

Merant

Business



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Company: MultiLinkCustomer: MerantSubmitted by: Roger Staton Assocs.
Faced with increasing pressures on time and a requirement to keep the cost of meetings to a minimum, employees at MERANT around the world are using audioconferencing to conduct meetings with suppliers, partners and project teams. It not only facilitates quicker business decisions, but also speeds up time to market for new products and services. Keeping ahead in today's competitive global business environment requires frequent communication with customers, employees, suppliers and partners around the world. For MERANT, providers of innovative enterprise application development and e-business solutions to businesses worldwide, business communications are a critical part of their operations.

This is also true for many other organisations today. MERANT is represented in more than 37 countries with 2000 employees worldwide. It has more than 5 million customer licenses at over 35, 000 customer sites around the world, including two thirds of the Global 500 and all the Fortune 100. This global organisation is using audioconferencing to conduct business meetings around the world as a faster, more efficient way of communicating in all its business operations. At the same time it's providing an effective way of reducing the cost of communications, saving around \$100, 000 a year in travelling costs alone - not including the cost of lost time and administrative co-ordination. Reducing the cost of communications is an issue for many large organisations when you consider that the typical manager spends up to one-third of each business day absorbed in meetings (source: MCI Worldcom).

MCI Worldcom also estimates that conference meetings can be as little as one tenth of the cost of in-person meetings. It's clear that as meetings take up an increasing amount of time in everyone's day, minimising time spent in meetings can provide significant savings - in the travel costs, but perhaps more importantly in the more productive use of employees time. Mike Barnes EMEA Managing Director from MERANT commented: "Audioconferencing is used by our employees as a key business communication tool. It's most commonly used for short meetings between employees as part of their project management as well as to communicate and meet with customers, suppliers and partners." Since meetings happen frequently in our business, meeting via conference is a much more productive use of time. In many cases it is the only way to meet due to time constraints and the need to make quick business decisions.

Employees and project teams can use the audioconferencing facility to communicate quickly and easily from wherever they are in the world - at the office or even at home - accessing the information and people they need at the touch of a button." In more competitive and demanding markets, pressure to get products and services to market as quickly as possible requires faster and more efficient communications. " Our product managers all use audioconferencing as a key part of their project communication," says Stuart McGill at MERANT. " Because it saves them time and speeds up decision making - it's generally quicker to schedule and meeting via conference call than arranging, travelling to and attending a face to face meeting - audioconferencing is helping to reduce time to market for new products." Using the MultiLink system, MERANT can set up a conference call

for anything from 3 to over 1, 000 participants connected into a single meeting or presentation. “ Barnes of MERANT says “ most of the time we connect a small number of people in a conference, about 5, but we can have up to 30 participants.

It’s easy to use, set up and manage.” MERANT opted to install the audioconferencing system, commonly known as a bridge, to cut out the cost of dealing with a teleconferencing service bureau. The bridge is easily installed into MERANT’s own PABX (Private Automatic Branch eXchange) so that the conferencing facilities can be controlled and managed from the switchboard. This option is often used by organisations who frequently use audioconferencing services. Audioconferencing can help increase productivity by allowing business professionals to conduct meetings from the comfort of their office and not spend too much time travelling.

An increasing number of businesses provide their employees with Internet access. The Internet is becoming a key enabler of advanced audioconferencing applications. New web-based software that allows the end user to set up, control and visualise conference calls is a case in point. Rather than using the tone-dialling functions of the telephone, calls can be booked and managed on-screen from any PC or Internet-enabled device. MERANT is currently evaluating web-based software as a key tool for its employees, allowing them to schedule and manage conference calls themselves from wherever they are using their PC’s or even Internet-enabled phones or PDAs phones.

Says Barnes at MERANT: “ We’re always looking at new technology to improve our own business processes. After all, that’s part of the reason businesses all over the world use our services - to provide productivity and efficiency gains that impact their bottom line.”