



4 Services & systems

Learning objectives in this unit

- Talking about services and systems
- Explaining how something works
- Introducing information
- Making comparisons

Case study

- Improving systems

Starting point

- 1 What services do you use regularly?
- 2 What do you like about them?
- 3 What makes services good or bad?

Working with words | Service

1 Read these website reviews.

- 1 Which of the extracts is about a website for
 - Lloyds TSB (a bank)?
 - The Guardian (a newspaper)?
 - Expedia.com (an online travel agency)?

- 2 Would you be interested in these services? Why / why not?

a

Instead of continuously visiting websites to see if there are new articles and updates, you can have them delivered directly to you. Its user-friendly service gives you access to all the most up-to-date and accurate news and information on the web.

b

This service is free and gives you immediate access to your accounts when it's convenient for you. The system also protects your personal financial information and ensures that you stay secure.

c

This system is really time-saving and efficient, because consumers can combine multiple flights, hotel bookings, car rentals, and local activities all from just one website. Users can customize their bookings to fit their needs and there are many discounts and special prices, so it's really cost-effective.



- 2 **16▶** Listen to three speakers. Which website in 1 would they be interested in?

- 3 **Underline** the adjectives in the reviews in 1 that would attract the three speakers.

4 Work with a partner. Which of the adjectives you underlined in the texts in 1 might describe these services? Do you use services like these?



5 17▷ Listen to four people talking about a service from 4.

- 1 Which service is each person talking about?
- 2 How does the service make their life easier or what does it allow them to do?

6 Work with a partner. Make sentences using the words in this table.

Example: Search engines allow people to find relevant websites.

Search engines	help	me	infinitive (with to ...)
Telecommunication companies	allow	you	
Financial advisers	make it easier for	organizations	
Call centres		companies	
Consultants	let	people	verb (without to ...)
Legal services		the world	

» For more exercises, go to Practice file 4 on page 108.

7 Make a list of the type of services your company offers or services you often use. They might be financial, travel, legal, or medical. Tell your partner about the benefits of these services.

Example: My financial adviser helps me to plan my future.

Booking tickets online is really efficient and more cost-effective than using a travel agent.

Tip | let

The verb *let* is followed by a noun and then a verb without *to*.

Don't say:

Online banking lets me to manage my account from home.

Do say:

Online banking lets me manage my account from home.

Presenting | Explaining how something works | Comparing new with old



- 1** Why do companies need databases? What sort of information do they keep? Do you use a database? If you do, is the system easy to use?
- 2** 18▷ A hotel chain has a new customer database for all its hotels. It is being presented to the hotel manager and her staff for the first time. Listen and answer questions 1–4.
 - 1 What was one of the disadvantages with the old database?
 - 2 When can they use the new database?
 - 3 How is it similar to the old database?
 - 4 What is new about it?
 - 5 What does the hotel manager suggest is a problem with the new system?
- 3** 18▷ Match 1–8 below to a–h to make pairs of phrases. Then listen again and check your answers.
 - 1 The good news is ..., _____
 - 2 It might seem a bit difficult to use at first ..., _____
 - 3 It looks very similar to ..., _____
 - 4 As soon as you ..., _____
 - 5 In other words, as well as (-ing) ..., _____
 - 6 The more ..., _____
 - 7 On the one hand ..., _____
 - 8 One downside is ..., _____
 - a but what's different is ...
 - b it also ...
 - c but the bad news is ...
 - d but on the other hand ...
 - e but in fact it's very simple.
 - f the (better) ...
 - g but on the plus side ...
 - h it starts to ...
- 4** Put the phrases in 3 into these categories.
 - a Comparing and contrasting: _____
 - b Describing what something does or how it works: _____

» For more exercises, go to Practice file 4 on page 108.

- 5 Work with a partner. Imagine your company has some new software for storing customer information. Make sentences using some of the phrases from 3 and these prompts.**

Example: The good news is we have new software, but the bad news is we need six months' training.

- 1 new software + need six months' training
- 2 press this button + look for the customer's name
- 3 the old system + the quantity of information it can store
- 4 storing basic information + finds more information
- 5 information you get + easier it is to target customers
- 6 the system is more complicated + it is faster

- 6 Work with a partner. Compare the functionality of the objects, systems, or services in 1–3. Make a list of the benefits and drawbacks of each of the more recent objects / systems.**

Example: Compared to CD players, MP3 players store more songs, are smaller, and more expensive.

- 1 CD players MP3 players
- 2 filing cabinets folder storage systems on PCs
- 3 going into a bank using an online bank

- 7 Now work with a different partner. Take turns to talk about the functionality of 1–3.**

Example: On the one hand, the MP3 player is expensive, but on the other hand, it can store thousands of songs.

- 8 Think of something that has recently changed at work. Tell your partner about the benefits and drawbacks of the change. It might be a change to**

- working hours / breaks
- how supplies are ordered
- measuring customer satisfaction.

 » Interactive Workbook » Email

Key expressions

Explaining how something works

Let me explain how it works.
 One / the main thing to note is ...
 What happens is ...
 Basically, ...
 It's a bit like ...
 You can see what happens when you ...
 As soon as you ..., it starts to ...

Explaining additional features and benefits


One other useful feature is that ...
 As well as (+ noun / -ing) ..., it also ...
 The more ..., the better (the) ...

Asking questions about functionality

Will it let me ... (+ verb)?
 Will it allow me ... (+ infinitive)?
 How does it know what to do?
 What happens when ...?

Comparing

On the one hand ..., but on the other hand ...
 The good news is ..., but the bad news is ...
 Whereas before ..., we now ...
 It looks very similar to ..., but what's different is ...
 It might seem ..., but in fact it's ...
 One downside is ..., but on the plus side ...
 One benefit is that ..., though a drawback might be ...

 » Interactive Workbook
 » Phrasebank

Practically speaking | How to introduce information

- 1 19▶ Listen to 1–5. Notice the stressed words in bold and the pauses (/) after the introductory phrases.**

- 1 As you **know**, / we have a new customer database.
- 2 So the **purpose** of today / is for you to start to become familiar with it.
- 3 As I **say**, / the good news is ...
- 4 **Now**, / up on the screen you can see ...
- 5 In **other** words, / as well as giving the customer more of what they want ...

- 2 Match the sentences in 1 to functions a–e.**

- a Repeating something you have already said: ____
- b Explaining a feature in a different way: ____
- c Giving information that is already common knowledge: ____
- d Explaining what is going to happen: ____
- e Introducing a new item: ____

- 3 Give a one-minute presentation to your partner about how an object in your classroom or office works. For example, the CD player or the answering machine. Try to use all five of the introductory phrases from 1 in your presentation.**

Language at work | Comparative forms

1 A hotel manager has received these comments from staff on using the new customer database. Complete their comments with the correct form of the adjectives in brackets.

1 'It takes a little _____ (long) to learn how to use it.'

2 'When customers call, it's slightly _____ (easy) to find their information.'

3 'It's definitely not as _____ (slow) as the old system was.'

4 'Even the customers seem to be noticing the differences. They are far _____ (positive).'

5 'In general, I think it's a great deal _____ (good).'

2 Read the comments in 1 again. For each comment, decide if the improvement of the new database is big or small or if there is no improvement.

3 Correct the mistakes in this dialogue about a new office.

- 1 A This office is more noisier than the last one.
- 2 B Yeah, but at least it's not as darker as the old one.
- 3 A That's true. I just wish it was bigger.
- 4 B It's much conveniener for teamwork though.
- 5 A Yes, but it's much more worse for concentration.
- 6 B I think it's as good than the last office, but in different ways.
- 7 A Well, you've always been more tolerant than me.

4 Decide if these intensifiers indicate a big (B) or small (S) difference.

slightly _____ a great deal _____ nearly as ... as _____ not anything like as ... as _____
 a little _____ significantly _____ far more _____ much less _____ marginally _____
 not nearly ... as _____ a lot _____

» For more information and exercises, go to Practice file 4 on page 109.

5 Work with a partner. Your local supermarket has changed its layout and updated its website. Take turns to ask and answer questions from this customer feedback form using the adjectives in brackets. Circle 0, 1, 2, or 3 to show your partner's opinion.

Example: A What do you think of the choice of goods?

B The choice is slightly wider than before. (Student A circles 2) on the form.)

Feedback form

Level of improvement (0 = got worse, 1 = none, 2 = some, 3 = big):

What do you think of the choice of goods? (wide)	0	1	2	3
How easy is it to find items? (easy)	0	1	2	3
What do you think of the wait at the checkout? (long / short)	0	1	2	3
What do you think of the café and children's area? (good / bad)	0	1	2	3
What do you think of the website? (user-friendly)	0	1	2	3

6 Work with a partner. Compare your present job with your last job. Choose your own adjectives or use some from the list to talk about the areas below.

*friendly long stressful challenging helpful modern
 convenient fast comfortable difficult interesting*

- your colleagues
- your office / work place
- your responsibilities
- your working hours
- your journey to work

Improving systems

Background

Travelling responsibly at Nike HQ

When Nike World Headquarters relocated to a suburb outside Portland, Oregon in the USA, the management decided to save money by building fewer car parking spaces at the new site. At this time, 98% of Nike's employees drove alone to work, and there were too many cars for the number of parking spaces.

Management soon realized they needed to encourage fewer people to drive to work alone. They started an incentive-based programme – employees who shared car journeys, cycled to work or used public transport received money towards their

travel costs, or vouchers that they could spend in the cafeterias at work and at Nike stores. It was a popular programme, but it was expensive and difficult to monitor. They then introduced a new system called TRAC – Travelling Responsibly? Accept the Challenge. TRAC gave employees information about public transport, cycling routes, and car-sharing and offered monthly prizes to employees. The company also started to pay 72% of the cost of bus and rail passes.

The percentage of employees driving alone to work is now 78%. However, the company would like to reduce this figure still further.

Discussion

- 1 What are the advantages of not driving to work for**
1 the employees? 2 the company? 3 the local community?
- 2 What could the company do to reduce the number of employees driving alone to work even further?**
- 3 What alternative means of transport would you consider using to get to work? Give your reasons.**

Task

- 1 Work with a partner. You both work for a large manufacturing company. The commuting situation at your company needs to improve. Read this information.**
 - Your company employs 30% more people than it did two years ago. As a result there are too few parking spaces and it is unable to get more space for employees' cars.
 - Traffic in the area is getting worse and employees travelling by car are often stuck in traffic jams and arrive at work late, feeling very stressed.
- 2 Hold a meeting with your partner. Take turns to report some recent relevant data. Make notes as you listen. Student A, turn to File 05 on page 136. Student B, turn to File 12 on page 138.**
- 3 Make a list of ways to improve the situation. Will you need to change the system of parking? Can you change the working hours? Perhaps you can encourage alternative means of transport for employees.**
- 4 Present your ideas to the class. Explain how the new system will work and explain its benefits compared to the current situation. Your audience may want to ask you questions about how it will work.**

The Expert View

Why change?

If staff are dissatisfied (D) with the current situation, and if there's a vision (V) for improvement and a clear process (P), then the cost of not changing (C) is more than the cost of changing (DxVxP>C). Change is resisted if dissatisfaction, vision and / or process don't exist.

What 'change process'?

Try a typical four-stage process: 1 awareness of the need for change, 2 interest in the process, 3 willingness to try the changes, 4 acceptance. Different stages need different tactics, but the 'platinum rule' is – do for other people what they would do for themselves!

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Case study

File 03 | Unit 2

Business communication skills, Exercise 8, page 15

Student A

You went to the Project 1 meeting. Your partner went to the Project 2 meeting. Call your partner to find out what's happening with Project 2. Then, tell your partner about Project 1. These are the things you need to know.

Project 1 – organizing a training day for staff

- Venue for training session – room booked
- Hotel for trainers – Victoria Hotel has available rooms, trying to negotiate discount
- Lunch – nothing so far. Need someone to book caterers and negotiate payment.
- Information pack for trainees – need to ask trainers to send schedule and summary of training day
- Transport between hotel and office for trainers – need to book taxis

Project 2 – raising money for a local children's charity

- Posters and leaflets?
- 10 km sponsored run?
- Charity sale?
- Other?

File 04 | Unit 2

Case study, Task, Exercise 2, page 17

Group A

You are working on the venue and all the equipment.

Your responsibilities:

- Organizing the installation of the dance floor, the sound system, the toilets, and the kitchen equipment.
- Painting and decorating the whole building.
- Buying plants and furniture for the relaxation zone.

Your progress: All the equipment has been ordered. The energy-generating dance floor is ready to install, and the kitchen and toilets have been installed.

Problems: You need a specialist electrician to complete the work on the dance floor and link it up to the sound system and the lights. The company you booked has pulled out and you need to find a replacement.

File 05 | Unit 4

Case study, Task, Exercise 2, page 29

Student A

Summarize these results for your partner. Do not read out the figures, but compare the results of last year and this year.

Example: The number of staff using public transport is a great deal lower than ...

	Last year	This year
% of staff using public transport	59	36
% of staff walking or cycling to work	22	21
% of staff sharing a car to work	11	23

File 06 | Unit 5

Business communication skills, Exercise 3, page 32

Student A



You are the facilities manager for a chain of hotels in Singapore and Thailand. Call your partner to ask about the services they offer. Ask if a visit is possible. Give this information to your partner.

- A chain of exclusively 5-star hotels.
- Some of the hotels have gym facilities that are eight years old.
- There are twelve hotels in total. Two have no gym facilities.
- You are speaking to your finance manager about the budget next week.

File 11 | Unit 2

Case study, Task, Exercise 2, page 17

Group B

You are working on the launch party event.

Your responsibilities:

- Booking the DJs and other acts.
- Organizing the special events, such as ethical clothing and make-up displays.
- Ordering all the food and drink for the event.
- Hiring and training staff.

Your progress: You have started booking people and so far the response is good. You have found local suppliers for most of the food and drink. You have advertised for staff and have a number of candidates. You need to interview candidates, hire them, and set up a training day.

Problems: The famous DJ you booked is no longer available. You have found a replacement but he is asking a lot of money which will take you over budget. You still need to find a supplier of organic beer.

File 12 | Unit 4

Case study, Task, Exercise 2, page 29

Student B

Summarize these results for your partner. Do not read out the figures, but compare the results of last year and this year.

Example: The number of staff arriving late is a great deal higher than ...

	Last year	This year
% of staff arriving late	53	87
% of staff doing flexitime	33	55
% of staff unable to find alternative parking (within walking distance of the company)	43	44

File 13 | Unit 5

Case study, Task, Exercise 1, page 35

Student B

You work for a business consultancy. Student A calls you. Ask for more information.

- What sort of reviews has the hotel received? What are the main problems?
- What sort of image does the hotel want to project?
- Arrange to visit the hotel. You are free on Thursday and Friday this week or Tuesday and Wednesday next week.

File 14 | Unit 5

Business communication skills, Exercise 3, page 32

Student B

You are the facilities manager for a chain of hotels in Croatia. Call your partner to ask about the services they offer. Ask if a visit is possible. Give this information to your partner.

- A chain of 3-star and 4-star hotels near the beach.
- One of the 3-star hotels has a fitness gym which is fifteen years old. You want to update that one and have new gym facilities in your other hotels.
- You have one 4-star hotel and three 3-star hotels.
- You have a comfortable amount set aside for installing these facilities.

File 15 | Unit 6

Case study, Task, Exercise 3, page 41

- 1 Have a film made showing day-to-day business and the lives of employees in the Swedish company and day-to-day business and lives of employees in the Indian company. It would include interviews with staff describing what they do and how they go about their jobs. Show this to all employees.
- 2 Set up a virtual chat room so that colleagues can communicate anonymously with each other to air their problems, find out what the reasons might be, and to share thoughts about their own cultures.
- 3 Get an external trainer to run a training course for Swedish and Indian managers about how to raise intercultural awareness. The course includes role-plays and language training.
- 4 Have a 'culture sharing meal / day' where Swedish and Indian colleagues spend a part of the day sharing their cultural background with each other over Indian and Swedish food.
- 5 Bring Indian managers to Sweden for a visit to observe how Swedish employees go about their day-to-day business. These managers would then report their observations to their Indian employees.

File 16 | Unit 16

Case study, Task, Exercise 1, page 101

Student A

Mission: Face-to-face market research in local supermarket. Get customers to taste the tea.

Result: Not good because

- some customers don't ever drink tea
- other customers like the taste but think the price is too high
- many customers have never seen this brand in the supermarket before.

Conclusion: Need to persuade supermarkets to make tea more prominent on the shelves. Offer special deals.