

**The Technical Difficulty of Organising a Global Conference Call from the United States:
Why Mumbai will become the Coordination Center of Global Commerce.**

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Scheduling an international meeting, either face to face or by video conference, can be challenging in today's global world. There are only 98 common work days available for a meeting where someone from each country could participate after accounting for all typical national and religious holidays observed in Europe, North America, Asia, the Gulf States, and the BRIC countries. This means only 38% of the 2010 business calendar is actually useable. If the common work days during the typical summer holiday period observed by most European and Australian firms are also eliminated there are only 78 (30%) days available. (Table 1)

Table 1 – Common Day Table for 2010

	Europe	With North America	With Asia & BRIC	Typical Summer	Holiday Free
January	15	14	10	0	0
February	11	10	8	8	0
March	12	12	10	10	0
April	15	15	7	7	0
May	10	10	6	6	0
June	10	10	7	7	0
July	13	13	9	9	0
August	16	16	10	0	0
September	6	6	3	3	0
October	13	13	12	12	1
November	13	12	9	9	0
December	13	13	7	7	0
Total Common Work Days	147	144	98	78	1
Average Monthly Common Work Days	12	12	8	7	
Total Possible Work Days Annually	260	260	260	260	52
Percent Available for Global Common Projects	0.57	0.55	0.38	0.30	0.02

If you need to schedule a bigger block of time for a seminar or trade show there is only 1 week in the entire year that has no observed holidays. (Table 2) September offers the least flexibility with only 4 common work days. October offers the best chance with 12 days on average available for global meetings. On average, there are only 7 common work days per month. The most popular holidays are related to New Years, Christmas, and a country's Independence or Liberation event. It is difficult to calculate the country with the most holidays since there are both national and regional holidays some of which are widely (but not legally) observed. Switzerland, for example, has a total of 54 legally recognized holidays if all the holidays from each canton are included. The country with the fewest number of nationally observed public holidays appears to be India, with only three dates (26, January; 15 August; 2 October), although it has many regional holidays.

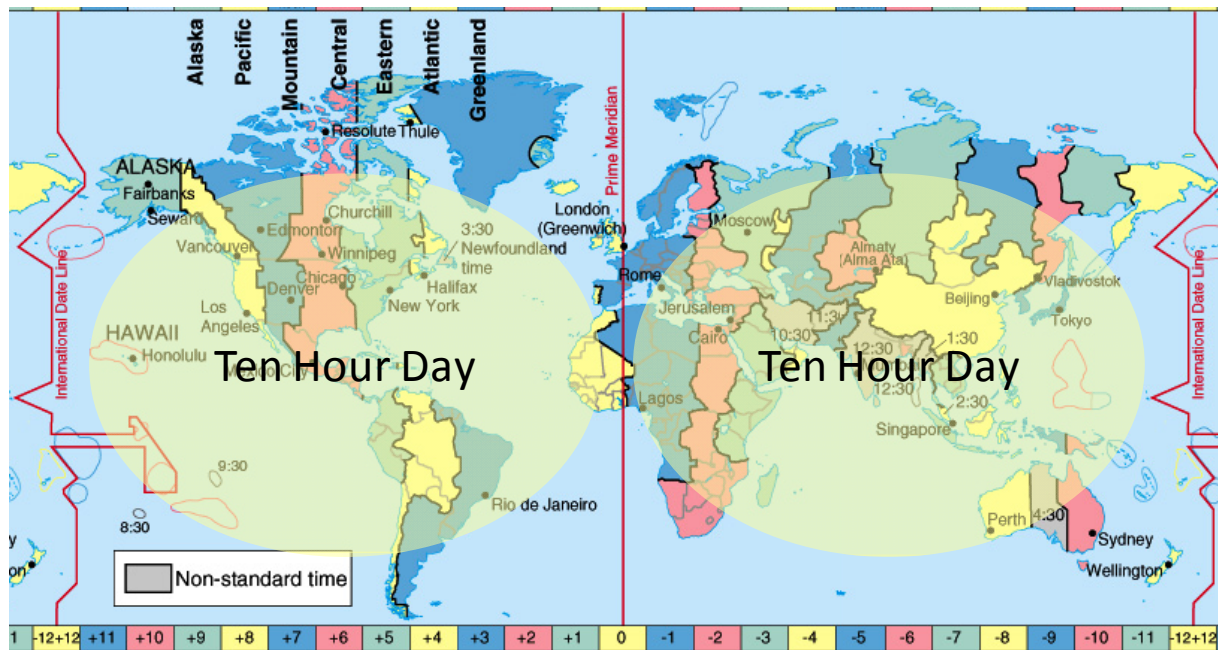
Table 2 - Common Work Days for 2010

2010	First Week					Second Week					Third Week					Fourth Week					Fifth Week					Sixth Week		
	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Mon	Tues	
January																												
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Legend: Grey = day not part of the month, Green = day available across all countries in sample, Red = day is unavailable in at least one country in the sample.
Source: Microsoft Outlook Calendar and individual country websites of national and local public holidays

As seasoned international managers know, finding a common day is only half of the problem. Global teams must also find a common hour. Traveling eastward, a common work hour day from the west coast of the USA to New Zealand is 18 hours long. The city with the best positioning for a global telephone or video conference is Mumbai. Assuming you are organizing a one hour conference call or video over lunch time in Mumbai it will be 8 am in London and 6 pm in Auckland.

Chart 1 - Common Work Hours Graphic



Source: World Time Zone Image found at www.onepointed.com/dan/images/time_zone_map.jpg

In a typical eight hour day this includes almost all of Europe, Johannesburg, Moscow, the Gulf States, India, and all of Asia. Adding England and Australia pushes the day to 10 hours. In contrast, lunch time in Chicago only overlaps with the typical 8 hour work day of Rio de Janeiro. If you expand the day to 10 hours you can to include Reykjavik, Lisbon, London and bits of West Africa.

Of course having lots of countries close by is well and good. But what really counts is the economic weight of these neighbors. If you are in the center of a poor cluster of countries it is harder to make the claim of being centrally located than if you are in the middle of a rich cluster. By this reckoning Chicago also loses out. It is in the center of only 33% of the world's wealth as measured by annual GDP.

(Appendix 1) Mumbai however is located in the center of the working day of nearly 73% of the world's wealth.

The time zone and center of wealth champion is clearly India. Perhaps all new world projection maps should be centered on India and not America!

Michael Segalla is a researcher and professor at HEC, Paris. A frequent contributor to Harvard Business Review, his focus is usually on the international dimensions of conducting business in other countries.

Appendix

GDP by Country and Regions

These region codes were added by author

Source: World Development Indicators Database, World Bank, 19 April, 2010

Region	Country / Region	GDP (millions of USD)
1	Antigua and Barbuda	1,217
1	Bahamas,	7,234
1	Barbados	3,682
1	Belize	1,359
1	Bermuda	5,855
1	Bolivia	16,674
1	Chile	169,458
1	Colombia	243,765
1	Costa Rica	29,664
1	Dominica	357
1	Dominican Republic	45,541
1	Ecuador	54,686
1	El Salvador	22,115
1	Faeroe Islands	1,974
1	Greenland	2,197
1	Grenada	638
1	Guatemala	38,983
1	Guyana	1,155
1	Haiti	7,205
1	Honduras	13,343
1	Iceland	16,657
1	Jamaica	14,614
1	Mexico	1,088,128
1	Nicaragua	6,592
1	Panama	23,088
1	Paraguay	15,977
1	Peru	129,109
1	São Tomé and Príncipe	175
1	St. Kitts and Nevis	543
1	St. Lucia	996
1	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	598
1	Suriname	3,033
1	Trinidad and Tobago	24,145
1	Uruguay	32,186
1	USA	14,093,310
1	Venezuela,	314,150

1	Region Total GDP	16,430,403
2	Afghanistan	10,624
2	Albania	12,295
2	Algeria	166,545
2	Andorra	3,245
2	Angola	84,945
2	Argentina	328,465
2	Armenia	11,917
2	Australia	1,015,217
2	Austria	413,503
2	Azerbaijan	46,135
2	Bahrain	21,903
2	Bangladesh	79,554
2	Belarus	60,313
2	Belgium	504,206
2	Benin	6,680
2	Bhutan	1,283
2	Bosnia and Herzegovina	18,512
2	Botswana	13,414
2	Brazil	1,575,151
2	Brunei Darussalam	11,471
2	Bulgaria	49,900
2	Burundi	1,163
2	Cambodia	10,354
2	Cameroon	23,396
2	Canada	1,501,329
2	Cape Verde	1,592
2	Central African Republic	1,988
2	Chad	8,400
2	China	4,326,996
2	Comoros	530
2	Congo, Dem. Rep.	11,668
2	Congo, Rep.	10,723
2	Croatia	69,332
2	Cyprus	24,910
2	Czech Republic	215,500
2	Denmark	341,255
2	Djibouti	875
2	Egypt,	162,283
2	Equatorial Guinea	18,525
2	Eritrea	1,654
2	Estonia	23,401
2	Ethiopia	25,585

2	Finland	272,700
2	France	2,856,556
2	Gabon	14,535
2	Georgia	12,791
2	Germany	3,649,494
2	Greece	355,876
2	Hong Kong	215,355
2	Hungary	154,668
2	India	1,159,171
2	Indonesia	510,730
2	Iran,	286,058
2	Israel	202,101
2	Italy	2,303,079
2	Japan	4,910,840
2	Jordan	21,238
2	Kazakhstan	133,442
2	Kenya	30,355
2	Korea, Rep	929,121
2	Kosovo	5,448
2	Kuwait	148,024
2	Kyrgyz Republic	5,059
2	Lao	5,543
2	Latvia	33,784
2	Lebanon	29,264
2	Lesotho	1,622
2	Libya	93,168
2	Liechtenstein	4,160
2	Lithuania	47,341
2	Luxembourg	53,704
2	Macao	18,599
2	Macedonia,	9,521
2	Madagascar	9,463
2	Malawi	4,269
2	Malaysia	221,773
2	Maldives	1,261
2	Malta	7,449
2	Mauritius	9,320
2	Moldova	6,047
2	Mongolia	5,258
2	Montenegro	4,891
2	Mozambique	9,846
2	Namibia	8,837
2	Nepal	12,615

2	Netherlands	871,004
2	New Zealand	129,940
2	Niger	5,354
2	Nigeria	207,118
2	Norway	451,830
2	Oman	41,638
2	Pakistan	164,539
2	Palau	181
2	Papua New Guinea	8,239
2	Philippines	166,909
2	Poland	527,866
2	Qatar	71,041
2	Romania	200,071
2	Russian Federation	1,679,484
2	Rwanda	4,457
2	San Marino	1,703
2	Saudi Arabia	468,800
2	Serbia	50,061
2	Seychelles	833
2	Singapore	181,948
2	Slovak Republic	98,464
2	Slovenia	54,613
2	Solomon Islands	645
2	South Africa	276,445
2	Spain	1,604,235
2	Sri Lanka	40,565
2	Sudan	55,927
2	Swaziland	2,837
2	Sweden	478,961
2	Switzerland	491,950
2	Syrian	55,204
2	Tajikistan	5,134
2	Tanzania	20,490
2	Thailand	272,429
2	Timor-Leste	498
2	Tunisia	40,309
2	Turkey	734,853
2	Turkmenistan	15,327
2	UAE	198,693
2	Uganda	14,326
2	Ukraine	180,355
2	Uzbekistan	27,934
2	Vietnam	90,645

2	Yemen,	26,576
2	Zambia	14,314
2	Region Total GDP	40,025,858
3	Burkina Faso	7,948
3	Channel Islands	11,515
3	Côte d'Ivoire	23,414
3	Gambia,	811
3	Ghana	16,653
3	Guinea	3,799
3	Guinea-Bissau	430
3	Ireland	267,576
3	Isle of Man	4,076
3	Liberia	843
3	Mali	8,740
3	Mauritania	2,858
3	Morocco	88,883
3	Portugal	243,497
3	Senegal	13,273
3	Sierra Leonesco	1,954
3	Togo	2,898
3	UK	2,674,057
3	Swing Region Total GDP	3,373,225
4	Fiji	3,590
4	Kiribati	137
4	Marshall Islands	158
4	Micronesia, Federated States	258
4	Samoa	523
4	Tonga	278
4	Vanuatu	590
4	Isolated Region Total GDP	5,534
1	American Region Total GDP	19,803,628
1	American Region Total GDP (%) (includes swing region)	33%
2	Mumbai Region Total GDP	43,399,083
2	Mumbai Region Total GDP (%) (includes swing region)	73%
TOTAL Global GDP (USD - 2008)		59,835,020