

newsworthy trends

From Business Class To The Conference Room

(NAPSA)—Meeting-goers are changing how they conduct business due to the events of September 11. Since then, according to a national survey, one in four business travelers has reduced air travel and turned to conferencing.

More than half (55 percent) of these now-cautious travelers have adopted audio-, video- or Web conferencing as a way to remain productive without putting a strain on their health, their families or their companies' budgets. Though the economy had already started to take a toll on travel budgets prior to the tragedy, personal safety, family concerns and airport delays have now mounted additional pressures on the road warrior.

According to the *Meetings in America IV: The New Road Warrior* survey, 62 percent of former business travelers plan to conference regularly in the future—even as safety concerns and budget cuts subside. In response, WorldCom has compiled some easy-to-use conferencing tips for today's business professional.

Why conferencing?

Conferencing allows people to attend meetings from their home or office without enduring travel hassles like red-eye flights, layovers and hectic airports. Efficient and relatively inexpensive, it's no wonder so many companies are adopting conferencing as a business standard. Conferencing is simple, especially when there's a moderator to keep things running smoothly.

Effective conference tips

- **Audioconferencing:** The most popular conferencing service, audioconferencing is the simplest and most inexpensive, enabling two or more people to converse together over the telephone. Tips:

- Distribute a written agenda prior to the call and avoid wasted time.

- Request RSVPs from participants and confirm attendance at the beginning of the call.

- Since no one can see you, make sure to identify yourself when you speak.

- When side conversations are necessary, mute the microphone so the meeting is not interrupted.

- **Web conferencing:** The fastest-



Conferencing is a convenient, inexpensive way to have a meeting of the minds.

growing service, Web or net conferencing combines audioconferencing with the power of the Internet to enable all parties involved to view and discuss a presentation and/or collaborate on a document. Tips:

- Prepare all documents in advance.

- Make presentations easy to read on all monitors by using at least a 20-point font.

- Close all other active applications to make your computer work most efficiently.

- If sharing a file, limit the size to 500K so that it is download-friendly.

- Allow five to 10 minutes for participants to connect before the meeting formally starts.

- **Videoconferencing:** Almost like holding face-to-face meetings, videoconferencing is the best alternative to travel. Even though special equipment has to be purchased, according to WorldCom, it is three times cheaper for five business professionals to hold a videoconference than fly to a business meeting. Tips:

- Because this is the only type of conferencing that puts a face to a name, use large name cards to identify participants.

- Ensure the most natural environment by acting as if the cameras are not really there (but remember, you are being watched).

As conferencing usage continues to rise, these tips will help you maintain productivity in the new realm of virtual business. For more information on surviving as a new road warrior, visit www.worldcom.com/conferencing.