# How Guest Users Expand the Value of Glip

Boosting the productivity of employees is the primary goal of most companies adopting team messaging and collaboration, but with RingCentral Glip™, the value is not limited to collaboration among employees. You can invite guest users into Glip for free as a way of engaging more intimately with customers, contractors, consultants, business partners, and advisors.

Guest users only get access to the team or teams you invite them into, which is a virtue when your goal is to grant limited access. For example, you might want to invite the members of a customer focus group into a Glip conversation where you share confidential details about your product plans and ask for their feedback. These customers would be full participants in the team conversation created for the focus group and could join Glip online meetings to discuss the work of the team. But they wouldn't be able to go poking around in other areas of your business.
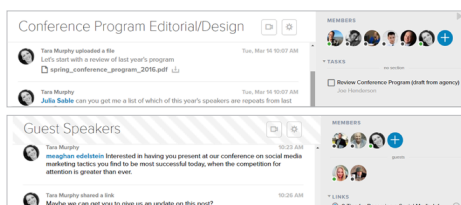
How Glip shows which teams include guests.

Conversations that include guests display a shaded background behind the team name when viewed from a browser or the Glip desktop app. In addition, the team composition (guests versus coworkers) is displayed on the Shelf, Glip's contextual sidebar (displayed as a tab in the mobile app). These signals help remind employees and other coworker-class users to be more careful what they share in mixed company.

By default, when you invite someone into Glip using an email address associated with your business domain, Glip treats them as a "coworker" or full-fledged user. When you invite someone from any other domain, Glip prompts you to choose whether they should be classified as a coworker or as a guest user. The advantage of making them a guest user is those accounts are free in all editions of Glip. On the other hand, if you are inviting in a trusted consultant or a board member, you might want to grant them all the same access rights as an employee. The ability to manually define who counts as a coworker is also important for virtual organizations where everyone may have an email address from a different domain.

Here are some of the scenarios where the ability to involve guest users can be valuable.

Engaging customers

Depending on the size and nature of your business, you might invite customers into Glip routinely or only selectively.

Consulting and professional services firms often create a Glip team for each customer, inviting members of the customer organization as part of the onboarding process. Customers get a direct channel for communicating with the firm whenever they have a question, request, or complaint. The firm benefits from having more of the communication, files, and tasks associated with their work for that client centralized in one place, making it easier to organize and prioritize work.

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For example, social media marketing agency SEA Media routinely creates Glip conversations for major customers to establish a continuing conversation about all the projects SEA is performing on their behalf. This is particularly handy for sharing design mockups as images in the conversation, which customers can mark up using Glip image annotation. In other consulting contexts, giving clients the opportunity to post comments on a PowerPoint or PDF document using Glip document previews would be equally powerful.

If yours is a large organization with thousands of customers, you wouldn't invite them all into Glip, but you might want to invite select or premier customers with whom you want to establish a close relationship.

A software company would be better off using a tool like Zendesk (which integrates with Glip) for routine customer support but can use Glip to get feedback from a few dozen beta testers. A consumer products company can recruit a sampling of the people who sent in the warranty card for a product to brainstorm with other users of the product about potential improvements. Inviting customers selectively and giving them inside access to your new product development or other insider processes creates a strong impression of how much you value their thoughts and their business.

Involving external contributors

Any non-employee who contributes to the work of your organization, whether on a single project or on an ongoing basis, could make sense as a guest user. For example, the temporary business-housing firm Travelers Haven uses Glip to collaborate with several of the major contractors who furnish and maintain its properties. Architects and construction companies use Glip to collaborate with subcontractors. Software development and marketing teams use Glip to stay in contact with agencies, contractors, and freelancers who fill specialized needs or supplement the talents of employees.

Communicating and collaborating through Glip keeps the interaction focused. Rather than being lost amid email, every message a guest user gets through Glip arrives in the context of a project or business function you have invited them into. You can assign them tasks and track how quickly those tasks are checked off as done (or how often deadlines are repeatedly delayed).

Cementing partnerships

Any relationship where organizations work together, formally or informally, can be served by a Glip team conversation.

Companies partner for all sorts of reasons. They may even be competitors on one front, simultaneously working together to develop or market a joint product. That's a case where you would definitely want a guest user confined to the team conversation for that joint project, rather than being given free rein as a coworker.

The same sort of limited access makes sense for a technology company collaborating with a channel partner who may also represent competitors. Ditto for a manufacturer working with mass market retailers. Your organization might form an academic partnership with university researchers to accelerate R&D, and academics might partner with each other.

A business that adopts a charity can use Glip to partner with that nonprofit and gain oversight into how its money is being spent. Or a nonprofit can use Glip to invite board members and major sponsors into a team conversation where it will solicit their advice.

Extending the invitation

Inviting guests into Glip is as simple as clicking the "+" button associated with any team conversation and entering a list of email addresses. If people are not expecting the invitation, it's a good idea to follow up with a message saying you want to use Glip to work with them more closely. Even if they don't respond immediately by setting a password for their account, they will get messages posted to the group as email notifications in the meantime.

Let them know why it will be worthwhile for both of you for them to join Glip as your guest.

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