

A MOMENT OF TRUTH FOR YOUR REMOTE MEETING SOLUTION?

Legal professionals may be working from home for many months. In order to operate effectively and stay connected, the right conferencing technology will be essential



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Around the world, law firms are planning for the very real possibility of staff working from home for a period of weeks or months. Meetings that previously occurred in-person with clients or colleagues must now take place remotely.

Conferencing technology has evolved significantly, and there are many alternatives to basic dial-in. But as law firms move to large-scale remote working, many are finding shortcomings with web conferencing tools. We've identified four factors to consider when evaluating a solution.

1. Simplicity

Conference calls have been an important part of day-to-day life for years, but some legal professionals will be using meeting technology for the first time. Partners must be able to schedule and join calls from home, rather than relying on colleagues to set them up. Clients must be able to join meetings without having to download software, which is often blocked by security settings. Integration with everyday tools like Outlook and mobile apps can improve usability. For international use, choose a solution with a multi-lingual interface. Bottom line – to avoid time wasted getting meetings started and dealing with distractions, the user experience must be streamlined and intuitive.

2. Features that enhance productivity

For a conference call to be an effective substitute for an in-person meeting, it must deliver comparable results. Look for features that improve remote meetings. Screen-sharing allows participants to view content together, rather than emailing documents and hoping everyone is on the same page. Adding video can increase engagement but isn't always appropriate. For example, on a long call with many guests, video can be distracting and discourages multi-tasking like checking email. Choose a remote meeting solution that makes it easy for hosts to start calls as audio-only and initiate video at their discretion.

3. Information security

Remote meetings can be the forgotten hole in a firm's information security. Basic dial-in conference calls are prone to unexpected guests listening in – often inadvertently (e.g., a meeting overruns and guests dial in for the next call), but occasionally for malicious reasons. Web and video conferencing software overcomes this by letting the host see exactly who's on the call, exposing unexpected guests. But in the last 12 months, security flaws have been identified with some of the most commonly used web and video conferencing solutions. Users have been left vulnerable to spying, denial of service attacks and malware. Clients trust law firms with some of their most confidential and commercially sensitive data. They expect the highest standards of information security at all times – including on conference calls.

4. Absolute audio reliability

If there's one feature that's not negotiable, it's audio reliability. Just one inaudible guest is enough to turn a conference call into a disaster. Most web conferencing platforms use VoIP to carry audio, sending packets of data over the internet. Any loss of packets leads to 'jitter' – words are jumbled or missing altogether. This is a particular problem when users join conference calls using home broadband over the public internet or create choke points as they enter a corporate network. By contrast, remote meeting solutions that route all calls over regular phone lines and only use the internet for screen-sharing and video always deliver 100 per cent audio reliability.

Putting users first

If a firm does find that its conferencing platform is not able to support large-scale working from home effectively, it's not too late to move to a new solution or deploy a backup. Software-as-a-service (SaaS) solutions can be rolled out across a firm in less than 24 hours on a pay-as-you-go basis, or downloaded by individual users.

Firms that can maintain client service delivery at this challenging time will emerge in a position of strength. This will require strong leadership, disciplined operations and a committed team. But having the right tools for effective communication will also play an essential role.



Premium remote meetings

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