



## Take a paws

Take the dog out for coffee or juice at a new beverage shop that has opened in Gilbert. **Page 7**

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## Conferring by phone can save big bucks

By **CHRISTINA ESTES**  
Special for The ABG

Less hassle, less time. For many Arizona businesses teleconferencing adds up to real savings.

A new survey from Wainhouse Research and Intercall® puts conferencing ahead of cellphones and just behind desktops as the most-valued company resource.

"It's much easier to get on a computer and see a seminar than get on a plane," said Vince Killian, a spokesman for the Tempe-based Institute for Supply Management.

Killian estimates that a recent teleconference arranged through Intercall® saved his company more than \$10,000 in travel expenses.

ISM goes a step further to make "webinars," live, online interactive seminars, as convenient as possible. If workers are unable to attend a webinar as it happens, the company supplies a link so they can visit later.

"We provide PowerPoint and questions and answers people asked," he explained. "The only drawback is they won't be able to ask questions."

Small businesses are benefiting, too.

Deborah Amsberry recently launched Empire Learning, a Phoenix-based company providing small businesses with 90-minute training webinars on Microsoft Office programs, QuickBooks and e-Marketing.

"I used to contract with some of the large seminar companies," she explained. "These were full-day classes and I knew these people were walking out with information overload. They got way more than they could absorb and remember."

Leaders at Tempe-based Calence LLC think they've just scraped the tip of a technology iceberg.

"I'm excited about the fact that we really don't even know what's possible yet," said Doug Fink, vice president of Unified Communications at Calence.

Calence, the largest pure-play network solutions provider in the U.S., is teaming up with Cisco Systems to bring high definition conferencing to the corporate boardroom.

Fink said using high definition flat screen TV monitors make for seamless communication. "Because it's high definition, it's almost 90 percent as effective as being there in person. You get eye contact, you get emotion."

According to Fink, Cisco has a waiting list for the virtual boardroom technology. Cisco is installing demonstration sites around its offices.

"Build it and they will come," Fink said.

And, he said, businesses will save money through internal investment.

"Customers get a bill every month for bridging services, Web or phone or video services. Those can add up to tens of thousands of dollars," he said. "We can put an on-premise solution in for as low as \$25,000. Our internal studies for customers typically range from four to six months for payback."

*Estes is a Valley-based freelancer. Reach her at christina@trustexpert.com.*

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