

**TSW FORMAT
for
INFORMATION GATHERING
"Ideas that Work"**

Type of Project: Communication

Project Name: Free telephone conference call

Project Goal: Facilitate members participation in a free conference call

Organizing Service Body: Rockland County IG

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Resources Needed (budget, volunteers, materials, etc.): It may be a good idea to Google the URL freeconferencecall.com. I was a little suspicious at first, as I wondered how they made money to be able to afford to offer the free service. I'm still not exactly sure, but I think they offer other expanded services for a fee. Their website is fairly self-explanatory.

Freeconferencecall.com is a free service, where parties can participate in a telephone conference call for free. It seems only available in the U.S., as the Region 6 Board was unable to use the service as some of the Board members live in Canada.

The only resources we needed to get started were to have the email addresses or phone numbers of members so that we could agree on what day and time to meet.

Implementation Process (including length of time for planning and implementation): The length of time to plan and implement it was long only because people had to get used to the idea. I think most of us would prefer to meet face-to-face to discuss any OA business, but this free conference call is one other way to increase the chances that members can find a time and a way to serve. I've heard from one intergroup member that there are some members who would like to participate in intergroup, but just CANNOT find the time to show up in person to a meeting.

The way it works is that all of the members get a toll-free number, with an access code, and on the day and time of the call, we all log in from wherever we are, even if one is calling from a cell phone. If you log in before the moderator, they will put you on hold for a period of time. If it's too early, they will ask you to call back. So it's best to call in only a minute or two before the start time. The material received from the member who signed up our intergroup said that the call could be recorded, which is a very useful function. We didn't take advantage of that function, as I logged my intergroup's responses to the issues discussed. I did think it would be very useful for a longer discussion to have the meeting recorded.

Additional Comments (including things of which to be mindful): I heard about the service from other OA members that had either used it, or had heard about it. The discussion often came up when we would discuss ways to cut costs, whether it was a regional discussion, or an intergroup discussion.

I participated in the conference calling for an OA committee and also for my intergroup. With my intergroup, the WSBC motions had to be voted on, and our next intergroup meeting was set after the deadline to submit our opinions on the motions. So, it worked out well. We were a bit concerned about the weather being an additional barrier to our intergroup meeting to discuss this business, so it worked out well for that reason.

The issue to keep in mind about this "idea that worked" is that the quality of the call can be affected by the phone used by the participants. For example, if someone calls in from a cell phone in a car, they need to be aware of road noise. There are mute functions that can be used to mute noise from the participants, but when people are new to this experience, it takes time to absorb and use all of the available features. Members need to be reminded that only one person can speak at time, and that they should speak up if they can't hear another member on the call.

Results:

The results were good; got the business transacted, and the decisions made that needed to be made.