

Teleconferences tips and useful phrases

What would your tips be for good teleconferences?

Choose your top seven tips from the list below:

1. Be sure to specify which time zone the time of the meeting is given in
2. Send out the agenda well in advance and ask for feedback
3. Meet up five or ten minutes before the scheduled time to have a chat with the people at your end of the teleconference
4. Prepare small talk topics in case you have to kill time
5. Start with a roll call
6. Have some periods where people are asked to all speak one at a time
7. Hold votes halfway through the discussion to check progress towards agreement and keep people involved
8. Ban emailing and texting during the teleconference
9. Summarise and confirm the discussion every so often
10. Schedule some people to join the conference call only when the points that are relevant to them are scheduled to come up
11. Use names as much as possible
12. Keep teleconferences short
13. Stop people interrupting each other
14. Introduce everyone at the beginning of the meeting
15. Ask everyone to introduce themselves at the start of the teleconference
16. Very clearly mark when you are moving to a different stage of the meeting
17. Go through the agenda in detail at the start
18. Summarise all discussion and decisions at the end of the teleconference in the same order as the agenda
19. Don't be shy about asking people to speak up or repeat
20. Give a preview of what you are going to say
21. Explain anything happening your end that the other side can't see
22. Clearly explain if the people taking part are different from those written on the agenda
23. Mention at the beginning if anyone will arrive or leave during the teleconference
24. Explain exactly what parts of documents you are talking about
25. Check if everyone has the documents you are talking about and has found the right place
26. Explain any silences your end
27. Politely explain if there is bad sound quality or other technical problems that will make understanding difficult
28. Chat about differences in time of day

Are there any you disagree with?

What phrases could you use to do the things you chose as important?



Suggested answers

1. Be sure to specify which time zone the time of the meeting is given in – “your time” “our time” “GMT” “New York time” “daylight savings time” “British Summer Time” “we’re five hours ahead/ behind you”
2. Send out the agenda well in advance and ask for feedback – “please let me know if the timings seem okay” “Please find a proposed agenda attached.”
3. Meet up five or ten minutes before the scheduled time to have a chat with the people at your end of the teleconference – “So, what is our position?” “Is there anything we really need to mention?”
4. Prepare small talk topics in case you have to kill time – “How’s the weather over there?”
5. Start with a roll call – “Can everyone shout out their names?”
6. Have some periods where people are asked to all speak one at a time – “Let’s go round and comment on it one by one”
7. Hold votes halfway through the discussion to check progress towards agreement and keep people involved – “Can we have a quick vote to see what everyone thinks?”
8. Ban emailing and texting during the teleconference – “Can everyone leave all emailing until the break?” “We need to get through a lot, so can we have mobile phones off this time?”
9. Summarise and confirm the discussion every so often – “So, ... thinks... but ... said that...”
10. Schedule some people to join the conference call only when the points that are relevant to them are scheduled to come up – “Kevin is going to join us for his presentation at half past.”
11. Use names as much as possible – “John, did you want to say something about this?”
12. Keep teleconferences short – “If we can keep to the timings on the agenda, we should be finished by three.”
13. Stop people interrupting each other – “Shall we let John finish first?”
14. Introduce everyone at the beginning of the meeting – “I think you all know...”
15. Ask everyone to introduce themselves at the start of the teleconference – “This is Alex.”
16. Very clearly mark when you are moving to a different stage of the meeting – “Moving on to...”
17. Go through the agenda in detail at the start – “And the third point on the agenda is... and should only take about...”
18. Summarise all discussion and decisions at the end of the teleconference in the same order as the agenda – “First of all we agreed...”
19. Don’t be shy about asking people to speak up or repeat – “Can you speak a little louder?” “Can you say the last bit again?”
20. Give a preview of what you are going to say – “I’d like to explain...”
21. Explain anything happening your end that the other side can’t see – “I’m just looking for the file now.” “We’re just discussing it between us.” “Just a moment, someone has just come in.”
22. Clearly explain if the people taking part are different from those written on the agenda – “Alex couldn’t make it.” “Alex’s place will be taken by...”

23. Mention at the beginning if anyone will arrive or leave during the teleconference – “Alex has to leave early.”
24. Explain exactly what parts of documents you are talking about – “It’s the third bullet point.” “The end of the second paragraph.”
25. Check if everyone has the documents you are talking about and has found the right place – “Can everyone see the appendix?”
26. Explain any silences your end – “I’m just thinking about it.”
27. Politely explain if there is bad sound quality or other technical problems that will make understanding difficult – “The line isn’t very good but we should be okay.”
28. Chat about differences in time of day – “It must be very early over there.”