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Communicating Across Cultures

Bob Dignen



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Contents

Communicating Across Cultures

Bob Dignen



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CAMBRIDGE
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Cambridge Business Skills

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Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521181983

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First published 2011

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-18198-3 Student's Book with Audio CD

ISBN 978-0-521-18202-7 DVD

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Preparing to communicate across cultures



You don't need me to tell you that business is international. But what impact does the globalisation of business have on the way we use English to communicate? Well, what it means is that speaking 'good English' is not good enough any more. We have also to understand and engage with the challenges of working across cultures. We have to become more aware of the differences between ourselves and people from other cultures. And we have to adapt, and communicate and use English in a way that is sensitive to these differences.

Bob Dignen, York Associates

Welcome to *Communicating Across Cultures*, one of a new series of courses from Cambridge University Press designed to develop excellence in business communication in English. The complete training package includes this book and an Audio CD, an accompanying DVD with worksheets and a dedicated website with full trainer's notes including extension activities. You can access this material at: www.cambridge.org/elt/communicatingacrosscultures.

The secret of communicating successfully across cultures

Whether you are receiving clients from abroad, visiting potential overseas suppliers, working in international teams, presenting, negotiating or just socialising after a hard day's work, you need to be able to do three things to communicate effectively:

- 1 You need to have an understanding of your own culture and the target culture you are dealing with. This means researching and analysing the national, regional and corporate cultures of the people you are dealing with.
- 2 You need to be flexible in the way you communicate with people from other cultures. This means adapting your style of communication to fit the situation.
- 3 You need to develop an international style of communication that will enable you to get your message across effectively in all business and social situations.

Each unit in the book begins with clearly stated aims to develop relevant skills which can improve your performance at work. A short 'Can do' statement at the end of each unit confirms which new skills you have learned and helps you track your progress.

As you work through the 12 units of this course, you should always be thinking how to make the skills and techniques your own. Working across cultures is a rewarding and enjoyable experience; this course is designed to give you the means to make the most of that experience.

I hope you enjoy the *Communicating Across Cultures* experience!

Communicating Across Cultures and you

Take a few moments before you begin the course to think about your own needs and experiences. Tick the comments below that apply to you and see how *Communicating Across Cultures* can help you to improve.

- I would appreciate practical advice on how to be successful in different cultures.
- Sometimes I get frustrated when people do things differently. I need to be more patient and tolerant.
- I need to be able to build strong relationships in my international role.
- I need to be able to deal with different styles of communication.
- I wish I could make my international meetings more productive.
- I don't feel comfortable with the idea of changing my personality to fit into different cultures.
- I sometimes have to deal with emails that seem impolite.
- I need to ensure that cultural differences don't lead to conflict.
- I need to work with people from different cultures in international teams.
- I would like to know how interculturally competent I am.

- This course contains interviews with professional business people working all over the world. They talk about their experiences of working internationally and how they solve intercultural challenges on a daily basis. Their experience will help you with your own challenges.
- Managing yourself is as important as managing others. Unit 1 enables you to think about how flexible you really are and to develop a more tolerant thinking style that will help you to cooperate with others more effectively.
- Most experienced international professionals say that the ability to build strong relationships is one of the biggest success factors for working across cultures. Unit 2 looks at the social skills needed to develop rapport with individuals across cultures.
- Units 3, 4, 5 and 8 analyse different communication styles and encourage you to develop a range of speaking and listening strategies which you can use in different contexts to get your message across while presenting, participating in a meeting or negotiating.
- Everybody wants to make meetings more productive! Unit 4 looks at how to take decisions more effectively and how to manage different types of communicator in international meetings.
- Being effective across cultures is not about changing personality. However, it is about flexibility and understanding how some of your own behaviours might confuse others. Unit 6 helps you to tailor your message for your international partners so that you can understand each other and work together effectively.
- Unit 7 looks at effective email practice and gives practical tips and tricks on writing and reading emails positively and professionally.
- Unit 9 is dedicated to the issue of conflict across cultures: the causes of conflicts and strategies to solve them. The unit will give you great ideas on how to avoid and manage conflicts that arise in your work environment.
- Units 10 and 11 give practical tips on how to manage diversity in teams to innovate more effectively.
- In Unit 12 there is a questionnaire you can use to analyse your own international working style and develop an action plan to improve your skills for the future.

1A


Developing intercultural skills

Aims


- To understand what culture means
- To learn ways to describe culture



- 1 Look at the pictures of professionals working in different areas.
 - What do you think the culture is like in these organisations?
 - Would you like to work there? Why / Why not?

- 2  2 Bo Græsberg is Danish but lives in Germany where he works for a multinational retailer of electronic goods. He talks about the challenges of working across both national and corporate cultures. Listen to the first part of the interview.
 - 1 What does Bo define as 'the key point about understanding culture'?
 - 2 For Bo, how useful are checklists on national culture (*dos* and *don'ts*) as a method of learning about national cultures?
 - 3 Bo works in a retail organisation which sells electronic goods. How does he describe the culture of his company and the retail sector?
 - 4 What causes 'big misunderstandings in communication' in his company, according to Bo?
 - 5 Do you disagree with any of Bo's opinions? Why?

- 3 Bo says that '... at the headquarters here we have at least 20 cultures'.
 - How many different cultures do you have in your organisation, e.g. Human Resources, IT?
 - How are the cultures different? What communication problems can this create?

- 4  3 Listen to the second part of the interview in which Bo describes two examples of cultural misunderstanding in his organisation.
 - 1 The first example involves the construction department and which other department?
 - 2 Why does this other department see itself as 'the kings of the company'?
 - 3 What is the main difference in approach to store design between the two departments?
 - 4 What does Bo say can be the result of the cultural differences between departments?
 - 5 In the second example, which part of the company does Bo describe first? What is the problem with this part of the company, according to Bo?
 - 6 What is the second part of the company? What is the problem?
 - 7 How does Bo summarise the differences between the cultures of these two departments?
 - 8 What does Bo describe as the 'simple solution' to dealing with these cultural differences?



- 5 Do you agree with Bo's solution to working with different cultures? What else do you think is important to work effectively across cultures?
- 6 Read the description of a company's culture and complete the sentences with phrases from the box.

project-driven we value generally, we try to take care we see ourselves as
the focus is on the leadership style trusting people a lot of time is given to

We're a small consulting company and the culture and (1) is relatively informal in general. (2) flexible, not too over-structured. (3) satisfying customers so we tend to adapt to what they need. (4) creativity so people have a lot of freedom to innovate and come up with new ideas. Relationships are really important here and so (5) talking to customers who visit the company. (6) of people inside the organisation and we have weekly team meetings where people can talk about problems and get support. We're quite a (7) organisation but there's a fairly relaxed attitude to time and schedules and decision making: for us, people come first. It's seldom that people are put under a lot of pressure with strict deadlines. (8) to get the job done is better than monitoring them all the time. And we definitely don't have an email culture. We communicate just by picking up the phone!

- 7 Look at these words and phrases which we can use to describe organisational culture.

- 1 Match up the opposites. Can you think of any more?
- 2 Which of these adjectives does Bo use to describe his organisation?

top-down	task-oriented
people-oriented	individualistic
risk-focused	cost-driven
quality-focused	action-oriented
team-oriented	bottom-up

- 8 In pairs, describe the culture of your own organisation(s) using some of the vocabulary from exercises 6 and 7. Think about these concepts.

Leadership Decision making Information Communication Relationships
Time Quality Customers Cooperation

- Say which parts of the culture you like, and which you would like to change and why.
- Then think about other organisations which you know and describe the main differences between their cultures and that of your own organisation. Which of these differences do you think could be a problem if the different organisations did business together? Why?

Cultural tip

Describe and discuss your own cultures and the cultures of others. This will help you and your business partners to develop clear strategies to communicate effectively across the different cultures.

Can do I can describe my own organisational culture.

1B Developing intercultural skills

Aims

- To develop flexible thinking
- To learn strategies for supporting more flexible thinking in others

- 1 People working across cultures need to become more sensitive to possible misunderstandings and to handle them effectively. Read the introduction to the case study and the email below. Then answer the questions.

Jack is a financial controller based in New York. He has asked Akash, a colleague in India, several times over the last ten days to email him some local budget figures which are needed to create a central report. However, despite a recent phone call from Akash promising to send the report the next day, Jack has not received any budget figures. He decides to send this email about the problem to two colleagues with experience of working in India.

Hi

How goes it? Hope you're busy. Look, sorry to trouble you but I have a bit of a challenge with Akash in Bangalore. I keep requesting figures, getting a promise to deliver, but then I never get anything. To be honest, I'm getting annoyed because this whole style of promising and then not delivering is just unprofessional. I'm also worried because I need the figures for my own report in the next week – if I don't get that, I'll miss one of my key targets. I'm thinking of escalating the problem and writing a very direct email to Akash's boss and copying in my boss. What do you think? Any advice would be much appreciated!

Best regards

Jack

- 1 What is the problem from Jack's point of view?
- 2 How well do you think Jack understands the reasons for Akash's behaviour? What other cultural, personality and business reasons could there be?
- 3 What is Jack's proposal to 'solve' the problem? What other solutions could there be?

- 2 **PW** Work in pairs. Read the emails which Jack receives from his colleagues with advice on dealing with the problem. Student A: read email 1 on page 76. Student B: read email 2 on page 78.

Tell each other what the emails recommend and decide what would be the best thing for Jack to do. Then compare your recommendations with the rest of the class.

- 3 Read what Craig Storti in his book *The Art of Crossing Cultures* says about flexible thinking, and the 'flexible thinking' model that follows. Then answer the questions.

The ability to interpret situations, problems, practices – the way we do things – from multiple perspectives, from the way other people see them, is a tremendous benefit to you and your company. You begin to understand that behaviour that makes no sense to you might make perfect sense to others. You're not so quick to judge any more ... you give the benefit of the doubt.



Flexible thinking model

Flexible thinking stops people judging others' behaviours negatively too quickly. It makes people more open and interact more positively with each other and creates a stronger foundation for cooperation and mutual learning – all with the simple step of trying to understand the world from the other person's point of view.



- 1 Which ability does Storti say can produce real benefits for those working internationally?
- 2 What does flexible thinking stop people doing, according to Storti?
- 3 How can flexible thinking improve cooperation between people?
- 4 Study the language you can use to exchange opinions, and to encourage others to think more openly and 'flexibly' by considering alternative perspectives. Match each heading to the expressions. What phrases can you add to say the same things?

Evaluating different perspectives Asking for the opinion of others Giving an opinion
 Generating multiple interpretations Deciding what to do

- 1
I tend to think that ...
From my perspective ...
 - 2
What do you reckon?
How do you see it?
 - 3
Could we look at it another way and say that ...?
Just putting myself into her shoes, maybe ...?
 - 4
This makes a lot of sense if we assume that ...
If this is the case, then you're right that ...
 - 5
Given what has happened, I think it would be best if ...
In the circumstances the best thing to do is to ...
- 5 **G** Discuss one of two case studies of intercultural misunderstanding. Group A, turn to Case A on page 76. Group B, turn to Case B on page 78. Consider the following questions.
- What do you think is happening in each case?
 - Which cultural, personality and business factors could be important?
 - How are the people involved seeing things? Are they thinking flexibly or inflexibly?
 - Decide on a recommended course of action to move each case forward in the best way possible. Present your case and recommendations to the other group.
 - Compare your recommendations with the short case summaries on pages 64–65.

Cultural tip

Try to keep an open mind if communication breaks down with international colleagues. Think flexibly and try to imagine others' motivations based upon an understanding of their culture, their personality and their work pressures. Then choose a constructive course of action to solve the misunderstanding.

- C**an do I can think flexibly when interpreting the behaviours of people from another culture.

2A Managing first meetings

Aims

To ask the right questions

To learn communication strategies for handling first meetings

- 1 Kwintessential is a global organisation which offers intercultural training. Look at its briefings on how to handle first meetings in four different countries. Which countries are being described?



Senegal



Japan



Germany



Kazakhstan

1

Greetings are rather formal due to the hierarchical nature of society. The common greeting is the handshake, often done with both hands and a smile. Some men will not shake hands with women, so be sensitive to these religious differences. Wait until invited before using someone's first name, although the invitation generally comes early in the relationship.

2

Greetings are formal. A quick, firm handshake is the traditional greeting. Titles are very important and denote respect. Use a person's title and their surname until invited to use their first name. In general, wait for your host or hostess to introduce you to a group. When entering a room, shake hands with everyone individually, including children.


3

Greetings are very formal and ritualised. It is important to show the correct amount of respect and deference to someone based upon their status relative to your own. If at all possible, wait to be introduced. It can be seen as impolite to introduce yourself, even in a large gathering. A foreign visitor may bow the head slightly, since no one expects foreigners to generally understand the nuances of bowing.

4

When people greet, they take time to ask about the health and welfare of family members. It is customary for these questions to be asked over a very long handshake. People should be addressed by their academic, professional or honorific title and their surname or first name.

- 2 What is your experience of meeting people from different countries? What differences in behaviour have you observed? What do you say and do when you meet someone visiting your organisation from another culture?

- 3  Nigel Ewington is a director of WorldWork, an intercultural consultancy. Listen to him talking about managing first meetings in different cultures.

- 1 Why does Nigel say it's important to manage first meetings well when working internationally?
- 2 What does he describe as the main purpose of first meetings in the Arab world?
- 3 When he goes to China, how does he usually start small talk? Why does this create a positive impression?
- 4 Why is asking 'open questions' important?



- 4 Complete these open questions which you could use in a first conversation with a stranger.
- 1 Job: What do you for a ?
 - 2 Company activity: What of business is your company ?
 - 3 Work location: Where your company ?
 - 4 Arrival: When you here?
 - 5 Hotel: Where you ?
 - 6 Duration: long you for?
 - 7 Travel: How many times you to the Ukraine?
 - 8 Time working for company: long you for your company?
 - 9 Departure: When you ?

- 5 Closed questions, which require a 'yes' or 'no' answer, can also help small talk. One way to ask closed questions is to make a statement followed by a short question tag, for example:
You've been to our offices before, haven't you?

Complete the following closed questions by adding the correct question tag.

- 1 You've met our finance manager, ?
- 2 Most of your team are based in Hong Kong at the moment, ?
- 3 You took part in the conference call last week, ?
- 4 The weather's been great so far this year, ?
- 5 Don't forget to text me the name of the restaurant, ?

- 6 It is important to find things in common when responding to what people tell you. Match each comment to a response.

Comment

- 1 I've been to Italy a few times.
- 2 I studied mechanical engineering at uni.
- 3 I grew up just outside Madrid.
- 4 So these are the new offices.
- 5 Business is a bit challenging at the moment.

Response

- a I know the city quite well but not the region around it.
- b Really? My brother did something similar and now works in construction.
- c Indeed, but I read that things should be improving by the year end.
- d Impressive. Looks like a nice place to work. Our offices are very different.
- e Have you? Me too. I love the South.

- 7 **G** Role play a first meeting. Student A, you are the visitor: read your role card on page 84. Student B, you are the host and will meet the visitor: read your role card on page 77. Student C should observe the meeting and give feedback: use the observer feedback form on page 80. Then change roles and repeat the role play.

Cultural tip

When you meet people for the first time, greet them politely and warmly. Use a mix of open and closed questions during the first conversation. Try to discover what things you have in common. Be sensitive to the cultural background of the other person during the meeting.

Can do I can handle first meetings with new professional contacts.


2B

Managing first meetings

Aims


To understand different attitudes to small talk and personal relationships at work

To manage different styles of small talk

- 1  5 Listen to a conversation between Pavel Simon, working in his Prague office, and Jon Sondheim, visiting the Czech Republic from the US. They are meeting for the first time.



- 1 Jon asks a number of questions. What topics does he ask about?
- 2 How does Pavel respond to the questions? Why do you think this is?
- 3 In what other ways could Jon have handled this first meeting?

- 2  6 Listen to a second conversation between the same Pavel and Jon over dinner. Answer the questions.

- 1 Which main topic does Pavel decide to discuss?
- 2 How does Jon respond during the conversation?
- 3 Jon asks some questions about Dr Kuehn. What is Pavel's reaction to the question and his answer? Why does he react and answer in this way?
- 4 How could Pavel have handled the conversation differently?

- 3 There are some differences in conversational style between Jon and Pavel.
- What differences in style do you hear?
 - How far do you think these differences are a result of cultural or personality factors?

- 4 Across cultures people build professional relationships in different ways. Susanne M Zaninelli analyses the impact of these cultural differences on small-talk styles, using the metaphor of peaches and coconuts. Read the text on page 13 and answer the questions.

- 1 What is the style of polite small talk for a coconut?
- 2 What is the style of polite small talk for a peach?
- 3 How can peaches and coconuts negatively judge each other?
- 4 The article ends, 'Perhaps we should become "pea-nuts"'. What does this mean?

- 5 Are you a peach or a coconut? Check with others in your group to see if they agree with your assessment of yourself.

- 6 Questions can help to support small talk. However, it is important to choose the right topic. Look at the list of personal and professional topics. Add a few more and brainstorm as many questions as you can for each topic. Aim for a list of 20 or more small-talk questions!

Do you live far from the office? What are you working on at the moment?

Personal focus: home, family, hobbies / interests,

.....

.....

Professional focus: work responsibilities, current tasks, developments in the organisation,

.....

.....

Peaches and coconuts – the art of managing small talk

The coconut culture



People from a coconut culture are more reserved and only offer a thin layer of their private 'space'. Therefore they may appear serious and a bit distant during initial social conversations – this is the 'hard shell' you experience when you first meet coconuts. It can mean that not much personal information is shared in the beginning; this is perceived as being polite. For peaches, it's difficult to get to know a coconut fast.

The peach culture



Peaches, on the other hand, are seen as relatively more sociable. They like 'large talk' with people they don't know. They like to share personal space with others and even talk about private aspects easily. Peaches are more likely to smile a lot and be enthusiastic towards others. This is politeness. Of course, they still keep a small area, the 'peach stone', private from others.

Solving the peach-coconut challenge

When peaches and coconuts meet, misunderstanding is common. Peaches can see coconuts as cold and difficult to get to know, because they don't engage much in social conversation. On the other hand, coconuts can see peaches as too friendly, superficial and even impolite because they ask too many personal questions.

The peach and coconut metaphor highlights important cultural differences and tells us that what we think is polite may be seen as impolite by others. The answer? To be effective across cultures we should firstly not misinterpret signals we receive from others. Understanding the meaning of signals gives both sides the freedom to stay as we are. We also could become more flexible and adapt our style to people from different cultures – to be more 'peachy' with the peach and more like a coconut with coconuts, so that the other side feels comfortable. Perhaps we should become 'pea-nuts'!

- 7 **G** Student A, you are the host of an international project meeting. Go to page 76. Student B, you are the first visitor (Miguel). Go to page 78. Student C, you are the second visitor (Dani). Go to page 81.

When Student A is speaking to Student B, Student C should observe the conversation. When Student A is speaking to Student C, Student B should observe the conversation. After the role play, as a group, discuss these questions.

- How effectively did the host manage each visitor?
- How effectively did the host adapt to the communication style of each visitor?
- What do you think are the biggest challenges to managing small-talk conversations in English?

Cultural tip

Adapt your small-talk style to the other person to make them feel comfortable. Choose topics which interest the other person and ask questions which motivate others to talk.

- Can do** I can be flexible when building relationships in social situations. I can use a range of small talk styles which are adapted to different individual(s).

3A

Communicating effectively

Aims


To understand why communication can go wrong

To communicate messages with good and bad news sensitively




1 José Romeu is a senior executive in a large multinational Spanish bank which recently took over a local bank in Russia. He met the local Russian management team in Moscow for the first time and gave a 30-minute presentation to the team to launch the new international partnership after the takeover.

- 1 What do you think was the main objective of José's presentation? Why?
- 2 What do you think should be his main message to the Russian management team?

2  **7** Listen to the first part of the interview with José Romeu.

- 1 What was his objective for his presentation?
- 2 How did he feel about it?
- 3 What was the feedback from his audience? Why do you think his audience felt this way? Discuss your ideas in small groups.








3  **8** Listen to the second part of the interview.

- 1 What does he say was his biggest mistake?
- 2 What else does he say he did wrong? Why did this cause a problem?
- 3 What is his advice for professionals who have to present internationally?

4 How far do you agree with José's advice? In what other situations could you apply this advice?

5 When working across cultures we need to communicate sensitively, particularly when giving both good and bad news.

Communicating good and bad news

-  Highlight good news
-  Give positive feedback
-  Show respect for the other person's time when asking for something to be done
-  Apologise for any problems
-  State clearly your positive motivation
-  Be open and honest with bad news
-  Show understanding of the other person's point of view / needs

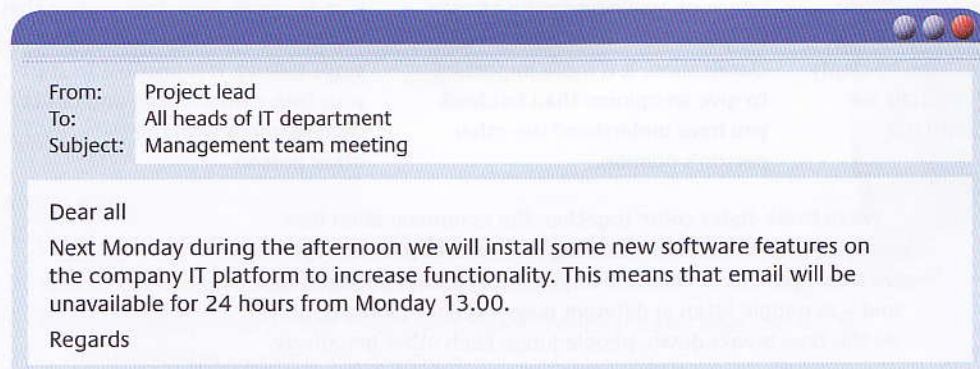
Read these strategies for communicating good and bad news. Then read through the extract on page 15 of a presentation to country IT managers from the leader of an international project to harmonise different IT systems across the organisation.

Each sentence in *italics* represents one of the strategies for communicating good and bad news sensitively. Match each strategy from the box to the correct sentence.

OK, let's turn now to our IT harmonisation project which we started at the end of last month. (1) Now I know that many of you were a little worried about disruption to services. And, (2) in fact we did have a few problems and lose some data during the migration. So, today (3) I would like to take this opportunity at the beginning to say I'm sorry for that. However, to better news: (4) I am happy to announce to you today that the project has been completed on budget and on time, which is a fantastic result. So I should also say (5) a big 'well done' to you and all of the staff of your departments. So, what's next? Well, we now move to Phase 2 of the project, which means we want to change some functionalities offered under home banking. (6) I know that this is a busy time of year for you with budget preparation but we don't believe Phase 2 will cause too much extra work for you. And at the end of the day (7) our main objective is to help you do your jobs more efficiently and deliver a better quality to the customer, which we all want. So, let's start with a more detailed look at Phase 2. I've asked Vladimir to talk us through this. So, over to you, Vladimir.

- 6 In pairs, replace the underlined parts of the above extract with as many different words and phrases of your own as you can, keeping the original meaning.
- 7 Read the email which the project leader sent to all the IT managers in the local countries the following week.

In pairs, redraft the email using the strategies in exercise 5 to communicate the main messages more sensitively. Then read out your emails to the class and judge which email is the most sensitive and effective.



Cultural tip

Always try to communicate to others in a way which they will understand as polite, respectful and positive. In addition, do not judge others too quickly when they communicate in a way which you see as negative. Try to find the positive message which they are trying to communicate.

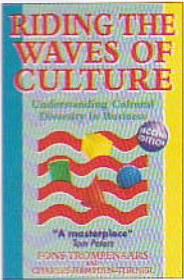
Can do I can communicate my message sensitively to others.

3B

Communicating effectively

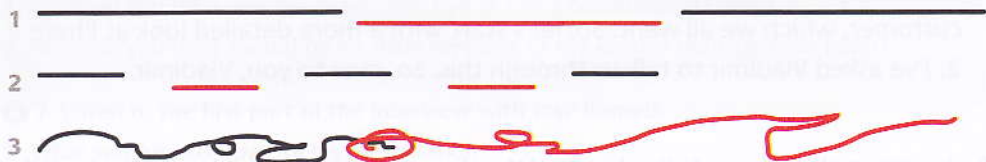
Aims

- To understand differences in communication style across cultures
- To learn phrases which help to manage conversations more effectively



- 1 In their book *Riding the Waves of Culture*, Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner investigate differences in the way people speak and listen across national cultures.

Read the descriptions of three different communication styles based on their work and match each style to one of the diagrams.



A Speakers give their opinions briefly with just a little information – this is seen as more modest and less dominant. There is lots of silence to allow people time to think and reflect. People are not direct when giving an opinion because harmony in the group is seen as important. People may not disagree strongly. Not so much time is taken to clarify what was said. Professionals are expected to understand the first time.

B People can give opinions in a very emotional or creative way. They may move around many subjects and talk so much that the only way to stop them is to interrupt them, and this is acceptable. People speak as others are speaking. If you don't interrupt, you never get a chance to speak. Little time is allowed for clarification. It is more important to give an opinion than to check you have understood the other person's opinion.

C In discussions people speak for a long time when giving an opinion, and can be powerful and direct. It is seen as professional to be analytical, to give all the facts and to have a strong opinion. Interruption is seen as impolite. You wait until it is your turn to speak – you know when that is because the other person just stops talking. It is possible to start your turn with a strong and direct disagreement with the other person.

When these styles come together, the communication flow breaks down and misunderstanding increases as people begin to give their opinions in different ways: direct / indirect; long / short; and – as people listen in different ways – silence / interruption. As this flow breaks down, people judge each other negatively.

- 2 Which style is closest to the style in your culture? Which do you think is most effective?
- 3 One way to manage these different styles and create a clear flow of communication is to use an interactive communication style. Read and complete the guidelines opposite with the correct phrase(s) from the box.

I couldn't agree more on that. I think, and it's just my experience, that ...
 I'm not disagreeing with you. It's just that ... You mean that ...
 What's your experience with this? I may be wrong about this but for me ...
 What do you think? What's your take on this? What about you?
 What you said was very interesting ... Interesting. Yes, but ... Absolutely.

Interactive communication style: guidelines

When speaking:

Give an opinion briefly. Don't speak for too long before letting the other person speak (90 seconds maximum).

Don't be too direct when giving an opinion. Show modesty and openness, perhaps by saying the other person could be right, e.g. (1)

Make clear that your opinion is not negative about what the other person said, e.g. (2)

As you decide to stop talking:

Finish with a question such as (3) or *Do you see what I mean?* to hand over to the other person and to show you are interested in their point of view.

This handover question also helps to make the conversation flow more easily.

When listening:

Give feedback to the speaker. Do this with non-verbal communication, e.g. nodding or smiling, or verbally, e.g. *Aha, OK, I see what you're saying* or (4)

As the other person stops talking:

Don't disagree too quickly by saying (5)


Begin with a short summary of what was said, e.g. *If I understand you correctly ...* or (6) to make sure that you understand.

Focus first on areas of agreement, e.g. *You may be right* or (7)

If you want to disagree, be polite and ask a question to discover more about the opinion: *Why do you say ...?*

Finally, give your opinion briefly.

4 In pairs, think of two more phrases of your own for each of the seven areas.

5  Listen to three colleagues exchanging opinions over lunch. Answer the questions.

1 Which proposal is discussed?

2 Summarise the opinions of the three colleagues to the proposal.

Jari:

Marie:


Sue:

6 Listen again.

1 What questions does Jari ask to help the conversation to flow?

2 Which two handover questions does Marie use?

3 Sue does not want to appear direct or arrogant. Which phrases does she use to communicate her opinions less forcefully?

7  Work in small groups. Choose one of the topics on page 84; both are about communication in organisations.


1 Discuss the topics using an interactive communication style to exchange opinions and thoughts. One person in the group should observe and then give feedback on the conversation using the guidelines in exercise 3.

2 Change roles and repeat with the second topic or another one of your choice.



Cultural tip

Be aware that people may use very different communication styles across cultures.

 I can build effective dialogues by adapting my way of speaking and listening.

Managing international meetings

Aims

To understand different approaches to decision making
To manage the decision-making process effectively in meetings

- 1 Read what four people said about the decision-making process in their organisations and answer these questions.

- What do you see as the main advantages and disadvantages of each decision-making style?
- Which of the decision-making styles is most similar to the one in your meetings at work?
- What kind of decision-making style do you personally prefer? Why?




In my department, meetings are very focused around taking decisions. The culture of my organisation is all about speed. So this means no meeting is scheduled for more than 30 minutes and we always have a decision before we finish.

Most of my meetings are by telephone with people all around the world. There's usually not much discussion between the participants. It's just one-way communication from the boss telling us about decisions he has already taken.

I work in research and development. People in our meetings love complex arguments. They always take their time to make a decision but once a decision is taken then they follow it.

The culture in this organisation is very informal. Where I work the most important meetings are the one-to-one meetings in the corridor or around the coffee machine. Sometimes it's good to network and get informal agreement about things over a coffee like this before the formal meetings.




- 2  10 Kaneko Takuya works in Japan for a global electronics company. Listen to him talking about his experiences of international meetings and answer the questions.

- 1 How does Kaneko describe the decision-making style in the meetings in his company?
- 2 He says the style has to change. In what way and why?
- 3 What target does the company have for its speed of decision making?
- 4 Which two factors make it difficult to change the decision-making style in the company?
- 5 Why does Kaneko believe it's harder to get to a decision in telephone meetings than in face-to-face meetings?
- 6 How does Kaneko describe his own personal decision-making style?


- 3 Kaneko says 'I think frequent communication *before* meetings is very helpful to get to a decision in a meeting faster.'

- How effective do you think it is to communicate a lot before meetings in order to help decision making in meetings?
- What other ways can you think of to improve decision making in international meetings?



- 4  11 Listen to the opening of a meeting about product development.
- 1 What two things does the project leader say she wants to clarify at the start?
 - 2 Which two decisions does she want to take?
 - 3 She says she doesn't want a 'big discussion'. Why not? What is proposed instead?
 - 4 The designer wants to 'slow down' the decision-making process. Why?
- 5 The project leader uses a five-stage process to confirm which decisions to take and how to take them. Look at the audio script on page 55 and underline the phrases she uses to manage each stage.
- 1 Say *what* you want to define.
 - 2 Say *which* decision needs to be taken.
 - 3 Say *how* the decision should be taken.
 - 4 Check with other participants and negotiate if necessary.
 - 5 Confirm the decision-making process.

What other phrases could you use to say the same thing?

- 6  Student A, you are the manager of a global insurance company. Student B, you are the representative of a training organisation specialising in sales education. You are going to discuss the roll-out of a specially developed training course.

First read the information below. Then Student A, go to page 84. Student B, go to page 88. In pairs, prepare your roles. Then work in Student A and B pairs and have the meeting.

You have both been involved for the past nine months in developing a new 'Leadership in sales' programme for senior sales executives across Europe. The target group is approximately 80 people. Student B has developed a concept and material for the new programme and sent this to Student A. You are now meeting to discuss next steps.

Student A sent this email two weeks ago to set up the meeting.

Hi

Thanks very much for the training concept and materials. Congratulations! It looks very good and is exactly what we wanted. We now need a meeting to discuss the process of rolling the programme out across the organisation in the first four months of next year. Meeting agenda could be:

- 1 When to do training
- 2 Where to do training

I would propose a short 20-minute meeting next Tuesday morning at 09.00.

Best regards

After the role play, form A and B groups of people who played the same role and compare your experiences.

- How effective was the start of the meeting?
- What did you do to deal with the situation? How successful was this?
- What was the result of the meeting?
- What did you learn about handling such situations in the future at work?

Cultural tip

The ways in which decisions are taken in meetings can differ significantly across different organisational and national cultures. It is important when starting an international meeting to clarify and agree with participants what is to be decided and how it will be decided.

 I can outline a decision-making process in meetings.

4B

Managing international meetings

Aims

- To understand how to deal with difficult communicators
- To use your language skills to manage difficult communicators in meetings



- 1 Donald Trump is a very successful American entrepreneur. Read what he says about managing difficult people. How far do you agree? Why?


There are some keys to managing difficult people. The obvious is to find something that you like about them. Everyone has hidden potential and a good manager will find it. Good managers will also look for qualities that they like about the people around them ... what they have in common can be used to build strong relationships. It's obvious that no one is perfect. We all have strengths and weaknesses. It's your job as a good leader to recognise the strengths instead of becoming obsessed with the weaknesses.

- 2 Running meetings in a foreign language can be very challenging, particularly when individuals in the meeting communicate in ways which are difficult to manage. For example, certain individuals may come across as aggressive or they may frequently interrupt and disturb the discussion.

Look at the table, which lists some common types of 'difficult' communicator. In small groups, discuss these questions.


- 1 How far do you think these behaviours can be explained as cultural or how far do you think they are a question of personality?
- 2 Note down in the table what you would say to handle these behaviours in a meeting if you were chairing it. How would you change what you say depending on whether the behaviour was culturally driven or personality-driven?

Behaviour	Response
Arguing and being aggressive	
Digressing frequently to irrelevant topics	
Not listening to others (playing with mobile phone / participating in side discussions)	
Saying nothing	

- 3  **12** Listen to four people describing behaviours which they find difficult and which strategies they use to support group communication. Make notes on what they say.

Communicator behaviours	Communication strategies
1 Quiet person	
2 Talkative person	
3 Impatient person	
4 Over-analytical thinker	


- 4 Listen again or read through the audio script on page 55. Find the phrases and sentences used by the speakers to manage the different behaviours. Write them down next to the strategies in the table.
- 5 Think of other phrases you could say instead of the ones in exercise 4, which have the same or a similar meaning.
- 6 Which other communicator behaviours are challenging to handle? Write down some phrases you can use to manage these communicators.
- 7 What kind of communicator are you at work? How do you think others see your behaviour (both positive and negative points)? What could you do to make it easier for others to communicate with you?

- 8  **G** Work in small groups of four or five. You are members of the HR department of a multinational company in the food sector. You want to develop the international awareness and skills of your managers and you have to make two recommendations to your executive management board. You are now going to have a meeting to decide which two recommendations to make. The agenda on page 81 has some ideas which you need to evaluate.

One person will lead the meeting (see page 77) and the others are participants. Participants should read through the different roles on page 79 and choose one to play during the meeting. Take a few minutes to prepare the role you have chosen and then hold the meeting. After the meeting, discuss with the leader of the meeting how he / she handled different communication styles.

Cultural tip

It is always important to respect and be tolerant of the different communication styles of individuals when working across cultures. However, leaders of international meetings need to use a range of strategies to 'manage' these different styles to make sure that group communication is efficient and effective.

 **Can do** I can manage different types of communicator in meetings.



Becoming a better listener

Aims

To understand the importance of listening for effective communication

To learn ways to clarify when listening



- 1 Abhijit Dey is an IT manager working in India for a global company specialising in chemical detergents, industrial adhesives and cosmetic products. He discusses his opinions on effective international communication. In his interview he says, 'Listening is probably the most important factor in any form of communication.'

- Do you agree with Abhijit? Why/Why not? What are effective listening behaviours?
- How good are you at listening? How could you be a better listener?

- 2 13 Listen to Abhijit talking about communicating across cultures.

- 1 In Abhijit's opinion, what is the main barrier to listening?
- 2 How does he try to listen effectively?
- 3 What helps to build 'two-way communication'?
- 4 How important is face-saving in Indian business culture?
- 5 How does Abhijit say we can make our partner feel comfortable and communicative?

- 3 Listen again and consider Abhijit's comments about listening.

- Do you agree that 'We are always responsible for communication working and, if it doesn't, then it's our weakness.'? Why/Why not?
- Are you surprised by Abhijit's comments about the communication style of the modern corporate Indian world?
- Do you think that in the future a global corporate style of communication will develop which is more significant than national or corporate culture? Why/Why not?

- 4 Abhijit says that 'clarification is always good ... in ... any country'. Research from intercultural consultancy WorldWork confirms that it's vital to ask questions frequently to check and clarify meaning. So when someone says, for example, 'We need more quality,' a good question to ask would be 'What do you mean by "quality"?'

Complete these clarification questions and statements with the expressions in the box.

You mentioned 'quality' several times. Is this ...	That's very interesting.
Why do you say 'cultural differences' ...	What kind ...
So if I understand what you said about 'risk', ...	How big is ...
So, 'we must have this in the deal' means that ...	So, I see that 'short term' for you ...
If we decide to 'stop all unnecessary spending', ...	What for you ...
I'm sorry, I'm not sure I fully understand.	What do you mean by ...

Checking understanding of their word(s) using your own words:

- 1 you think that we need a back-up solution?
- 2 means the next two months?

Clarifying directly the meaning:

- 3 'difficult'?
- 4 is 'good teamwork' exactly?

Clarifying values / motivation:

- 5 a big issue for you?
- 6 could be an issue?

Testing the consequences:

- 7 there is no scope for negotiation on this point?
- 8 should we cancel the planned training?

Asking for more precise definition:

- 9 of 'problem' exactly?
- 10 'big'?

Apologising and saying you didn't understand:

- 11 What do you mean by ...?

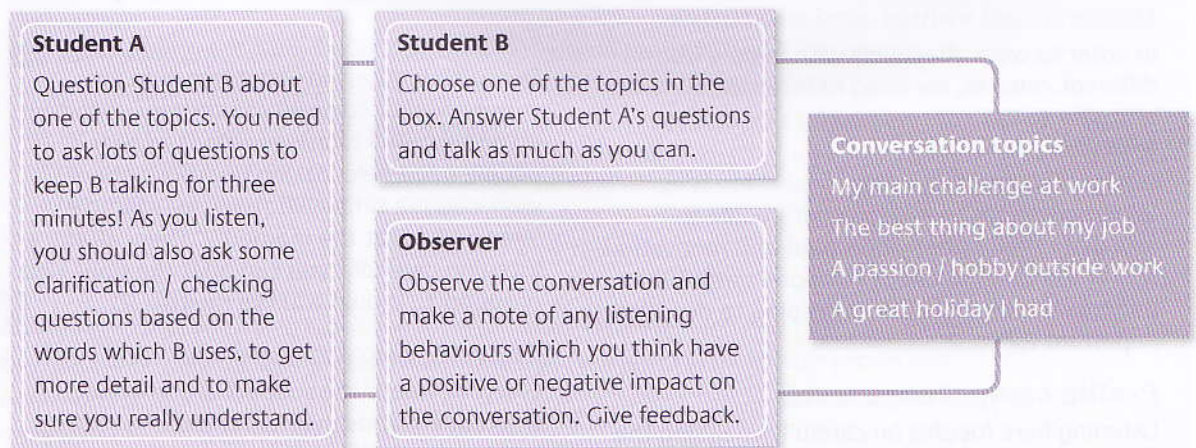
Explaining that something is important to you:

- 12 When you talk about quality, you're saying that ...

5 Read the extracts from different business conversations. What could you ask to clarify meaning?

- 1 I think we should try to reduce spending this year. It's a difficult financial climate and I think costs are out of control at the moment.
- 2 I think we need to review the process for handling customer enquiries. My feeling is that it's way too slow and we're getting real quality issues.
- 3 I'm worried about Peter. He's stressed out with all the new project work. He's leaving the office late every evening and I don't think he'll be able to keep it up much longer.
- 4 I think we need to improve communication a little inside the department. People don't seem to be on the same wavelength these days.

6 Work in small groups. Take it in turns to play the three roles. Spend around three minutes on each conversation and two minutes on feedback from the observer. Then change roles.



Cultural tip

When communicating with people from different cultures, clarifying the words we use creates better understanding. It also makes the listener feel that the speaker is really interested.

Can do I can use a range of clarification questions to understand what others are saying.

5B

Becoming a better listener

Aims

- To analyse why we listen to other people
- To learn phrases that help us to listen more effectively

- 1 Why do we listen to other people? In small groups, take a few minutes to think of as many reasons as you can. Then compare your answers with the list on page 68. Which do you think are the two most important reasons?
- 2 Read the text and answer these questions.
 - 1 Why is it important to listen out for a person's attitude to punctuality, for example?
 - 2 Why should we listen carefully to what a person tells us about their professional expertise?
 - 3 What kinds of question can help you understand if people need support?
 - 4 How can listeners get useful information?
 - 5 What is it essential for listeners to do when people talk about their emotions and feelings?

Five good reasons for listening



Understand values and attitudes

In order to work effectively with people from different cultures, we need to listen out for their attitudes to key concepts such as leadership, teamwork, punctuality, quality and customer service. The best way to discover these is by asking questions that help other people to articulate their underlying values and motivation. So, for example, to check someone's attitude to punctuality we could ask 'Is keeping to deadlines important for you?'

Profile competence levels

Listening here focuses on carefully analysing the expertise of the speaker. We ask questions to find out the other person's level of knowledge and skills. This can make it possible for us to get advice or to ask for help to make a decision, if the person has the right experience. For example, we can ask 'What's the best way to handle this, in your view?'

Get useful information


Listening for information which is important for the listener is essential to every busy professional. Effective listeners typically listen silently to analyse useful information or ask questions to direct the speaker to confirm things they know or inform them about things they do not know, for example 'So, how many more people do you need on the project?'

Offer help with work

Supporting others in your team who are overworked or stressed can be very important. It can be useful to ask questions to hear if people need help. Asking questions about workload is a simple strategy, for example 'Are you busy at the moment?' Then, after listening carefully, you can offer the right kind of support: 'Would you like me to ...?'

Support emotionally

Everyone needs the support of someone who understands their emotions and feelings in relation to difficulties they are facing. It is very important for listeners to make the speaker feel that he or she is understood sympathetically by using simple phrases such as 'I understand' and 'It must be difficult' or by using positive phrases such as 'I think you're doing a great job'.


- 3  14 Listen to three short conversations. Identify the main objectives of the listener in each conversation using the reasons in the text, and note down the questions they ask.

	Reasons for listening	Questions asked
1	1	1
	2	2
2	1	1
	2	2
3	1	1
	2	2



- 4 Match the questions to the headings.


- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1 Understand values and attitudes | a And everything's on schedule so far for all the other European launches? |
| 2 Profile competence levels | b So do you have a background in ...? |
| 3 Get useful information | c Why don't we ...? |
| 4 Offer help with work | d Is keeping to deadlines important to you? |
| 5 Support emotionally | e Have you worked a lot in ...? |
| | f I see. Sounds like it was quite difficult, yes? |
| | g So it's important for you to have a clear schedule in projects? |
| | h So how much exactly do you plan to spend next year? |

- 5  6 Form small groups of three or four. Use the cards on pages 86 and 87 to practise active listening. Take turns to be the speaker, the listener and the observer(s).

The listener takes two listening cards. The speaker then takes a speaking card and starts talking about the topic on the card. The listener has to ask follow-up questions to keep the conversation going and, during the conversation, use the two listening behaviours on their cards.

Cultural tip

Develop a wide range of listening behaviours which you can adapt to the specific person and the specific situation.

 Can do I can adapt my listening behaviours to the needs of different speakers and situations.

6A

Presenting across cultures

Aims

- To understand the challenges of presenting to different audiences
- To learn how to customise messages for your audience

- 1 Look at the notes from a training seminar which describes audience expectations of sales presentations in different parts of the world. Which country is described in each set of notes?

Finland UAE UK Germany US Japan

1

Humour goes down well.
A strong and powerful personality is appreciated.
A direct sales approach – slogans go down well.
Very individualistic culture which requires speaker to 'sell' himself or herself.

2

A formal presentation environment is expected.
Communication style is quiet and polite.
Knowledge of and respect for the company, its history and its leaders.

3

Clever and eloquent speakers are appreciated.
Speakers are expected to entertain and be animated.
This is a relationship environment which relies on more than just facts to sell.
Selling takes time and will require more than one presentation.

6

Ironic humour is appreciated.
Stories and personal anecdotes and observations work well.
Sales language should be moderate and reasonable (overstatement does not go down well).

5


Communication style is relatively formal and quite neutral.
Design is also important so the technical and quality features of the product should be stressed.
The speaker should not be over-confident.

4

Presentation should be serious and focused on data with solid analysis.
It should start and finish on time.
The audience is unlikely to participate.
The audience may expect to hear about the speaker's professional experience in the introduction.


- 2 In pairs, discuss these questions.

- What kinds of things do you need to know about your audience before a presentation?
- If you are from one of the countries described, do you agree with the notes? If you are not, create a similar profile for your country.

- 3  15 Dom Sullivan is based in Dubai but works across the Middle East region and Japan. His job is in advertising and he regularly makes presentations internationally. Listen to him talking about his experiences of presenting across cultures.

- 1 What is the most important advice he can give to people presenting internationally?
- 2 Which two universal rules of presenting internationally does Dom describe?
- 3 How is the style of presentation in the UK different to other cultures? Why?
- 4 Dom tells a story about a manager who was fired. Why was the manager fired? What is the main message of that story for Dom?



4  16 Dom says that presenters should adapt to the interests of local audiences.

- 1 Read these presentation extracts where the speaker acknowledges the audience's main interests and explicitly promises to deal with them.
- 2 Try to complete the extracts with words we can use to communicate needs and expectations. Then listen and check.

a

This afternoon I'd like to look again at the new designs for the global brand. Now I (1) u..... that there are significant problems with our first proposal in relation to your local market, which you (2) f..... are important. So I want to focus (3) e..... on these (4) c..... today, particularly around the choice of colours, and show you some solutions which I think you will find very (5) a.....

b

Now, as HR professionals, I can (6) a..... that one of your main concerns is to manage training effectively. What I want to do today is to help you to use the new training portal we plan to implement. Now, I'm not planning to go into great technical detail today because I know that you are mainly (7) i..... in how the new system can help you manage training more effectively in the company. For this reason I'll (8) c..... on explaining the main three (9) a..... for you of the new system.

c

Now I know that the changes to the organisation are complex, and I (10) s..... that things are a little unclear for many of you. So to help (11) c..... things for you what I want to do is split the talk into two parts. Firstly, I'll run over the main reasons for change just to (12) e..... you to understand things a little better. Then, as I know you'd really (13) n..... to have some more information about how these changes are going to (14) a..... you on a daily basis, I want to spend some time looking at the new central database where you'll have to log customer enquiries in the future.

5 Read the notes below for another presentation. In pairs, discuss how you could customise the introduction to this presentation. Then present your introduction to another pair.


Your role: You work for sales management at headquarters
Audience profile: Sales staff from Latin America
Objective: Give results of major survey of international customer satisfaction
Your interest: Give information to help sales staff improve sales and level of service
Audience interest: To sell more / How to make customers happier / To earn a bigger bonus

6 In pairs, prepare a short presentation where both of you speak to welcome a group of visitors to your organisation. After the welcome, the visitors will begin a tour of the company with a senior manager.

- 1 Decide the profile of the visitor group:
 - nationality
 - professional area
 - reason for visiting the company
- 2 Customise the content and style of your introduction as much as possible. Use the briefings on national culture at the start of this unit to help you prepare your introduction.
- 3 Give your welcome presentations. Before you begin, tell your audience the visitor profile. Those listening to the presentation should give feedback on how effective it is in terms of clarity of the message and appropriateness for the given audience.

Cultural tip

Make your presentations focused, structured and logical to help international audiences understand quickly what you want to say. It may help to discuss presentations in advance with some audiences to check how successfully your message will come across.

 Can do I can customise my presentations to different international audiences.

6B

Presenting across cultures

Aims

- To analyse the dynamics of the Q & A phase of a presentation
- To learn ways to manage different types of question effectively



- 1 Rana Sinha is a cross-cultural trainer based in Finland. Read what he says about presenting to international audiences.

- 1 According to Rana, how can international audiences differ in their approach to asking questions?
- 2 What does Rana say is the best approach?

Making a presentation in front of international audiences is not for the fainthearted. People from different cultural backgrounds with varying language skills are definitely more challenging for a presenter than a homogeneous local audience. For example, ways of handling questions are very different across cultures. Brits or Americans almost always ask challenging questions. In Finland or in some Asian cultures, audiences are more likely to greet a presentation with silence or just a few polite questions. This is not always indifference but a show of respect. The most vital thing to remember is that each and every member in your international audience is a fellow human being. If they feel treated well and get something for being there, they will appreciate your efforts.

- 2 The Q & A (question and answer) part of a presentation is crucial. It is an opportunity for a presenter to check the audience's level of understanding and agreement with what has been said and for the audience to comment or clarify.

Here are some guidelines for handling this phase of a presentation.

- Do you agree with them? Why / Why not?
- Are there any you disagree with? What advice would you give instead?
- Can you add any more?

1 Invite questions from your audience when it suits you, either during the presentation or at the end, e.g. 'I'd prefer to take questions at the end of my presentation if that is OK with everyone.'


2 If you know people in the audience and there are no questions but silence, ask individuals to comment on your questions, e.g. 'Marie, what do you think of this design?'

3 Give yourself time to think when answering a question. Don't rush to respond. For example, you can say 'That's a very interesting question, Philippa.' or 'I'm pleased you asked that.' to give yourself time to think.

4 If you are not sure you fully understand a question, reformulate it in your own words, e.g. 'So what you are saying is ...' or 'What do you mean exactly by ...?'

5 Link the last question to the next part of your presentation or your summary, for example 'If that is the last question, I'll move on to the next part / my summary.' Never end with your last answer.

3 In pairs, think of other ways to express the meaning in the example sentences in exercise 2.

4  17 Samira Saeed is a project manager in Dubai. Listen to her giving a presentation to colleagues at an internal product development meeting.

Question 1

- 1 Which potential problem is raised by the first question?
- 2 Samira makes two points in the answer to this question. What are they?

Question 2

- 3 How does Samira first respond to the second question? How does the question help her?
- 4 How does she answer the criticism of 'poor planning'?

Question 3

- 5 Why doesn't Samira answer the third question in detail during the presentation?
- 6 What does she say to satisfy the questioner?



5 How well do you think Samira handles the Q & A part of her presentation?

6 Difficult questions, such as the ones Samira had to deal with, are challenging to handle. The crucial thing is to remain positive, polite and professional. How would you deal with these situations? Discuss in pairs. Then share your ideas with another group or the class.


- 1 Someone asks you for information about something you already mentioned.
 - 2 Someone asks a question which challenges the basic ideas of your presentation.
 - 3 Someone asks you a question so quickly that you don't understand a word of it.
 - 4 Someone asks you a question which is totally irrelevant.
 - 5 Somebody asks you a question about something you want to deal with later.
 - 6 Someone asks a question after you have run out of time.
- 7 In small groups, practise dealing with the difficult question types in exercise 6. One of you should present a business topic of your choice for one minute.

At the end invite questions. The others should ask difficult questions to which the presenter has to respond in a positive, polite and professional manner.

- Plan your short presentation.
- Present.
- Invite and deal with questions.
- Swap roles and do it again.

Cultural tip

When you plan your international presentations, think very carefully about the needs and expectations of different audiences. If possible, talk to the people you are presenting to in advance so that you can adapt the style and content of your presentations and answer any questions effectively.

 **Can do** I can customise presentations to the needs and expectations of different audiences and get my message across successfully.

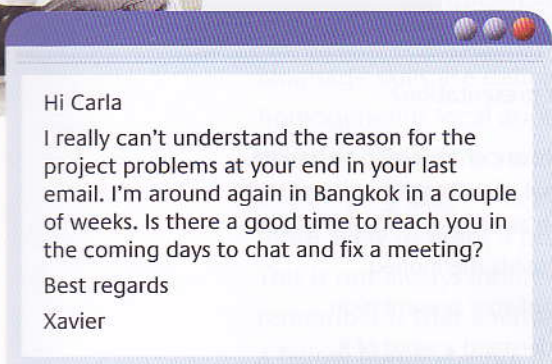
7A Writing emails

Aims

- To understand the challenges of writing emails internationally
- To learn how to communicate clearly in emails



- In pairs or small groups, discuss these questions.
 - Who do you communicate with within your organisation by email: your manager, people you manage, your peers? Who do you communicate with outside your organisation: suppliers, customers, others?
 - What's the difference between your internal and external email communication styles?
 - What are the problems you face with emails?



- Read the following email and consider how effective it is.
 - What is the purpose of the email?
 - Is the message clear?
 - How could Xavier improve this email? Think about:
 - sounding more positive
 - fixing a specific time for the call and meeting
 - Now compare your ideas with the model on page 69.
- Write Carla's reply to Xavier. Then compare your reply with the model on page 70.

- Business emails need not be formal but should be polite, and structured with clear and specific information which the reader can understand and reply to.

Complete the following emails for four typical work scenarios. Use the framework for each email to help you.

appreciate confirm getting let suggest arrange convenient
helpful opening writing book discuss invitation seeing

Framework

State clearly reason for writing.

Specify date / time / place.

Request confirmation.

Organising a meeting

I am (1) to (2) our next P12 meeting to (3) the new sales strategy for Eastern Europe.

I would (4) 13.00 – 18.00 on 15 January in the Berlin office.

Please (5) me know as soon as possible if this date is (6)

Best regards

Confirming a meeting

Thank you for the meeting (7)

I can (8) that 15 January works well for me.

Could you please (9) a room for me in the Hilton, as usual?

Looking forward to (10) you then.

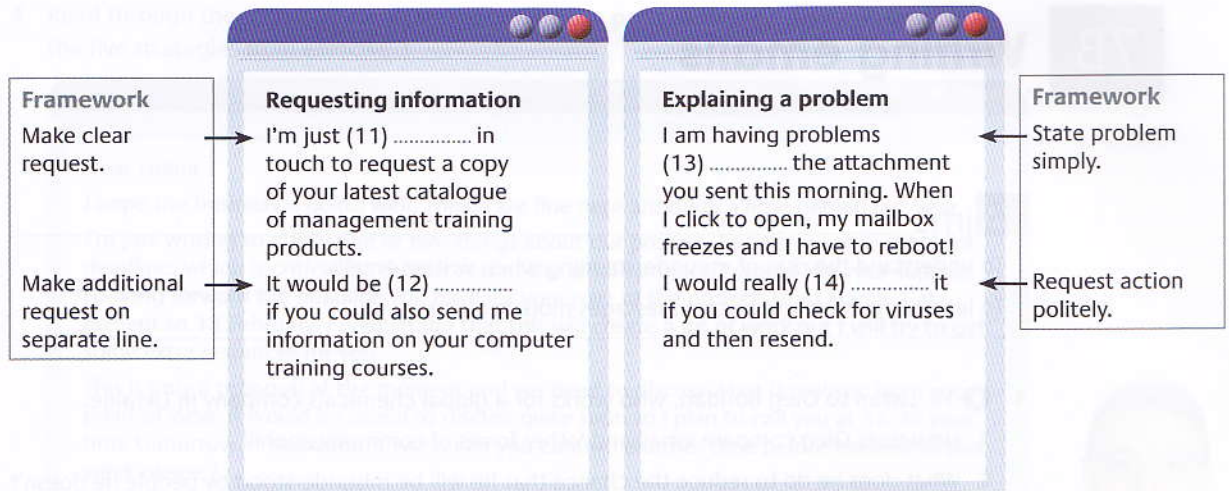
Framework

Open politely.

Give information concisely.

Request clearly.

Close positively.



- 5 What other kinds of email do you write at work, e.g. declining a request or cancelling a meeting? In pairs, think of as many reasons as you can for writing emails at work.
- 6 Create a framework for one or two of these situations, using the frameworks in exercise 4 as an example. Write an example which you could use in your work. Then in groups compare your frameworks.
- 7 Read the email below.
 - 1 In pairs, write two emails in reply:
 - to your colleague, Josep
 - to his manager, Jordi.
 - 2 Form two groups and compare your emails. Decide which are the best and then read these out to the rest of the class. Finally, vote for the best emails!

Hey

Hope you're well. Only a couple of weeks and then it's Tunisia for me for two weeks on holiday!

Just a quick email to ask if you could come over to Spain first week in August and give our IT people here a day's training on the new products which you developed last year. We've started to sell but it would be good to have more info.

If you're free, can you confirm separately to me and to my manager, Jordi, that's Jordi.Romeu@harkor.es, to let him know that you can come and the costs – he will use your email to confirm budget with his boss.

Really hope you can make it.

See you soon!

Josep

Cultural tip

Write short, simple and structured emails with a clear subject header. Begin the email with a clear, polite sentence which explains the reason you are writing. Make sure it is clear to the reader what they need to do after reading the email.

Can do I can write clear, polite emails which give information and request actions in a way which is easily understandable for the reader.

7B Writing emails

Aims

- To understand the risks of misunderstanding when writing emails
- To learn ways to communicate messages more sensitively



- 18** Listen to Oleg Bondari, who works for a global chemicals company in Ukraine.
 - How does Oleg compare email and 'other forms of communication'?
 - What does he do to reduce the chance that he will be misunderstood by people he doesn't know so well?
 - What does he do when he receives an email which irritates him?
- Read these two emails.
 - Discuss with a partner how they could be misunderstood (negatively) by the reader.
 - Rewrite the emails making them clearer, more sensitive and more positive.
 - Now compare your emails with the ones on page 71.

John
Need your figures by the end of today urgently for my budget presentation on Fri.
Pete

Dear Ingrid
Had a look at the presentation for the project you sent. If this is meant to be marketing for the project, I think it has far too many slides and isn't giving a focused message. It needs to be slimmed down a lot or it's going to confuse people.
Kath

- Complete the phrases for sensitive email communication by putting one word from the box into the correct space. Then match the expressions with the strategies.

decision writing support appreciate opinion convenient enable

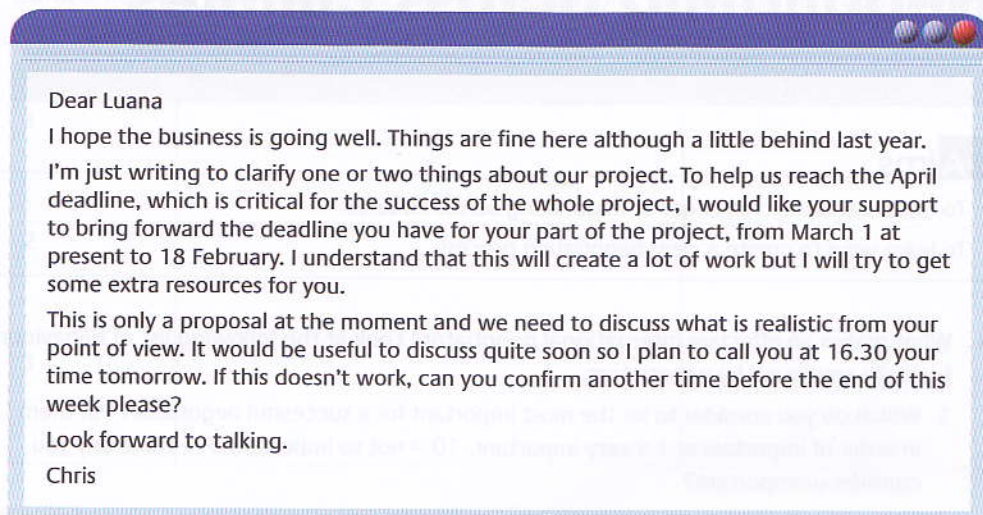
Strategies

- Give clear and positive reasons behind your thinking to avoid misinterpretation.
- Acknowledge possible 'negative' impact of your email.
- Stress a common objective; ask for support rather than demand things.
- Communicate openness to others' opinions and ideas.
- Have clear actions and suggest a telephone call if the email topic is sensitive.

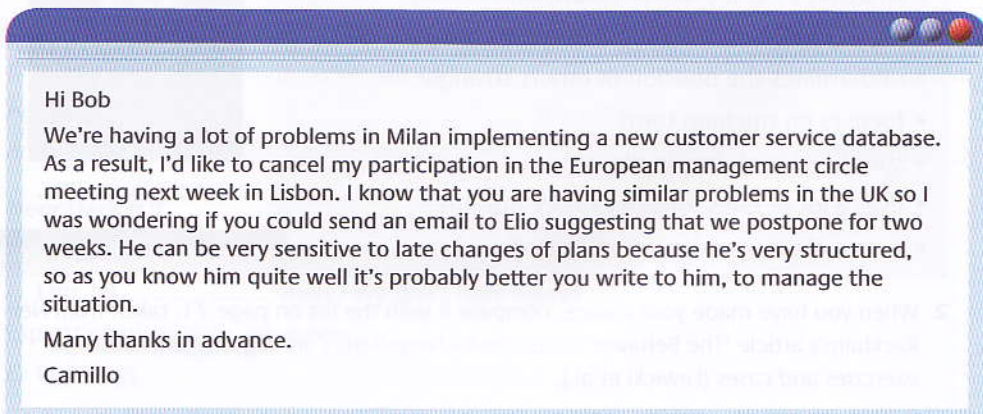
Expressions

- I that this will create some work ...
I realise that this is very short notice but ...
- Would it be a good idea to ...
This is just my What do you think?
- We need to take a on this by Friday. Shall I call you tomorrow at 10 am your time to discuss?
If tomorrow is not , can you please let me know when would be a good time for you to talk?
- I'm just to request because ...
This is important because I need ...
- In order to do this, I need your to ...
If things go well, it will us to ...

- 4 Read through the following email and underline the parts of the text that correspond to the five strategies from exercise 3.



- 5 Read the following email from your friend Camillo Mazzola. Write to Elio as suggested by Camillo to postpone the management circle meeting using the ideas in this unit to make sure your email is clear and received positively by Elio.



- 6 When you have written your email, go into small groups and compare your emails. Read them aloud and choose which you think is best. Finally, read the best email from the group to the rest of the class.

Cultural tip

When you write emails, especially on sensitive topics, make sure that you communicate positively and in a way which the reader can see is open and respectful.

Can do I can write emails which communicate sensitive information in a way which is unlikely to be misunderstood by the reader.

Negotiating across cultures

Aims

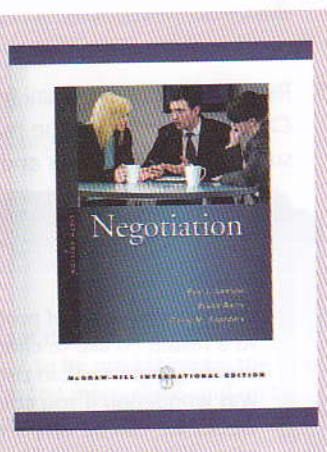
- To understand the challenges of negotiating across cultures
- To learn ways to create a clear negotiation process

- 1 What makes an effective international negotiator? Look at the following list of behaviours typically employed by negotiators.


- 1 Which do you consider to be the most important for a successful negotiator? Put them in order of importance: 1 = very important, 10 = not so important. Are there any you consider unimportant?

A good negotiator is someone who ...

- focuses strongly on personal objectives.
- tests the understanding of the other party frequently.
- structures the discussion clearly and flexibly.
- highlights common ground between the parties.
- undermines the position of others strongly.
- focuses on the long term.
- spends a lot of time in planning.
- uses a lot of questions to explore options.
- fixes a clear agenda and sticks to it.



- 2 When you have made your choice, compare it with the list on page 71, taken from Neil Rackham's article 'The Behavior of Successful Negotiators' in *Negotiation: Readings, exercises and cases* (Lewicki et al.).


- 2  19 Chen Zhu works for an electronics company based in Shanghai. Listen to Chen talking about her experience of negotiating with an American company.

- 1 What was the purpose of the negotiation?
- 2 What was the most challenging thing for Chen in the negotiation?
- 3 What was the biggest difference in negotiating style between the two companies?
- 4 What didn't the American company want to do and why not?
- 5 What does Chen describe as frustrating in the negotiating style of the American company?
- 6 What was the biggest lesson for Chen about how to negotiate internationally?

- 3 In pairs, discuss these questions.

- What is your experience of negotiating with customers and suppliers, with people in your organisation, and in your personal lives?
- Which negotiations are most difficult and which are the easiest? Why?
- What differences in negotiating style have you observed?
- To what extent were the differences due to culture – national, organisational, departmental – or to individual personality?
- What challenges did these differences create? How did you manage them?



- 4  20 Chen says that 'The really critical part of the negotiation is the start.' Listen to extracts from the openings of three different negotiations. In each case note down which proposed objective / agenda point for the negotiation is changed and why.

Negotiation	Change to objective / agenda	Reason for change
1		
2		
3		

- 5 Listen again to the three extracts.

- 1 Complete the sentences used to set the agendas.
- 2 In what other ways could you express the ideas in these sentences?

Negotiation 1

Disagreeing with the proposed agenda:

B: Actually, (a) We want to ...

Agreeing to a change:

A: OK, (b) So then you'll ...

Negotiation 2

Giving your opinion:

C: (c), the major objective today is to ...

Suggesting:

C: Right, (d) differently ...?


Negotiation 3

Interrupting:

F: Erm, (e) there? We don't have figures ...

Expressing pleasure in agreement:

E: Right - (f) So, let's get started ...

- 6  Prepare for the introduction phase to a negotiation with someone from your own organisation. Student A: go to page 88. Student B: go to page 91. Plan what you will say to clarify a common objective and agenda for the negotiation.

Then, in A / B pairs, role play the opening stages of the negotiation. Remember to use some of the expressions from exercise 5.

After you have finished, review the negotiation.

- How far did you both create a positive atmosphere?
- How clearly defined were the objective and agenda of the negotiation?
- Were the most important issues identified?
- How confident are you that the rest of the negotiation would be successful? Why?

Cultural tip

Plan the opening of a negotiation very carefully. Make sure you have a clear objective and agenda for the discussion which is understood and agreed by both parties before you start discussing anything else.

 Can do I can define a clear and common objective and agenda at the beginning of a negotiation.

Aims

- To understand principles of influencing
- To learn language for influencing


- 1 Chen Zhu says about her negotiation partners that 'it was quite hard to influence them in any way to change'. In pairs, discuss who you need to influence in your organisation and outside it.
 - How do you try to influence them?
 - Who do you influence successfully and who not? Why?
- 2 Oakwood Learning researched attitudes to influencing among 1,200 British managers and employees. The research identified a number of principles that can be used as influencing techniques. Read the text and match each to one of the comments which demonstrate the technique in action.

Oakwood Learning Limited

- 1 By far the single biggest influential behaviour is the ability to pay attention to the other person and demonstrate that you are listening. If people feel listened to, they are open to being influenced when a suggestion is finally made.
- 2 We are more open to influence from those who deliver benefits to us. This can mean giving help to solve work problems or just offering good advice.
- 3 Effective influencers believe in their own ideas and explain with conviction.
- 4 People feel influenced by information that is presented in an organised way using logic.
- 5 People will be influenced by a person who is open and explains the reasoning behind their thinking and is willing to share experience, resources and information.
- 6 There is also an emotional side to influencing. We are more open to influence from people we like or have a lot in common with. People with social skills, those with humour and those who are seen as polite and friendly are more influential.


- a 'I changed my mind because I believed what he said – he didn't hide anything from me.'
- b 'I felt they really understood my needs so I was happy to accept their proposal.'
- c 'I had to agree. The facts spoke for themselves.'
- d 'She convinced me to join the project because I enjoy working with her.'
- e 'He offered to help me out on my project so I agreed to support him at the meeting.'
- f 'I supported her idea because I could see she really believed in it 100%.'

- 3 In pairs, discuss the influencing principles in exercise 2.
- Which are most important in your organisational culture?
 - Which are most important in your national culture?
 - Which of these influencing principles do *you* prefer to use?
 - What other influencing principles can you think of in addition to those described in exercise 2?

- 4  21 Petra Ebke works in corporate communications. Listen to her asking a manager from another department, Nelvi, to help her out with a problem. Answer the questions.

- 1 What does Petra want Nelvi to do for her?
- 2 Why is Nelvi reluctant to help her?
- 3 What offer does Petra make to try to convince Nelvi?
- 4 What finally convinces Nelvi to change her mind?
- 5 How far would Petra's influencing techniques have persuaded you? Why?



- 5  22 Listen to a manager using different influencing techniques to persuade a team member to accept the leadership of an international project. Number the techniques 1–6 in the order she uses them.

- Offer benefits.
- Convince with logic.
- Listen first and then suggest.
- Emphasise willingness to share.
- Be convinced yourself.
- Stress commonality.

- 6 Now read the audioscript on page 59 and underline the phrases which are used to communicate these techniques. Then replace the phrases with alternative expressions of your own with the same meaning.
- 7 In pairs, practise applying these influencing principles to get what you want. You are colleagues who work in the same department. Make up two favours to ask each other and see how good you are at persuading. When you ask a favour, try to use at least three of the techniques each time.
- 8 **PW** Prepare for a negotiation. Student A: go to page 77. Student B: go to page 89. Plan in your A and B groups what you will say to get what you want.

Then, in A / B pairs, role play the negotiation. Remember to use some of the techniques you have learned.

After you have finished, review the negotiation:

- Opening: was there a clear introduction to the negotiation?
- Discussion: how effective were the influencing strategies?
- Conclusion: how successful was the negotiation for both parties?

Cultural tip

You will need to use a range of influencing strategies when you work internationally. However, you should prioritise listening as it will be difficult to convince someone if they do not believe that you are listening to what they have to say.

Can do I can use a range of arguments to influence my international contacts effectively.

Managing conflict

Aims

To understand why conflict happens


To learn ways to avoid potential conflicts



- 1 Dani Razmgah, originally from Iran, works in Human Resources for a Swedish bank in Stockholm. Look at what he says about conflict and answer the questions.

'For me anyhow, conflict is when something gets me angry and I don't really know what to do. Conflict always involves emotions.'

- How far do you agree with Dani that conflict is 'always about emotions'?
- What do you think are the typical causes of conflict in international organisations? In pairs, make a list of potential sources of conflict and then compare with another pair.

- 2  23 Listen to Dani describing his experiences of working with international leaders in situations which have involved conflict.

- 1 In what specific situation does Dani see a lot of conflict?
- 2 In what way do managers replicate the mistakes of top managers in the way they communicate with their teams?
- 3 Dani gives an example of a two-day meeting. What was the issue management were trying to resolve?
- 4 What did management offer? What did staff really want?
- 5 What is the reason for managers not communicating better with staff?
- 6 What is the reason for managers not involving staff in decision making?
- 7 According to Dani, what are the benefits of better communication and involving staff more in the decision-making process?

- 3 Dani is critical of leaders' failure to think about potential conflicts and to consider ways to avoid them. He says 'They hadn't even thought that they might create conflict doing it so quickly.'

A-I-R is a three-step method for avoiding potential conflict. It works by first anticipating possible conflicts, then identifying the different points of view of the people involved, and finally recommending a solution which can prevent conflict from happening.

Here is an example of the way it can be applied.

Situation

Jane has just joined the project team and has to work with Piotr over the next few weeks. They have very different working styles but must work closely together to solve some big project problems in the near future.



Anticipate possible conflicts	<i>Jane and Piotr might / could have problems working together in the coming weeks of the project. They may disagree about the best way to solve project problems.</i>
Identify potential sources of conflict	<i>The working styles are very different. Jane is very detailed and likes to take decisions carefully after lots of discussion with people. However, Piotr likes to think quickly and work independently.</i>
Recommend a way to avoid conflict	<i>The project leader should / ought to have a meeting with both of them to discuss differences in working style and encourage them to agree the best method to deal with these problems.</i>

Work in pairs or small groups.

- 1 Discuss how the three-step A-I-R method could be applied to the following three situations. You may have more than one idea for each step.
- 2 Write down your ideas to present to other groups.

Situation 1

Alison, an assistant in an accounts department, has to inform Janek, a senior sales manager, by email of overdue payments, which Janek then has to follow up directly with customers. Janek's first step is to email customers to remind them of the unpaid invoice but he does not normally copy Alison in on these emails. Alison asks Janek by email to copy these emails to her so she is informed of what is happening.

Situation 2

Paul is considering offering Claudia the opportunity to work in the New York office on a special project. She's the best qualified person and someone he can rely on totally to do the job. In addition, the secondment will enable her to learn about new parts of the business and allow her to improve her English, which she struggles with at present. Paul has already spoken to a colleague in New York who has agreed that Claudia's profile sounds perfect for the job. Paul is planning to send an email to Claudia to inform her of the job opportunity and invite her to a conference call with his US colleague to discuss how to move forward on this.

Situation 3

Jenny Capri, head of sales in a medium-sized company, has been told to reduce costs by her board of directors. She decides to instruct her sales team that all foreign travel to customers has to be authorised by her personally over the next six months. Historically, sales staff have been responsible for their own travel budget and are free to decide when they should travel and who they should visit within a fixed budget agreed at the beginning of the year.

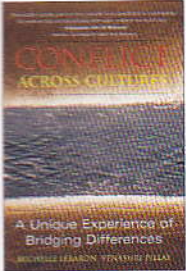
Cultural tip

Anticipate possible conflicts arising from different cultural values, personality characteristics or different business interests, and plan ways to avoid conflict happening.

- C**an do I can anticipate possible conflicts which could happen in my international working environment and communicate effectively to avoid them happening.

Aims

- To understand how conflict is handled across cultures
- To learn strategies to manage conflict situations



- 1 *Conflict across cultures* deals with different aspects of intercultural conflict. Read the account of conflict between Japanese and American colleagues.

- 1 What was the conflict about?
- 2 How did the Japanese colleagues manage to resolve the conflict?

In a recent Hollywood movie production with the action set in Japan the stage was covered with *tatami* mats, a grass floor covering typical in Japan. The Japanese members of the production team requested that their American colleagues removed their boots before walking on the *tatami*. The Americans agreed to do this but increasingly made 'quick changes' to lighting or electrical components without taking boots off. Symbolically, this behaviour by the Americans communicated disrespect to the Japanese, who became increasingly upset by the Americans' failure to remove their boots. It led to increasingly poor relationships and other conflicts.

Positive change only came when the Japanese realised that the Americans did not understand the symbolic importance that the Japanese attached to respecting *tatami*. In their next meeting, the Japanese compared the place of *tatami* in their culture to the place of the US flag in American culture, asking the Americans to please act as they would if the US flag were on the floor. Hearing this, the American perception of the situation changed; they understood the feelings of their Japanese colleagues and changed their behaviour, enthusiastically removing their boots every time they walked on the *tatami*.


- 2 In pairs, discuss these questions.

- What lessons can we learn from the way the Japanese solved the problem?
- In which other ways could this conflict have been resolved?
- What strategies do you have for handling conflict?

- 3 Individuals and teams can handle conflict across cultures in very different ways. In the following extracts, five different people talk about conflict in their working contexts.


Complete each extract with what you think they will say about how conflict is handled.

- 1 'The company where I work has a pretty male culture – lots of testosterone around. This means there's a lot of aggression around the place and, to be honest, the best way to handle conflict is to
- 2 'This organisation has one strong value and that is "respect". So if conflicts do arise, people are pretty quick to sit down and start talking and listening to each other. The basic approach is to understand the other person and try to
- 3 'People tend to avoid conflict so as not to confront or disrespect people, so what I find working here is the tendency to
- 4 'I don't have the time to spend arguing when I know I'm right. And because it's a pretty hierarchical environment, the quickest solution to manage disagreements is to
- 5 'I quite like conflict. I think it is a way to surface issues and I like to have my own values challenged. So, if someone tells me that my ideas are rubbish, my basic response is to

4  24 Now listen to what the five people actually said.

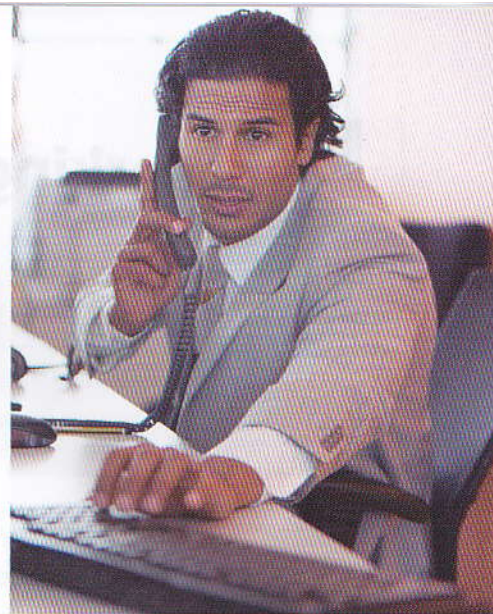
Answer these questions.

- What do you think of the strategies?
- How effective would the strategies be in your organisation?
Why / Why not?
- What advice would you give the five people?

5  25 Listen to a telephone call between Gavin Jones and Alessandro Pierro, two colleagues working in different countries.

A conflict arises during the discussion.


- 1 What is the conflict about?
- 2 What is Gavin's preferred approach to manage the conflict?
- 3 What is Alessandro's preferred approach to manage the conflict?
- 4 In the end how do they compromise in order to move forward?



6 Gavin and Alessandro use strategies to take the heat out of the situation.

- 1 What would you say to achieve these seven objectives?
- 2 Compare your ideas with what was actually said by listening again to the discussion.

Apologise explicitly.	
Acknowledge other's feelings.	
Reject ideas politely.	
Show confidence in finding a solution.	
Offer a compromise.	
Invite ideas from the other person.	
Summarise to avoid future misunderstanding.	


7  Student A, you are a project manager. Turn to page 85. Student B, you are a department leader in the same organisation. Turn to page 92. Prepare to discuss the participation of a member of the department leader's team in a project. Prepare in A or B pairs or small groups and then find one partner with the opposite role and carry out the role play.

After the role play, go back into the small groups of people who played the same role and compare your experiences.

- How effective was the meeting overall?
- What strategies were used to manage the conflict?
- What was the result of the meeting?
- What did you learn about handling such situations at work in the future?

Cultural tip

When dealing with conflict, focus first on understanding the interests and position of the other person. Then use a conflict management strategy tailored to the situation in order to solve the problem and achieve the desired outcome.

 I can use a variety of strategies to manage conflicts arising in my international job.

Aims

- To understand the challenges of working in an international team
 To learn ways to make an effective personal introduction at first team meetings



- 1 Gudrun Pleuger is a German project specialist who works on international projects for a global financial services company. Read her comment about international teams and answer the questions.

'When you want a successful team, it's very important that people get the feeling that you're open and friendly and interested in the other person. You have to build up and then maintain personal contact.'

- What is your experience of working in teams?
- How far do you agree with Gudrun's ideas about what makes a successful team?
- In your experience, what are the five most typical reasons a project team is unsuccessful?
- Now compare your list with the one on page 85.

- 2 26 Listen to Gudrun describing her recent experiences of international project teams and her opinions about how to make a team successful. Answer the questions.

1 Gudrun describes what she says at the first meeting of a project team. What does she:

- a always say?
- b never say?
- c sometimes say?

2 What does she recommend when introducing herself to a large team? Why?

3 When she introduces herself to the team, which two messages does she try to communicate in addition to the idea that she is motivated by the project?

4 Why does Gudrun say it is important to tell others what you are like when working in a team?

5 After the first meeting, what does Gudrun advise people to do to maintain the initial positive feelings?

6 According to Gudrun, what stops people from building / maintaining good relationships?

- 3 Gudrun says, 'I often make networking calls in the evening, not during my working time.'

- How important is networking as part of the team-building process?
- Would you say you are a good networker? Why?
- What do you think about networking after work? Is this something you do (or should do) in your current work? Why / Why not?

- 4 27 Listen to three people introducing themselves at a first team meeting.

1 What does each person say about his / her approach to working in teams?

2 Discuss the following questions in pairs.

- What impression do these three people make on you?
- Who would you find it easiest to work with? Who would be the most difficult for you? Why?
- What would you have to do to make working with them a success?

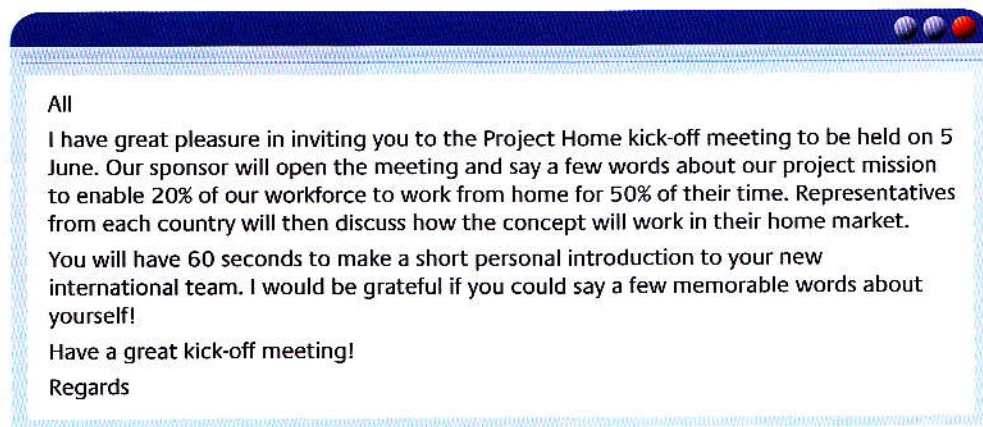
5 During their introductions, the speakers describe themselves using words and phrases such as 'results-oriented', 'single-minded' and 'I'm not a great believer in ...'. Prepare a mini-presentation of yourself to make to a new team.

- What would you say about yourself: your style of working, your strengths and your weaknesses?
- Make notes and share your ideas with a partner who knows you well. Does your partner agree with your description of yourself?



6 You are joining an international project team which has been set up to introduce home working into the company. Employees will be able to divide their time so that they work from home for 50% of their time, 50% in the office.

You receive this email asking you to prepare a short personal introduction at the kick-off meeting.



- 1 Prepare your introduction, including information about:
 - your daily job
 - your role in this project
 - any relevant personal information
 - why you welcome this opportunity to work in an international environment.
- 2 Form small groups and take turns to make your introduction. Each participant should take notes on the introductions of the other people on these points:
 - what they like (general impression the introduction gives)
 - what they think could be better or clearer
 - what they think might be easy or difficult about working with the person in a team.
- 3 Give feedback to each other at the end of all the introductions. At the end of the feedback round, each person should say what they found to be the most useful feedback and why.

Cultural tip

When introducing yourself to a new international team, make sure that you come across to them as open, friendly and cooperative, and that everyone understands your role and what you bring to the project in terms of your experience and motivation.

Can do I can make an effective personal introduction in team meetings in order to support mutual understanding and team performance.

Aims

To understand the value of feedback to team members

To learn ways to give and to respond to feedback

- 1 Complete this questionnaire about giving feedback. Then, in pairs or small groups, compare your experience and approach to handling feedback.

1 Who do you give feedback on performance to?

- people you report to people who report to you
 your peers

2 What is the purpose of the feedback?

- to praise to criticise to correct something
 to improve something something else

3 In what context do you give and get feedback?

- in team meetings in informal one-to-one meetings
 in formal performance appraisal meetings

4 How often do you give and receive feedback on performance?

- rarely sometimes frequently regularly

5 How easy do you find it to give and respond to critical feedback?

- very easy easy difficult very difficult



- 2 28 Listen again to Gudrun Pleuger. This time she is describing a British project leader who gave feedback badly. Answer these questions.

- 1 What was the problem with the British project leader's feedback?
- 2 What lesson does Gudrun draw from this experience?
- 3 Which nationalities does Gudrun say are better than the British at giving feedback and why?
- 4 Why does Gudrun encourage feedback and for people to question things?



- 3 29 Listen to Lars Haglund, a team leader, giving feedback to Jean-Claude Pires, a member of his team, after a meeting with some customers.

- 1 What positive feedback does Lars give first to Jean-Claude?
- 2 Which behaviour of Jean-Claude's does Lars focus on for his feedback?
- 3 Which questions does Lars ask to make Jean-Claude reflect on his behaviour?
- 4 What does Jean-Claude agree to do during the conversation?

- 4 Read the advice on giving feedback. Which tips do you think are most useful? Which do you agree or disagree with?

Creating a team feedback culture

- 1 Feedback should begin with positives – saying what people have done well. This creates a good atmosphere and opens up people to accepting constructive criticism later.
- 2 When giving feedback on others' behaviour, it is important to describe them in a neutral way, e.g. 'You walked into the meeting and sat down without shaking hands.', and to explain the consequences of this behaviour on others, e.g. 'Some people felt this was a little rude.'
- 3 Questions such as 'What do you think about this feedback?' 'Did you know that others felt this way about your behaviour?' or 'What could you do differently?' should encourage the recipient to reflect on their behaviour.
- 4 At the end of giving feedback, the recipient should commit to a course of action that will have a positive team impact, e.g. 'OK, I will try to come across as more open and polite by ...'.
- 5 When receiving feedback, it is vital not to defend or justify your own actions, e.g. 'Yes, but ...', but to be open, ask questions and learn about how others see you. Without this attitude to receiving feedback, individuals will find it more difficult to improve their performance.

- 5 Listen again to the conversation in exercise 3. How well do you think Lars gave feedback to Jean-Claude? What would you have done? Compare your analysis with the one on page 73.

- 6 How would you improve the way feedback is given and responded to in this conversation? In pairs, rewrite the conversation to follow the advice given in exercise 4.

A: Could we just spend a minute talking about your outburst during the meeting?

B: If we have to.

A: What you said may have some truth in it but the manner in which you said what you did was totally wrong.

B: OK, but Sam was just as angry about what Karl had said.

A: Look, forget about what Sam said. What you've got to realise is that not everyone behaves like you. Am I making myself clear?

B: I'll try to avoid this happening again, but it's just that I feel very strongly about this project.

A: Well, I'm glad you agree with me. So let's leave it there.

- 7  30 Listen and compare your rewritten dialogue to the model dialogue.

- 8 Work in pairs to give each other feedback on something that is damaging your project team's performance. One of you is the manager, the other is a team member.

1 Agree on a performance problem which you need to discuss. It could be on any topic that interests you (e.g. deadlines, use of computers, objectives, quality of work).

2 Raise the problem in conversation, remembering to follow the tips in exercise 4.

3 Swap roles and discuss your second performance problem.

Cultural tip

Give and receive feedback often when you work in an international team as a way to build mutual understanding, respect and trust.

 Can do I can give and respond to feedback effectively.

11A Managing diversity and creativity

Aims

- To understand the value of diversity for organisations
- To learn ways to make people work together more effectively

- 1 Philip Berry and Debbe Kennedy are two leading thinkers about the challenges facing international organisations today. Read the extracts from their websites. What is the connection between their ideas?



Organisations and individuals all over the world are discovering that putting our differences to work is the most powerful accelerator for generating new ideas, creating innovative solutions, executing organisational strategies, and engaging everyone in the process. The breakthrough is the essential ingredient of diversity ... The magic begins when we come together.


Debbe Kennedy, founder, president and CEO, Global Dialogue Center and Leadership Solutions

According to a recent study, innovation is one of the top ten challenges on the minds of global CEOs. As businesses globalise and competition increases, you have to work harder and harder to continually come up with new ways to stay on top of the consumers' mind with your product or service. Effective, innovative organisations discover ways to tap into the creative talents of their own people. The most important thing to establish internally is an atmosphere where it is acceptable behaviour to come up with new ideas which may be a big departure from past practice. I always say that if everybody is thinking the same, then nobody is thinking!



Philip Berry, President of Philip Berry Associates LLC



- 2  31 Frédéric Thoral is a senior HR director in a major French bank that has significant global operations. Listen to him talking about managing diversity in international meetings.

- 1 What does Frédéric say about the efficiency of meetings with diverse groups:
 - a in the early life of the team?
 - b in the longer term?
- 2 What is his first tip about managing diversity in meetings?
- 3 What does he say are the characteristics of Americans in meetings?
- 4 What is his advice about managing French people in meetings?
- 5 What does he say is the most important point to manage in meetings?
- 6 What does he say is fundamental to build when managing diversity?


- 3 How important is innovation and creativity in your organisation?
- How far do you agree with Frédéric's ideas? Why?
 - In which ways could you use diversity, of either culture or personality, in your own meetings to find more innovative and creative solutions to problems?

- 4 It is not only the chair of a meeting or the team leader who should encourage people to work together to become creative. All the participants at a meeting or the members of a team should do this.

Look at six different diversity techniques which everyone can use to influence people to work together and come up with creative ideas during discussions. What could you say in an international meeting to apply each technique?

Diversity techniques

- 1 Encourage a person to give their ideas freely.
- 2 Ask someone to comment on the idea another person has just put forward.
- 3 Encourage alternative and very different points of view.
- 4 Discourage people from disagreeing too quickly with others' ideas.
- 5 Ask people to combine the different ideas around the table to find a creative solution.
- 6 Suggest a creative proposal based on the different ideas of people around the table.

- 5  32 Listen to six extracts from a meeting in which people think about how to increase sales at the beginning of the year, typically a very bad period for selling. Which diversity technique is used in each extract?

A B C D E F


- 6 Now read the audio script on page 62 and underline the key phrases which are used to communicate the different diversity techniques. How easy do you think it would be for you to use these diversity techniques in your own international meetings? Why?

- 7  Work in small groups to hold a management meeting to discuss two problems in your company. See Agenda A on page 89.

- 1 Nominate one of the group members to chair the meeting.
- 2 During the meeting everyone should try to use the diversity techniques to encourage open cooperation and creative thinking in the group.
- 3 When the meeting is finished, evaluate the creativity and innovation level of the meeting together.
 - Did everyone motivate participants to work together and offer ideas?
 - Did everyone encourage and positively manage different points of view?
 - Did the leader connect the ideas and take the best from each to find a good solution?

Cultural tip

Cultural diversity is an opportunity in meetings because different mindsets can support innovation. Encourage individuals in meetings to be creative and generate ideas, and to engage with the ideas of others positively in order to find innovative solutions.

-  Can do I can lead a meeting and use the diversity of participants to help to find creative solutions.

11B Managing diversity and creativity

Aims

To understand how to use brainstorming techniques to support creative thinking
To learn ways to introduce and evaluate ideas in meetings



- 1 Many models of intercultural competence emphasise that people who work across cultures need to think creatively and be open to new ideas. Take a look at the intercultural competence dimension called *New Thinking* from Worldwork's *International Profiler*.

- How creative are you?
- How would you score yourself on a scale of 1 to 10?

A person who scores high in New Thinking is creative and excited by new ideas and is able to change their perception of issues and see things from different perspectives. They typically have a strong sense of curiosity that drives them to look for creative insights into complex problems. They like to work internationally as they are exposed to ideas and approaches with which they are unfamiliar.



- 2 Brainstorming is the most widely used technique to generate creative solutions to problems. The original concept goes back to Alex Osborn's 1953 book, *Applied Imagination: Principles and Procedures of Creative Thinking*. Here are seven steps to help you make brainstorming an effective part of your meetings. Can you put them in the right order?

- Agree follow-up actions – who does what and when – and decide when to review.
- Review ground rules for the brainstorming: all ideas are acceptable; ideas are not criticised; ideas are recorded; focus is on quantity of ideas not quality.
- Evaluate the ideas carefully and then agree which to follow up and which to forget.
- After you have finished brainstorming, clarify and group the ideas.
- Choose a clear objective for brainstorming, e.g. 'How can we improve customer service without spending more money?'
- Start brainstorming for an agreed period, e.g. ten minutes.
- Appoint a good facilitator (essential for success) who can energise discussions.

- 3 If you have used brainstorming techniques in your work, what has been your experience? If you have not, how easily do you think it could be applied in your work situation?

- 4 33 Listen to part of a meeting in which the participants brainstorm ideas for improving customer service. Note down the four ideas which are given by the participants.

Paul:

Jennifer:

Sam:

Carl:

5 The following are all techniques to generate and introduce ideas in a brainstorming.

- 1 Read through the audio script on page 63 and underline the words and phrases which the participants use to generate ideas in these ways.

Proposing a radical idea:

.....
 Making suggestions based on how others might see the problem:

.....
 Building on another person's idea in the meeting:

.....
 Recommending ways to improve an existing process / system:

.....
 Introducing an idea by imagining a perfect future:

- 2 Now think of other expressions of your own you could use with the same or a similar meaning.



6 Study these phrases for evaluating ideas following the brainstorming phase.

- 1 Evaluate the ideas from the brainstorming meeting by completing the phrases with your own words.

Positive	Negative
This would enable / allow us to ...	This might cause / lead to problems because ...
This would mean we could ...	This might damage / limit / restrict ...

- 2 In pairs, think of more 'positive' verbs such as *enable* and *allow* to describe the benefits of an idea. Think of more 'negative' verbs such as *damage* and *limit* to describe the disadvantages of an idea. Practise using the verbs in sentences to evaluate the suggestions from the meeting.

7 **G** Work in small groups. You are a special committee supporting the HR department on 'people issues'. You have been asked to hold a brainstorming meeting and come up with ideas to help with two problems. See Agenda B on page 81.

- 1 Hold a meeting to brainstorm ideas and then select the best three ideas for each topic to give as a recommendation to your HR director.
- 2 When the meeting is finished, review it.
 - How creative were you during the brainstorming part of the meeting?
 - How effective were you at evaluating the best ideas?
 - How could you improve?

Cultural tip

Use creative brainstorming sessions regularly when working internationally in order to capture the different perspectives held by members of an international team. Ensure ideas are evaluated carefully and action plans are developed from the best ideas to make sure that the creativity is captured and delivers a real benefit for the organisation.

Can do I can propose and evaluate ideas during international meetings.

Profiling your intercultural competence

Aims

Profile your own intercultural competence

Develop a personal development plan on the basis of the profile you have created



At heart, intercultural effectiveness depends on an individual's openness to those who are different. This means being able to interact with others positively, avoiding negative emotions such as irritation and defensiveness which so often arise during the challenge of having to deal with a person who is different. If individuals can stay positive, they have the opportunity to experience diversity not as a challenge but as an opportunity, to take the best from the 'two worlds' of self and other, and create a synthesis of something better. This is the ultimate aim.

Bob Dignen, York Associates

- 1 Read the descriptions of ten dimensions of intercultural competence opposite, which are based on research by UK-based consultancy WorldWork.
- 2 Decide how far they describe your international working style by circling a number 1–4 (1 = not very significant for you, 4 = very significant). It is important to answer honestly! There are *no right answers* – there are advantages to both high and low scores.
- 3 Read the analysis of results on pages 82–83 to find out the possible meaning of your scores. Identify the three main strengths and three main weaknesses which your profile shows.
- 4 Look at the personal development guide on pages 90–1 and think about the important strengths and weaknesses which you identified above.
- 5 Use the table below to note down three personal development targets, either to improve a skill or to work on a weakness in some way.

Personal development target	Action steps	Schedule
1	a b c	
2	a b c	
3	a b c	

- 6 Review your personal development targets with someone who knows you well and who may have insights to offer on your targets and recommendations on actions and schedule.

1 Meeting new people	1 2 3 4
I take a very strong interest in meeting new people from different and unfamiliar cultural backgrounds. I like to be the one who makes the first introductions, starts conversations and begins building the relationship.	
2 Being flexible	1 2 3 4
I adapt very easily to many different social and cultural situations. I often experiment with different behaviours and change to those which are acceptable and comfortable for others.	
3 Focusing on targets	1 2 3 4
I like to set specific goals when working internationally and work very hard to achieve them despite any problems or pressure to compromise from others.	
4 Dealing with uncertainty	1 2 3 4
I enjoy variety, change and stimulation in life. I frequently push myself into uncomfortable and ambiguous situations, even if I am unsure if I have the skills needed to succeed.	
5 Understanding how others see me	1 2 3 4
I know how others see me. I am sensitive to how my own communication style and general working behaviour can be interpreted – positively and negatively – by my international partners.	
6 Listening effectively	1 2 3 4
I think it is important to clarify what others say when communicating internationally. I often ask <i>What do you mean ...?</i> or <i>Do you mean that ...?</i> to check that I understand what others have said.	
7 Speaking clearly	1 2 3 4
I explain ideas with simple words and short sentences. I often explain the positive motivation behind my message so that others do not misunderstand my communication negatively.	
8 Learning about culture	1 2 3 4
I invest time in learning about different cultures. I get the information in different ways, for example reading, asking colleagues and clients about culture, observing and reflecting.	
9 Influencing decisions	1 2 3 4
I can influence what happens around me at work because I understand and manage the 'politics' of organisations, for example who the real decision makers are, who I need to build relationships with, etc.	
10 Managing diverse groups	1 2 3 4
I link people together in discussions and meetings. I help people listen to each other so that different points of view are respected and can be used to help to solve problems creatively.	

Cultural tip

Consider the skills you need to be effective in an international role in your organisation. Define a realistic personal development plan with clear targets to improve your communication skills. Make sure you are able to measure the success of each action.

Can do I can profile my own intercultural competence and set realistic targets to develop it.

Audio scripts

Track 2

1A Exercise 2

Interviewer: Bo, is it important to you to think about culture when communicating internationally? Is it useful?

Bo: Well, someone once gave me an interesting definition of culture. She said, 'Culture is what makes us different'. There are a million ways in which we're all the same – we all need food, love and security and all that. But then there are also a million ways in which we're all different, and you can call that 'culture'. When I sit here in my office in Germany and call someone in Russia or Spain, I don't think I'm calling Russia or Spain, but I do think I'm calling someone who is likely to be communicating in a different way to me. Understanding that there is a difference possible in communication is very, very important. That's the key point about understanding culture. Is that making sense?

Interviewer: Yes, absolutely.

Bo: So, while it's nice to know most Hungarians do this or Russians do that – the kind of 'dos and don'ts' checklist approach – for me that's not really useful. The main thing is to understand that people are different. And that when you say something and the other person doesn't say anything back, that may not mean the same for them that it means for me. It could be they don't understand, maybe they're being polite, maybe they disagree.

Interviewer: So when we're talking about culture, what is useful? Is talking about national culture too high-level, too general?

Bo: Absolutely. I think the business sector or company culture is more important. I work in a retail culture – selling electronic goods. Retail is fast, there's an orientation towards opportunity not risk, people are action-oriented. 'We'll just do it and see what happens.' That's an attitude you find very often in our company. But even company culture is complex – there's gender culture, departmental culture ... at the headquarters here we have at least 20 cultures! That's really important. In fact, every individual has a culture, and they're all different from mine.

Interviewer: And do these different departmental cultures cause problems internally?

Bo: Absolutely. Big misunderstandings in communication.

Track 3

1A Exercise 4

Bo: I can give you a couple of examples. When we open new stores then we've got basically two major players in the company. One is the construction department – they buy all the stuff, they write the plans, and so on. The other is the sales team. They see themselves as, you know, the kings of the company because they sell things. 'We make the money.' And they're in charge of how things look. 'Where shall we put the TVs ... to the left or to the right when you go in the store?' ... bla bla bla ... and they like to be creative – their approach is all about the customer. So when the construction guys come with their store plan, for them it's a finished store design, their focus is all on planning, but the sales team take it more as a kind of suggestion, you know. They love ideas! And they have no problem two or three

weeks before the store is meant to open in saying 'We want to move the entrance, we need it here not there', and the construction department goes nuts. So that's an internal and specifically departmental thing – different priorities around planning and creativity and customer focus. And at the end of the day, this can cause delays and cost the company money.

Interviewer: Do other departments have similar problems?

Bo: Well, we also have a problem with IT. On the IT side of our company they go into way too much technical detail, 50 slides in a presentation and all that. And then on the other hand you have the business side where there's a real lack of understanding of how things work, how things are connected. They just make a decision and they don't know what that means in terms of putting it into life with IT systems – the costs, the problems. They just need to get more realistic! So this is all about focus on systems and making things work versus focus on, I guess, making money.

Interviewer: Is there a solution to all this?

Bo: Well, we created jobs to deal with this problem. I was talking to this guy recently and I asked him what his job is and he said he's a translator. I said, 'What do you mean, a translator?' and he said, 'I translate between IT and business.' And I said, 'Ah, OK.' And he said, 'These two parts of the business just don't connect. They need me to be an interpreter so they can work together.' I think in a way this is the solution, what we all need to do is, first, understand and describe our own culture and describe and understand the cultures of others. Then we can begin, as this guy said, 'to translate'. And then it's possible to start to communicate across cultures.

Track 4

2A Exercise 3

Interviewer: How important is it to handle first meetings well?

Nigel: Very important, and breaking the ice can be more difficult due to language differences, cultural unfamiliarity and so on. But when we have to work with people across the globe we don't see very often, it becomes critical to manage that first moment positively, to get the relationship going.

Interviewer: In terms of cultural differences in first meetings, what have you experienced?

Nigel: Well, being British I do a little small talk about the weather, how I travelled to the place, some of the challenges I faced on the way, and a touch of humour but quite quickly getting down to business because I don't want to take up too much of the time of the individual I'm talking to. In other cultural contexts, I've learned you need to take a different approach. For example, working in the Arab world, I think the concept of 'small' talk is less relevant because those opening social moments are critical in a relationship-orientated culture. And showing respect for the local culture, saying positive things about what you've seen, what you know, why you appreciate where you are, showing and receiving hospitality. There's a slower transition into business, more exchange on a personal level before getting down to the task. And that builds trust. All this can be seen as slow and time-wasting in a UK context.

Interviewer: What kinds of positive things do you say?

Nigel: I think when I go to China I often find myself asking where someone comes from because I know quite a lot about China and it's an opportunity to show a kind of interest which I have for the country and a sensitivity to that person's roots. So I would say something like 'Oh, you come from Shanghai, I've been there a couple of times and I love it there.' This creates a positive impression. And it's true. I do love it there!

Interviewer: Does asking open questions generally work across all cultures to stimulate conversation?

Nigel: I think it definitely does. The open questions beginning with 'what' and 'how' open people up, give you an opportunity to listen to people speak, understand their interests ... so questions are very important as a way to create common ground.

Interviewer: Is this one of the secrets of success – creating common ground?

Nigel: I think so. You can ask an open question, listen to the response and then connect your experiences. You have the potential to build common ground also at an emotional level in terms of going through some common challenges. However, you can also ask closed questions to show interest in something around you.

Track 5

2B Exercise 1

Jon: So, can I say hello? I'm Jon, from the New York office and just over for a couple of days to meet some guys here. I'm let loose on the office to say hello to people ... so hi. I think you're going to be at the meeting later?

Pavel: Good morning. My name's Pavel. Yes, I'll come to the kick-off.

Jon: OK, cool. So, what do you do here?

Pavel: I work on the accounts for a major customer. I have a small team here of five people. It's a good team, very good.

Jon: OK. Good. You been here long?

Pavel: Er ... five years.

Jon: Ah, good. Long time. Yes, I've been in New York now for ... wow ... must be around six years. So, similar timing. Erm, so, you from round here? You live nearby?

Pavel: Erm, yes. Nearby you can say.

Jon: Family? Kids?

Pavel: No. Erm, ... sorry but ...

Jon: Ah. OK. Look, maybe I can invite you for a coffee? I have so many questions about what you do here ... the business – what you're doing could be very interesting for us back home ...

Pavel: Sorry, but I have to make a telephone call and I'm a little late.

Jon: Oops, sorry. I didn't realise. I'm a bit excited today. Look, I'll let you go and make that call. Hopefully, we can catch up a little later after the kick-off meeting.

Pavel: Yes ... maybe.

Track 6

2B Exercise 2

Pavel: So, I think it was a good meeting. I think we made good progress. For me the main question is if we can get the budget to run the project properly. The big problem in the company is resources.

Jon: Yes. I guess. I heard quite a few people say that. Hey, this is good. Yours good?

Pavel: Yes. And the other big question from today is the deadline. I think it's possible but it will be very difficult to achieve.

Jon: Yeah, agreed. Still, we got tomorrow to focus on these things again, I guess. Long meeting so it's good to relax.

Pavel: Yes, but I think tomorrow will be a challenge. The project sponsor is coming and he will give some strong messages to the team. You know him?

Jon: Who, sorry?

Pavel: The project sponsor, Dr Kuehn.

Jon: No, don't think I do.

Pavel: Yes, well, he has a long experience in the company. He joined over ten years ago; worked in India for the company for some time ...

Jon: India. Now that's a great place to travel to.

Pavel: Yes. And then after India he took over the operation in Eastern Germany, which was very successful. So he has an excellent reputation.

Jon: Good. I'm sure he's a good guy. Is he easy going? Good to get along with?

Pavel: Sorry?

Jon: This guy, Kuehn ... Dr Kuehn, whatever ... good team player ... easy to get along with, friendly?

Pavel: Erm ... I don't know ... erm ... he has a lot of experience and a good vision but strong. I worked with him before in another project when I was with ... [fade]

Track 7

3A Exercise 2

Interviewer: So, José, can you tell me a little bit about the presentation in Moscow? It didn't go so well, I understand.

José: No. For me, the objective was very clear. I was representing my Spanish bank, of course. We had just taken over the Russian local bank. I was there to say 'hello' to the local senior management and welcome them to a new international future, as part of a bigger and more international operation. This was meant to be a positive step.

Interviewer: Okay. And what happened?

José: Well, it went wrong. I was a bit nervous about how they would react because I knew they weren't all happy about the takeover. I could sort of see during the presentation that it wasn't going very well. There was no smiling or positive feedback from the audience. And no questions at the end. I was a bit confused because here I was offering a great new future and no one looked happy.

Track 8

3A Exercise 3

Interviewer: So what was the problem?

José: Well, I think I gave them a confusing message. It was my fault. My biggest mistake was to talk a lot about the history of the Spanish bank and our international operations and our successes. And I think it came across a little like, we are Big Brother coming to you and taking you over and you can forget about how you did things in the past, we do it better, we are better ... and so on. And people didn't like this. They felt disrespected.

Interviewer: OK. Was that how the audience understood the message?

José: Yes, and I also got another thing wrong – I didn't co-present with the local boss, the CEO. The culture of the local bank was very hierarchical and I think I needed to give him a clearer role on the day – a central role – and I didn't. So he was a little unhappy and that had a negative impact on the event.

Interviewer: Interesting. And so coming back to the message you gave ... what would have been better?

José: I think my biggest mistake was that I didn't talk about the successes of the Russian bank, the successes of the local boss and that we Spanish could learn from their experience. The message was too ... all about us and not about them. Not very sensitive.

Interviewer: Is this a general mistake people make internationally, you think?

José: Absolutely. I think this was more an international problem than an intercultural problem. I think it's always important when communicating internationally to show respect to people, especially the local management, and their successes. And to say that you think they are good. If you're not sensitive in this way, there is a risk that people hear your message in the wrong way and think you're telling them you're better and that your way is right. This is really a big question in the communication between the headquarters of an organisation and a subsidiary.

Track 9

3B Exercise 5

Marie: Shall we sit here?

Jari: Sure, Marie. That's fine.

Sue: Good.

Marie: Mmm, I'm tired. Busy morning.

Sue: Very.

Jari: Hey, did anyone see the thing on the Intranet today about email?

Sue: No.

Marie: No, what was it?

Jari: Well, apparently, our CEO has proposed an email-free day next month, what was it, 'to let people get on with real work' ... or something like that.

Marie: Ridiculous. I know we all complain about it but you can't just stop people using it.

Jari: What do you mean, Marie? Why do you say that?

Marie: Well, it's not email that's the problem, it's how you use it. For me, at least, if you overuse it or use it in the wrong way, it's not an email problem, it's a problem with the person. You see what I mean?

Jari: I see what you're saying, Marie. But I think we need to do something. I'm just totally overloaded. People need to learn what a phone is again.

Marie: Absolutely. I just think you can do this in other ways. I mean if you're really serious about doing something with email in the company, you're going to need more than a free day. I think it's just a gimmick. Maybe I'm wrong. But you see what I'm saying?

Jari: Yeah, yeah. Sue, you're the comms expert. What do you reckon?

Sue: I'm staying well out of this.

Jari: No, what do you think?

Sue: Well, I think the free day is a good idea. I mean, I may be wrong, but I think we'll all find we can live without it, for a day or two.

Marie: OK.

Sue: Yeah, I'm not disagreeing with you. I just think it'll make people think a bit more about what they're doing with emails. And that's no bad thing.

Jari: Absolutely.

Marie: Yeah, this is from Mr Email himself. I think I've had about 10 from you this morning already ...

Track 10

4A Exercise 2

Interviewer: How would you describe the decision-making environment in your company?

Kaneko: I think our company decision-making style is kind of slow and relatively careful but we know we need to accelerate our decision making in order to compete worldwide.

Interviewer: In what way?

Kaneko: Well, the automotive industry – one of the major industries in Japan – has a faster decision-making culture than we have now. It has fast processes for putting products onto the worldwide market and this is a big influence on us. So now it's a competitive advantage to have a fast decision-making culture. It matches customers' needs. We need to change our mindset to speed up our decision-making style.

Interviewer: So how is your company speeding up decision making?

Kaneko: Well, for example, we're trying to accelerate things by reducing our product development time to six months – basic design two months, another four months for production trial and quality assurance evaluation.

Interviewer: What is it at the moment?

Kaneko: Almost a year. So it's a hard target which creates a lot of pressure for people. And we are also cutting the number of management levels needed to approve decisions.

Interviewer: Is this approval process slowing down decision making?

Kaneko: Well, decision making here is a bottom-up process with working staff creating ideas and then we have this approval process with many management levels with checking and checking, so this is time-consuming.

Interviewer: Is this a Japanese decision-making style?

Kaneko: Yes, I think this is a Japanese decision-making style which takes more time to consider which direction we need to take. But there's also a question of teamwork. Because every project is constructed by many company departments – design, purchasing, finance and so on – we need to work with a consensus style ... working together. In fact all production industry has a project team culture – automotive, chemicals – all work in these project teams, so we can't step forward based just on our own individual judgements and ideas. We have to work together and get a collective decision, and this takes more time. That can be frustrating for some people.

Interviewer: Can I ask about the problem of distance? I know that telephone meetings are common now as a way to deal with the problem of distance, people in different places. Do you find these meetings less efficient than face-to-face meetings?

Kaneko: Yes, with telephone meetings we can't see each other's face, so it's much more difficult to understand and take a decision – the way to exchange opinions is less efficient. Face-to-face meetings are easier – you can see how the counterpart is feeling and what they are thinking. In fact, in a face-to-face meeting it's easier to have a conclusion, to

take a decision. With a virtual meeting it's harder to get to a decision and maybe you need one more meeting because you don't have enough time to get consensus with the agenda. And you have to plan for that when working in the project.

Interviewer: Do you have any tricks to manage this challenge?

Kaneko: I think frequent communication before meetings is very helpful to get to a decision in a meeting faster. I talk regularly to all worldwide staff to build understanding, of differences and of personalities and points of view, just to get to know the person. The distance is real but this gets you closer emotionally.

Interviewer: What kind of decision maker are you?

Kaneko: Individually, I'm fast. I don't like taking so much time to conclude things so I'm always thinking about how to accelerate things to get things done and move on to the next item because there are so many things we have to do now. The next thing to do is always waiting just around the corner.

Track 11

4A Exercise 4

Project leader: OK, shall we get started? I think, to begin our meeting today, as I've discussed with some of you by phone, I'd just like to take a minute or so to clarify one or two things: firstly, what we're trying to achieve, you know, what decision we want to take, and, secondly, agree how we want to take it. I mean, the reason I say this, I think we all agree that we had a bit of a misunderstanding at the last meeting which wasted quite a lot of time. As I said, I've talked to a few of you on the phone about this. So, what we're looking to take away today is a couple of decisions. I put this on the flip chart ... that's a final decision on the product design, so that we don't spend any more time on development, and also a decision on the final launch date so that we can begin thinking about the sales side of things. And for that you need to hear from me what we really need and I need to hear what's realistic from your side and balance things up. In terms of process, I don't really want to go into a big discussion again about the design concept again ... no ... exactly ... we don't have a massive amount of time and, you know, we've already discussed this a lot in the past. I think it would be useful for you if I simply list what I like and don't like and then it's easier for you to tell me where you can produce some quick fixes. OK? How does that sound from the design side?

Designer: Yeah, firstly, thanks for that. Yeah, I'm happy with that. I understand what you're saying. I think we can get to a decision today but, I agree, we may need to slow down a little bit, just to be sure, you need to be sure it's the right decision. As I keep saying, once the design is finalised and we hand over to prototype production, it's very difficult to go back to the design phase again. Very expensive. So, I would just say, don't get stressed if I push back a few times with questions. I'm not being negative here. I just want you to be sure that you take the right decision, a decision which you can really go forward with.

Project leader: OK, that's good. So, we agree we should be able to decide on product design. And maybe we should have thirty minutes with a strong question-and-answer session where you can push a little, just to check I'm not missing anything ... that I really know what I'm doing ...

Designer: That's good. OK, so, to start, you wanted to do a quick review of where we stood with things and give some feedback on ... [fade]

Track 12

4B Exercise 3

- 1 What I find difficult to handle is people who say very little, people who are quiet. I mean, I know there are different reasons for this – it could be they're not great with English, maybe it's a confidence thing, they're nervous in groups. And I know there are some cultures where silence is a kind of respect. But I need to have opinions to solve problems. So to get people to speak I basically have to ask. Sometimes I ask open questions like 'What does everyone think?' but that might not work – usually nobody wants to speak out first. It can be a better strategy to just ask a specific person, you know, so you say, 'Valdemar, what's your opinion on this?' And to make it easier for someone, you could maybe give them options like: 'Carla, do you think we should invest or save money?' But it's not easy sometimes. I tell you.
- 2 I think for me the biggest problem to manage is people who talk too much. And I think that's because I don't like interrupting. It just doesn't feel very polite; and if the person is a big boss, then interrupting is really not easy! But I had to learn it, to learn how to stop people. And I guess I now have a few strategies, if you like. Some are kind of obvious – just apologise and then interrupt, you know, like 'Petra, sorry to interrupt but ...' If you have a good reason, it means you can stay polite. So you say something like 'Toni, can I stop you for a moment? I think we need to hear what others think.' I also try to use a positive phrase to begin and maybe end. 'That's an important point, Franco. Can we hear Mary and I'll come back to you in a moment?' People often accept that. But you know, I still don't like doing it.
- 3 I run a lot of team meetings and, for sure, the most difficult person to handle is the impatient type – always knows best, has the answer worked out, won't listen to other ideas, can be very direct, you know, even rude sometimes – they can really destroy teamwork in a meeting. Working with external consultants, you get this problem. And it can get very tricky with people from the more face-saving cultures where indirect communication is more typical. Really tricky keeping the peace. In terms of strategies: get them to listen to others, get them to slow down and think of things they may have forgotten. So I say something like 'Yes, but what if ...' or 'Have you thought about ...'. Sometimes just asking for more information gets them to think. But there's always a potential for conflict with this type.
- 4 Yeah, I come from a retail culture, so pretty fast and sales-driven. So I always have a bit of a problem with people who are a bit slower, who love to analyse every last detail. I know their approach is useful; they pick up on problems which the faster types might miss. But it's hard to listen to them sometimes and they slow down decision making. And if they start going on, and you can see the rest of the meeting falling asleep, you have to step in, maybe focus them in some way, like, 'Bob, are you basically saying that ...' or 'So what exactly is the main risk from your point of view?' Or you have to push them to take a decision for once in their lives, just be very explicit 'So, what do

you recommend we do?' Something like this. I'm getting better but I still really don't have much patience.

Track 13

5A Exercise 2

Interviewer: How important are listening skills when working internationally?

Abhijit: Very important. Listening is probably the most important factor in any form of communication. More so in international communication because of the way people interpret things so differently.

Interviewer: Do you think listening is different across business cultures?

Abhijit: Well, we come with very different expectations and different experiences to the international community. And when we listen, we listen to what we know and want. The main barrier or problem is that we listen for what is important for us and not what the other person is trying to communicate. So people are always listening in different ways across all cultures and across all communities.

Interviewer: So, if this is the case, how can we listen effectively so we hear what others are really trying to say?

Abhijit: Well, for me it's a learning process, so there's no sure solution to this. But what I like or try to do is listen carefully. I concentrate, and ask for clarification if necessary. It can be during or after, actually a follow-up after a meeting. The key thing for me when I listen is not to assume I understand, and to clarify.

Interviewer: Is clarifying always a good thing in India?

Abhijit: I think clarification is always good, not only in India but any country, if it's done properly, which means explaining *what* you are trying to clarify, and done in a way which doesn't put someone under pressure.

Interviewer: So how do you avoid pressure?

Abhijit: Making sure the person sees you are interested in what they are saying is probably the best way. The other person feels you are a partner. And he's more willing to share thoughts. So showing interest, showing intent to solve a problem, probably is important to build two-way communication.

Interviewer: I know many people from Western Europe who go and work in India. A lot seem to report the issue that it can be difficult to get people to be open about problems. You know, you ask if there are any delivery problems, people say no and in fact, there are problems. What do you think about this?

Abhijit: I don't think this kind of situation happens very often in today's modern corporate Indian world. I'm focusing here on communication in a business context. But when there are people in India who are like this, and it does happen, it's a very interesting scenario to handle. My style would be to make sure the person does not feel threatened in any way by my questions or the clarification I am looking for. The person must be comfortable in the one-to-one conversation we are having.

Interviewer: So, if people are not being open to us, it could be something in our communication which is causing the problem. You mean we are responsible?

Abhijit: Absolutely. We are always responsible for communication working, and, if it doesn't, then it's our weakness. The person has to understand that my intention is positive; my intention is to support and help; or the person has to feel that I want to understand; then the person will

be more open, will share information and we'll be in a better position to exchange our ideas. You have to show positive intent and then the other person will be open.

Track 14

5B Exercise 3

Conversation 1

A: I wish I had a bit more of an understanding of finance.

B: Why? Are you feeling a bit insecure with things?

A: In a way, yes. My job isn't finance as such but I need to know quite a lot about accounts, and I read quite a few financial reports.

B: Why don't we talk to HR? Maybe there's a finance course, you know, for non-finance people they can offer.

A: Yeah, maybe I should. I've been half-thinking of that myself. So, who do you reckon would be the right person to talk to about ... [fade]

Conversation 2

C: Have you seen this email I got from Jaume?

D: No. What does it say?

C: Well, it's not so much what it says. It's just copied into his manager again. It really winds me up, constantly escalating things to management. Why not just pick up the phone and talk to me?

D: You prefer to sort things out one-to-one?

C: Absolutely. Don't you?

D: Well, it depends. Sometimes escalation can speed things up. But anyway, I'm not sure this is escalation in the way you mean it because it's just copying his boss in ... to me that's not ... [fade]

Conversation 3

E: I'd really like to offer you more support.

F: Good. What's your experience of software development?

E: Yeah, I did quite a bit of that in my last job. Not done so much recently but it's not part of the job at the moment.

F: Are you missing that?

E: Yeah, I am. Development is a creative thing and I really miss it. The job now is very much maintenance and dealing with angry customers ... not my idea of fun.

Track 15

6A Exercise 3

Interviewer: So, what advice would you give to someone presenting across cultures, from your experience in the Middle East and Japan?

Dom: The most important thing for me is to try as much as possible to make the presentation as collaborative as possible, with colleagues and external clients. So we spend a bit of time, for example, talking to clients in Japan and getting their first impressions, even just making sure from a language point of view that they understand the points you want to make. Working with others is really important to make the presentation more understandable for them. So in the presentation there are very few surprises. It's typical to let people look at the presentation beforehand – it's what I said before – so there are no surprises. And that's a personal challenge for me. I like to go away and write things privately.

Interviewer: Are there difference in the business environments too which can cause an issue?

Dom: Yes, you have people like us from our markets trying to give ideas to very different markets, which may not work in this part of the world. So you have to be much more collaborative to make sure what you say really makes sense for the particular environment. So, basically, you need to customise your message and style to the different needs and perspectives of different audiences. That's probably a universal, though.

Interviewer: What else in terms of advice?

Dom: Well, I guess, and this is another universal rule, internationally you need to simplify everything – one-word or one-sentence slides with occasional tables ... to be structured, logical, and keep a focus on main points. In presenting internationally, you find everything is much shorter, obviously. Less detail, sometimes more of a focus on entertainment rather than actual content. But seriously, you have to find ways to engage people.

Interviewer: Is this different to the UK?

Dom: Yes, heavy long presentations don't go very well here. And that's different to the UK where heavy and long presentations are necessary to convince the client that you know what you're talking about. In the Middle East the real business is done around the presentation not in it.

Interviewer: When you look back at yourself entering the Arab world, did you make many mistakes or did you adapt quickly?

Dom: Well, if you can relax a little bit, you fit in quickly, and I'm quite relaxed so I was OK. If you have this, a 'this is how we do it back home' attitude, then you are almost guaranteed to fail. In another ad agency I know, the creative director has just been fired. He lasted about three months. I'm sure he's excellent at what he does, but he came through too strong – 'this is how we need to do things, this is not professional enough, we need to change' – and they fired him.

Interviewer: So the message is?

Dom: Adapt to the local context or you'll fail.

Track 16

6A Exercise 4

- a This afternoon I'd like to look again at the new designs for the global brand. Now I understand that there are significant problems with our first proposal in relation to your local market, which you feel are important. So I want to focus exclusively on these concerns today, particularly around the choice of colours, and show you some solutions which I think you will find very acceptable.
- b Now, as HR professionals, I can appreciate that one of your main concerns is to manage training effectively. What I want to do today is to help you to use the new training portal we plan to implement. Now, I'm not planning to go into great technical detail today because I know that you are mainly interested in how the new system can help you manage training more effectively in the company. For this reason I'll concentrate on explaining the main three advantages for you of the new system.
- c Now I know that the changes to the organisation are complex, and I sense that things are a little unclear for many of you. So to help clarify things for you what I want to do is split the talk into two parts. Firstly, I'll run over the main reasons for change just to enable you to understand things a little better. Then, as I know you'd really need to have some more information about how these changes

are going to affect you on a daily basis, I want to spend some time looking at the new central database where you'll have to log customer enquiries in the future.

Track 17

6B Exercise 4

Samira: So, I think I'll stop there for a second as there may be a few questions. Yes, Omar?

Omar: Yeah, you mentioned that we'll need to go back to potential customers again with these new ideas on design. Isn't that going to slow things down a lot? It could be a time problem.

Samira: Yes, well, it's a good question. I think if we decide to tackle this today and I get things moving quickly, any delays should be pretty minimal. And secondly, to be honest, I don't think we have any choice. We need to check with the customer. What do you think?

Omar: No, I agree with you. I was just concerned about delays, that's all.

Samira: OK. Any other questions? Derek, yes?

Derek: Why didn't you plan for this in the first schedule? Isn't it poor planning?

Samira: Sorry, what do you mean by poor planning?

Derek: We should have discussed having this consultation phase earlier.

Samira: Oh, I see. Well, I don't agree. We did discuss this in the first planning meeting, and it was agreed not to buffer in extra time. So, I appreciate it may look like bad planning but it's what you and I and the rest of the team agreed to do. I think the main thing is to look forward now and find a solution. OK, any more questions or I'll wrap up? Jeanne, you have one?

Jeanne: Yeah, where are we going to do the product training?

Samira: I think it's a little early to raise that, Jeanne. It's about a year down the road so let's come back to that in a few months. OK?

Jeanne: Well, I think it's useful to look at it now.

Samira: OK, let's talk after the meeting today, we're under a little time pressure now. I can give you what info I have then. OK?

Jeanne: Fine.

Samira: Right, Luis, can I hand over to you now so that you can ... [fade]

Track 18

7B Exercise 1

Oleg: My feeling is that there is a bigger risk of misunderstanding with email than with other forms of communication, particularly when handling sensitive information. And, for me, the shorter the email, the bigger the chance you will be misunderstood. So if I don't know the person I am writing to so well, then I try to give clear explanations and expectations – to try not to be ambiguous. I try to give more background to the problem, for example. Usually this makes my emails a bit longer, longer than ones to the people I know. This is a general rule that I follow across all cultures. If the email channel is not working for some reason or other, then I phone. And when I get an email which irritates me, I leave it and don't respond immediately, then read it again later and maybe think there is misunderstanding from my side. And that stops me replying too quickly.

Track 19
8A Exercise 2

Interviewer: So what's your experience of negotiating across cultures?

Chen: Well, one of my most interesting experiences was being in a project to negotiate the outsourcing of our IT functions to a major American IT company. So, an outsourcing negotiation.

Interviewer: What were your experiences? What was most challenging?

Chen: I think, for me, just having to explain what you do to another company. The way we do things is very different and we had to explain that to the external outsourcing partner. And it was really hard for them to understand.

Interviewer: And what was the biggest difference in negotiating style?

Chen: Well, they were just extremely detailed, much more detailed. They didn't want to sign up for anything unless they understood every detail. And that was a big challenge. We're not a big documentation and process company. So we had to create all of that to carry into the negotiation which really slowed it down.

Interviewer: Did that damage the atmosphere – this mismatch of expectations about detail?

Chen: Yes, because we felt they were too detailed.

Interviewer: Did they explain this – their approach to you at the beginning of the negotiation?

Chen: No, they didn't really warn us before. And I didn't realise.

Interviewer: What else was challenging?

Chen: Well, they were just very conservative. They didn't want to take any risks. One example: we wanted to set them a target, a goal – this is what we expected. But they wouldn't agree unless they were 100% sure that they could deliver. They did not want to be held liable. There were a lot of negotiations between the legal departments. And this slow decision-making process from their side was frustrating for us. And it was quite hard to influence them in any way to change.

Interviewer: So is there a tolerance of risk in your company culture?

Chen: Could be. In my organisation people are pretty relaxed. People normally have a lot of flexibility in terms of what they do. So I think we're more flexible than most companies and they were just more conservative, which is why the clash happened.

Interviewer: What were the learning points for you from this?

Chen: I guess we didn't really think before about the challenges. We didn't know how conservative they were until we were in the situation, and then things got delayed. So a key lesson is that we have to communicate much more in the early stages. In the set-up of the negotiation, you need to understand what exactly they are asking before you really begin to negotiate and they need to understand you, and then you can move to goals and realistic timelines. The really critical part of the negotiation is the start, to communicate clearly.

Track 20
8A Exercise 4

Negotiation 1

A: In terms of the agenda, I would suggest we start with brief statements from both sides about what we expect from today, and then we can move to a discussion of the issues. Is that OK? Or would you prefer to do things another way?

B: Actually, we'd prefer to start. We want to tell you about some recent developments which are important for the negotiation today, if that's all right with you.

A: OK, that's fine with us. So then you'll kick things off with the recent developments and we'll follow with a quick presentation on ... [fade]

Negotiation 2

C: As we see it, the major objective today is to define the terms of an agreement on IT software implementation.

D: Can I just interrupt for a second? Sorry. From our side, it's important to say it's not just implementation. I think the major issue is going to be maintenance and service rather than the short-term implementation question. We need to discuss this today as well, we feel. And that'll need some time.

C: OK. That's important to clarify. So we need to allow some more time for that discussion. Right, shall we rearrange things differently and use the first hour after lunch for maintenance and service issues?

D: Fine. That'll be good.

Negotiation 3

E: I think we need to analyse and agree future upgrade costs because we're now committing to a five-year period.

F: If I can just say something there? We don't have figures for that discussion right now. So we will need to schedule another meeting on that if you want to go into any sort of detail.

E: OK, perhaps we should have clarified that before the meeting. It's not ideal. But then let's just discuss financial principles today. We can schedule another meeting, as you say, to go through the figures in detail.

F: Good. It's not a problem to postpone this. I think it's better to reschedule that part of the discussion until we have all the figures.

E: Right, glad we sorted that. So, let's get started with the first point, which is ... [fade]

Track 21
8B Exercise 4

Petra: Nelvi, sorry to bother you. Do you have a moment?

Nelvi: Yes, of course. Come in. How can I help?

Petra: Erm, I just wanted a word about Paul.

Nelvi: Yes? Is there a problem? I thought he was finished with your audit project.

Petra: Well, we're having a real problem getting things wrapped up on time. I won't bore you with the details but we're really behind schedule at the moment and you know we need a report ready for next Friday.

Nelvi: I know.

Petra: So, I was wondering if I could possibly borrow Paul for a couple more days, just to get us back on track. It would be a massive help to us.

Nelvi: It's not good timing, Petra. We've got so much on at the moment. I can't really spare anyone, to be honest. There's the Berlin conference next week ... then we've got the China launch ... sorry but, as I said, it's just really bad timing. I've got the team here working flat out getting all the documentation ready. I mean you can see ... look at it.

Petra: OK, but what if I got you some support for all the documentation preparation?

Nelvi: What do you mean?

Petra: Well, I just got a couple of interns – really bright graduates – great with this sort of presentation material. Would that free up Paul?

Nelvi: It's not just the software. The graphics are pretty complex ... there's layout, format ...

Petra: OK, so you're saying they would need briefing on what to do?

Nelvi: Absolutely.

Petra: OK, well, let's ask Paul to do that. Even if he can just hand over some of the tasks and I get him for a day, that would really help. I just need him for a day.

Nelvi: Mmm.

Petra: And it actually makes sense to train up a couple of my team on the documentation side. It'll really help you out next time round, when you're really busy.

Nelvi: Yeah, maybe.

Petra: I think it really makes sense. Then we can share resources on a more regular basis. We both have these peaks all the time, so why not pool resources a bit more?

Nelvi: Look ... OK. If you can give me cover – good cover – for the documentation preparation ...

Petra: Absolutely.

Nelvi: OK. And we train up these people ... maybe I can use them again ... OK, let's go and talk to Paul. I think he's in his office.

Petra: Great. Fantastic. Thanks very much, Nelvi. I owe you one!

Nelvi: Absolutely.

Track 22

8B Exercise 5

- 1 I'm really sure that it's the right move for you.
- 2 I think the main advantage is the chance to try your hand at leadership. I think it's a great opportunity for you.
- 3 I was in your position a couple of years ago and I decided to follow a project career. It was the best decision I ever took.
- 4 As you want to develop your career, it's clear that you'll need to manage a project at some point for sure. So why not do it now?
- 5 If you like, if it helps, I can sit down with you and talk you through my experience of project management. Would that help?
- 6 I can understand it when you say you're not sure about taking this on before Christmas. As you said, it's a really hectic period. So maybe delay until February next year?

Track 23

9A Exercise 2

Interviewer: Dani, you deal with managers across all functions in Human Resources and sometimes have to deal with conflict. What does conflict mean to you?

Dani: For me anyhow, conflict is when something gets me angry and I don't really know what to do. Conflict always involves emotions.

Interviewer: What's the main type of conflict that you see around you at work?

Dani: What I see at the moment – which is causing problems – is that leaders often communicate very badly when it comes to things changing in the company.

Interviewer: In what way is the communication causing conflict?

Dani: For example, with a reorganisation, if you're the head of an international division, and your own top manager comes to you and tells you to change, maybe you have to take new products, for example. And your first reaction is, 'I don't like it.' And then you talk to your boss, your wife or husband, and so on. Emotionally you go through a lot during this time. You're angry. You're sad. But, after four, five months or so, then you see the change is good and you're happy to do it. Then you make a 20-minute presentation to your own local teams for people there to understand. And people can get very worried and angry about the change and then managers get angry with staff. 'Why don't you understand, why are you saying no?' And I say to the leaders, 'If it took you six months to understand, how can local staff understand in 20 minutes?' They hadn't even thought that they might create conflict by doing it so quickly. This is a typical mistake.

Interviewer: OK, so the problem is going too fast – not taking time to think about possible conflicts and then how you can avoid them?

Dani: Yes, and not taking time to listen. I remember a management team in another company. Their staff told them that they had no job satisfaction. So, management had a two-day meeting about this to change things in some way. They had ideas: free massage, free training, and so on. When they came back to the employees to tell them, there was like a big revolution, shouting, a lot of anger, and the employees said, 'How can you think like this? These ideas make it worse!' All that the employees wanted, in fact, was leaders to go to them and say 'thank you'. They just wanted a close connection with their boss, the person who can develop them. There was a lot of conflict because the managers hadn't listened before. They didn't think that what they said would create this kind of conflict.

Interviewer: Why didn't the leaders communicate better with their employees?

Dani: It's funny actually, it's the leadership culture of many organisations. Leaders don't want to take up the employees' time. They don't want to involve people because they think the employees have so much work to do. They think it's their job as leaders to do this.

Interviewer: But do you think this more sensitive and open listening process would work well everywhere? It might not work in a more hierarchical context, for example? Maybe there you just tell people.

Dani: Well, right now, I'm working in many countries, some with a strong hierarchy and some with little hierarchy. All the managers are saying the same thing even if how to do it is not exactly the same. You have to meet people and understand how they think and involve them in change if you can. When you're open like this, then an employee feels that and they feel part of the organisation. They will give you more – 'I really can change something. It does matter if I give my opinion.' – and they will work more efficiently.

Track 24

9B Exercise 4

- 1 The company where I work has a pretty male culture – lots of testosterone around. This means there is a lot of aggression around the place and, to be honest, the best way to handle conflict is to be aggressive back to people if they are aggressive to you. It's the only language which people understand sometimes.
- 2 This organisation has one strong value and that is 'respect'. So if conflicts do arise, people are pretty quick to sit down and start talking and listening to each other. The basic approach is to understand the other person and try to find some form of creative solution which both parties will buy into.
- 3 People tend to avoid conflict so as not to confront or disrespect people, so what I find working here is the tendency to sweep problems under the carpet or to try and work them out later.
- 4 I don't have the time to spend arguing when I know I'm right. And because it's a pretty hierarchical environment, the quickest solution to manage disagreements is to involve a manager who will then just tell the other person what to do.
- 5 I quite like conflict. I think it's a way to surface issues and I like to have my own values challenged. So, if someone tells me that my ideas are rubbish, my basic response is to ask more questions to clarify what ideas the other person has.

Track 25

9B Exercise 5

Gavin: So what's the latest on the new resource we discussed?

Alessandro: Ah, yeah. We have a little problem there.

Gavin: Alessandro, we agreed at the last zone meeting that I would get an extra person for my side of the project. So I don't really understand this.

Alessandro: But, Gavin, you know, we've just had this new set of cost-cutting measures and there's no budget for extra resources for the time being. I'm really sorry about this.

Gavin: This is really frustrating. We spent a lot of time planning this at the last meeting and now we're back to square one.

Alessandro: Look, I can understand you're frustrated ...

Gavin: I am frustrated but I'm also worried. I can't see how we're going to be able to deliver in the timeframe with this. Maybe we should tell the board about the situation.

Alessandro: No, I don't think that's a good idea. I'm sure we can find a solution with a little bit of creative thinking. I've been thinking, I have a meeting later this afternoon with Giacomo Bindi, maybe you know him? He works in IT under Peter. Anyway, I know he's just come to the end of the Athena project. How about if I check whether he has time now to help out? Or do you have any ideas?

Gavin: OK, I know Giacomo. Yeah, he's good and could be useful, if he's available. But I guess even if he isn't, there may be people from Athena who have been freed up. It's worth checking, I guess. It's not ideal but better than nothing.

Alessandro: OK, good. So, I'll talk to Giacomo later today and then catch you before you go home to see where we stand. Yeah?

Gavin: OK, let's run with this and touch base at the end of the day.

Track 26

10A Exercise 2

Interviewer: You spend a lot of time working on international projects. What in your opinion makes a good team?

Gudrun: When you want a successful team, it's very important that people get the feeling that you're open and friendly and interested in the other person. You have to build up and then maintain personal contact.

Interviewer: Can you describe what happens at the first meeting of a team? How do you handle the formal introductions at the beginning, you know, when people go round the table, saying who they are and so on?

Gudrun: Yes, it's very important for the team to get it right from the start. So I would always talk about the area where I work, about my experience so people know me, and the things I'm interested in at work. I would never say I'm a doctor because I know in a lot of cultures it's not normal to say it. Because I know in Germany people focus much more on working life and not so much on private life. So if you see others talk about their private life – 'I have two children' and so on – it's best if you do the same otherwise people could think you're not really interested in sharing that kind of information with the group. And sometimes I would say I like clear communication. I would say, 'As you know it's difficult to talk in a foreign language and if I say something that isn't clear or if it sounds impolite, please ask me, because I definitely don't want to say anything bad and it would be helpful for the whole group if we clarified it directly.' So sometimes yes, say something about clear communication.

Interviewer: How long is all this?

Gudrun: It's easier when the person who is the facilitator or leader of the team has a structure. When you have a big group you have to make it short and sweet or people cannot remember. You have to think of two or three messages you want other people to remember and connect with you.

Interviewer: And what are the two or three messages that people connect with you?

Gudrun: Good question. I want to give them the impression that I'm interested in the topic. It's good to tell people why the project is important for you. And I also say something like 'I'm open', which means I like to share ideas and that anyone could ask me questions and give feedback and so on. It's helpful to tell people a little bit about what you're like in a team so that they have an idea of how to work with you.

Interviewer: After the kick-off, when you have all this positive motivation, how do you keep it alive through the project when people begin to do the real work?

Gudrun: Networking is the answer. I think it's very important that you as a team member are very active and that you get in contact with them, send them an email, phone them every week or two and say, 'At the moment I'm working on this ... what's your status ... what could we do together ...' to ask people how they feel. And I often make networking calls in the evening, not during my working time.

Interviewer: Do you think people do that enough in your experience?

Gudrun: No. And the reason is pressure. Sometimes when I'm under pressure I also forget to do it. In my last project I was so focused on the task and on deadlines and lack of resources that I didn't make time to have these long conversations. But this isn't right. People focus too much on the task and the methodology. They think if they have more

information then they'll run things better. Sometimes it's better just to have a commitment from another person from another country and that's enough.

Track 27

10A Exercise 4

- 1 I'm Jaume from Madrid. So what can I say? Well, I suppose I should start by saying I like working with colleagues from different countries. I think I'm very easy to get along with. What really gives me a buzz is all the ideas you get in a good team. I really like that creative side of things. I'm not a great believer in structure and deadlines, by the way, so push me if you need to on that front, OK? Yeah, and more specifically, I believe in this project. I think it will really help our work in Barcelona and, also, it will help the company generally.
- 2 My name is Angel and I'm from Bulgaria. I'm head of IT there. For me and my colleagues in Bulgaria, we are very committed to this project. It's very important to help us grow our market faster. Er, why do I like working in international teams? Well, I'm very results-oriented, very single-minded sometimes, which can come across as a bit critical to some, but I get a real kick out of working in teams because I think that teams reach better results than individuals working alone.
- 3 My name is Peter Chu from Malaysia. I am very happy to represent my country in this part of the project. It's my third international project and I know that they can be very hard work, very hard, but I always learn a lot when I'm in this kind of team, and that's a big motivator for me – I just love learning new stuff.

Track 28

10B Exercise 2

Gudrun: There was a problem with one British project leader who was too polite when he gave feedback. It wasn't clear to the non-native speakers what he wanted to say. He would say something nice and sweet but in fact it was a last warning.

I think that a leader has to be more clear and direct when giving feedback. If he only says things in a nice way, it's not clear that something has to change. For example, when you say to someone who is not a native speaker 'I wonder if it is possible for you to do it in a different way next time,' it sounds too nice and maybe people won't change anything. If you say 'I'm not happy and I would like us to agree that if we have the same situation again I expect this and this,' it's clearer what you expect in the future – in a neutral voice, not aggressively. That's why it's easier to understand Americans or Australians. They're more direct. They say they're not happy and then you can ask, 'What's the problem? What has to be changed?' to focus on solutions and actions. That's easier to understand.

I also think it's very important to get lots of feedback to make sure that team members understand each other. I think you have to say to people that we are an international team – not everyone is a native speaker. And I would also say, 'If I say something which sounds strange, please give me this feedback.' It could be a mistake because of the foreign language and nothing to do with me or my opinion. I would encourage people to give me feedback or ask.

Track 29

10B Exercise 3

Lars: Jean-Claude, just one final thing. As I said, I think the meeting went well this morning and the outcomes were excellent. The preparation on your side was great, so thank you. I just wanted to talk a little with you about your role, particularly your participation during the meeting.

Jean-Claude: OK.

Lars: It's just that you were very quiet. You didn't say very much in the actual meeting or during dinner later.

Jean-Claude: I see.

Lars: I think it's important to think about this because, well, for different reasons. It makes it a little unclear what you're thinking, especially to our customers. Maybe you agree? I could see some of them were a little unsure at times whether you were on board. And another thing is that it means your colleagues have to do more – ask more questions, keep people happy. I think it's no problem with people you know, but to be fair, you need to share the effort during these kinds of meetings and events.

Jean-Claude: OK, I didn't see the problem. I am not a big talker, as you know.

Lars: I see. You heard what I said about customers and colleagues?

Jean-Claude: Yes, I heard. OK, maybe I need to say 'I agree' or 'That's a good idea' more often during the meeting. Is that better?

Lars: I think the question is really how we handle our customers together as a team. It's very important to be clear.

Jean-Claude: OK, I agree. I'll try to say more, to give clearer messages.

Lars: Good. And also during dinner, helping colleagues. You know, it's hard to speak English all day. Erm, what could you do differently?

Jean-Claude: Mm, I'm not sure. 'Blah blah blah' is not my style. I'm an analyst. And you know my English. But I see, I have to help. OK, I'll try to talk more and you may have to remind me again. But I am open to feedback. I want to help the team, you know.

Lars: Sure, good. I know that. So we can talk again after the next meeting. And you know, if it's a question of using English, then maybe training could be something we discuss later when we review ... [fade]

Track 30

10B Exercise 7

A: Paul, could we have a quick word about the meeting this afternoon?

B: Of course.

A: What you said had a lot of truth in it but I could see a few people felt uncomfortable – it was a little too direct for them. What do you feel yourself?

B: Mm, yes, you're right. I'm sorry about that? I just lost my temper.

A: OK. So what do you think you could do differently next time?

B: Count to ten before saying anything?

A: Sounds like a good idea. Anything else?

B: I think I'm going too fast and not listening to the others.

A: So more questions?

B: Yes, asking more would definitely help, I think.

A: Good, and if that doesn't work, I'll put you down for the anger management training course! Anyway, thanks for your time. I think it was good to talk it through.

B: Yes, thanks for that.

Track 31

11A Exercise 2

Interviewer: What's your experience of running international meetings with very diverse multicultural teams?

Frédéric: Well, at first, I should say, I think it's always easier to work with people who are like you. In fact, you are more productive, efficient, you can go quicker, and so on. But there is a big issue and this is innovation or creativity. And in my experience, when I work with international teams, it's true that at the beginning when we have meetings it's very difficult: we have to find the way, we have to find how to communicate all together, and there is a time where we are less productive and less efficient. But, in the longer term, after five weeks, two months working together, the meetings are much more creative. I have no figures but the number of ideas, the innovation, the productivity in our meetings is really fantastic and this is the great advantage of having diverse cultures in the meetings.

Interviewer: So how do you get these creative results in the meetings? What's the secret of managing the diversity in meetings?

Frédéric: The first tip: you have to adapt how you lead the meeting. If you lead the meeting, you have to balance the intercultural differences, to help people work together. So, to generalise a little, if I am with Americans, then first I need to take into account the ability of Americans to have natural leadership in meetings, speaking, being very proactive. In France when someone interrupts, disagrees with a manager, he's considered as a revolutionary. In America, if you don't speak out, you are considered as a loser. Then if I take the case of having someone Chinese and an American in the same team, I have to manage the American – make him hold back – and give the stage to the Chinese person who is more modest. If I have to manage a French and an American – very opposite cultures – I have to encourage French people to break the rules towards the hierarchy, to speak out et cetera, et cetera. I have to bring people together somehow. But there's no single way of doing this. You have to adapt.

Interviewer: But in the end, you want to encourage people to engage with the ideas of other people? You know, when you're in the meeting and people are coming up with points to say, for example for John from the US to say 'Paulo, as an Italian, what do you think of this?' to get the creative benefit of diversity, the different mindsets?

Frédéric: Yes, exactly. So first you have to coach, build awareness of other people. Then, most importantly, to manage meetings you need to encourage different points of view, build collaboration, listen to each other, work with each other's ideas so you can take the best. I needed a lot of training. It really takes a lot of time before this behaviour and these attitudes develop.

Interviewer: Are there difficult people who don't accept these ideas? For example, very task-driven people may not be great listeners, not highly cooperative.

Frédéric: Of course, someone who is very task-oriented will not change. But I don't want to change the people. I just want to make people cooperate, and to have a mix of

people. For me it's very important to have task-oriented people in the team, and someone who is more people-oriented. As I said, it's how to get people to really listen to each other and be creative with each other in meetings. So sometimes it's very important to step in and to help people to connect, to get to a synergy effect – but this takes time to learn. We have to do it over and over again. And the fundamental step is building tolerance, patience in yourself and others. This is the first step, but it can be very difficult, you know, with busy professionals sometimes.

Track 32

11A Exercise 5

A

A: OK, so we seem to be saying that we need to think more creatively about pricing.

B: Sorry, can I interrupt here? I'm just a little worried about this focus on pricing. We've been here before and, to be honest, I don't think it works. I'm not sure what ... maybe get more expensive, more exclusive ... I don't know. Can we think a little bit about more alternative approaches?

B

A: I think we need to look to new markets to find customers for the quiet months.

B: Yeah, and maybe we need new channels. Maybe we need to work through agents and not just sell direct.

C: OK, interesting. Can we put these ideas together in some way?

C

A: So, what do people think? Any ideas? OK, John, maybe I can start with you. I know you have a lot of good ideas on this because we discussed it over coffee this morning. What do you think we could do?

D

A: Can I just say something? I really liked what Paul said about using agents more intensively. I think there's something in that idea. And Julia, you talked about new partnerships. I'm just thinking, using these two ideas, maybe we should think about creating joint ventures with agents, actually doing business with them, not just through them, as real business partners.

E

A: ... so the proposal is to spend a bit more on advertising.

B: I disagree. We need to control costs at the beginning of the year, not spend and ...

A: OK, sorry to interrupt. Before we disagree too quickly, and you may be right, can we just look at the possible advantages?

F

A: OK, Anne-Marie, so for you it's a question of more creative pricing, yes?

B: Yes, I think if we offer a good discount in the quiet months, it might pull a few more customers in.

A: OK, Gerald. What do you think about Anne-Marie's idea? Discounts in the quiet months?

Track 33

11B Exercise 4

Leader: So, the focus of the brainstorming today is to generate a few ideas on how to improve customer service – meaning both here in the company, with our wonderful colleagues in other departments, and our so-called ‘real customers’. I think we all know the rules, and we should probably aim to keep the ideas phase to around ten minutes as we’re a bit pushed for time. OK? So, anyone want to start? Paul? We can always rely on you to say something.

Paul: No problem at all. Well, just to turn things a little bit upside down, why not start by looking at ways to reduce customer service? Maybe we’re doing too much in some areas – you know, too much quality is a cost, waste of effort, stops us focusing on the key areas. Might sound a bit crazy but I have a feeling that we could do with rejigging things a bit.

Leader: OK. Fine, not crazy, anything goes, remember. So, first idea, let me write it on the flip chart: reduce customer service to ... rebalance?

Paul: Exactly.

Leader: OK, we’ll do the evaluation a bit later. So, for the moment ... more ideas, people, please! Jennifer?

Jennifer: We need to see things from the customers’ point of view. So maybe it makes sense to ask them. You know, what do you want from us, how are we doing at the moment, what else can we do? That sort of thing.

Leader: OK, I’ll note down: ask customers. I guess we’d need to create a kind of survey. Is that what you mean?

Jennifer: Exactly.

José Luis: I think that’s a bad idea. Sends out the message that we don’t know ... and ...

Leader: José Luis, this is ideas only. Evaluation later, OK?

José Luis: Sorry. Later, later.

Sam: Yeah, just to spin off from that, if we want to get good feedback, maybe we can give a prize for the best suggestion. Or is that too much?

Leader: No evaluation. Let’s just keep to collecting ideas. So: prize for feedback. OK. Can we also think in process terms ... making something bigger, stronger, more efficient, more effective and so on?

Carl: Yeah, I was thinking along similar lines about modifying the ‘time process’. What I mean is, I think we should look at how we can be faster in the way we respond to customers, both here and outside, particularly around problems. So: speed things up would be an idea from me. In an ideal world, we should know about the problems before the customer.

Leader: OK, so speed up. Yes? More? No? So, maybe we can look at the ideas in more detail starting with the first point here from Paul on ... *[fade]*

Key and commentary

1A Developing intercultural skills

1

Commentary

Prompt students to reflect on different aspects of the culture of these working environments:

- the speed of working life
- whether the environment is individualistic or more team-oriented
- whether it is very hierarchical or people have the freedom to take their own decisions
- whether it is driven by financial values or more people-oriented.

2

- 1 Understanding that people may communicate in different ways.
- 2 Not really useful.
- 3 Retail is fast. There's an orientation towards opportunity not risk. People are action-oriented.
- 4 Different departmental cultures.
- 5 Students' own answers.

3

Students' own answers.

4

- 1 Sales.
- 2 Because they sell things and make the money.
- 3 The construction department focuses on planning. The sales department like to be creative, work with ideas and be customer-focused.
- 4 Delays and extra costs.
- 5 IT, which communicates too much technical detail.
- 6 The business side, which makes business decisions without realising the costs and challenges for IT to support the decision.
- 7 Focus on systems and making things work versus making money.
- 8 First, understand and describe our own culture. Then describe and understand the cultures of others. Finally, translate and start to communicate across cultures.

5

Students' own answers.

6

- 1 the leadership style
- 2 We see ourselves as
- 3 The focus is on / A lot of time is given to
- 4 We value
- 5 a lot of time is given to / the focus is on
- 6 Generally, we try to take care
- 7 project-driven
- 8 Trusting people

7

- 1 top-down / bottom-up
risk-focused / action-oriented
people-oriented / task-oriented
team-oriented / individualistic
quality-focused / cost-driven
Others might include: traditional / modern, aggressive / friendly, tightly structured / loosely structured
- 2 Bo describes the sales team as action-oriented. From what he says, the IT team are task-oriented and quality-focused (*focus on systems and making things work*) and the business side as cost-driven (*focus on ... making money*). The new job he describes at the end is people-oriented (*They need me to be an interpreter so they can work together.*)

8

Students' own answers.

1B Developing intercultural competence

1

- 1 He urgently needs budget figures from his colleague in India but they have not arrived.
- 2 He realises it may be a cultural problem but is not tolerant or understanding of it – he assumes Akash is being unprofessional.
- 3 He intends to write to Akash's boss and copy to his own boss to put pressure on Akash. Other solutions might be calling Akash by telephone, visiting him in person, finding out if there is a problem preventing him from replying.

2

Piotr's email recommends finding out further information and if possible visiting Akash to establish a personal working relationship. Javed's email suggests it's a face-saving measure because something has gone wrong and that the matter is best dealt with at a higher level.

3

- 1 The ability to interpret from multiple perspectives.
- 2 It stops people judging others so quickly.
- 3 It makes people more open and positive with each other.

4

- 1 Giving an opinion
- 2 Asking for the opinion of others
- 3 Generating multiple interpretations
- 4 Evaluating different perspectives
- 5 Deciding what to do

5

Case summaries

Case A:

The business context is a transfer of jobs from one location (Switzerland) to another (Germany). These 'change' projects are often difficult because the business unit which is transferring the jobs feels like 'the loser', so cooperation may not be enthusiastic.

In this situation Joerg makes several (negative) assumptions. The fact that four people attend the meetings in Zurich could mean many things. For example, it's possible that all four people are affected by the transfer of jobs from Switzerland to Germany, so it makes perfect sense for them to attend. It may be typical in Swiss organisational culture to have many people at meetings involving change or complex decisions so that more voices of the organisation are present. In Joerg's organisation, responsibilities may be more strongly divided and are managed by individuals.

It may be natural for the Swiss colleagues to ask a lot of questions in the meetings. This could be part of their communication culture. It could be that asking questions is a sign of engagement for the Swiss; they want to show they are fully involved.

They might need to ask the questions because they need the information themselves. It may be that they have to answer a lot of questions with their own staff after the meetings with Joerg, so they want to be well prepared.

The pressure the asking of questions is placing on the timing of the meeting could tell Joerg that he needs to schedule longer meetings. There may be a culture clash in how meetings are timetabled and managed: Joerg may prefer shorter meetings with decisions taken quickly without too much discussion.

Joerg's solution to write an email to Luis may be useful to stimulate clarification of the misunderstanding. At least the issue will be discussed. However, the email is based on the assumption that the meetings are currently inefficient, which may not be an opinion shared by the Swiss and may be an opinion which they think is too directly communicated.

The Swiss organisation does not match the German organisation exactly. Many people have to be invited to the meeting because they are all impacted – the project crosses many roles and responsibilities. The Swiss organisation is also more used to networking knowledge than the German organisation is, by inviting many people to meetings.

Case B:
There is clearly misunderstanding about the status of the negotiations and the form of agreement reached during the Shanghai meeting. Cultural factors may be important on various levels. It may be that those present at the meeting are not the people with ultimate responsibility to authorise the contract. In the meeting, they perhaps agreed with what Marie offered, but they were agreeing only to submit to more senior management who will decide in the next three weeks. Therefore, to the Chinese negotiation team, no final agreement has been reached. Marie assumes that her understanding of verbal agreement is shared by the Chinese negotiating team, which it is not.

There may also be different attitudes to email. Marie is using email as formal minutes of the meeting which she feels she has the authority to write. For her Chinese counterparts, it may be unacceptable to agree in writing in this way; it may be too much of a commitment. This is why they disagree

that some discussions took place as they are not willing to agree to such a written record.

Marie shows with her emotions of anger and shock that she is unprepared to do business in this environment. She is interpreting from her own cultural viewpoint, expecting others to follow her business practices.

Her email and telephone call to clarify the matter may or may not be productive. Dealing with problems openly and directly in this way may be problematic if her counterparts prefer a more indirect and harmony-based approach. If she has a trusting relationship with her main Chinese counterpart, it is possible that she might get good feedback with such an approach about how people are feeling locally in Shanghai and how she could work to move the situation forward.

For Marie, to agree verbally and then to confirm in writing is seen as standard practice when giving a commitment or making a decision. In other cultures, a verbal promise may be less binding and open to renegotiation if circumstances change. In addition, problems of understanding due to language may lead to very different interpretations of what was agreed in a meeting.

2A Managing first meetings

1

- 1 Kazakhstan
- 2 Germany
- 3 Japan
- 4 Senegal

2

Students' own answers.

3

- 1 To get the relationship going quickly with people you don't see very often.
- 2 To begin trust building.
- 3 He begins by asking where the person comes from. It shows an interest in the country and a sensitivity to the person's background.
- 4 To discover common ground.

4

- 1 do, living
- 2 line, in
- 3 is, based / located
- 4 did, get / arrive
- 5 are, staying
- 6 How, are, staying
- 7 have, been

- 8 How, have, worked
- 9 are, leaving / going

5

- 1 haven't you
- 2 aren't they
- 3 didn't you
- 4 hasn't it
- 5 will you

6

- 1 e
- 2 b
- 3 a
- 4 d
- 5 c

7

Students' own answers.

2B Managing first meetings

1

- 1 The meeting to come later; Pavel's job; how long Pavel has been with the company; where his home is; his family. He also suggests having coffee.
- 2 Pavel gives short answers. He may be busy or may not feel comfortable with this kind of very enthusiastic small talk. Pavel seems happier to answer questions about his professional life rather than private life.
- 3 Jon could have asked fewer questions about personal life and focused more on professional areas. He might also have changed the tone of his small-talk style to be more neutral and serious – closer to the style of Pavel.

2

- 1 The project, a professional subject.
- 2 Jon sounds bored. At one point, when the project sponsor is mentioned, he seems not to be listening.
- 3 Pavel is a little confused by Jon's questions about Dr Kuehn's character. He might think this is not so relevant or appropriate to comment on, and so decides instead to give information about Dr Kuehn's professional experience.
- 4 In general, Pavel could have managed the conversation around topics which interested Jon, possibly asking more questions about Jon's personal interests outside work. In particular, he could have asked questions about Jon's interest in India, which he sounded very enthusiastic about.

3

Commentary

Generally, Pavel is far more task-oriented and is less willing to engage in small talk on social topics as Jon is in the first conversation. Pavel is more focused, especially in the second conversation, on results whereas Jon is more relationship-focused and likes to discuss people and their personalities. Both personality and cultural factors are important in shaping an individual's communication style.

4

- 1 To be reserved, serious and distant. Not to share so much personal information. To talk about work.
- 2 To spend time talking together. To share personal information. To ask questions about the private lives of others. To smile, to be friendly and enthusiastic.
- 3 Peaches can see coconuts as cold, difficult to get to know, maybe even a little impolite and arrogant. Coconuts can see peaches as 'too friendly', a little superficial, playing a game, impolite.
- 4 The notion behind this is that we should all have the flexibility to adapt ourselves during small talk to the style of the other person.

5-7

Students' own answers.

3A Communicating effectively

1

Commentary

In this situation, many senior executives decide to make a presentation which introduces their own bank with a brief history, scope of action and figures about people and financial results. They then follow up with some form of vision statement concerning the new partnership / activity, in this case in Russia.

In takeover situations such as this, it is important for executives to motivate local management and to deal with fears people will have about losing authority and even their jobs in a takeover process. José should communicate a strong respect for the local bank and give detailed examples of ways in which the takeover will support and benefit the local operation and help it and its staff to grow. It is less important to give details of the Spanish bank and high-level vision statements about future success.

2

- 1 The objective was to say hello to local senior management and welcome them to a new international future, in order to make them feel part of the new operation.
- 2 He felt nervous because he knew they were not all happy about the takeover.
- 3 The feedback was negative, probably because the audience felt disrespected.

3

- 1 José didn't talk about the successes of the Russian bank and what the Spanish bank could learn from them.
- 2 He didn't copresent with the local boss who was unhappy and this had a negative impact on the event.
- 3 His advice is to show respect to people, especially the local management, and their successes.

4

Students' own answers.

5

- 1 Show understanding of the other person's point of view / needs.
- 2 Be open and honest with bad news.
- 3 Apologise for any problems.
- 4 Highlight good news.
- 5 Give positive feedback.
- 6 Show respect for the other person's time when asking for something to be done.
- 7 State clearly your positive motivation.

6

Suggested answers

- 1 I appreciate / understand / recognise / realise; concerned about / afraid of / fearful of
- 2 to be honest / actually / frankly speaking
- 3 I apologise for / I regret / I'm disappointed by
- 4 I am pleased to inform you / delighted to tell you
- 5 congratulations / let me give very positive feedback
- 6 everyone is under time pressure at the moment / at this time of year you are all very preoccupied
- 7 our primary aim is to support / first thought is to enable

7

Commentary

The model below is relatively formal in style but tries to send a balanced and professional message to an audience

which could receive this news very negatively (i.e. email is unavailable for 24 hours!). All the strategies have been integrated into this email and each strategy is identified below:

(1) *As part of our objective to increase the company's IT functionality, (2) I am happy to inform you that we will be installing some new software features on the system next Monday.*

(3) *Unfortunately, email will be unavailable for 24 hours as from Monday at 13.00. We know that this will cause some disruption to your working day, (4) particularly at this busy time, and (5) we apologise for this.*

(6) *You may have expected such upgrades to be handled at the weekend. However, certain technical requirements made it necessary for us to complete the process on Monday.*

(7) *I would like to thank you for your understanding. I am confident that the new software will enable you to continue to (8) produce the excellent results we see every month.*

- 1 State clearly your positive motivation.
- 2 Highlight good news.
- 3 Be open and honest with bad news.
- 4 Show respect for the other person's time when asking for something to be done.
- 5 Apologise for any problems.
- 6 Show understanding of the other person's views.
- 7, 8 Give positive feedback.

3B Communicating effectively

1

1 C 2 A 3 B

2

Students' own answers.

3

- 1 I may be wrong about this but for me ... / I think, and it's just my experience, that ...
- 2 I'm not disagreeing with you. It's just that ...

- 3 What do you think? / What's your experience with this? / What about you? / What's your take on this?
- 4 Interesting. / Absolutely.
- 5 Yes, but ...
- 6 You mean that ... / What you said was very interesting ...
- 7 I couldn't agree more on that.

4
Students' own answers.

- 5
- 1 A proposal to have an email-free day in the company.
- 2 Jari: Agrees with the idea. It is doing something to deal with the problem. Marie: Agrees email is a problem. Thinks the email-free day idea is not the right solution. Sue: Agrees. Thinks it will make people think about how they use email.

- 6
- 1 What do you mean? Why do you say that? What do you reckon? What do you think?
- 2 You see what I mean? But you see what I'm saying?
- 3 I may be wrong. / I'm not disagreeing with you ...

7
Students' own answers.

4A Managing international meetings

1
Students' own answers.

- 2
- 1 Slow and relatively careful.
- 2 He says the company has to accelerate its decision making because it's a competitive advantage.
- 3 To reduce product development time to six months from twelve.
- 4 The fact that many levels of management have to approve decisions, which is time-consuming, and the project team culture of working together means it takes more time to get a collective decision.
- 5 Because speakers can't see each other and gauge how people are feeling.
- 6 Fast / Likes to get things done and move on.

3
Students' own answers.

- 4
- 1 What decision to take; how to take it.
- 2 Final decision on product design; final launch date.
- 3 They don't have much time; they have already discussed a lot. The project leader suggests listing what she likes and doesn't like and then taking feedback.
- 4 To make sure the right decision is made. It's difficult and expensive to return to the design phase again later.

- 5
- 1 I'd just like to take a minute or so to clarify one or two things; firstly, what we're trying to achieve ... what decision we want to take, and, secondly, agree how we want to take it.

- 2 ... what we're looking to take away today is a couple of decisions ... that's a final decision on the product design, ... also a decision on the final launch date
- 3 In terms of process, I don't really want to go into a big discussion again about ... it would be useful for you if I simply list what I like and don't like and ... for you to tell me where you can produce some quick fixes.
- 4 How does that sound from your side? ... OK, that's good.
- 5 So, we agree we should be able to ... And maybe we should have thirty minutes with a strong question-and-answer session where you can push a little, just to check I'm not missing anything ... that I really know what I'm doing ...

6
Students' own answers.

4B Managing international meetings

1, 2
Students' own answers.

3, 4

Communicator behaviours	Communication strategies
1 Quiet person	1 Ask open questions. <i>What does everyone think?</i> 2 Ask a specific person for an opinion. <i>Valdemar, what's your opinion on this?</i> 3 Ask a specific person for an opinion but give them options to make opinion giving easier. <i>Carla, do you think we should invest or save money?</i>
2 Talkative person	1 Apologise and interrupt. <i>Petra, sorry to interrupt but ...</i> 2 Interrupt with a good reason. <i>Toni, can I stop you for a moment? I think we need to hear what others think.</i> 3 Use a positive phrase to begin and end. <i>That's an important point, Franco. Can we hear Marie and I'll come back to you in a moment?</i>
3 Impatient person	1 Get them to listen to others. 2 Get them to slow down and think of things they may have forgotten or not considered <i>Yes, but what if ... or Have you thought about ...</i>
4 Over-analytical thinker	1 Focus them. <i>Bob, are you basically saying that ... or So what exactly is the main risk from your point of view?</i> 2 Push them to take a decision. <i>So, what do you recommend we do?</i>

5-8

Students' own answers.

5A Becoming a better listener

1

Students' own answers.

2

- 1 We listen for what is important to us and not what the other person is trying to communicate.
- 2 He listens carefully, concentrates, and asks for clarification if necessary.
- 3 Showing interest and intent to solve a problem.
- 4 It doesn't often happen, but when it does it requires careful handling.
- 5 You have to show positive intent.

3

Students' own answers.

4

- 1 So if I understand what you said about 'risk', ...
- 2 So, I see that 'short term' for you ...
- 3 What do you mean by ...
- 4 What for you ...
- 5 You mentioned 'quality' several times. Is this ...
- 6 Why do you say 'cultural differences' ...
- 7 So, 'we must have this in the deal' means that ...
- 8 If we decide to 'stop all unnecessary spending', ...
- 9 What kind ...
- 10 How big is ...
- 11 I'm sorry, I'm not sure I fully understand.
- 12 That's very interesting.

5

Commentary

There are many ways in which it is possible to clarify even these short extracts. Here are some examples for you to consider and compare your answers with.

- 1 It is probably useful to clarify the costs part of the statement first because it sounds as if the speaker may feel very strongly about this issue:
What do you mean by 'out of control' exactly?
After clarifying this, it would be useful to move the discussion forward by quantifying the kind of action recommended by the speaker:
Reduce by how much?

- 2 The meaning of 'too slow' or 'real quality issues' is unclear and could be clarified. If you accept the opinion of the speaker, you could go directly to explore the consequences of what is being said:

Do you think that our customers are unhappy with the current levels of service?

- 3 Several individual words could be clarified to understand more fully the information which the speaker is giving, e.g. 'stressed' or 'late'. It might also be useful to clarify the motivation behind the words:

I can hear that you're worried. Do you want me to have a word with him?

- 4 As a listener, it is possible simply to check your understanding of what has been said in your own words:
When you say 'not on the same wavelength', you mean that people are not getting on together?

6

Students' own answers.

5B Becoming a better listener

1

Some good reasons for listening:

- to get facts and figures (for own needs)
- to show respect
- to be fair (give someone their turn to speak)
- to understand a person's needs so we can influence them later
- to motivate someone by showing they are important
- to provide emotional support to someone
- to build rapport (chemistry) and a positive atmosphere
- to learn

2

- 1 Understanding attitudes to key concepts such as time can help us to work effectively with people from different cultures.
- 2 We can find out if the other person can give advice.
- 3 Asking simple questions about workload.
- 4 By listening silently and analysing information to focus on what is useful.
- 5 Make the speaker feel that he/she is understood.

3

Conversation 1

To support emotionally: *Are you feeling a bit insecure with things?*

To offer help: *Why don't we talk to HR?*

Conversation 2

To get useful information: *What does it say?*

To analyse values and attitudes: *You prefer to sort things out one-to-one?*

Conversation 3

To check competence levels: *What's your experience of software development?*

To support emotionally: *Are you missing that?*

4

- 1 d, g
- 2 b, e
- 3 a, h
- 4 c
- 5 f

5

Students' own answers.

6A Presenting across cultures

1

- 1 US
- 2 Japan
- 3 UAE
- 4 Germany
- 5 Finland
- 6 UK

2

Students' own answers.

3

- 1 Work with others to make the presentation understandable for them.
- 2 Customise message and style to the different needs and perspectives of different audiences. Simplify everything; to be structured, logical and focus on the main points, keep it short.
- 3 In the UK, presentations can be longer and heavier to convince the client that the presenter is an expert.
- 4 The manager communicated in too strong a way and upset people. The main message of the story is that it is important to adapt your style to the local context or you will fail.

4

- 1 understand
- 2 feel
- 3 exclusively

- 4 concerns
- 5 acceptable
- 6 appreciate
- 7 interested
- 8 concentrate
- 9 advantages
- 10 sense
- 11 clarify
- 12 enable
- 13 need
- 14 affect

5 Model introduction

OK, today I'd like to talk about the results of the survey we did on international customer satisfaction. I think this will be interesting for you because I know that you're motivated to keep customers happy so that we can keep sales high. I've used the survey to produce some concrete proposals using the information in the report which I hope you will find useful. And we can discuss these after I've gone through the survey to think about ways in which you can increase your sales.

Commentary

This presenter customises the introduction very strongly. The presentation starts with a clear statement of the topic and follows with a sentence which explains why the presentation is relevant for the audience (*I think this will be interesting for you because ...*). The presenter also stresses that there are 'concrete' and 'useful' proposals to help the audience increase sales (their main motivation at work) and offers the opportunity for discussion at the end of the presentation to make sure that the ideas presented can be clarified and put into practice.

6

Students' own answers.

6B Presenting across cultures

1

- 1 They differ in how challenging their questions are.
- 2 To make sure the audience feel that they are being treated well and getting something for being there.

2 Possible additional guidelines

If you do not know the answer to a question, say so, but promise to find out the answer later, e.g. *I'm afraid I can't answer that but I'll find out and get back to you.*

Make sure you have answered the question satisfactorily, e.g. by saying *Does that answer your question, Michelle?*

3 Possible answers

- 1 If you don't mind I'll take questions at the end. / I'll take questions at the end if that's all right.
- 2 Marie, could you tell us what you think? / Could I ask you for your thoughts, Marie?
- 3 Good question. Let me think ...
- 4 Let me just check I've understood your question.
- 5 If there are no more questions? Right, I'll move on ...

4

- 1 A time problem (going back to ask customers questions will slow things down).
- 2 Any delay will be minimal if the speaker starts on the problem today; there's no choice as they have to check with the customer.
- 3 'Sorry, what do you mean?' is the response. It helps the speaker to understand precisely the criticism (that no discussion about the potential problem took place) and buys her some time to think about her answer.
- 4 She disagrees with the questioner and insists that discussion did take place.
- 5 She does not feel that the question is important at this stage.
- 6 She suggests a private conversation after the meeting.

5

Students' own answers.

6 Possible answers

- 1 As I mentioned earlier in the presentation when I was talking about ..., I think that ...
- 2 It's an interesting question. What do you think?
- 3 I'm very sorry. Could you repeat that, please?
- 4 I think that's a little outside the scope of today. We can take it one-to-one afterwards, though, if you like?
- 5 I'll be dealing with that a little later, if that's OK?
- 6 I'm very sorry. Could I take the question afterwards just to be sure I understand the question?

7

Students' own answers.

7A Writing emails

1

Students' own answers.

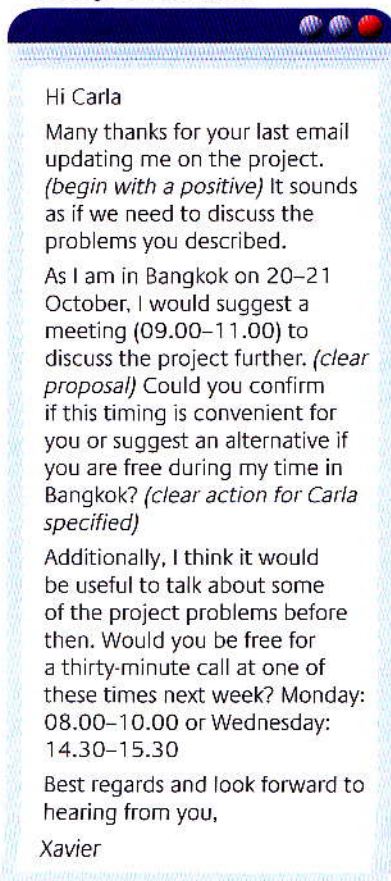
2

- 1 Xavier wants to find a convenient time for a telephone call in order to arrange a meeting in Bangkok.

2 Commentary

The email on page 30 is reasonably clear in that it gives background information (the person will be in Bangkok) and it has an objective (to arrange a telephone call and a meeting). However, it can be improved in several ways. The first sentence about project problems could come across as rather direct and critical, and so needs to be modified in some way. In fact, it may not be necessary to give this feedback at all in the email. Additionally, the request to schedule a telephone appointment could be made more efficient by suggesting some times which are convenient for the writer, so enabling the reader to confirm an appointment time rather than having to suggest one themselves.

- 3, 4 Here is a possible email where the message is more clear:



Hi Carla

Many thanks for your last email updating me on the project. *(begin with a positive)* It sounds as if we need to discuss the problems you described.

As I am in Bangkok on 20–21 October, I would suggest a meeting (09.00–11.00) to discuss the project further. *(clear proposal)* Could you confirm if this timing is convenient for you or suggest an alternative if you are free during my time in Bangkok? *(clear action for Carla specified)*

Additionally, I think it would be useful to talk about some of the project problems before then. Would you be free for a thirty-minute call at one of these times next week? Monday: 08.00–10.00 or Wednesday: 14.30–15.30

Best regards and look forward to hearing from you,

Xavier

3 Possible email

Hi Xavier

Thanks very much for your email. I think a telephone call would be a really good idea and then we can discuss the project in more detail face-to-face when you are in Bangkok. (*positive start*)

Why don't we speak at 8 o'clock on Monday morning your time?

I would be available to meet you on Wednesday 20 October at 10 am. (*clear information*)

Please let me know what works for you and I will give you a call on your office number. (*procedure of who calls who is specified clearly*)

Best regards

Carla

4

- 1 writing
- 2 arrange
- 3 discuss
- 4 suggest
- 5 let
- 6 convenient
- 7 invitation
- 8 confirm
- 9 book
- 10 seeing
- 11 getting
- 12 helpful
- 13 opening
- 14 appreciate

5

Possible situations

- Re-arranging a meeting
- Describing the status of a project
- Reporting figures
- Checking when work will be completed
- Informing of a mistake and apologising
- Making an offer
- Accepting an offer
- Rejecting an offer
- Giving instructions
- Congratulating (on the successful completion of a project)
- Inviting to a social event
- Responding to a social invitation

6

Students' own answers.

7 Possible emails

To Josep:

Dear Josep

Great to hear from you. I'm well and hope everything is good with you too.

Regarding the training request, I'd be really happy to come over in the first week in August (Week 31) to run a day's training with your IT people. I think we need to organise a call to discuss the objectives, content and timing of the training in more detail. Can you let me know a good time for me to reach you next week? Any afternoon Monday–Wednesday is good for me.

I'll send a confirmation email to your manager with proposed costs so that budget can be confirmed.

Look forward to talking next week and hearing about your plans for Tunisia!

Best wishes

Commentary

The email opens with a little small talk in response to Josep's email. The email is clearly structured into two sections. The first focuses on accepting the request to run a training course. The second section deals with Josep's request to send an email to his manager.

Importantly, the email requests a telephone call to clarify immediately details of the training – a good way to avoid any misunderstanding.

The email ends positively and politely with a reference to Josep's holiday in Tunisia. Overall, the general style of the email is likely to be seen by Josep as friendly and professional.

To Jordi:

Dear Jordi

Josep has asked me to email you to confirm that I can come across to Spain in the first week in August to run a product training course with your IT people.

Regarding costs, the trainer fee we charge internally is €850 per day (this will probably be a two-day course) and we invoice travel and accommodation expenses at cost. Flight costs will be approximately €400 and accommodation around €120 per night.

If you can let me know if these costs are acceptable, I will go ahead and book flights and reserve accommodation. We can keep costs down if we book earlier.

If you have any questions about the costs, do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards

Commentary

The email opens with a clear statement explaining the reason for writing. The second paragraph gives a concise overview of proposed costings per night for training fee and hotel accommodation. This makes it easy to calculate final costs once the duration of the training course is decided.

It is a good idea to request a confirmation about the acceptability of costs as this permits the booking of the flight and accommodation (earlier means costs can be reduced).

The email ends politely by signalling openness to clarification or feedback on the proposed costings.

7B Writing emails

1

- 1 His feeling is that there is a bigger risk of misunderstanding with email.
- 2 He tries to give clear explanations and expectations, and tries not to be ambiguous.
- 3 He doesn't respond immediately / too quickly but reads it again later to check if he has misunderstood it.

2

First email

- 1 Pete's email can be misinterpreted as an 'order', and come across as rather disrespectful.
- 2 An alternative approach could be to:
 - integrate a social start to 'soften' the impact of the request (which will cause work for John)
 - express the request for information as a need for support (people

usually read requests like this more sympathetically than what they see as a demand)

- acknowledge that your email will create extra pressure / work (and perhaps apologise for this)
- stress that the email is to reach a common objective rather than solve 'my' problem
- be open to a telephone contact to discuss the matter (shows you are open)
- finish with a clear and unequivocal polite expression of thanks

3 Sample email:

Dear John

Hope you are well.

I'm just writing to request your figures by the end of today, if possible. I realise this is very short notice and that you'll have a lot of other things to do. But I need the data urgently for my presentation to the board on Friday. If the talk goes well, we should have our budget authorised, which will be great news for all of us.

I tried to reach you this morning but without success. If it is a problem to deliver the data, we should speak before lunch time.

Many thanks for your support with this.

Best regards

Pete

Second email

- 1 Kath's email can easily come across as very critical due to its lack of explicit positive feedback and focus on things which need to be improved.
- 2 This is a good example of when not to send an email as it is likely to be far more effective to discuss the presentation in detail over the telephone. In this case, the following email expressing thanks and balanced minimal feedback with a proposal for a telephone call would be more effective.

3 Sample email:

Dear Ingrid

Many thanks for your email and the attached presentation.

I've had a look through and have some comments on what I like about it and areas which I think could be improved.

Would it be a good idea to have a telephone call to discuss things in more detail? If so, could you propose a time for sometime next week? Thursday morning would suit me best.

Look forward to talking.

Regards

Kath

3

- 1 d: writing
- 2 a: appreciate
- 3 e: support, enable
- 4 b: opinion
- 5 c: decision, convenient

4

- 1 I'm just writing to clarify; To help us reach the April deadline,
- 2 I understand that this will create a lot of work
- 3 success of the whole project, I would like your support to ...
- 4 This is only a proposal at the moment and we need to discuss ...
- 5 I plan to call you at 16.30 your time tomorrow

5

Model email

Dear Elio

I'm writing to suggest we have a telephone call to discuss the status of the database implementation and possible postponement of the European management circle meeting next week.

I realise that the postponement suggestion is very short notice and that it may be difficult to reorganise things. However, I have just had an email from Camillo indicating that Italy

is experiencing significant problems with the implementation. We also have difficulties here in the UK and I think we need to use the time to sort out these issues rather than meet in Lisbon. But I am interested to hear your opinion as you may have other ideas or be able to offer some support.

I think it would be a good idea to discuss this by phone. I would suggest that I call you at 17.00 CET tomorrow. If this is not convenient, can you let me know when would be a good time for you to talk?

Look forward to resolving this.

Best regards

Bob

8A Negotiating across cultures

1

These are the five most important (unranked) according to Rackham:

- Tests the understanding of the other party frequently.
- Structures the discussion clearly and flexibly.
- Highlights common ground between the parties.
- Focuses on the long term.
- Uses a lot of questions to explore options.

2

1 Chen's company wishes to outsource (subcontract) its IT function to an American IT company.

2 Having to explain what she / her company does and the way they do things to another company.

3 The American company was much more detailed in their approach than Chen's company.

4 The American company did not want to take any risks and make commitments which would make them liable if things went wrong.

5 The slow decision-making style.

6 The importance of clear communication at the start of the negotiation.

3

Students' own answers.

Negotiation	Change to objective / agenda	Reason for change
1	Other negotiator wants to start.	To update on important new developments.
2	Discuss maintenance and service in afternoon session.	It needs a lot of time.
3	Discuss finance principles only.	Detailed figures not available.

5

- we'd prefer to start
 - that's fine with us
 - As we see it
 - shall we rearrange things
 - if I can just say something
 - glad we sorted that
- 2 Students' own answers.

6

Students' own answers.

8B Negotiating across cultures

1

Students' own answers.

2

- b
- e
- f
- c
- a
- d

3

Students' own answers.

4

- She wants Nelvi to give her Paul, one of her staff members, to help finish an audit which is behind schedule.
- Nelvi's department is very busy preparing (e.g. documentation) for events in Berlin and China.
- She offers to give two interns who can help prepare the documentation.
- The idea to train people in Petra's department who can support Nelvi in future when her department is very busy.

5 Commentary

Petra and Nelvi sound as if they are good friends and there is no hierarchical distance between them. The conversational style between them is typical in very relationship-oriented and informal professional cultures (the peach culture – see page 13). It may also be common in her culture to change arrangements rather than see it as necessary to

stick to the plan. In more task-driven and formal environments where such intimate relationships are less typical (the coconut culture – see page 13), where not changing plans is the norm and conversation may be more serious, neutral and fact-driven, Petra's approach might not be so successful (depending on the individual she is trying to persuade).

5

- Be convinced yourself.
- Offer benefits.
- Stress commonality.
- Convince with logic.
- Emphasise willingness to share.
- Listen first and then suggest.

6

- I'm really sure ...
- I think the main advantage is ...
- I was in your position a couple of years ago
- As you ... it's clear that you'll need to ...
- I can sit down with you and talk you through ...?
- I can understand it ... As you said ... So maybe ...

7–8

Students' own answers.

9A Managing conflict

1 Possible answers

- Language misunderstanding
- Different goals and interests
- Personality clash
- Cultural differences, e.g. different approaches to leadership, level of detail expected by either side

2

- Change management: managers communicating change badly.
- Managers do not take enough time to manage and communicate change.
- Lack of job satisfaction in staff.

- Management offered things like training and massages, but what people really wanted was just a 'thank you'.
- Managers don't want to waste their staff's time.
- Managers think it is their job as leaders to do this.
- Staff will be more committed and give more of themselves.

3

Commentary

Situation 1:

Anticipate: This could create a problem for Janek as he may see Alison's request to copy emails as a lack of trust or even a form of controlling of his work, which he will not recognise as Alison's responsibility.

Identify: Alison simply wants to know what is going on whereas Janek feels it is his responsibility to chase the invoices and inform Alison of the outcome, not to involve her at every stage of the process.

Recommend: Alison and Janek should have a meeting to clarify their different points of view. Janek needs to agree a way to keep Alison informed of the status of outstanding invoices, either by copying his emails to her or notifying her in some other way. Alison ought to be flexible and be open to other solutions from Janek which give her the information she needs to do her job.

Situation 2:

Anticipate: This could be a problem for Claudia on many different levels. She may feel anxious about taking a job in the US because her language skills are weak. When she gets Paul's email, Claudia may feel irritated that he has already spoken to a colleague in New York without consulting her first. Paul may become frustrated if Claudia rejects his idea as he has already started the ball rolling by setting up a meeting and it would look strange if he now had to inform his US colleague that Claudia is not interested in the job.

Identify: Claudia needs to feel involved and feel sure that she has the necessary skills whereas Paul wants to support the organisation in the US and to support Claudia to develop her career. Claudia needs to recognise the positive intention behind Paul's offer, as an expression of confidence in her ability and as support for her career. Paul needs to see that he perhaps moved too quickly and that he should discuss with Claudia in much more detail her view of the situation.

Recommend: Claudia and Paul should hold a meeting to discuss the opportunities and risks for Claudia of the US position. If Claudia expresses an interest to go further, the meeting with the US colleague can go ahead.

Situation 3:

Anticipate: This measure could create considerable resentment among staff who may feel that their independence and professional responsibility has been reduced. It may be interpreted as a lack of trust and a suggestion that people were spending money on the wrong things in the past.

Identify: Jenny has to implement measures to control costs whereas staff members want to have the freedom to make their own budget decisions.

Recommend: Jenny should meet with staff and explain the background to this decision: the general economic climate, the financial performance of the company and the aims of the specific decision to involve her in signing off budget decisions. Staff members need to recognise the responsibilities of management towards costs and provide clear information about essential and non-essential travel which makes it possible for the managing director to make the right decisions when budget is requested for travel.

9B Managing conflict

1

- 1 The Japanese production team was upset that their American colleagues did not remove their boots when walking on the tatami mats.
- 2 The Japanese made the Americans realise their behaviour was disrespectful (by comparing walking on the tatami to walking on the US flag).

2, 3

Students' own answers.

4

- 1 ... be aggressive back to people if they are aggressive to you. It's the only language which people understand sometimes.
- 2 ... find some form of creative solution which both parties will buy into.
- 3 ... sweep problems under the carpet or to try and work them out later.
- 4 ... involve a manager who will then just tell the other person what to do.

- 5 ... ask more questions to clarify what ideas the other person has.

5

- 1 The cancellation of previously agreed extra resources for Gavin's project.
- 2 Take the problem to the board for them to decide.
- 3 To find a creative solution themselves.
- 4 To check if people free from another project are available to support Gavin.

6

- 1 Students' own answers.
- 2 Apologise explicitly: I'm really sorry about this.
Acknowledge other's feelings: Look, I can understand you're frustrated ...
Reject ideas politely: No, I don't think that's a good idea.
Show confidence in finding a solution: I'm sure we can find a solution.
Offer a compromise: How about if I check whether he has time now to help out?
Invite ideas from the other person: Or do you have any ideas?
Summarise to avoid future misunderstanding: So, I'll talk to Giacomo later today and then catch you before you go home to see where we stand. Yeah?

7

Students' own answers.

10A Working in an international team

1

Possible reasons teams fail:

- Confused goals
- Unclear roles
- Badly defined working procedures
- Personality conflicts
- Poor sponsorship / leadership

2

- 1 a She always talks about her work area, experience and things which interest her.
b She never says she's a doctor.
c She sometimes talks about her private life if others do and sometimes says she likes clear communication.
- 2 Keep it short and sweet otherwise people will forget what you've said.
- 3 She's open to sharing ideas; she tells them what she's like as a team member.

- 4 So that team members have an idea of how to work with you.
- 5 To network and be in frequent contact with people.
- 6 The pressure of work.

3

Students' own answers.

4

- 1 Jaume enjoys the creative buzz of working in a team and doesn't like structure or deadlines. Angel is results-oriented and thinks that teams achieve more than individuals. Peter finds working in a team motivating and likes learning new things.
- 2 Students' own answers.

5, 6

Students' own answers.

10B Working in an international team

1

Students' own answers.

2

- 1 The message was unclear: he was too polite when he needed to make it clear this was a last warning.
- 2 That leaders need to be very clear about what message they want to communicate.
- 3 Australians and Americans because they are more direct.
- 4 To make sure people understand each other fully.

3

- 1 He says the preparation for the meeting was great.
- 2 Being quiet / not saying much during the meeting or the following dinner.
- 3 You heard what I said about customers and colleagues? What could you do differently?
- 4 To try to talk more; be open to more feedback; help the team.

4

Students' own answers.

5

Commentary

- 1 Lars starts with positive feedback to prepare for the more critical input to follow.
- 2 He begins the critical feedback by simply describing what he saw - '...

you were very quiet ...' – and then goes on to explain the consequences of these behaviours for customers and colleagues and focuses on the professional responsibility to 'share the effort' during meetings. This feedback is relatively balanced; it does not openly accuse or blame Jean-Claude in any way with phrases such as 'You weren't involved.' or 'You let your colleagues do all the work.' As a result, Jean-Claude is open to the feedback and to changing his behaviour.

- 3 Lars is indirect in one sense but focuses the discussion very clearly with a number of questions which force Jean-Claude to think carefully about his behaviour with both customers and colleagues.
- 4 Lars finishes the conversation on a positive note. Importantly, he suggests that they talk again after the next meeting to see if the feedback has been implemented. He also offers to sponsor training which Jean-Claude should see as an important form of support as well as a serious commitment from his leader to see a positive change in his behaviours.

6–8

Students' own answers.

11A Managing diversity and creativity

1

Both believe that innovation is important for organisations today and both believe that diversity (people thinking different things) can help to produce innovation.

2

- 1 a At first it's very difficult, less productive, less creative.
b In the longer term the meetings are much more creative.
- 2 You have to adapt how you lead the meeting to manage different cultural styles to bring people together.
- 3 He says Americans are natural leaders, speak out and are proactive.
- 4 You have to encourage French people to 'break the rules towards the hierarchy', meaning to interrupt and disagree openly.
- 5 You need to encourage different points of view, build collaboration, listen to each other, work with each others' ideas so you can take the best.

6 Tolerance and patience in yourself and others.

3

Students' own answers.

4 Possible answers

- 1 What do you think, (person's name)? It would be good to hear your point of view.
- 2 (Person's name), how far do you agree with (other person's name)?
- 3 Can we come up with a few other ideas?
- 4 Can we take a few minutes to talk about the positives of the idea before we criticise?
- 5 Can we combine these ideas in any way to help us solve the problem?
- 6 I think if we take (person's name)'s idea about ... and (another person's name)'s idea about what we could do is ...

5

- A 3
- B 5
- C 1
- D 6
- E 4
- F 2

6

- A Can we think a little bit about more alternative approaches?
- B Can we put these ideas together in some way?
- C OK, John, maybe I can start with you.
- D I'm just thinking, using these two ideas, maybe we should think about ...
- E Before we disagree too quickly, and you may be right, can we just ...
- F Gerald. What do you think about Anne-Marie's idea?

7

Students' own answers.

11B Managing diversity and creativity

1

Students' own answers.

2

- 1 Choose a clear objective for brainstorming, e.g. 'How can we improve customer service without spending more money?'
- 2 Appoint a good facilitator (essential for success) who can energise discussions.

- 3 Review ground rules for the brainstorming: all ideas are acceptable; ideas are not criticised; ideas are recorded; focus is on quantity of ideas not quality.
- 4 Start brainstorming for an agreed period, e.g. ten minutes.
- 5 After you have finished brainstorming, clarify and group the ideas.
- 6 Evaluate the ideas carefully and then agree which to follow up and which to forget.
- 7 Agree follow-up actions – who does what and when – and decide when to review.

3

Students' own answers.

4

Paul: Reduce customer service in some areas.

Jennifer: Ask customers.

Sam: Offer prize for best feedback / idea from customer.

Carl: Think about how to speed up customer service, particularly when solving problems.

5

1 Proposing a radical idea:

Well, just to turn things a little bit upside down, why not start by looking at ways to ... ; Might sound a bit crazy but I have a feeling that we could do with ...

Making suggestions based on how others might see the problem: We need to see things from the customers' point of view. So maybe it makes sense to ...

Building on another person's idea in the meeting: Just to spin off from that, if we want to ... ; maybe we can ...

Recommending ways to improve an existing process / system: I think we should look at how we can be faster in the way we ...

Introducing an idea by imagining a perfect future:

In an ideal world, we should ...

2 Students' own answers.

6, 7

Students' own answers.

12 Profiling your intercultural competence

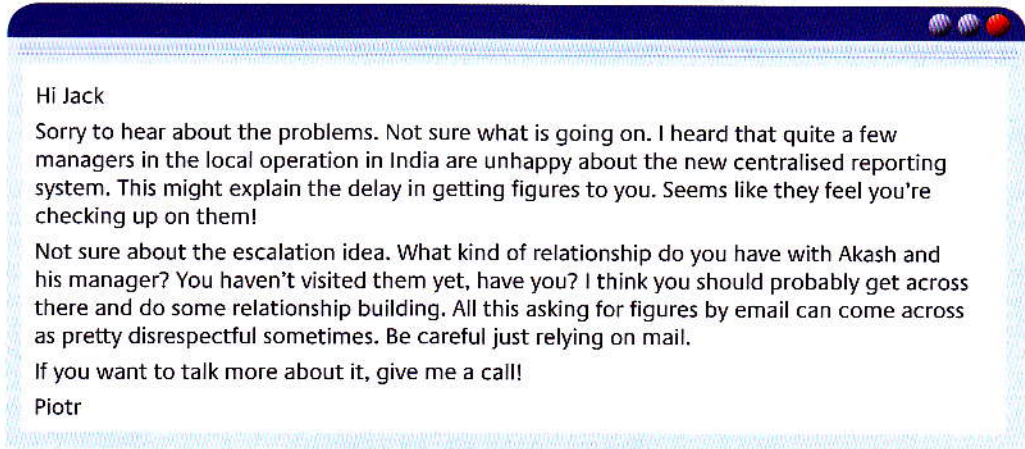
See pages 82–3 for scores and pages 90–1 for the Personal development guide.

Communication tasks

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1B page 8: Exercise 2

Email 1



1B page 9: Exercise 5

Case A

Joerg travels regularly from Bonn in Germany to Zurich in Switzerland for meetings related to a project which will transfer 50 jobs from Switzerland to Germany. He usually arranges meetings directly with his Swiss contact person, Luis Blattner, but is always surprised when he regularly finds himself in front of four Swiss colleagues rather than just Luis. He sees this as inefficiency in the Swiss business. It seems that the Swiss need four people to do the job which Joerg can do alone. There is also the problem that the Swiss ask a lot of questions during the meeting, which makes it difficult for Joerg to get to a decision in the time scheduled. He tries to stop people asking too many questions, but is unsuccessful. Joerg begins to suspect that this is a form of tactics from his Swiss colleagues to slow down the process of the project and save the jobs for Switzerland.

In the end Joerg decides to write an email to Luis to suggest the meetings would be more focused if just he and Luis met, and the other persons are not necessary.

2B page 13: Exercise 7

Host

You are about to meet two colleagues for the first time five minutes before an international project meeting. You don't have much time to build the relationship before getting down to the business of the meeting.

Talk to Student B, Miguel, first and then meet Student C, Dani. Try to adapt your communication style to the different personalities. You have heard that Miguel is quite serious about his work so be careful in your questions. You have heard that Dani is very easy to get on with and likes to socialise with colleagues.

2A page 11: Exercise 7

Host

You work at the company headquarters in Zurich. Your boss is James Schiro. James just told you that he will be ten minutes late for a meeting with a visitor who is about to arrive at the office. He has asked you to look after the visitor until he arrives. When the visitor arrives, explain the situation to the visitor and make him / her feel comfortable with small talk until James arrives. As you talk, observe your visitor and choose a style of communication which works for both of you.

4B page 21: Exercise 8

Leader

Your role is to open the meeting, explain the objective and lead a discussion which reaches a decision on three recommendations to make to your management board. During the meeting, pay attention to the communication style of the participants and try to manage the different styles to make communication effective.

8B page 37: Exercise 8

Negotiation Role A

Background

You really want to take two months off this summer to complete a personal goal: to do some voluntary work in Africa on a Water Aid project. You raised the subject with your manager (Student B) one week ago and got a very cold response initially. Your boss is clearly not happy about your request for extended leave (you have even offered to take 50% as unpaid).

For you, this is a chance in a lifetime. Friends from Water Aid are organising everything at quite a low cost so this opportunity is perfect. In any case, this is something which you feel ethically very motivated to do. You also strongly believe the life skills you learn will make you a better person and improve you as a working professional.

You know that you are a highly valued employee! You feel that all your hard work and excellent results over the past few years mean that you should be given the chance to travel. You do not want to postpone your holiday. This year is the perfect opportunity.

Personal profiles

Your profile:

You come from a relationship-oriented culture. As an individual, you value creativity and are an optimist, always looking to the future for yourself and others. If you hear arguments from your manager which recognise the above things about you, listen positively and be more prepared to negotiate.

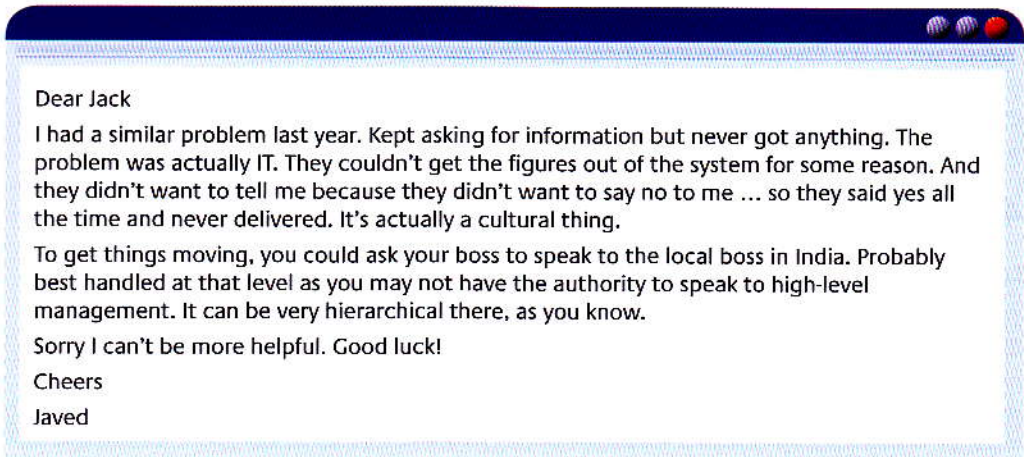
Manager's profile:

Your manager is more task-oriented and focused on reaching results, very logical and analytical. In meetings he/she often uses strong and powerful arguments and seems to be convinced when others do the same.

Prepare some arguments (influencing strategies) for the meeting / negotiation which are based on the profile of your manager.

1B page 8: Exercise 2

Email 2



1B page 9: Exercise 5

Case B

Marie is horrified following a contract negotiation in Shanghai. She arrives home following a meeting at which there was, for her, very explicit verbal agreement that her company would build a state-of-the-art set of laboratories for a university in Shanghai. Marie even sent an email while waiting in the airport to her main Chinese counterpart thanking him for supporting the successful contract negotiation.

To her shock and anger, when Marie gets into the office the next day, she finds an email from her Chinese counterpart which disagrees that any agreement was reached and that Marie will be informed in the next three weeks of the decision of the university. The email also states that some discussions summarised by Marie never happened.

Marie decides to call her Chinese counterpart the moment the office opens in Shanghai to clarify the matter.

2B page 13: Exercise 7

Visitor: Miguel

As a person, you are task-focused and do not usually invest a lot of time in small talk. People often say you are quiet and reserved. You often give short answers when questions are asked and ask few questions back. You do not smile often because you think business is a serious activity. You are punctual and you like to start meetings on time. Read your profile below.

Personal profile

Home: Moved to Porto, Portugal, two months ago

Family: Married, no children

Out of work interests: Football and fishing

Relationships at work: Valdemar Baretto (Head of Finance) has left the company.

Professional profile

Responsibilities: Head of Marketing

Current tasks: Marketing strategy for Portugal and Spain

Work abroad: 3 months in Madrid

Business developments at work: Working closely with Italy to develop joint strategy

4B page 21: Exercise 8

Participant 1

You are a relatively quiet communicator. You don't say a lot in meetings until you are asked. You pay attention to the feelings of others during a meeting and will give people positive feedback from time to time to maintain a positive climate.

Observe the other participants in the meeting and note down their behaviours. After the meeting you can check to see if you correctly noted down what was written on their role cards.



Participant 2

You are a strong and talkative communicator. You like to take the lead in meetings and are happy to be the first to say something! You like to give your own ideas into meetings to help to find solutions to problems. You are happy to interrupt others during the meeting to help them express their own ideas or to move the meeting to a decision.

Observe the other participants in the meeting and note down their behaviours. After the meeting you can check to see if you correctly noted down what was written on their role cards.



Participant 3

You prefer action rather than words. You are very positive and believe in quick and simple solutions without the need for a lot of discussion. Life is simple. Why complicate it with words?

Observe the other participants in the meeting and note down their behaviours. After the meeting you can check to see if you correctly noted down what was written on their role cards.



Participant 4

You are highly analytical and like to collect all the data before you take a decision. You are very sensitive to risks and what could go wrong if bad ideas are implemented. You often take the role of the sceptic in meetings and like to disagree.

Observe the other participants in the meeting and note down their behaviours. After the meeting you can check to see if you correctly noted down what was written on their role cards.



Participant 5

You value creativity. You like to explore ideas and possibilities before taking a decision. Facts and figures are not always the most important thing. Innovation for you comes through lots of discussion and lots of questions.

Observe the other participants in the meeting and note down their behaviours. After the meeting you can check to see if you correctly noted down what was written on their role cards.



Participant 6

If you would like to play another kind of role (for example, you can simply play yourself), make a few notes below to describe how you will behave during the meeting before it starts.

Observe the other participants in the meeting and note down their behaviours. After the meeting you can check to see if you correctly noted down what was written on their role cards.

Role:

.....

.....

.....

2A page 11: Exercise 7

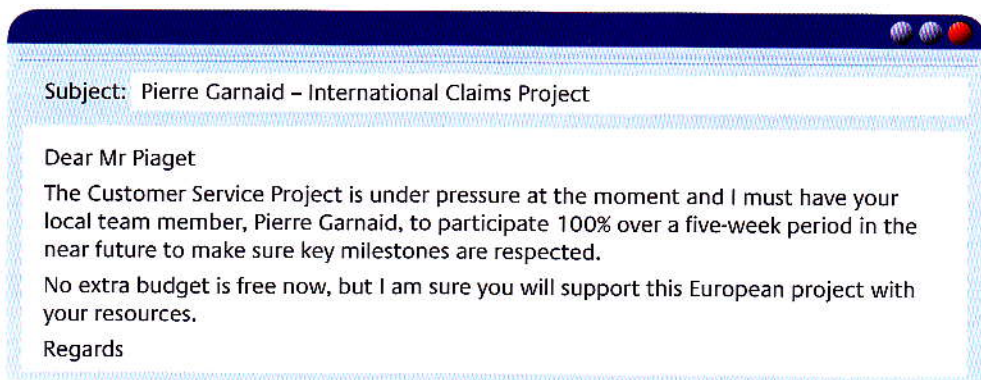
Observer

Use this feedback form to take notes on the first meeting between the visitor and the host. Then use your notes to give feedback to the two people.

Feedback	Good (examples)	Could be better (examples)
<i>First introductions</i> Greet politely Explains situation		
<i>Small talk</i> Asks questions Finds common ground Creates positive atmosphere		
<i>Body language</i> Helps the conversation		

9B page 41: Exercise 7

Email



Subject: Pierre Garnaid – International Claims Project

Dear Mr Piaget

The Customer Service Project is under pressure at the moment and I must have your local team member, Pierre Garnaid, to participate 100% over a five-week period in the near future to make sure key milestones are respected.

No extra budget is free now, but I am sure you will support this European project with your resources.

Regards

2B page 13: Exercise 7

Visitor: Dani

As a person, you are relationship-focused and you like to make small talk. You enjoy speaking about personal subjects like home and family, and are very ready to show photographs of your children to strangers. You also like to ask personal questions to get to know people. Read your profile below.

Personal profile

Home: Stockholm, Sweden

Family: two young sons (one at school now)

Out of work interests: You play in a rock band

Relationships at work: You have good contact with CEO of the company, Eric Hallberg

Professional profile

Responsibilities: Head of Marketing in Scandinavia

Current tasks: Developing a new strategy in Finland

Work abroad: In Helsinki three days per week

Business developments at work: Looking to expand into Estonia next year

11B page 49: Exercise 7

Meeting agenda B

1 English skills

You would like to improve the English language level of the twenty staff in your department but you have no money left for formal training this year (it is July). There are mixed language levels – five people are beginners, ten are intermediate and five are advanced. Consider what can be done in the short and medium term to improve skills.

2 Recruitment

Your company would like to recruit the talented students from the local university. At the moment, students are choosing other companies which offer higher starting salaries and which have a more attractive image for young people. You have no special programmes or initiatives in place at the moment to attract students. Consider what can be done in the short and medium term to improve the situation.

4B page 21: Exercise 8

Meeting agenda

Developing international awareness and skills in junior management

Objective: To agree two of the following actions to recommend to the management board

Current list of options (costings not yet evaluated):

- 1 To set up job rotation for junior managers to work in other countries to widen experience
- 2 To set up an intranet database with cultural briefings on different countries
- 3 To give individual coaching to junior managers to support their international work
- 4 To offer two-day seminars in intercultural competence to junior managers
- 5 To set up a new management newsletter focused on developing cultural understanding (with articles about cultural differences and stories from the different business units of the company)
- 6 To ask senior managers to brief the junior managers on success factors when working internationally
- 7 Other ideas?

12 page 50: Exercise 3

Profiling your own intercultural competence guide to understanding scores

1 Meeting new people

Score: 1–2: Your working style is quite strongly task-oriented. You probably have the ability to focus on tasks when under time pressure. However, some people may find your approach a little impolite if you do not spend enough time on relationship building.

2 Being flexible

Score: 1–2: You like to be honest and authentic. You don't like to pretend and play roles in social situations. You may have the ability to create trust in this way as people will believe what you say is what you really think. However, people may feel uncomfortable with your behaviour at times and see you as inflexible in some circumstances.

3 Focusing on targets

Score: 1–2: Your working style is less focused on individual goals and more on reaching results which are right for your team or the whole organisation. You can see the bigger picture and negotiate with those who have a different opinion. However, some may think you lack focus on your own goals and that you are too easily influenced by others.

4 Dealing with uncertainty

Score: 1–2: You are someone who likes to organise and plan in order to be effective at work. You may prefer to be an expert in one subject than learn a little about many topics. You may find some international situations, where things are uncertain, rather challenging and you may push for clarity too quickly.

5 Understanding how others see me

Score: 1–2: You focus on getting the job done rather than managing people's feelings. However, you may not see that some people find parts of your working style difficult. As a result, you may slow down the process of relationship building, which is often very necessary to reach a business result.

Score: 3–4: Your working style is strongly people-oriented. You probably have the ability to build rapport quickly with many different types of people. However, individuals who are strongly task-oriented may think you spend too much time on small talk and not enough time on getting the job done.

Score: 3–4: Your working style is based on a strong people orientation and a preference for harmony in working relationships. You can probably make people feel comfortable with you by adapting to their style. However, some may find trusting you difficult if they see that you change your behaviours too much.

Score: 3–4: Your working style is strongly results-oriented. You probably have the ability to reach your goals even in very difficult situations. However, some may see you as too focused on your own goals and not able to negotiate compromises with those who have a different opinion.

Score: 3–4: You feel comfortable in situations where things are open and unplanned. You would probably like to learn many new skills rather than specialise and be expert in one area. Some people may think you lack focus at times, especially those who are experts or those who like detail.

Score: 3–4: You have a good understanding of your own working style and how others will interpret it, either positively or negatively. You probably have the ability to be flexible and adapt your style to make other people feel comfortable. However, you may spend too much time worrying about the opinion of other people rather than getting the job done.

6 Listening effectively

Score: 1–2: You are someone who believes that they can understand what others are saying quickly. You may like to spend less time on communication and more time doing things. However, you may misunderstand others more often than you think. In addition, people may think you are a bad listener if you do not spend time commenting on and clarifying what they say to you.

7 Speaking clearly

Score: 1–2: You may be a natural communicator who is able to get messages across easily. You may not need to simplify or moderate your way of speaking. However, some people may find you difficult to understand but have not given you feedback yet. It could be that international partners frequently misinterpret the meaning of what you say – a request is seen as an order, feedback is seen as a personal criticism and so on.

8 Learning about culture

Score: 1–2: You feel it is important to know the individual and not learn about the culture. You may have the ability to form strong interpersonal relationships without a lot of cultural knowledge. However, without knowledge of the wider cultural context, you may manage people in the wrong way or take poor decisions.

9 Influencing decisions

Score: 1–2: Your working style is focused on results. You are not interested in playing political games with people who have influence over key decisions. However, some may think you are a little naive for international working. You may not have the skills to build enough influence with key decision makers to enable you to reach your results.

10 Managing diverse groups

Score: 1–2: You may prefer strong leadership and a clear direction. You may think that diversity is best managed by creating clear common guidelines which everyone can follow. However, you may not spend enough time listening to different opinions which could produce innovative solutions.

Score: 3–4: You are someone who thinks that it is very important to clarify often what people say to you. You probably ask a lot of questions to make sure that you understand the opinions of others. Some people may think that asking a lot of questions in this way shows a lack of expertise in the subject, and so may think you are not competent.

Score: 3–4: You are a person who is sensitive to the challenges of communicating internationally in a foreign language. You have the ability to adapt the way you speak to make sure others can understand you, by speaking slowly, simplifying your language, and explaining your reasoning explicitly. However, others may think that your simplified communication style is too 'soft' or not dynamic enough.

Score: 3–4: You believe that it is important to know about the national and organisational cultures of your international partners. You probably have the ability to build respect by showing this knowledge during business conversations. However, you may focus too much on knowledge rather than on adapting your behaviours to make others comfortable.

Score: 3–4: Your working style is based on networking with a wide range of people. You understand that many decisions in international organisations are highly political. You know that if you want to influence a decision, you have to get close to key decision makers. However, some may see this kind of behaviour as too political and begin to distrust what you say to them.

Score: 3–4: You see cultural diversity as an advantage. You are very aware of the different working and communication styles of people around you. In meetings, you make sure that all opinions are heard and discussed. However, some may see the time taken to collect diverse opinions as a lack of strong leadership.

2A page 11: Exercise 7

Visitor

You arrive on time at the company headquarters in Zurich for a meeting with James Schiro, a colleague working on the same international project. You work in a local country business unit – you choose the country. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the progress of the project. If James Schiro is not there to meet you, ask when he will be in the office.

4A page 19: Exercise 6

Insurance company manager

You understand the meeting to be part of the ongoing process of product evaluation. You need your senior manager's approval (and his manager's) before you can take any final decision on buying the product. This is for any buying decision with a value of more than €30,000 and means decision making in your organisation can be slow.

Your manager has decided that she would like to run two pilot programmes at zero cost (in other words, no fee to the training organisation) to evaluate the training concept with end users. If the feedback is positive then the decision will be made to support the product, and a price negotiation can start and final roll-out schedule agreed. The purpose of the meeting for you is to decide when to run the pilots and where.

You arrive at the meeting in a good mood. The meetings in the past have gone very well. The relationship between you and the training company representative has been excellent.

3B page 17: Exercise 7

Topic 1

Research shows that telephone conferences are much less effective than face-to-face meetings. The general level of involvement is lower; for example, people often write emails as they listen and don't concentrate on what is said. Participants' understanding of the discussion also decreases: it's more difficult to follow the discussion without the support of body language. Another major problem is that native speakers of the language being used tend to talk too much compared to the non-native speakers. What can organisations do to make telephone conferences more effective?

Topic 2

Research shows that most people complain about the use of email in their organisation. They complain that they receive too many unnecessary emails. They say that the emails which they do receive are usually written too quickly and are not clear enough, leading to further email exchanges. Many people report that email is a frequent generator of misunderstanding and even conflict. What can organisations do to make email communication more effective?

9B page 41: Exercise 7

Project manager

You are a senior IT manager located in the Moscow offices of a global bank. You are leading a high-profile international IT project (with a lot of pressure from senior management) to create a new eastern Europe customer database – but you have big schedule problems! You need to increase participation in your project of Pierre Garnaid, one of the team members from the French business unit, who currently spends 25% of his time on this project. You need to increase this to 100% over the next five weeks to make sure all data is collected to support the project at a critical time.

You sent a very polite email to Student B, Pierre's manager, asking for more of Pierre's time. You explained that you are facing strong pressure from top management (you were asked by your boss to copy him in on the email) – in fact, the topic was actually discussed in a global board meeting recently in Moscow. You have had no reply to this email which was sent three days ago marked urgent!!

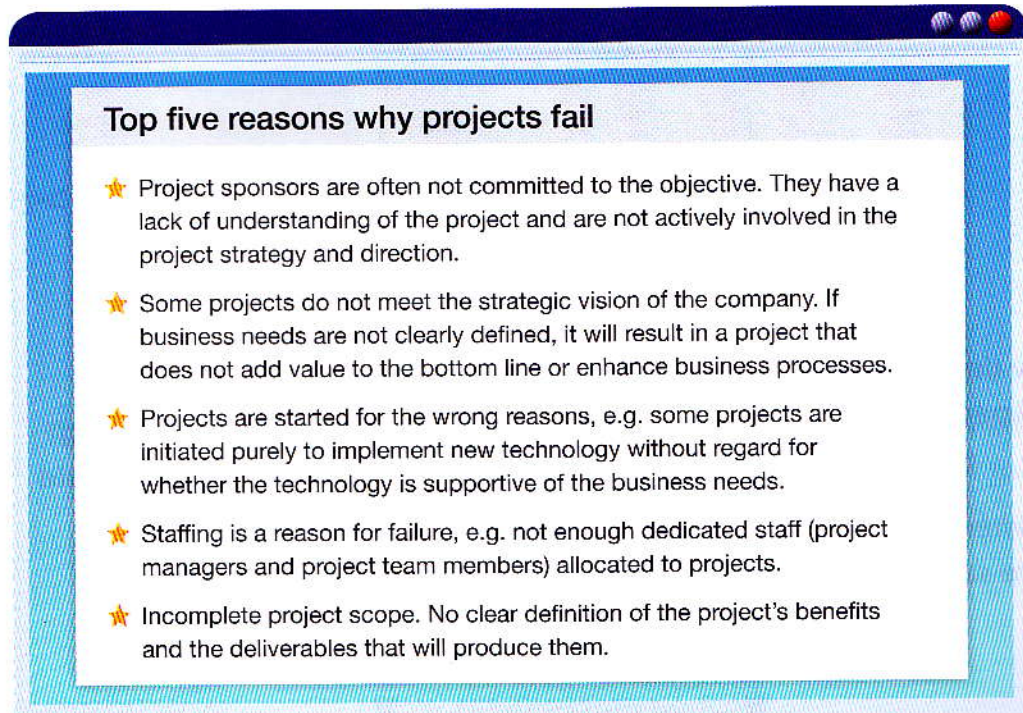
You know that it will not be easy to persuade Student B to let Pierre participate in the project further. You have heard from colleagues that he/she can be very difficult to negotiate with and has a reputation for being unsupportive of centrally-driven projects. In fact Pierre has also told you that his manager believes this project to be a waste of time.

There is also the question of Pierre's style. Although he is excellent technically, you know that he is not analytical enough and can work too fast at times. As a result he often has to rework many of his tasks and has sometimes fallen behind schedule with his objectives. Therefore it is only fair he should do more at this critical phase of the project to catch up.

Prepare for a meeting with Student B in Paris to discuss how to increase Pierre's participation in your project.

Read the email on page 80 which you sent to Student B but to which you have not yet had a reply.

10A page 42: Exercise 1



Top five reasons why projects fail

- ★ Project sponsors are often not committed to the objective. They have a lack of understanding of the project and are not actively involved in the project strategy and direction.
- ★ Some projects do not meet the strategic vision of the company. If business needs are not clearly defined, it will result in a project that does not add value to the bottom line or enhance business processes.
- ★ Projects are started for the wrong reasons, e.g. some projects are initiated purely to implement new technology without regard for whether the technology is supportive of the business needs.
- ★ Staffing is a reason for failure, e.g. not enough dedicated staff (project managers and project team members) allocated to projects.
- ★ Incomplete project scope. No clear definition of the project's benefits and the deliverables that will produce them.

5B page 25: Exercise 5

Listener cards

Analyse values and attitudes	Support emotionally	Discover ways to help
Understand competence levels	Get useful information	Clarify the meaning of specific words used: <i>What do you mean by ...?</i>
Show understanding of specific words used: <i>So when you say ... you're saying that ...</i>	Make noises such as 'Aha' or 'Mm' to show you are listening	Choose a listening technique you would like to practise

5B page 25: Exercise 5

Speaker cards

The best thing about my job	Best-ever holiday	How I want to develop my career
What makes a good email	Something I would love to do	One thing I would change about my job
The best thing about working for my company	Plans for the next weekend	One place I would love to visit in the world

4A page 19: Exercise 6

Training representative

You understand that the objective of the meeting is to confirm the purchase of the training and the price. You will propose €600 per person per course for 80 persons but will accept a 10% discount, or maybe a little more as you are flexible. You also need to confirm a roll-out process, to schedule the number of training courses and location. You have prepared a schedule with the following proposal to discuss at the meeting.

	January	February	March	April
Country 1	1 course		1 course	
Country 2		2 courses		1 course
Country 3	2 courses		1 course	
Country 4		1 course		2 courses

You are very well prepared for this key client. You can inform them that you have already booked trainers for the specified months, which is a cost already paid. Internally, you have sent estimated sales figures to your manager (these figures are included in a recent report prepared for your board) and you have received very positive feedback about the deal from some board members. You arrive at the meeting in a good mood. The meetings in the past have gone very well. The relationship between you and the company representative has been excellent. You have worked as a good team without the interference of management to push forward with this project very quickly, in line with the fast decision-making culture of your own organisation.

8A page 35: Exercise 6

Negotiation Role A

You are an HR manager with global responsibilities. You are going to meet with a staff member (Student B) to discuss the terms of his / her contract for a six-month posting to Sydney, Australia. The position abroad is part of a job rotation programme in the company. The staff member does not have to accept the contract. However, you want him / her to accept because you believe it is important to develop the career of people in the company in this way.

Budget for this job rotation programme is limited so you may have a problem to persuade the person to accept a short-term contract with no extra financial benefits. You think their objectives may be more financial than concerned with career development.

You would like to open the negotiation.

Your objective: To support career development that benefits the company long term.

Common objective: The staff member should receive a contract which they are happy with and which motivates them in the new role.

Your agenda:

- 1 Clarify the responsibilities of the new job.
- 2 Agree a salary (no extra compensation package).
- 3 Decide who will handle B's job while they are in Australia.

Issues to be discussed: Financial support for accommodation

Logistics: You have only 45 minutes for this meeting.

11A page 47: Exercise 7

Meeting agenda A

1 Internet use

Your company currently makes the Internet available to staff from all computers, with a firewall in place to stop them from surfing specific sites. However, a survey conducted by Human Resources has found that employees waste on average 6% of working time surfing the Internet for private purposes. One senior board member is very unhappy about this and wants you to consider which measures can be implemented to deal with this.

2 International business ethics

Your company has a strict policy about not giving any gifts greater than the value of €100 to business partners (customers, suppliers, etc.). However, sales staff in eastern Europe have reported that this is causing them significant problems in doing business, as the local practice expects a bigger incentive. Estimated loss of business due to this is approximately €4.5m last year. You have been asked by your board to come up with creative solutions which maintain the current ethical policy as far as possible.

8B page 37: Exercise 8

Negotiation Role B

Background

One of your team (Student A) wants to take a two-month break from work in order to complete a personal goal, to do some voluntary work in Africa. You are sympathetic but your staff member has brought this up at a very bad time. Your department is already very overworked and you think this is going to give out the wrong messages to fellow colleagues, many of whom had shorter holidays this year in order to manage the workload. You are under no legal obligation to grant this wish for more holiday. However, you want to keep a good relationship with this employee because their results have been excellent over the past few years. Ideally, you really need a solution which satisfies yourself and the team member in some way, for example persuading the staff member to postpone this dream for a couple of years.

Personal profiles

Your profile:

As a person, you are a balance of task-oriented and relationship-oriented. People tell you that you are very logical and analytical but you also have a human side. It's important to you that people listen to you. So although in meetings you often use strong and powerful arguments, you appreciate it when others listen actively to what you say (by clarifying and giving positive feedback). If you hear arguments from your team member which recognise these qualities, listen positively and be more prepared to negotiate.

Team member's profile:

As a person, he/she is relationship-oriented. As an individual he/she is very creative and optimistic. You know that he/she can be frustrated by people who focus too much on risks and not on opportunities.

Prepare some arguments (influencing strategies) for the meeting/negotiation which are based on the profile of your team member.

Personal development guide

1 Meeting new people

Score: 1–2: If you feel you are too task-oriented, you may want to spend more time in small talk with colleagues, getting to know them and building a personal relationship.

2 Being flexible

Score: 1–2: If you feel that you are not flexible enough, you may want to observe people more and try to adapt your behaviours more to theirs so that they feel comfortable.

3 Focusing on targets

Score: 1–2: If you feel you are not focused enough on goals, you may want to spend more time communicating the importance of your own goals, and informing when you have reached your targets.

4 Dealing with uncertainty

Score: 1–2: If you feel you are over-focused on detail, you may want to spend time discussing at a more strategic and less operational level, and be open to taking decisions without all the facts at hand.

5 Understanding how others see me

Score: 1–2: If you feel that you do not spend enough time thinking about your impact on others, you may want to ask others for feedback more often.

6 Listening effectively

Score: 1–2: If you feel you do not do enough active listening, you may want to ask more clarification questions to check that you really understand what people are saying.

7 Speaking clearly

Score: 1–2: If you feel that your speaking style is too complex for your international partners, you may want to speak more slowly, use simpler words and sentences, and give people more opportunities to clarify what you have said.

Score: 3–4: If you feel you are too person-oriented, you may want to communicate more quickly about the task and results and spend less time on personal matters.

Score: 3–4: If you feel you are too flexible, you may want to show less flexibility in discussions, for example sticking to your own opinions more, so that people can see you have a clear position.

Score: 3–4: If you feel you are too focused on your own goals, you may want to show others that you are willing to help them reach their goals and to focus less on your own to reach a common target.

Score: 3–4: If you feel that you lack a focus on detail, you may want to spend more time in meetings investigating the details of issues and problems.

Score: 3–4: If you feel that you are too sensitive to how others see you, you may want to spend more time reflecting on your own strengths and using these for your job.

Score: 3–4: If you feel that you ask too many questions and clarify too much, you may want to start making more statements that give your opinions clearly and then allow others to clarify or contradict.

Score: 3–4: If you feel that your speaking style is too simplified for people who expect a more sophisticated or powerful style, you may want to speak more quickly and use more complex words and phrases.

8 Learning about culture

Score: 1–2: If you feel that you need to know more about culture, contact your HR department to get a recommendation for a book on communicating across cultures (or check the recommended reading list at the back of this book).

9 Influencing decisions

Score: 1–2: If you feel that you do not understand enough about how different organisations work, who the key stakeholders and decision makers are, you may want to get a mentor who can help you acquire this knowledge.

10 Managing diverse groups

Score: 1–2: If you think that your style is seen as too directive, you may want to spend more time listening to people and integrating their different points of view into decisions which are taken.

Score: 3–4: If you feel you have enough knowledge about culture, you may want to ask others for feedback about your behaviours to check that you are converting knowledge into the right actions.

Score: 3–4: If you feel that others may see you as 'too political' in some way, then you may want to make sure that you give your honest opinions more clearly in meetings and discussions so that people can feel that they can trust you.

Score: 3–4: If you feel that you take too much time listening to people and managing different points of view, you may want to start to take decisions faster and simply report them rather than discuss them.

8A page 35: Exercise 6

Negotiation Role B

You are a staff member in a large international company and you are going to meet the HR director (Student A) to discuss the possibility of a six-month posting to Sydney, Australia. The position abroad is part of a job rotation programme in the company. You are interested but only if the conditions are right. You do not have to accept the position but you know that your line manager and the international HR manager are hoping you will do so. You would like a financial incentive to go and live in a foreign country for six months. You know that when you come back, you will have a lot of work to catch up in your old job.

You would like to open the meeting with a short summary of your reasons for working abroad just to clarify expectations.

Your objective: To clarify the reasons for going to Australia and to clarify the terms of the contract.

Your agenda:

- 1 Clarify the timing of the posting (when will you have to go / for how long / is it possible to extend, etc.).
- 2 Discuss the responsibilities of the new job.
- 3 Agree a salary plus extra compensation package including support package for accommodation – renting is very expensive in Sydney.

Issues: Who will be doing your job while you are away?

Logistics: You have set aside 90 minutes for this meeting.

9B page 41: Exercise 7

Department leader

You are a sales manager in a leading global bank. Pierre Garnaid, one of your best team members, has been involved in a new IT project led by a senior Russian project manager (Student A), located in the Moscow office. Pierre's task is to assist IT to develop a new eastern Europe customer database which offers central benefits but few local advantages – in fact, the project seems to create more complexity and work at a local level.

Pierre's role is supporting one workstream in the project but he has told you that the project leader has been extending the scope of the role and demanding too much focus on detail. As a result the project has been occupying a lot of Pierre's time even though he is meant to be spending only 25% of his time on the project. You received an email yesterday from the project leader demanding that Pierre works 100% on the project over the next five weeks!! The email was copied to a board member. You have not replied to the email yet because your local email server crashed.

This project is causing problems for you in the French organisation. Pierre is already neglecting his main line duties in France, and there is an important broker event coming up in three weeks which will require a lot of effort from all members of your department to prepare.

You have heard that the project leader is a poor time manager and often pushes for extra resources from country line management when his/her projects fall behind schedule. You don't want this to happen to you and so would not like Pierre to do any more than the agreed 25%. You have also heard that the project leader can be very defensive in meetings.

Prepare for a meeting with Student A to discuss the issue. The meeting is in Paris and you have taken time out of another workshop to attend the meeting. You would like to retain Pierre's participation at 25%.

Take time to read the email on page 80 which you received from Student A on this topic.

Further reading

Books

Hall, E. and Hall, M. R. (1989) *Understanding Cultural Differences*. Yarmouth: Intercultural Press.

Hofstede, G. (1991) *Cultures and Organizations*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

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Schein, E. T. (2010) *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. 4th edition. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

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Stumpf, S. and Thomas, A. (Eds.) (2000) *Diversity and group effectiveness* (pp. 252–271). Lengerich, Germany: Pabst Science Publishers.

Trompenaars, F. and Hampden-Turner, C. (1998) *Riding the Waves of Culture. Understanding Diversity in Global Business*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Vulpe, T., Kealey, D., Prothero, D. and MacDonald, D. (2001) *A Profile of the Interculturally Effective Person*. Ottawa: Canadian Foreign Service Institute.

Websites

www.culturaldetective.com

This site has a very large number of interesting country culture briefings available for purchase online.

www.dialogin.com

This site is a learning community on culture, communication and management in international business. It is a great resource for all types of information on the subject of intercultural communication.

www.international.gc.ca/cfsi-icse/cil-cai/index-eng.asp

This site is run by the Centre for Intercultural Learning, part of the Canadian Foreign Service Institute. It has great resources ranging from articles and books on intercultural competence to cultural guides to many countries in the world.

www.kwintessential.co.uk

Interesting country culture guides which are useful as a reference point when preparing to do business internationally.

www.oakwoodlearning.com

Their research on 'Understanding the true realities of influencing' is available for download under 'Articles'.

www.sietar.org.uk

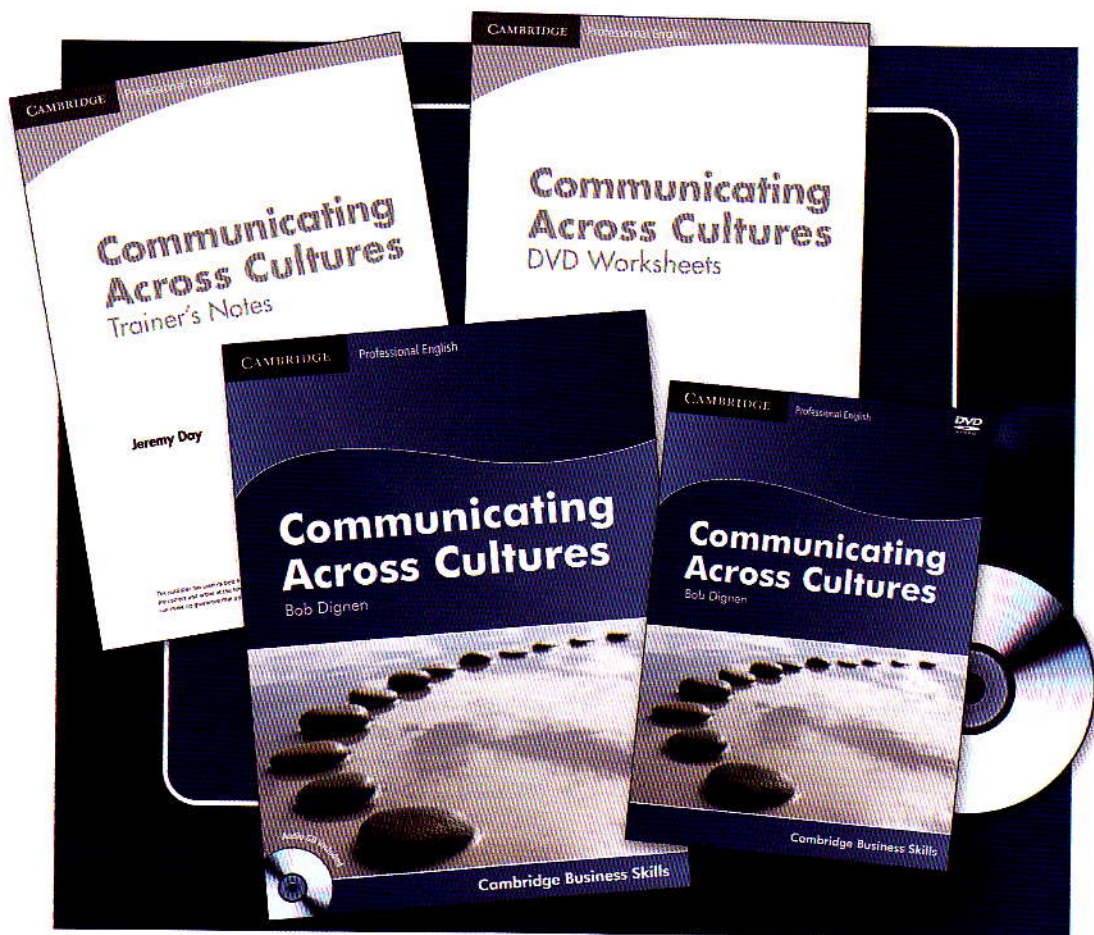
The Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research is the world's largest interdisciplinary network for professionals and students working in the field of intercultural relations.

www.worldwork.biz

Check out the download of *The International Profiler*, a set of international competences, under the 'Product' section of this site.

Communicating Across Cultures

Bob Dignen

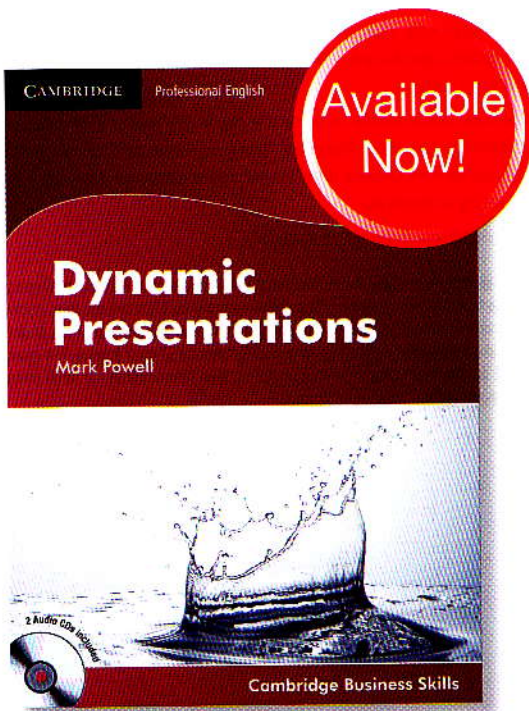


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www.cambridge.org/elt/communicatingacrosscultures

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Acknowledgements

Author's acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone who gave up precious time to be interviewed for *Communicating Across Cultures*. Their experiences and insights were invaluable for me and will assist professionals working in a range of international contexts to become more mindful of both the challenges and opportunities of working across cultures.

Bo Græsberg for the interview material on pp. 6, 7 and 52;

Kwintessential Ltd for the logo and adapted text on p. 10;

Nigel Ewington for the interview material on pp. 10, 11, 52 and 53;

WorldWork Ltd for the logo and text on pp. 10, 22, 48 and 50;

Susanne M. Zaninelli, CULTURE CONTACT Munich * New York, for the adapted text on pp. 12 and 13;

Kaneko Takuya for the interview material on pp. 18, 54 and 55;

Abhijit Dey for the interview material on pp. 22 and 56;

Dominic Sullivan for the interview material on pp. 26, 27, 56 and 57;

Rana Sinha, Dot-Connect, for the adapted text on p. 28;

Oleg Bondari for the interview material on pp. 32 and 57;

Oakwood Learning Ltd for the adapted text and logo on pp. 36 and 37;

Dani Strömberg Razmgah for the interview material on pp. 38 and 59;

Conflict Across Cultures by Michelle LeBaron and Venashri Pillay, 2006, Intercultural Press, Nicholas Brealey Publishing Inc. for the adapted text on p. 40;

Gudrun Pleuger for the interview material on pp. 42, 44, 60 and 61;

QBS Business Solutions, QLogic AB for the adapted text on pp. 42 and 85;

Frédéric Thorat for the interview material on pp. 46, 47 and 62.

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Bob Dignen

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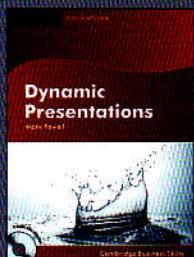
The author

Bob Dignen is a director of York Associates and author of several best-selling business English publications. He specialises in intercultural skills programmes and international team seminars which he delivers to clients in Germany, Switzerland, Iceland and Sweden. He is accredited to use The International Profiler (an intercultural profiling tool) and is also an advanced practitioner of TMP (Team Management Profile – an international team profiling tool).

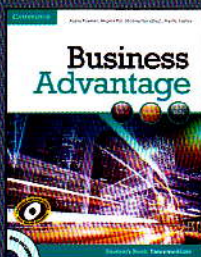
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