deploy a voice infrastructure for their business. This followed successes in 2008 with being awarded the contract to be the supplier for the telephone system for the Wimbledon Championships and five Royal Palaces in 2006, including Hampton Court, Tower of London and Kensington Palace.

We have a large number of high profile customers including The Church of England, The Delfont Mackintosh Theatre chain, The National Union of Teachers and The Restaurant Group.

We are Mitel Premier Resellers and direct Alcatel Voice and Data Partners.

We aim to achieve excellence in the solutions we provide and also in our technical accreditations and customer support. We believe this is paramount in looking after our customers.

We have very high staff retention, with around two thirds of our staff having been with the business for more than 5 of our 12 years.