



Enter the Realm of the Conferencing Service Industry Today!!!

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Enter the Realm of the Conferencing Service Industry Today!!!

Introduction

According to the market studies, the telecommunication industry, especially in the VoIP segment is poised for stupendous growth. The USA alone is expected to convert to a 60% VoIP telephones. The overall conferencing application service provider realm is forecast to bring in industry revenues growing from \$2.9 billion in 2003 to \$4.3 billion in 2008, producing a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8%.

With the advent of “out sourcing or off shoring” as it is called, the explosion of globally distributed workforce has become very common. Integrating these people and projects together has become a tremendous exercise. Increasing productivity and reducing costs appear to be the two primary drivers behind businesses turning to virtual conferencing. This, coupled with a progressively more distributed workforce where staff telecommutes or collaborate from different locations, requires a comprehensive solution.

To provide an element of teamwork and consolidate with utmost convenience at reduced costs is the basis of an automated voice conference system. This has further expanded to include web and video conferencing. Web conferencing is done using the internet and is used when sharing documents as a collaborative solution. Video conferencing allows people to talk face to face with the help of special equipments installed in rooms structured for that purpose. Although a great innovation these come with the downside that not only are they expensive, their audio quality is not all that good in parallel. Audio conferencing on the other hand is simple, inexpensive and gets the job done at no extra frills which is a great option whether companies are starting new or there are huge corporate volumes.

What is audio conferencing?

Also called phone conferencing or teleconferencing, this is a service that allows a number of people to be linked together through a telephone call wherever geographically scattered they are. The people involved in the conference can hear each other and respond interactively.

Why audio conferencing?

This helps companies gain timely information pertaining to the firm and access it in real time. Bring together people and ideas rapidly without any boundaries facilitating fast decisions and thus increasing productivity. Eliminate unnecessary travel costs and downtime when employees have to travel for meetings.

How is it done?

Audio conferencing to an end user is as easy as picking up a telephone and dialing a number and providing a “PIN” which is just a pass code. The conferencing service provider will have to

have the necessary equipment that is connected to the telephone network and internet or IP networks depending on from where their clients call originates.

Who benefits from it?

Organizations of all types and sizes see the benefits of incorporating audio conferencing into their communications processes. It is the easy and cost effective way to communicate and collaborate among employees, customers, suppliers and partners, faculty and students, doctors and patients

Sales: Increase revenue and leverage resources by delivering presentations remotely to more prospects. Identify target segments by responses avoiding wasted efforts...

Training: Train employees, customers and partners, and conduct training more frequently.

Marketing: Do a test run before product launch and gain valuable insight to make changes. Bring campaigns to market more quickly and effectively.

Corporate Decisions: Communicate new programs and policies to worldwide employees swiftly and efficiently.

Medical Professionals: Ease in patient case diagnosis and expert opinion without any loss in time hence improving quality of healthcare.

Manufacturing: Brainstorm on designs and manufacturing plans to get products to market faster.

Telecommuters: Generate more sales from your virtual office while staying in touch and integrated with the rest of your global team.

Project Managers: Keep required deliverables in sync with better coordination and communication across the entire offshore/onsite team.

Distance Learning: Online education programs benefit enormously by conducting contact classes between faculty and students.

Does being an Audio Conference Service provider make good business sense?

There is a booming economy, businesses are looking to expand and communication capacities are challenged. Today, teleconferencing is available at any time, is easy-to-use, economical, and secure. Options are available where there is little or no initial investment required and there is a rapid payback due to unprecedented growth within a short period of time. Taking into all these factors this seems like an opportune time to give it some serious consideration.

Selection criteria of your Audio Conferencing Equipment

We broadly classify the areas you need to consider while looking for a conferencing bridge equipment

Technology: Traditionally Voice bridges connected with PSTN or the normal phone lines only. With the advent of the VoIP or the Internet phone services Conferencing bridges connecting to them have become more efficient. The downside is that older bridges require additional cost and equipment to be purchased in order to scale to and support VoIP.

The best systems integrate at absolutely no extra cost with protocols using SIP on the VoIP side or with T1/E1, T3/E3, and ISDN PRI on the PSTN interface side. Also, look for conference equipment which can scale additional capacity effortlessly.

Integration: To embark on a conferencing business there are some basic prerequisites, to begin with you require the telephone lines provided by the telecom company, then there is the conferencing equipment from the provider and last but not the least the business process which binds these together. Efficient integration of the above systems is the key to running a successful conferencing service. Choose an equipment provider who can do a phenomenal job of setting it up so that it ensures a smooth flow. Make sure that there is room in your environment for web collaboration products to be incorporated once your business requirements grow to that level.

Price: Look for a very affordably priced system in comparison to the other systems in the market. The cost per port should be among the lowest in the teleconferencing industry. Ideally, gets an all inclusive price considering the features and benefits that you are receiving plus look out for any hidden costs for feature upgrades and limitations in scalability.

Scalability: The requirements can grow quite rapidly hence look for a system that can expand your service with minimum disruption.

Service: Service from commission to installation and service including maintenance service through remote management are required since this will reduce the risk of downtime which is crucial in managing large volumes. Look for companies that have an established support and service model

Expertise: Finding a company with a history of expertise in the area of telecommunications product business will help since market knowledge aids in the evolution of strategic products in tune with current times.

Features: The conferencing product should be a comprehensive solution loaded with futuristic features. Some of the important features may be:

Types of Conferences: This allows you to have reservation and reservation less, ad-hoc and on-the-fly conferences all with the same equipment. Most products on the market require a different system for each option. The most recent ones can perform all these with a single platform.

Modes of conversation: Conferences can be done in the widely used Conversation mode, in Presentation mode, Quiz mode or even a Polling mode.

Some products also offers intuitive web based interaction for organizer and operator, Dial out conferencing, call recording and playback, billing and reporting, real time audio streaming on the net are available too.

Add web control to manage the conference, touchtone to operate and you have an extensively feature rich configuration. Choosing a product with extensive features allow to future proof your investment and enhances the usability of the product in the coming years.

Customization to individual clients needs is a welcome feature because it helps to incorporate your company's name in the greetings and menu requirements to suit your current scenario.

Security: Extensive security features cannot be emphasized enough. Companies constantly worry about their confidentiality, and hence these security features can be reassuring to them.

Specify the type of entry announcements – none, beep, name option for participants to record name and play back when joining the conference.

Remove uninvited guests by checking up on their Caller ID and disconnecting their line.

Separate moderator and participant's access pin, Lock and unlock conference, Hear participants count,

Expiring access code at the end of scheduled conferences are few of the essential security features which would reduce security breaches.

Administration: Make sure the entire set up is easy to manage and works on a daily basis without too much effort. Choose a provider who is able to handle efficiently almost all your administrative necessities of your operations.

What are the options to have your conferencing service business?

Outright Purchase –In this option you purchase the equipment and it is customized to your requirements and integrated into your environment. A good provider will work with you from installation to commissioning of the service. Make sure there are no hidden costs and the total costs are based solely on a one-time all-inclusive purchase price.

Hosted Solutions on Premises - The Company manages remotely the systems installed in your infrastructure.

Hosted Solution Off Premises –The company hosts the system for you, as per your requirements, manage and operate the service.

Starts Your Own Conferencing Business – Here you are given access to the conferencing platform and your business processes are set up for billing and e-commerce without any capital investment.



Conclusion:

The telephone has become an instrument of information exchange and the most effective way of staying connected. Opening up the channels of conversation between all walks of employees in the organization, keeps the data flowing in real time. Just as in person-to-person calls, teleconferencing must be as easy to accomplish from anywhere, by anyone, at any time, as simple as picking up the nearest telephone. That heralds the new era in audio conferencing.

About us

The author of this document, Priya Srikanth works for Indosoft (<http://www.indosoft.ca>) a company that is a leader in the application of Computer Telephony Interface (CTI) and Voice over IP (VoIP) based in Canada. She can be reached at priya@indosoft.ca

Recently, Indosoft launched an audio conferencing system which is feature-rich and future proof at an unbelievable price.