

Phone conference etiquette tips

Make sure you're on mute. By staying on mute except when talking, this eliminates background noises, echoing and also takes care of any potentially embarrassing sounds.

Never put the call on hold. If you absolutely must step away, which should be done in emergency situations only, just put the phone on mute and go. This takes care of the elevator-music serenade that's all-too-often inflicted on fellow conference callers. (Be sure to turn your call waiting off, as well, to eradicate those bothersome beeps.)

Don't talk over others. Multiple people talking at the same time was the most distracting behavior on a conference call, too much jabber is not only annoying, it's counterproductive. In order to prevent this from happening, wait for an obvious opening, and then identify yourself as you begin talking. Be sure to direct all questions or comments toward a particular person (by name) when possible. This will cut down on any confusion about who is supposed to chime in and when.

Call in early. If you're hosting and someone calls in late, don't stop the meeting to announce their arrival. Instead, wait for a conversation to finish before mentioning that someone new has just joined.

Send out meeting materials ahead of time. Sending out meeting materials to clients or other attendees ahead of time allows for forward momentum until the problem is solved.