

## UNDERSTAND YOUR CONFERENCE CALL COSTS AND COMPARE PROVIDERS BY PRICE

This guide will help you:

- understand the different charges that appear on your conference call bill
- calculate how much you are spending per minute, per participant and use this to compare with other conference call providers

Conference call bills are notoriously difficult to understand, leaving a business prone to confusion over the real cost of their conferencing. Bills will show charges for conferencing minutes used, but they may also show additional charges for call recording, archival and listening to call recordings, standard monthly charges, meeting or access charges and surcharges for international calls. Therefore it can be difficult to know the true per minute charge for your standard conferencing and even more difficult to compare conference call costs with other providers.

To start with, let us help you understand what you may see on your phone bill with a glossary of conference call bill terms.

<b>Centralised Billing</b> (BT, LoopUp, Arkadin, Meeting Zone, Speakserve)	The business receives one monthly bill and every participant's usage and any conference charges are allocated to one centralised bill. Participants are not charged for accessing the service.
<b>Shared Cost Billing or Premium Rate Conferencing</b> (PowWowNow, Conference Genie)	Each participant is billed separately for their portion of the call. Charges are applied to the individual's phone bill and take the form of an access charge (variable dependent on the telephone company can be 10-17p per minute for a landline and up to 50p per minute for a mobile) A service charge is also applied, normally between 5-6p per minute for the UK.
<b>Bridging Fee, Conference Bridge Charge or Meeting Rate</b>	This is usually a pence per minute rate, charged as the base rate for each participant joining the conference.
<b>Global Access Charge or Access Rate</b>	Dependent on the geographical location of participants, they will be charged a variable per minute rate on top of the bridging fee/meeting rate.
<b>Call Recording Charges</b>	Some conference call companies will charge you an additional fee for recording your call and is either a per minute charge or a standard flat rate. (e.g. LoopUp £0.08 per minute, BT £6 per recording.)
<b>Playback and Storage Charges</b>	In addition to the call recording charge you may also see further charges to playback your call recording and store the call recording past 7 days.

## COMPARE YOUR CALL RATES

To be able to compare conference call costs correctly, you will need to work out your per minute, per participant charge. This will be more straight-forward if you have one centralised bill that covers every participants usage but you can still calculate from a mobile phone bill if that is the way your conference provider charges you.

First, find the total amount of minutes that you are being billed for. In most instances your total minutes will be shown clearly either at the start or the end of the bill. If on a mobile phone bill you will have to manually add the call duration up. Then you will need the total bill charge before VAT. To obtain your per minute rate use the following equation. This will provide a more accurate per minute cost, rather than just the access charge that most conference providers will advertise.

$$\text{TOTAL COST OF CONFERENCING} \div \text{TOTAL MINUTE USED} = \text{COST PER MINUTE, PER PARTICIPANT}$$

[Get in touch](#) for our Cost Comparison Sheet to see how this equation is used to compare costs amongst the main conference call providers in



### TOP TIP

Be vigilant with your conferencing bills. Many companies are coming up with new ways to charge for services and it is important to fully understand your bill and be sure there are no hidden or recurring costs that you were unaware of when signing your contract with your provider.

Perhaps its time to do an audit of your current conferencing costs, don't forget to also look at ad hoc conferencing charges that may exist on company mobile phone bills as well.

To further help with comparing conference call providers use our [10-Point Guide](#) to help you choose the right service to fit your business needs.

