

# CONFERENCE CALLS

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## GOOD THINGS ARE HAPPENING HERE

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### FORUM ANNOUNCES CONFER III

Forum Communications just announced the next generation CONFER product, the CONFER III. It looks similar to the old bridge, but it's all new.

Many things have changed with the CONFER III. For starters, each Unit or board now has the capacity for eight ports, up from six in the CONFER II. This allows for up to seventy-two ports in a card cage, up from 48. Also, several card cages can be interconnected seamlessly to grow to several hundred ports, satisfying a request from our customers the last few years.

Never before has there been a meet-me bridge of this size at this price level.

With built-in echo canceling, the CONFER III is now truly a plug-and-play bridge. Those few of you who used to have some installation matching problems can relax now. It won't be an issue any more.

Better disconnect supervision is now included to work with some of the less conventional phone systems such as Nortel and Toshiba. (I'm sure we'll hear comments back on that.)

There is now greater ease and flexibility in partitioning the CONFER III for multiple conferences, even between multiple card cages. More conference groups can be defined than in the CONFER II. Partitioning is now on four-port increments instead of six. And the configuration can be done remotely, via a new, optional, PC interface. This interface can be accessed through LAN connections for purposes of monitoring conferences, including who is speaking at a given

moment, as well as changing configurations and (optional) auth codes. Several other features are also available through the PC interface.

Another feature of the CONFER III card cage is the inclusion of three 50-pin connectors for connecting the phone lines. These can be used in lieu of the modular connectors for each line on the front of the conference cards. Things admittedly got a little messy with all the line cords at the front of the cards, and made it a little difficult when a card had to be pulled. The modular connectors are still present on the cards and can be used for line checks just by plugging a 2500 set into the modular connector.

Other requested features include a recorded greeting when a person calls the bridge, with entry and exit tones; a self-mute/un-mute feature and, self increased-gain feature

There are many other features in the CONFER III. We suggest that you give us a call to find out all the advantages of the new bridge.

This bridge is so neat that Communications Convergence Magazine has awarded it the "Editors Choice" in the August issue.

All these neat things are available at about the same per-port price as the Confer II, so the value leader has just become a bigger leader. And it's backed by the same service as always.

For you CONFER II owners, rest assured that we will continue to stock these boards to accommodate your expansions over the next several years.

## **HARRY WALLS NEW VP, SALES/ MKTG**

Forum Communication is proud to announce the addition of Harry Walls as our new Vice President of Sales and Marketing. This addition is part of Forum's new drive for expanded activity in the market, along with the new, enhanced, CONFER III product line. The company will draw on Harry's extensive experience and recognition in expanding the business.

Harry joined Forum because, in his words, he "could see the potential for tremendous growth with Forums strategic plans, and felt (he) could make a significant contribution".

Many of you will recognize Harry's name, as he has been active in this market for over fifteen years, being one of the pioneers as well as a well respected participant. Harry comes to Forum from Spectel, where he helped launch them into the U. S. market several years ago.

With Harry's help, Forum is looking forward to a banner year and continued growth. If you know Harry, feel free to give him a call and congratulate him. If you haven't met him yet, give him a call and introduce yourself.

## **ZURICH N.A. LOVES CONSORTIUM**

Zurich North America sells business insurance and provides financial services to businesses world-wide.

Several months ago, Zurich bought a Consortium Conference System to bring their conference calls in house, and save the cost of using a service provider, and to take advantage of other in-house features. According to Virginia Kirby, Director of Telecommunications, they love it. In their own words.....

"zConference rings up the savings"

SCHAUMBURG -- The new zConference call system has saved Zurich North America \$90,671.60 over 1-800-Conference and \$115,207.63 with AT&T in the first four months of 2002.

Want more good news? "The savings and usage are still growing," said Virginia Kirby.

zConference allows Zurich North America employees to schedule their own conference calls on-line through Channel Z. Not only is the system convenient, it also provides dramatic costs savings to the call host compared with outside services.

zConference costs just 6 cents a minute per conference participant as opposed to 27 cents a minute per participant with 1-800 Conference and 31 cents a minute with AT&T. A one-hour conference call with 10 people would cost \$36 on zConference. The same call would cost \$162 with 1-800 Conference and \$186 on AT&T.

"People like the system because it's easy and quick," said Josh Levin, Multimedia Manager. "They also like the sense of control the system offers. You don't have to rely on someone else. You set the calls up and make the changes yourself."

Recent feature updates create more opportunities for use. Now, employees can set up conference calls through the phone as well as through Channel Z. You can also set up a call to start as soon as you need it to accommodate impromptu meetings. And you can attach a PowerPoint presentation that can be viewed through Channel Z during your call.

(reprinted with permission from Zurich, N.A.)

## **Forum Bridges Help Fight Fires Out West**

If you live in the west, you're probably very familiar with the forest fires roaming through California, Arizona and Colorado. They've been on the national news, so most of us are at least aware of them if not understanding of the intense danger.

The Bureau of Land Management had purchased several conference bridges from Forum, just for times like this.

In the task of fighting these fires, it is important to coordinate the firefighter's efforts in attacking the blaze for the most effective results in controlling the fires. But more important, it is crucial to keep all the firefighters informed of the fire's course, and especially when it takes sudden turns, to assure that the firefighters don't become trapped. Forum's bridges play a vital in this communication.

Between fire seasons, the bridges are also used for administrative purposes, and may even be used for such occasional tasks as coordinating search parties.

## **Happy Eleventh Birthday To Us**

On May 8th, we at Forum celebrated our eleventh birthday, or anniversary, depending on how you want to look at it. In those 11 years, our business has grown every year and even with the current pause in the economy, our business continues to grow. In fact, as has been true in the past, the current "tight" economy seems to help our sales. It's the cost-saving factor which gets peoples attention.

We now have over 44,000 ports installed around the world, in over 45 countries. We continue to install into Government agencies for the U.S and foreign Governments as well as state agencies. Other on-going sectors include energy, retail, financial institutions, manufacturing and entertainment.

## **Another Love Story**

We can't help enjoying these. At a recent visit to the Tenth Court of Appeals in Denver, one of our people talked to Telecom Manager, Dottie Hirsch. They have two CONFERs with the Director option which is used for appeal cases, saving the plaintiff, the defendant and their attorneys from having to drive to the court house and find a place to park. She says they just love it. It's so easy to use. They're used 6-to-8 hours a day, five days a week.

## **Consortium Prices Reduced**

In case you haven't heard, we reduced the prices on the Consortium product line a few months ago

The reduction was about ten percent, passing on the savings of lower production costs with our higher build rate. This should make sales even easier. Go get 'em!!

## **DEALERS! Sell Conference Bridges!!**

We're all hearing stories about the tight economy and how businesses are cutting back on purchases. They can live with their old phone system 'til things get better. So your sales people are running out of reasons to call on them. Call them and talk about conference bridges. They're still buying conference bridges. At least it's a new reason to keep in touch with your customer base. And it shows your diverse product offerings.

Sell Confer or Consortium bridges. We've preached it many times, but it still works. Go ask your customers if they do conference calls using a service. If so, how much do they spend a month? Over a few hundred dollars, tell them about Confer. Over a few thousand, tell them about Consortium.

It works! It's a cost-avoidance product. They still sell. We have several dealers who have told us how glad they are that they have our bridges in their product list, because that's all they're selling right now. Even if you don't make a sale immediately, it's an excuse to call on the customer.

## **Forum Communication Runs At Indy 500**

You wouldn't have seen our logo on any cars or on any of the signs around the track, but Forum was there, right in the thick of it at the Indianapolis 500 race. If you watched the race, you might remember the interviews with some of the drivers during the race, especially during the caution flags. Sort of a high-speed conference call.

This wasn't CONFER's first experience at the racetrack. Several years ago the CONFER was used at some regional races too. Track safety spotters around the track used the CONFER to advise of crashes on the track so drivers wouldn't come around a curve into a crash site. The spotters would immediately notify the control tower who would then turn on the yellow lights and wave the yellow flag.

## **Forum Helps With Verizon Critical Needs**

As most of you know, Verizon is one of the leaders in the world of telecommunications today.

Forum was approached by Verizon NSAC (Network Service Assurance Center) recently for a conference bridge that would serve as an "on demand" meeting place for their many locations throughout the country. The application was straightforward but of a critical nature.

"We needed a system that can bridge simultaneous calls and change voice prompts on the fly," said Mike Nedry of Verizon. "The Consortium fits our needs perfectly with its remote access, dynamic port allocation, and ease of use."

The 96-port Consortium is located in Verizon's new "Fault Management Center" where they can view their entire network in real time. It is similar to the "War Rooms" you often see in recent movies. Verizon can respond to problems immediately, as well as using the Consortium for daily routine tasks.

Forum is proud to be chosen by one of the leaders in this industry.

## **HERE WE GROW AGAIN**

"It's getting a little crowded around here." We started hearing that more, as we've been adding more people to our staff. With the economy in a quagmire, we've been reluctant to invest in more office space, but we've been forced into it now, so we added 40% more space to our operations. All we had to do is knock out a wall and add a few new walls, as there was vacant space next to us. We can stay in the same space we started in over ten years ago. No down time for moving. Also, this gives us two demo systems for Consortium, as our demo times were getting crowded too.

## **More Forum 9/11 Response Participation**

Over recent years, several railroads through North America have installed conference bridges from Forum, including Canadian National, Indiana Harbor Railroad, Wheeling & Lake Erie and even METRA in Chicago. They have been used to assist in the daily operations of these regional and nationwide rail systems.

In response to the 9/11 tragedies in New York and Washington, several of these rail carriers, such as Canadian National, called emergency conference calls. They needed to assess the effects of the tragedy on their operations as well as evaluate the potential of an attack on their systems and discuss preliminary response plans.

This was just one of several industries and Government agencies who really put the Forum bridges to the test during this trying time. We're proud to say that we had nothing but good reports on the bridges.

