Tips for Successful Teleconferences

**Teleconference coordinators:**

*Planning ahead*

- Identify a teleconference coordinator and have them in the meeting to address any technology challenges and remind participants of teleconference etiquette.
- Determine what technology will be needed in the meeting room. The teleconference coordinator should be trained on the features of the system and common troubleshooting strategies.
  - Speak with guest presenters ahead of time to find out what a/v needs they may require.
- If powerpoint and other live components to the meeting (such as flip charts, movies, etc.) will be used, consider using technology such as Adobe Connect or GoToWebinar, which allows teleconference attendees to participate in a more interactive manner.
- Determine who will take minutes for the meeting (this should not be the teleconference coordinator).
- In large conference rooms, select technology that has multiple speakers/microphones distributed around the table.
- Plan for enough time to test the technology before beginning the call.
- In communication with teleconference attendees:
  - Inform participants of the teleconference far enough in advance that proper arrangements can be made.
  - Include the call-in telephone number and access code.
  - Send handout materials in advance so attendees will have an opportunity to review beforehand.
  - Include a list of all planned participants on the call.
  - Inform participants of how to mute/unmute their line.
  - Ask teleconference participants to call in 5 minutes prior to the meeting to test their individual connection.
  - Include protocol on how the teleconference attendee should notify that coordinator if challenges occur.
    - Do they have the freedom to interrupt the speaker?
    - Can they text message, instant message, or email someone?
During the teleconference

- Remind in-room participants to speak clearly.
- Remind participants of “one speaker at a time” rule and inform them that you will interrupt the group with this reminder if necessary.
  - Some coordinators have found ding a bell a successful reminder.
- Remind participants to mute their line (with directions on how to do so) when appropriate
- If the call is being recorded, inform participants before the meeting begins.
- Have keynote speakers located closely to the microphone.
- Depending on the size of the meeting, announce who is in the room/on the line before beginning.
- Introduce guest speakers.
- Advise all participants on the call and in the meeting room to always begin their speaking with their name, i.e. “This is John Smith speaking...”
- Remind call-in participants to unmute their line when Q&A period begins (with directions on how to do so).
- When only a few individuals have called in, ask each of them individually if they have any questions or items to add before the presenter leaves or the meeting ends.

Teleconference attendees:

Planning ahead

- Plan to be in a location with reduced background noise (consider construction, traffic, pets, etc.) and plan to use the restroom before the call.
- Have a glass of water already available.
- Have all necessary documents printed or open on your computer during the call (review these documents ahead of time as well)
- Know how to mute your line and do so when requested or needed.
- Try to access the teleconference from a land line phone if possible. The next best is a cordless phone, then cell phone, with the last option being speaker phone. Speaker phone often produces echoing noise and can be distracting to all.
  - If you must access with a cell phone, consider where you receive the best phone reception and try to be in that location during the call.
    - When using a cell phone, make sure that it is adequately charged and if not, that the charger is plugged in near your location.
  - Consider using a headset so that you may take notes by typing and prevent neck/shoulder discomfort (definitely mute your line if you are typing).
- Video conferences: check your appearance before hand to ensure professionalism.
During the teleconference

- Mute your line when appropriate.
  - Write down a note to yourself to remind yourself if you are muted/unmuted.
- Introduce yourself before speaking.
- Contact the teleconference coordinator with any challenges you may be experiencing (understand this protocol beforehand).

After the teleconference

- Provide feedback to the coordinator on challenges you experienced.
- Follow up on committed action items.

For questions regarding working off-site successfully and flexible work arrangements, contact Michelle Artibee, Associate Director, Work/Life Programs, at (607) 255-3976 or wellbeing@cornell.edu.