

Business & Broadband ^{1/3}

Cost and Productivity

The two issues affecting any organisation are cost and productivity. Using broadband will give you a competitive edge by addressing both these areas. The service itself offers all day communication for a fixed price and so is more cost effective and convenient than ISDN. Companies that take advantage of this service for telecommuting, e-learning and outsourcing will reduce their overheads and can concentrate on their core business.

With more enhanced features than ISDN, such as being able to transmit larger files on a more frequent basis or accessing multimedia applications faster, it offers increased productivity and better time management for businesses.

VPN-Secure Remote Access

With Broadband businesses can keep the connection with their head office open through either a LAN (Local Area Network) or a WAN (Wide Area Network) secured by a VPN (Virtual Private Network).

VPN technology provides a secure communication channel between a business, its branches, partners and remote users without having to run dedicated lines. This extends geographical connectivity, improves security, decreases transmission times for remote users and reduces costs. An instance where this proves beneficial is when an employee is working from home and they need the same level of security and speed as their colleagues in the office.

Global Connectivity

Broadband unites businesses globally through its web conferencing solution which includes:

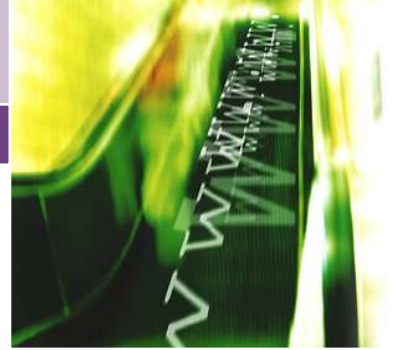
- ▶ The ability to share PowerPoint slides.
- ▶ Interactive question and answer sessions.
- ▶ Real time collaboration.
- ▶ The ability to digitally record and archive events for the company website.
- ▶ Sharing of files and applications.

It also allows the ability to privately direct messages between participants, to list attendees, conduct polls, and to archive sessions.

With the provision of such features, online conferencing is becoming more of a reality. It reduces overheads such as the travel and accommodation costs associated with business trips and the amount of time spent out of the office.

VoIP or Internet Telephony

VoIP (Voice over IP) or Internet Telephony allows telephone calls to be made and faxes to be sent over data networks, such as the Internet and intranets, at a low cost. It simplifies business equipment needs through integrating voice and data into one system and therefore reduces equipment costs and the problems that can arise from them.



Business & Broadband ^{2/3}

At the moment the direct telephone line offers better quality so VoIP is not widely used. However it is expected to expand rapidly because it offers advantages over traditional telephone calls, such as offering synchronous voice and audio messages where many people can talk to each other at the same time while exchanging images, videos and voice annotated documents. It also is cost effective in that you only pay for your ISP usage and not for a separate phone bills.

Tendering Online

Real-time international tenders benefit a business by streamlining the management process. This gives suppliers more time to place a bid and reduces the costs of responding by:

- Reducing advertising costs and the distribution of documentation material.
- Allowing a search on advertised tenders.
- Offering a secure environment to tender electronically.
- Providing a facility to download documentation.

The process generally enables the geographically independent deposit of tenders, and free on-line registration ensures that suppliers can be advised of any changes to the tender documentation.

Access To Online Financial Institutions

By providing a faster online service, Broadband reduces the amount of time spent on account management such as funds transfer/scheduling payments to free staff for other tasks.

On-line Procurement

Business procurement can be streamlined through the online operation of stock trading and control across the supply chain. Just-in-time stock control, i.e., creating and placing orders exactly when required, cuts storage costs. Using online procurement creates a faster turn-around time with the advantages of automatically creating invoices and reducing errors compared to a paper system.

Reduction of Expensive Travel Costs

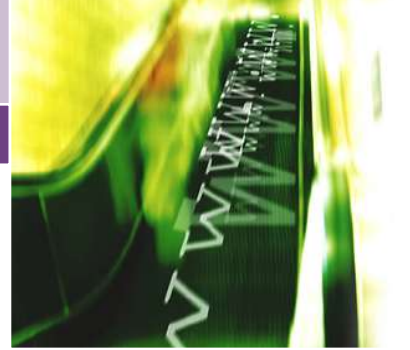
Travel and accommodation costs will be dramatically reduced, as business trips will no longer always be vital due to the take-up of online conferencing.

Staff Training

With "always on" access to the Internet, staff can participate in training via video conferencing to other online material situated on their intranet. Within their companies they will have the availability of twenty-four hour access to training manuals and/or assistance and can in turn discuss and share their ideas openly.

Teleworking

Teleworking or telecommuting offers the opportunity to work from home as opposed to being in the office. This allows cost savings through eliminating travel to and from work expenses and cuts down on office space. Because of the flexibility it offers, there is greater work efficiency and better quality of life leading to a general overall happier and loyal workforce. It is a great method for retaining valuable employees who may be thinking of leaving for lifestyle reasons.



Business & Broadband ^{3/3}

Enhancement of Client Relationship through Sales and Service Facilities

Videoconferencing can give you a competitive advantage by allowing you to enable your potential customers to view online demonstrations. This saves costs for you and your clients and will make your service a step above the competitors! Videoconferencing can help you cut costs and improve efficiency by allowing faults to be diagnosed online. With broadband you can examine the faulty piece of equipment remotely using a videoconferencing tool, and then instruct the on-site workers about how to repair it.





Security

Through videoconferencing, sites can be provided with a twenty-four hour security system that will allow anybody to see if an alarm call is genuine or false. This will cut down on false callouts and the need for extra security staff. Sites can also be monitored remotely for security breaches.

Invest NI E-business Service

All the benefits that have been mentioned so far have been facilitated greatly by the use of broadband. Invest NI is currently offering an incentive to help get more businesses online. It will provide up to 40% funding for small to medium enterprises to implement broadband within their organisation. This will incorporate supporting installation, consultancy costs where applicable, and the first year's running costs up to a maximum of £5000.

Related Links

-  <http://www.videnet.gatech.edu/cookbook/>
-  http://www.iec.org/online/tutorials/int_tele/
-  <http://www.investni.com/mainsite/default.asp?CATID=547>
-  <http://www.detini.gov.uk/>