



## 1 ➤ Conversation skills

### Lead-in

Some business practices may differ from country to country. Here are some questions to research before you meet new business contacts:

- 1 How do people usually greet each other in business situations in the country you are in or are going to visit? For example, is it more usual to shake hands or bow?
- 2 How do people exchange business cards? Do people usually receive the card with one or two hands? Are you expected to read the card carefully? Are business cards usually exchanged at the beginning or end of the conversation?
- 3 How important is small talk in different business situations (e.g. during first meetings)?

### Introductions

#### Introducing yourself

*Hi/Hello, my name's ...*

*Can I introduce myself? I'm ...*

*May I join you? I'm ... from ...*

#### Introducing others: two-step introduction

- Introduce people by saying their full name and title.
- Follow with brief information about the person.

<b>Formal/Semi-formal</b>	May I introduce ... I'd like to introduce ...
<b>Less formal</b>	This is ... Let me introduce you to ...

*Professor Kim, this is Clare Williams. Clare will be leading the design project. Clare, this is Professor Kim from Seoul National University. Professor Kim is advising the project team on smart technology.*

#### Responding to an introduction

- Use the person's name in your response.
- Add a brief comment.
- When you are introduced to someone using a title or surname (Ms, Mrs, Miss, Mr, Dr, Professor, etc.) it is polite to continue using the title/surname until the person suggests using their first name (e.g. *Please, call me Sarah.*).

<b>Formal</b>	It's a pleasure to meet you (too). Delighted to meet you.	You too.
<b>Less formal</b>	Great/Nice/Good to meet you.	And you.

*It's good to meet you, Professor Kim. I'm looking forward to working with you on this project.*

### Welcoming

	Initial comment (host)	Response (guest)
<b>Welcome</b>	Thank you / Thanks for coming.	Thanks for inviting me. / It's good to be here.
	It's good to see you again.	Good to see you too.
	How are things? / How are you? / How's business?	Good / Not bad, thanks. And you?
<b>Offer help/hospitality</b>	Can I take your coat?	Yes, please. / No, thanks.
	Would you like a drink?	Could I have a coffee, please?
	How do you take your tea/coffee?	Black, no sugar, thanks. / With milk and sugar, please.

## Small talk

It can be useful to think about a few brief comments or questions on a few small talk topics before a meeting. Acceptable topics include business/work, current affairs, the weather, sport, interests, travel, etc.

Initial question or comment	Response
Is this your first visit to ... ?	Yes, it's a great city. / No, I was here for a conference last year. How long have you been here?
This is a great space, isn't it?	Yes, it's a great venue. Have you been here before?
What are you working on at the moment?	A new research project. It's challenging but interesting. And you?
What do you think of the news about ... ?	It was surprising/interesting/awful, wasn't it? What are your thoughts on it?
Did you catch the news today?	No, what happened?
It's great/awful weather today, isn't it?	Yes! Is it meant to continue?
Did you see the match last night?	No, I missed it. Who won? / Yes, it was great, wasn't it?
So, what do you do in your free time?	I'm interested in / I play ... . And you?
Do you travel much on business?	Yes, quite frequently. / No, rarely. What about you?
What are you doing over the holidays?	I'm hoping to travel round Japan. What are your plans?

## Keeping a conversation going

It is polite to show interest in what the other person is saying and respond with a follow-up comment or question to keep the conversation going.

Initial question or comment	Response	Follow-up question or comment
This is a great space, isn't it?	Yes, it's a great venue. Have you been here before?	Yes, I was here for a conference last month. What about you?
Do you travel much on business?	No, rarely. What about you?	Actually, I travel quite frequently. But this is my first time in Japan.
What are you doing over the holidays?	Actually, I'm hoping to visit Rome.	Really? I hear it's beautiful this time of year.

## 2 Presentation skills

### Lead-in

Some business practices may differ from country to country. Here are some questions to research before you prepare presentations for different audiences:

- 1 How much detail should you include in the presentation? What does your audience already know about this topic? How much background, explanation or technical understanding will be required? Should some of the information be presented visually?
- 2 Does your presentation answer key questions such as *who*, *what*, *why* and *when*?
- 3 What is the appropriate level of formality for this audience? Should the presentation be relaxed and informal or structured and formal? Should humour be included or would the audience prefer a more serious delivery? Would you prefer questions during the presentation or at the end?

### Beginning a presentation

	Formal/Semi-formal	Less formal
<b>Opening and welcome</b>	Thank you for inviting me to speak to you today.	It's great to be here today. Thank you for coming.
<b>Providing a brief outline of the talk</b>	I'm here to talk about the retail supply chain. I'd like to give you a brief outline of my presentation. The talk consists of three main sections.	Shall we get started? I'd like to talk to you about strategies to improve productivity. The talk is divided into three main parts.
<b>Telling the audience when they can ask questions</b>	I will be happy to answer any questions during the presentation. There will be an opportunity after the presentation to ask questions.	Feel free to ask questions during the presentation. I'll be happy to answer any questions at the end of the presentation.

## Transitions and signposting

<b>Sequencing</b>	Let's start by looking at ... Firstly, ... / Secondly, ... / Then ... / Next ... / Finally, ... First, let's start with ... Following this, ... Last but not least, ...
<b>Moving from point to point</b>	Which leads me on to my next point. My next point covers ... Moving on to ... Turning to ... Now, I'd like to talk about / discuss / look at ... Now, let's move on to ...
<b>Emphasising</b>	The most important thing to remember is that ... So what is the key information here? Now, why is this important? This point is vital. The thought I'd like to leave you with is ...
<b>Checking understanding</b>	Before we move on, can I check that everyone understood? Are you all with me? Is everything clear so far? Would you like me to go over anything again?
<b>Giving examples</b>	For example, ... For instance, ... A good example of this is ... To give you an example, ... Let me give you an example.
<b>Adding</b>	In addition, ... Added to this, ... Furthermore, ... Also, ...

## Presenting visual information and figures

<b>Drawing attention to visuals</b>	As you can see from our first slide, ... This graph shows ... Can I draw your attention to this chart? Let's move on to the next slide. Now, I would like to show you ... Let's look at ...
<b>Presenting figures</b>	We interviewed <b>around</b> 2000 people. This is <b>about</b> a third of the population. This represents <b>approximately</b> 20 percent of the average salary. There were <b>precisely</b> 912 different brands. <b>Exactly</b> 69 percent of our customers reported that they were satisfied with the service.

## Closing

<b>Summing up</b>	To sum up, ... To summarise, ... I'd like to summarise the main points. Now let's summarise briefly what we've looked at.
<b>Closing</b>	In conclusion, ... To conclude, ... Let me end by saying ... Finally, I'd like to say ...
<b>Thanking the audience</b>	Thank you for listening. Thank you for your attention/time.
<b>Inviting questions</b>	Does anyone have / Are there any questions? Any questions or comments? I'm happy to answer any questions. If you have any questions, I'll be happy to answer them now.
<b>Dealing with difficult questions</b>	That's a good question and I'd like to come back to it later. I'll need to get back to you on that. Thanks for highlighting that and I'll speak to you after the presentation.

### 3 > Interview skills

#### Lead-in

Here are some areas to research before an interview:

- 1 Prepare:** Read about the job role and the company. Identify the skills, qualities or experience that make you a good candidate for the role. Think about the questions the interviewer might ask and practise your answers. Before the interview, use some techniques, such as deep breathing, to relax.
- 2 Know what to expect:** Will the interview be with one person or with a group of people? Will you need to sit a test?
- 3 Be confident:** When you walk into the interview, shake hands, smile and listen carefully to the questions before you respond.

#### Beginning the interview

	Interviewer	Interviewee
<b>Welcome</b>	Thank you for coming along today. My name is ... and this is my colleague ... Please take a seat.	Thank you for taking the time to see me. It's nice to meet you. Thank you.
<b>Small talk</b>	Did you have any trouble finding us? Is this your first visit to ... ?	No, the instructions were very clear. Yes, I've never been here before. / No, I was here for a conference last year.
<b>Getting started</b>	Shall we begin? Let's get started.	Certainly.

#### Typical interview questions

Interviewer	Interviewee
<b>Tell me about yourself.</b> (Possible follow-up questions: <i>Where did you do your work placements? / Tell us about your internship. / What did you learn from the experience?</i> )	<p><b>Tip:</b> Don't go into too much personal detail. Focus on information that is useful for the job role. Give the interviewer enough information to ask follow-up questions.</p> <p>I've been studying at [the Indian Institute of Science] and recently completed my degree.            I graduated from [Oxford University] in [2017].            I carried out two work placements with [pharmaceutical companies].            I also completed an internship to gain wider experience in the field.            Now I'm looking for a position which will allow me to fully use these skills, which is why I applied for this role.</p>
<b>Why did you leave your last position?</b>	<p><b>Tip:</b> It's unlikely that you will be asked this question if the interview is for your first job. If you are currently in work, don't use negative language or go into detail about things that are wrong with your current position.</p> <p>I wanted a position which would offer more challenge.            I felt that I had outgrown the position and there wasn't room for advancement.            I'm looking for a position where I can fully use my skills and qualifications.            I'd like to take on more responsibility.</p>
<b>What are your strengths/weaknesses?</b>	<p><b>Tip:</b> For both questions, focus on positive qualities which relate to the position or company.</p> <p>My main strengths are that [I am focused and hard-working and work well in a team].            I'm also a [good problem solver and I enjoy challenges].            I perform well under pressure.            I'm used to working [in a busy environment].            I'm good/skilled at [working to a deadline].            I've always been [very organised].</p> <p>In the past, my main weakness was organising time, but I developed a system which helped my organisation skills.            One skill I am currently working on is [sharing responsibilities].            I am not very good at [managing my time]. To address this problem, I have joined a time-management course at my local community college.            I work too hard sometimes.</p>

<b>Why do you think you're right for this role? / Tell us why we should hire you.</b>	<p><b>Tip:</b> Don't focus on why the company is right for you. Point out why <i>you</i> are right for the role or company. Use research that you have done about the job or company.</p> <p>I think that [my computing qualifications] would help me contribute to this role.  I think that [my experience in the industry] would make me a good match for this position.  I have [excellent administrative skills] and I believe I'd be an asset for the company.  I believe that I will be successful in this position because ...</p>
<b>Where do you see yourself in five years' time?</b>	<p><b>Tip:</b> This is where you can show that you are ambitious but are not planning to take the CEO's job!</p> <p>I want to improve my key skills and industry knowledge so that I can be effective in my role.  I'd like to rise to a team leader position and contribute to the success of the company.  My long-term career goal is becoming a project manager.</p>

### Dealing with questions

That's a good question.  
I'm pleased that you asked me that.  
Could you repeat the question, please?  
There are two ways to answer that question.  
May I take a moment to think about that before responding?

### Asking questions about the role/organisation

Do you offer training opportunities for staff?  
What type of projects would I work on in this position?  
Are there opportunities for advancement for employees?  
Do you have an induction program and could you tell me a little about it?  
How much travel is expected?  
What are the most important skills of the person who does this job?  
Who would I be working with?

### Ending the interview

Interviewer	Interviewee
I think we've covered everything. Shall we end there?	Could you talk me through the next steps? Would you like a list of references? When can I expect to hear from you?
We'll contact applicants by the end of the week with the decision.	That's great. I look forward to hearing from you.
Thank you for coming in today.	It's been a pleasure. Thank you for seeing me.

## 4 Meeting skills

### Lead-in

Here are some questions to consider before organising or attending a business meeting:

- 1 What is the purpose of the meeting? What do you want to accomplish? Who will attend?
- 2 Is there a meeting agenda? What topics need to be discussed? How long will you need for each topic?
- 3 During the meeting, are you keeping to the schedule? Are you keeping the comments on topic? Is everyone participating and contributing?
- 4 How will you keep record of the key points, action points or items that require further discussion? Do you need to identify someone to take minutes? Have you ensured there is a meeting summary to send out to all participants?
- 5 What are your next steps? Do you need to set up a follow-up time and date to meet again?

## Introductions and opening

<b>Welcoming participants</b>	Thank you all for coming today. It's great to see you all here today. Thank you all for coming at such short notice.
<b>Introducing participants</b>	I think we all know each other, don't we? Could we go round the table and briefly state our roles? Before I get started, I'd like to welcome Luke, from our office in Paris. Firstly, I'd like to introduce Emil, our new Finance Manager.
<b>Opening the meeting</b>	Good morning, everyone. If we're all here, let's get started. Since everyone is here, shall we begin? OK, let's begin by looking at the first point on the agenda.
<b>Stating the meeting objectives</b>	The goal of this meeting is to agree on the new logo design. We are here today to discuss our presentation to senior management. The meeting was called to give an update on the project tasks. By the end of the meeting we should have ideas for the new website.
<b>Introducing the agenda</b>	You'll see from the agenda that we are here to discuss the findings from the customer satisfaction survey. We have five main items on the agenda that we need to discuss today, so let's stay focused. Firstly, we'll discuss ... / After that, we'll be looking at ... / If time allows, we will also cover ...

## Managing a meeting

<b>Keeping to the point</b>	That's a good point, but we will discuss it in more detail at a later date. This is not on today's agenda, so let's leave it for our next meeting. Let's save this for next time. I'm afraid we'll have to come back to this later. Let's talk more about that next time.
<b>Managing time</b>	We're running out of time, so let's move on. That's all the time we have on this topic. We can discuss additional points in our next meeting. I'm afraid we're running out of time. Does anyone have anything important to add before we move on? We only have ten minutes left, so let's talk about the next item on the agenda.
<b>Managing interruptions</b>	I understand your point, but it might be better to discuss this at a later date. Your point has been noted but please let Amal finish. We'll come to you next, Chris. Karl, please continue with what you were saying. Let's let Nadia finish her point.
<b>Inviting comments/ feedback</b>	Sara, what are your thoughts on this? Do you agree with this viewpoint, Emil? Maria, it would be useful to have your opinion on this. What do you think, Ulrich? Does anyone have anything to add?
<b>Clarifying and asking for clarification</b>	What I meant to say was that the figures aren't reliable. To put it another way, we need to spend less on marketing. What I'm trying to say is that we'd need to talk to our design team about this. Could you explain how that is going to work? So, what you're saying is that we need to look at other options? Can I check what you mean by cost cutting?
<b>Agreeing</b>	That's a good point. I agree with Jean Luc. That's a really good idea. That would work. That's true. Absolutely./Exactly.
<b>Disagreeing</b>	I can see your point but I'm not sure that would work. I'm afraid I don't agree. Not necessarily. That's not always true / the case. I'm not so sure about that.

## Problem solving

<b>Explaining the problem</b>	The main problem is that the supplier can't deliver the order. The issue is that we don't have enough staff. The thing is that the equipment is broken and so we won't be able to finish.
<b>Suggesting solutions</b>	Why don't we find a new supplier? We could hire some short-term staff for the project. Have you considered replacing the old equipment? What about adding this information to our website?

## Closing

<b>Summing up</b>	That's all we have time for today. Let's sum up the main points. Shall I summarise the key points from today's meeting? Before we close the meeting, I'd like to summarise the main points. Let me quickly go over today's points.
<b>Referring to action points and next steps</b>	Please send Anna the completed reports by Friday. Please don't forget to hand in your reports by the end of the week. Is everyone clear about what they need to do? We'll meet again in a week to discuss progress. I look forward to hearing your views at the next meeting. Everyone will be sent a copy of the minutes and action points. We'll meet again next Thursday to discuss next steps.
<b>Closing</b>	Thank you for coming, everyone. It was a very productive meeting. Thank you for your contribution and ideas. Thank you all for your input today.

# 5 Negotiation skills

## Lead-in

Some business practices may differ from country to country. Here are some points to research before you prepare for a negotiation:

- 1 Most negotiations are about both discussion and relationship building. Some cultures prefer a more direct form of communication and speak about business early in the conversation. In other cultures, the introduction and small talk part of the negotiation is important for a successful outcome. Check what type of negotiation to expect before you prepare.
- 2 Negotiating styles such as ways of expressing agreement and disagreement or decision-making can differ from culture to culture. Nodding might not have the same meaning in all countries. Check that your understanding is the same as the person that you are negotiating with.

## Opening and welcoming

Good to meet you / see you again. Are you well?  
How's business?  
Can I get you anything?  
How was your journey?  
Thanks for agreeing to meet today.

## Proposals

<b>Stating the agenda</b>	What I'd like to discuss today is the terms and conditions for the order. OK, let's start by looking at the agenda. Shall we have a look at the main points of today's discussion?
<b>Making a proposal</b>	We think the best way is to reconsider delivery times. It might be possible to increase the quantity. Would it help if we reviewed the monthly payment terms? If we lower the price, perhaps you could agree to increase the volume? How do you feel about increasing the discount? Do you think you could consider invoicing in dollars? We propose/suggest a four percent discount.
<b>Requesting a proposal</b>	Would you like to outline your proposal? What do you have in mind? Do you have any suggestions? We welcome any offer/suggestion that you would like to make.

<b>Clarifying and checking</b>	<p>Just to clarify, you mean increasing the payments?</p> <p>What do you mean by extending the deadline?</p> <p>Let me make sure I got your point.</p> <p>I'm not sure I understood your position. Do you mean you are prepared to lower the unit price?</p> <p>Let me see if I understand what you're saying.</p>
<b>Compromising</b>	<p>We could offer you a ten percent discount if you think you can order more than 2,000 units.</p> <p>In exchange for a bigger volume, would you be willing to reconsider payment terms?</p> <p>We might be able to work on the price if you think you can pay within a month.</p> <p>How flexible can you be on that?</p> <p>Would you be willing to accept a compromise?</p>

## Bargaining/ Discussion

<b>Suggesting alternatives</b>	<p>What about improving quality control?</p> <p>How about increasing the price by five percent rather than eight percent?</p> <p>Can we look at the delivery dates?</p> <p>Could you accept payment in euros?</p> <p>Would you be prepared to increase the order?</p> <p>How would you feel if we extend the deadline?</p>
<b>Agreeing to a proposal</b>	<p>That seems reasonable.</p> <p>That's acceptable.</p> <p>We can work with that.</p> <p>I'm happy to agree to those terms.</p> <p>That sounds great to us.</p> <p>We have a deal!</p>
<b>Refusing a proposal</b>	<p>I'm afraid we can't agree to that.</p> <p>We'd find it difficult to complete the project by your proposed deadline.</p> <p>I'm afraid we can't agree to deliver twice a week unless you increase the volume of the order.</p> <p>That won't be possible, I'm afraid.</p> <p>I'm sorry, we can't accept that.</p>
<b>Explaining concerns</b>	<p>My main concern is that quality will suffer.</p> <p>The main issue is it will take longer by sea than by plane.</p> <p>It's important that we consider whether the changes will increase the budget.</p>
<b>Checking for agreement</b>	<p>Does that sound reasonable?</p> <p>How does that sound?</p> <p>What do you think?</p>

## Closing a negotiation

<b>Agreement has been reached</b>	<p>It's been a pleasure doing business with you.</p> <p>Thank you very much for your time.</p>
<b>Agreement has not been reached</b>	<p>I'm sorry that we couldn't reach an agreement.</p> <p>Unfortunately, we haven't been able to reach an agreement.</p> <p>Perhaps we can discuss this again at a later date.</p>
<b>Outlining next steps</b>	<p>So, we'll send you a contract by email.</p> <p>We'll put in writing the terms and conditions we agreed today.</p> <p>If you confirm that in an email to me, we will draw up an agreement.</p> <p>I'll be in contact in the near future to see if we can discuss this again.</p> <p>I'll send you an email confirming all this in writing.</p>