



1

First impressions

Learning objectives in this unit

- Talking about first impressions
- Introducing yourself by email
- Making a follow-up call
- Arranging to meet
- Exchanging contact details
- Talking about your work and company using present simple or continuous

Case study

- Making business connections

Starting point

- 1 What are your first impressions of the business in the picture? What kind of business could it be? What impression could it want to give?
- 2 What first impressions do you think people have of you and your company?

Working with words | Talking about first impressions

1 Read this text and answer questions 1–2.

- 1 Is any one factor more important than others for a company's image?
- 2 What else does a company operating internationally need to think about?

Impressions

A company's image is like an orchestra. No single instrument is responsible for an orchestra's success or failure. Likewise, the image that a company projects is not based on a single business card, glossy brochure or fashionable display, but on the total impression created by all of these things and more. There are many intangibles that can be critical, like the **reputation** you have, your **principles** and **professionalism**, your **creativity**, and even the warmth of an initial welcome.

For a company to come across well internationally, it also needs to consider the culture of its client or customer. A Finn might take an instant dislike to **extravagance**, a Ghanaian might prefer **innovation** to **tradition**, a Qatari might put personal **rapport** before anything else.

Images can create a negative impression or a positive feeling in a few seconds. If you get it right, that favourable first impression will help in building a successful business relationship.

2 Read the text again and answer questions 1–4.

- 1 What are the 'instruments' that the text mentions? What others could you add?
- 2 What is the meaning of 'intangibles' in a business context? What others could you add to those in the text?
- 3 How important do *you* think it is to consider the culture of your client / customer? Can you think of any examples?
- 4 Discuss an experience you have had of a positive or negative first impression of a company. What factors contributed to this?

3 Match the words in bold in the text in 1 to these definitions.

- 1 something that is expensive or wasteful: _____
- 2 the ability to produce something using imagination or artistic skills: _____
- 3 a high standard of skill and behaviour: _____
- 4 friendly understanding: _____
- 5 new ideas or methods: _____
- 6 the views generally held about somebody or something: _____
- 7 strong beliefs that influence actions: _____
- 8 a way of doing something that's existed for a long time: _____

4 Choose the correct answer from the words in *italics*.

- 1 What kind of image would your company like to *project / show*?
- 2 What sort of reputation do you or your company *hold / have*?
- 3 Is there anything about your company that always *forms / creates* a good impression for new customers?
- 4 In your line of work, how important is it for you to *build / assemble* a relationship with customers or clients?
- 5 Have you ever *experienced / taken* an instant dislike to anyone you met in the course of your work? What were the reasons for this?
- 6 How do you think you *come / go* across to people you meet for the first time?

5 Work with a partner. Ask and answer the questions in 4.**6 01▷ Listen to Zhifu Li, a website designer in Hong Kong, talking about adapting websites to local needs. Answer questions 1–2.**

- 1 In what way is website localization like other forms of advertising?
- 2 What differences between websites for Western and Asian consumers does Zhifu mention?

7 Match each of these adjectives from audio 01▷ to an adjective with a similar meaning from 1–12.

expensive ineffective arrogant trustworthy
suspicious complex functional modest
ostentatious successful wary favourable

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 reliable: _____ | 5 costly: _____ | 9 simple: _____ |
| 2 unsuccessful: _____ | 6 mistrustful: _____ | 10 effective: _____ |
| 3 showy: _____ | 7 practical: _____ | 11 over confident: _____ |
| 4 positive: _____ | 8 complicated: _____ | 12 cautious: _____ |

8 Work with a partner.

- 1 Which of the adjectives in 7 are positive and which are negative? Explain your choices.
- 2 Using as many of the adjectives as possible, discuss what makes an effective website in your culture.
- 3 What aspects of a website would give a negative first impression?

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 1** on page 102.

9 Work with a partner. Look at these things which can create a good or bad first impression of a company.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • uniform | • dress code |
| • office / business premises | • website |
| • telephone answering system | • advertisements in the media |
| • reception area | • brochures / printed materials |
| • meeting / conference rooms | • price |
| • quality of product / service | • speaking customer's language |
| • warm greeting | • reputation |

- 1 Which four are the most important and why?
- 2 Choose two of the factors that create a good impression of your company. Explain how.
- 3 Choose two of the factors that are less successful at creating a good impression of your company. How could they be improved?

 » Interactive Workbook » **Glossary**



Exchanging information | Introducing yourself by email | Making a follow-up call | Arranging to meet

1 Read this email from Ivan Formanek, owner of a translation agency in Prague.

- 1 How did he find out about Sean McFee?
- 2 Why is he contacting him?
- 3 What does he ask Sean to do?



To: sean.mcfee@sfdesign.com
From: ivanformanek@sspeaking.cz
Subject: Designer for new website needed

Dear Mr McFee

My name's Ivan Formanek and I have my own translation agency – Simply Speaking. I was given your details by one of your former colleagues, Ursula Vladikova. She recommended you to me as we are planning to renew our website.

If you are interested in discussing this further, could you either call us or send an email in reply and we will arrange a meeting with you?

Best regards
Ivan Formanek

2 02▷ Sean sends an email in reply to Ivan and then calls him. Listen to their conversation and answer questions 1–3.

- 1 What is the purpose of the call?
- 2 What is the outcome?
- 3 Why is there a delay before the meeting can take place?

3 Match 1–7 to a–f to make phrases.

- 1 I'm calling about ... ____
 - 2 Yes, I ... ____
 - 3 Thanks for ... ____
 - 4 I wondered if you'd had time ... ____
 - 5 I suggest we meet ... ____
 - 6 Fine, whatever's ... ____
 - 7 Let's say, provisionally, ... ____
- a the email I sent you regarding ...
b to look through the portfolio I sent.
c remember.
d best for you.
e responding so quickly.
f to discuss things further.
g Tuesday the 13th at 11.00.

4 02▷ Listen again and check your answers.

Tip | *actually* and *currently*

Don't confuse *actually* with *currently*. Use *actually* as an alternative to *in fact* or *as a matter of fact*.

*I'm **actually** going to be in Prague already.*

Use *currently* to express something you are doing at the moment.

*We're **currently** updating our corporate image.*

5 Put the phrases in **3** into these categories.

- a Making a follow-up call: _____
- b Responding to a follow-up call: _____
- c Arranging to meet: _____

6 **03**▶ Listen to a call Sean receives and answer questions 1–3.

- 1 Who is calling Sean and why?
- 2 How will Sean know how to find Simply Speaking?
- 3 What transport is he going to use?

7 **03**▶ Listen again.

- 1 What phrase does Sean use to
 - a enquire about transport?
 - b refer to the time of the train?
 - c discuss the possibility of catching the train?
- 2 What phrase does Catherine use to offer help with
 - a directions?
 - b a taxi?

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 1** on page 102.

8 Think of a situation in your own job where you have to introduce yourself to a company or client. Draft an introductory email. Give the email to your partner.

9 Work with your partner. Take turns to make a follow-up call to your email in **8**. Say who you are and why you are calling. Arrange to meet and discuss travel arrangements and directions.

 » Interactive Workbook » Email

Practically speaking | Exchanging contact details

1 **04**▶ Listen to three conversations and answer questions 1–2 for each one.

- 1 How does speaker 2 give contact details?
- 2 What means of communication is speaker 1 likely to use to contact speaker 2 again?

2 **04**▶ Listen again. Put these phrases into categories a–d.

- 1 I have an email address for you but I'm not sure if it's current.
- 2 Here's my email address.
- 3 Let me take your name and number.
- 4 I'll send you her contact details by text.
- 5 Can I have Suzy's number and email address?
- 6 The one above is my business email. I check it regularly so please use that one.
- 7 Here's my card.

- a Asking for details: _____
- b Giving details: _____
- c Checking details: _____
- d Promising details: _____

3 Work in groups of four. Exchange your details with each other. Do this in as many different ways as possible. Refer to the *Useful phrases* on page 134.

Key expressions

Introducing self (email)

My name's ... and I (have / work for / represent) ...

I was given your details by ...
(She) recommended you to me as ...

Making a follow-up call

Hello ... This is ...

I'm calling about the email I sent you regarding ...

I wondered if you'd had time to ...?
I wanted to see if you are still interested in ...

Responding to a follow-up call

Yes, I remember.

Thanks for responding so quickly.

Thanks. I wanted to speak to you about ...

Arranging to meet

I suggest we meet to discuss things further.

When would you like to meet?

We can meet ...

Fine, whatever's best for you.

Let's say, provisionally, Tuesday the 13th at 11.00.

I'll get my assistant to call you later today to confirm.

See you (in a couple of weeks).

Discussing travel arrangements

You'll be travelling in from ..., won't you?

Can you tell me how I get to ...?

Is it best by taxi or public transport?

Let me know where you're staying and I'll email you a map and directions from your hotel.

There's a train that leaves at ... Will I have time to catch that one?

It only takes ... to get to ...

Let me know if you need a taxi and I'll book one for you.

 » Interactive Workbook
» Phrasebank

Language at work | Present simple and continuous

1 Read these extracts from audio 02▷ and 03▷.

- a I'm **calling** about the email I sent you ...
- b Yes, I **remember**.
- c We're currently **updating** our corporate image.
- d I **go** to Berlin once a month ...
- e It only **takes** 20 minutes to get to the station.
- f I'm **leaving** the day after tomorrow.
- g There's a train that **leaves** at 3.00.
- h We can meet when I **get** back.
- i I'm **covering** for a colleague who's on maternity leave.

In which extract is the **present simple** used to refer to

- 1 a routine? ____
- 2 something always or permanently true? ____
- 3 a thought / feeling / reaction rather than an action? ____
- 4 an item on a timetable? ____
- 5 the future after a time word? ____

In which extract is the **present continuous** used to refer to

- 6 an action in progress at the moment of speaking? ____
- 7 a current (unfinished) project? ____
- 8 an arrangement in the future? ____
- 9 a temporary situation? ____

» For more information and exercises, go to **Practice file 1** on page 103.

2 You want to find out this information from someone you meet for the first time. What questions would you ask?

- who they work for
- their responsibilities at work
- their daily routine
- how their English studies are going
- the department or area they work in
- a current project they are involved in
- what their schedule is next week
- how regularly they need English at work

3 Work with a partner. Ask and answer the questions in 2.

4 Which of these phrases would you normally use with the present simple and which with the present continuous?

*for the moment at the moment generally speaking for the time being
on the whole tomorrow afternoon once a week most of the time
every winter right now once in a while as a rule currently*

5 Work with a partner. Use the phrases in 4 to make true statements about your activities in or out of work.

6 Give a short presentation about your company using these points.

- 1 The industry as a whole
 - how important it is and whether it employs a lot of people
 - any changes taking place at the moment
 - future developments
- 2 Your company
 - where it is based and what it does
 - current projects and future plans
 - what customers like about the company

Making business connections

Background

Business networking with BNI

BNI is a business referral network, which works as a word-of-mouth promotion tool. When companies join BNI, their representatives attend a local / regional group which holds regular breakfast meetings. At the meeting, members are required to give a '60-second speech' – telling the other participants what type of business they are in, what type of business connections they are looking for and any other information that is helpful for generating more business. The meeting agenda is standardized throughout the world. There is time for members to present their company, hear about success stories

within the BNI network, and pass on their contact details. The benefits of this type of 'cross-promotion' are clear. Business people who attend the meeting can refer their business associates to someone they meet at the meeting. Or two members may forge a business relationship – a supplier / client relationship or a synergy.

Example of networking success: A printer joined BNI and got to know a real estate company. This company was dissatisfied with its current printer and decided to switch to the printer it met through the BNI group. As a result, \$100,000-worth of business was handed over to him!

The Expert View

Networking is defined here as a two-way relationship-building process – promoting what we have to offer, and seeking opportunities through what others have to offer us. In an increasingly fast-moving and competitive global environment, we all need to communicate clearly and create opportunities to develop a network of contacts. Information is available from all corners of the world, but in business nothing can replace the value of building personal relationships. This process often takes time, particularly in some cultures. But when it is done well, networking can deliver a real competitive advantage.

Pauline Weight, Chairman of the Cranfield Management Association
Cranfield School of Management

Discussion

- 1 Why might a company join a network like BNI? What are the main advantages of the network?
- 2 What would you say about your company in a 60-second speech?

Task

Work in groups of four. You are going to attend a meeting of a similar networking organization. Each person chooses one of the four companies from File 01 on page 136.

- 1 Read your information. Prepare a 60-second speech to give at the meeting. Make sure you
 - give some general facts about your company
 - speak briefly about current activities
 - say what you hope to gain from being a member of the networking organization.
- 2 Have a networking meeting. Listen to each other's speeches and decide which company it would be useful to forge a business relationship with.
- 3 It is a week after the networking meeting. Call the business acquaintance you chose and arrange to meet.
- 4 Meet with your business acquaintance. Discuss and decide how your two companies can help each other and / or promote each other's business.



Case study

File 01 | Unit 1

Case study, Task, page 11

Name: Silent Systems

Product: cabinets for servers / audio / technical equipment

Information for your networking colleagues:

Cabinets reduce the noise and keep equipment cool. They can be positioned in the office, avoiding the need for a purpose-built computer room.

We provide demonstrations, customized units and value for money. Recent clients include government agencies and several multinationals.

Current activities: breaking into the US market

Name: Languages Today

Product: translation, interpreting and proofreading services

Information for your networking colleagues:

150 languages can be translated and interpreted at this agency by linguists around the world. Specialist / technical subjects can also be translated.

Current activities: setting up a database of clients and translators; producing specialist glossaries for key clients

Name: Sitemagic.com

Product: all-in-one website design for small- to medium-sized businesses

Information for your networking colleagues:

Provide a website, domain registration and email at very reasonable prices. We can start your website after one phone call.

Current activities: expanding to fifteen staff and moving to new premises; offering websites in other languages

Name: Reisinger & Taylor

Product: independent corporate caterer

Information for your networking colleagues:

Provide catering for offices, schools and colleges – USP = fresh ingredients. We offer value for money and a large distribution network. No company is too small.

Current activities: expansion into more regions; new events catering service; special banquet service available

File 02 | Unit 2

Practically speaking, Exercise 2, page 15

- 1 You meet a client by chance at the theatre during the interval. The bell for the second half has just rung.
- 2 You meet your old manager at your child's football match. You have a lot of friends there so you don't really want to talk to him / her for long.
- 3 You're at a conference and have been talking to an acquaintance for five minutes. You've run out of small talk topics.
- 4 You're just leaving your friend's birthday party. It's been a long day and you want to get home. You bump into a colleague who's just arrived and wants to chat.

File 03 | Unit 3

Language at work, Exercise 3, page 22

Student A

- 1 Your colleague is in a project team which is converting an old building to provide new company premises. Ask how the project is going. As your colleague is speaking, comment on what he / she says and ask additional questions.
- 2 Your company is building a new warehouse and office complex. Update your colleague, using these prompts and / or your own ideas. Use *already* and *yet* and appropriate time expressions.
 - finish the main building work
 - have problems with some of the suppliers
 - not install the IT system
 - not complete electrical wiring
 - reschedule the opening date

File 04 | Unit 9

Business communication skills, Exercise 6, page 57

Pair A: Managers

Your company is finding it difficult to keep staff – apparently your competitor has better working conditions. Two members of staff have recently told you that they are thinking of leaving. Hold a meeting with them to discuss working conditions. Find out what they want. Then decide what you can offer them and what you are willing to compromise on. Likely areas of discussion are

- flexible hours / home working
- better travel expenses
- more perks: fitness club membership, lunch vouchers, new computer
- increased salary (this should be no higher than 1% more than inflation)
- less bureaucracy in the job
- more training for future promotion.

You will lead the discussion. Make sure that you outline the situation, put forward proposals, state the consequences of these, bargain as necessary, and summarize your progress.