

Case Study

Striking a balance through home working

Responsibility for managing marketing projects throughout seven countries across different continents is no easy task when you aim to maximise the time spent with your family. However, Sarah Higgs, Global Marketing Programmes Manager at BT Conferencing is able to juggle spending quality time with her young daughter whilst having a successful career by using conferencing technologies to work remotely from home. By using phone, video, and data conferencing Sarah can meet with colleagues across different time zones without having to leave her desk.

A desktop 'plug and play' videoconferencing system, a standard telephone and a PC are all Sarah needs to work simultaneously on documents with colleagues across the globe, have instant phoneconferences via the **BT MeetMe** service and present to a group of people based in different locations by videoconference.

The services can be made available with either no prior notice or a very short booking time, which makes them ideal for ad hoc project work, crisis management meetings or team announcements.

Sarah says: *"As well as reducing commuting time during the day, the compact style of the technology enables me to work remotely from home for part of the week, which enables me to spend more quality time with my daughter, Sophie. And in my capacity as Global Marketing Programmes Manager, many of my projects involve colleagues and customers based across the globe so physical meetings are often impractical."*

Sarah continues, *"The team and I put the technologies to very good use recently when we worked on a project with Japan Telecom to develop marketing material for the launch of J-Session, Japan's first phone and videoconferencing service. The project involved artwork design and drafting text for all the marketing material, including users guides, posters, credit card guides and note pads. During the course of the project, we worked with the Japan Telecom marketing team, based in Tokyo and our design agency in Kent."*

"With a time difference of 11 hours, I found a videoconference every Friday morning at six am ideal, as it was completed by the time Sophie woke up so I could enjoy breakfast with her and walk her to school. It also suited our design agency well, as the creatives were discussed on the call, amendments made during the day and new visuals sent back to Japan by the start of their day the following Monday."

Conference Call Presence, a data sharing application, was used for sharing the creatives between all parties involved.

"Thanks to advances in conferencing technology, we were able to deliver the project efficiently and in the short time frame we were given. From initial concept to delivery in Tokyo, the project took six weeks, including endorsement by Japan Telecom Chief Executive Officer, William Morrow"

Sarah adds, *"Although conferencing is now the obvious choice for the majority of my meetings I am very much aware of the different attitudes towards conducting and attending meetings between cultures across the globe. For example, I use phone conferences for short day-to-day meetings in the UK and with colleagues based abroad with whom I already have built a good working relationship. However, if I was conducting a meeting with colleagues abroad, I would always meet in person for the initial stage of a project as in many countries face-to-face meetings are preferred initially, before turning to virtual meetings"*.

Phone, video and data conferencing not only provide people like Sarah with the tools to make the working day more efficient, but they enable a more flexible approach to attending meetings to create a better work/life balance.

