

Audio Conferencing Etiquette Guide

A TelSpan Worldwide Conferencing White Paper

Introduction

When audio conferencing, it is important to make certain that you and your participants are interacting in the most time efficient and effective manner. The following tips are easy guidelines to follow to increase the professionalism of your audio conference call.

Preparing For Your Audio Conference

It is imperative to consider how you are going to conduct or participate in your audio conference call. For instance, your audio conference will most certainly work via your speakerphone. However, we would suggest you use it judiciously since it will pick up many background noises of which you may be unaware. These background noises will greatly reduce the quality of the entire conference. Unfortunately, the quality of speakerphone equipment varies drastically and will impact the clarity as well. While a speakerphone can work well when speaking on a standard two-person call, it can be very disruptive in a conference call.

Dialing Into and Beginning Your Audio Conference

Leaving/Entering the Conference

Upon entry into the audio conference, it is recommended that you state your name and affiliation if you feel it is necessary. If you selected the “Enter Tones” feature as an account option, a single audible tone will alert you to a new arrival. At that time, if that participant has not identified himself or herself, you can ask them to introduce themselves. Also, for your information, if you selected the “Exit Tones” feature as an account option, you will hear another audible tone when a participant exits the conference.

A second option, called “Roll Call”, alleviates this issue by requiring each participant to say their name before they enter the live conference. This option is useful if you need to have this information as a part of your conference and gives you the opportunity to obtain roster updates at any time during the call.

During Your Audio Conference

Noise

If at all possible, avoid extraneous sounds (i.e., music, coughing, eating, typing, shuffling papers) since these sounds may be bothersome to the other participants and may make it difficult for some to hear the ongoing conversation.

Speaking

It is always recommended that everyone should take turns speaking. All will hear if only one person speaks at a time with no secondary or competing conversation. If there are more than four people on your conference, briefly state your name before speaking (i.e. “Jones here. I think...”); also announce your departure from the conference.

Breaks During a Reservationless Conference (TelSpanDirect)

Since the TelSpanDirect service is available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, without a reservation and for any duration, a conference call can be stopped and started at any time.

Breaks During a Reserved Conference (TelSpanRSC)

If a “break” is desired, we suggest that the host/moderator of the conference announce this to all participants. All parties can hang up and redial (in the same manner as you started) to convene later. This, of course, is subject to the scheduled length of your call, but you can do so at any time during the entire duration of the scheduled time. If you need to extend the scheduled length of your call you can call **TelSpan’s** Operator Services department to make the adjustment.

Putting Your Phone on “Hold”

NEVER put your phone on “Hold” during a conference. Many telephone systems have “Music On Hold” features, which cannot be eliminated by **TelSpan**. It is also possible for another employee to inadvertently pick up the line on hold and disrupt the conference call. It is recommended you use the “Mute” feature on your telephone or hang up and redial when your interruption is completed. When using our reservationless system you have access to the *1 feature which will mute your line. Pressing *1 again will un-mute your line, enabling you to participate in the call.

Use of Cell Phones

Cell phone usage is possible but not recommended. All of us are subject to the many inconveniences caused by this usage when cell phone service drops or picks up static. Unfortunately, **TelSpan** has no control over the call quality when any participant decides to use their cell phone.

Use of Headsets

Headsets can be very useful while attending a conference call. They allow for freedom of movement, are more ergonomically friendly, and may help a participant to hear well. Again, the quality of these devices varies so be cautious with their use.

Local Access Connections and Static/Audibility Issues

With local telephone service deregulation, the quality of our local access connections has deteriorated in many locales. **TelSpan’s** conferencing equipment is fully digitized and will pick up poor connection noises (static) very well. It is recommended that, should this problem occur, you have all parties hang up and redial. This usually eliminates the source of the noise. If you hear static when using our reservationless system you can hit *0 and a **TelSpan** Operator will assist you in identifying the source of the noise.