



11

Communications

Learning objectives in this unit

- Talking about communications
- Explaining procedures
- Teleconferencing
- Dealing with situations on the phone
- Talking about obligation and prohibition

Case study

- Solving a communication problem

Starting point

- 1** Is the world a better place with communications technologies? Why or why not?
- 2** What communications technology could you personally not live without? Why?

Working with words | Communications

1 43► Listen to an extract from a discussion programme looking at development in the world of communications. Answer questions 1–3.

- 1 How does speaker 1 see communications systems developing?
- 2 What three stages in communications development does speaker 2 mention?
- 3 What is speaker 3's main point about communications systems?

2 Match phrases 1–9 from audio 43► to phrases a–i with a similar meaning.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1 have access to ____ | a communicate with |
| 2 connect to ____ | b give attention to |
| 3 focus on ____ | c combine with |
| 4 interact with ____ | d affect |
| 5 have an impact on ____ | e have something near you which you can use |
| 6 be involved in ____ | f work together with |
| 7 subscribe to ____ | g join to a supply or network |
| 8 collaborate with ____ | h be part of |
| 9 integrate with ____ | i pay regularly for |

3 Complete these questions with the correct form of phrases 1–9 in 2.

- 1 Do you have the opportunity to _____ projects run by other departments in your company?
- 2 Do you _____ colleagues based in another country to put on exhibitions or conferences?
- 3 What equipment, if any, have you bought to _____ your computer system at home?
- 4 Is it easier to _____ other people in a teleconference if you can see them on screen?
- 5 Do you _____ any teleconferencing facilities in your office?
- 6 How much does the Internet _____ the lifestyle of you and your family? Do you think you spend less time together?
- 7 How do you _____ the Internet at home – dial-up or broadband?
- 8 Do you _____ any satellite, cable or other services at home?
- 9 Are there any problems your company needs to _____ in order to improve communications between departments?

4 Work with a partner and ask and answer the questions in 3.

5 Read the texts quickly. Which text is about

- 1 an unexpected use of an existing technology?
- 2 a new combination of two different technologies?

Mercy Ships

The global charity Mercy Ships uses its growing fleet of hospital ships to deliver free health care to developing nations. Now, with the help of an innovative new microscope, the 'Nikon Coolscope', and a satellite communication system, volunteers on board can analyse blood and tissue samples with the help of experts in distant locations around the world. Still images of samples obtained from patients are loaded

onto the Internet. Experts log in to a secure web page, gain access to the samples and provide immediate diagnoses or consultation by email. The Coolscope can also be used for 'live' sessions during an on-board operation. With remote access to clear digital images, expert doctors can immediately suggest a course of action to follow – by telephone, from their own home, perhaps thousands of miles away.



Africa Calling

In many parts of the world, mobile phones aren't a convenient alternative to landlines but the only means of communication: they provide connection with the outside world where there was none before. In Africa, mobile phones mean real change. If you live in rural Africa, your payment options are limited and so, therefore, is your participation in the wider economy. If you don't live within a hundred miles of a bank, don't have a chequebook and have never

even seen a credit card, how do you send money to someone else? Mobile phones provide an instantly transferable form of payment. You buy a pre-pay card, obtain the voucher number and then text that number to your counterpart. And the person you sent it to can start using it right away. This enables the development of small businesses without banks and contributes significantly to the growth of the local economy.



6 Read the texts again and answer questions 1–2.

- 1 How has technology improved the service Mercy Ships can provide?
- 2 How have mobile phones made a difference in Africa?

7 Complete the word families for these words from the texts.

Verb	Personal noun	Noun	Adjective
<i>communicate</i>	<i>communicator</i>	communication	<i>communicative</i>
analyse			
	volunteer	–	
			innovative
		consultation	
		economy	
		development	
	–	connection	
	–		transferable
		participation	

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 11** on page 122.

8 Work in small groups. Discuss the changes that communications technology has brought about in your job / company / industry. Present your views to the class, giving examples from your own experience as appropriate.

Context

Job Seeker is an international e-company serving both people looking for jobs and companies looking for staff. It has recently introduced services in Romania and Austria. Two new positions have been created in each country to look after key account customers. Job Seeker has arranged a teleconference with the two countries to inform them about procedures for working with key accounts. The participants are Jimmy from the US, Angelika from Austria and Mirela from Romania.

Meetings | Explaining procedures | Teleconferencing



- 1 44▷** Read the *Context*. Listen to the teleconference and answer these queries Angelika prepared before the call.

How often do we contact / meet key account customers?
Do we have any offers for key accounts?
How do we calculate the price?
Can we get information about key accounts in writing from the US?

- 2** Put these phrases used for explaining procedures into categories a–c.

- 1 You must set up regular meetings.
 - 2 It's a good idea to plan these for once a quarter ...
 - 3 You need to make sure they've seen the demo ...
 - 4 What's useful is to send it to them on a CD ...
 - 5 What happens is ... an offer is made according to ...
 - 6 It's essential to tell them about our advantages ...
- a Referring to a necessary measure: _____
b Making a recommendation: _____
c Giving an explanation: _____

- 3** Work with a partner. Explain the procedure for teleconferencing calls in your company (use File 23 on page 143 if necessary). Make sure you state what's necessary and what's recommended.

- 4 44▷** Listen to the teleconference again and answer questions 1–4.

- 1 What two phrases did Angelika use to ask for clarification?
- 2 What two phrases did Jimmy use to check the participants had understood him correctly? How did the participants show they had understood?
- 3 What did Jimmy say to keep the meeting to time?
- 4 What two communication problems did they encounter during the teleconference? What did the participants say to indicate there was a problem?

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 11** on page 122.

Tip | Teleconferencing

In a teleconference, it can be difficult to know who is speaking, especially if there is more than one woman or man present. It helps to identify yourself when you speak.
This is Angelika (speaking).
This is Mirela again.
This is Jimmy, by the way.



5 Work with a partner. Decide what you would say in these situations, using phrases from Key expressions.

- 1 One of the speakers is talking too fast and you can't keep up.
- 2 You're not exactly clear what one of the speakers on a teleconference means.
- 3 It's a bad line and you can't hear.
- 4 You're running the teleconference and you're behind time with the agenda. You want to finish on time.
- 5 You're facilitating the teleconference and want to make sure everyone is following what's been said.

6 Work in groups of three.

- 1 Think of a procedure you do at work or in your free time (e.g. sending a meeting request by email / decorating a room in your home).
- 2 Explain the procedure to the rest of the group.
- 3 When you are listening to the explanation, ask for clarification as necessary.

» Interactive Workbook » Email

Practically speaking | Dealing with situations on the phone

1 45▷ Listen to three conversations. Answer questions 1–2 for each conversation.

- 1 What is the situation?
- 2 How is each situation resolved?

2 45▷ Match statements 1–4 to the best response a–d. Listen again and check.

- 1 Sorry, but this'll have to be quick, Renée, I'm about to board a plane! ____
- 2 This is hopeless. It's a really bad line. ____
- 3 I'm afraid I didn't catch that last bit. ____
- 4 Look, I'm sorry, but I have someone on the other line. Can I call you back? ____

- a Yes, I'm around for another hour, then I have a meeting.
- b So now's not a good time to call?
- c OK. I'll hang up and call you on the landline in five minutes.
- d I said, any chance of getting it to me by tomorrow?

3 45▷ Which statements in 2 indicate that there is a problem in communication? Which indicate that it isn't a good time to call?

4 Work with a partner. Have four short phone conversations. Use these situations or think of your own. Refer to the Useful phrases on page 135.

- You're on holiday in the Caribbean when your manager calls about an unfinished report.
- You've gone to visit a client in a remote country location. You call your PA for some figures.
- You're at the cinema and have forgotten to turn off your mobile. Your partner / a colleague calls to remind you about an appointment.
- You're at a crowded sports event. You need to call someone to rearrange a meeting.

Key expressions

Explaining procedures

- You must ...
- It's a good idea to ...
- You need to ...
- What's useful is to ...
- What happens is ...
- It's essential to ...

Asking for clarification

- What exactly do you mean by ...?
- So you're saying ...?
- Can you run through that again?

Checking listener understands

- Are you with me?
- Is that clear?

Showing you've understood

- Yeah. That's clear.
- OK ... Yes, I've got that.
- OK. I'm with you.

Teleconferencing

Technical problems

You're very faint. / You're breaking up.

I can't hear (Mirela).
 There's an echo on the line.
 Hang on ... Is that better?
 Yes, it's fine again now.

Yes, you're back again now.

Timing

Can we speed up a little ...?
 Could you slow down a bit? We're having problems following you.

» Interactive Workbook » Phrasebank

Language at work | Modal verbs – obligation and prohibition

1 Read these extracts from audio 44▷.

- a We **don't have to** go through the demo ...
- b You **must** set up regular meetings.
- c You **should** read through this thoroughly ...
- d There's another conference call booked ... so we **can't** run over.

Which extract means that

- 1 something is obligatory? ____
- 2 something is not possible or not allowed? ____
- 3 something is not necessary? ____
- 4 something is advisable or preferable? ____

2 Which of these phrases can you use in place of the modal verbs in bold in the extracts in 1?

have to mustn't needn't ought to don't need to aren't allowed to

3 Match these present tense forms to the past tense forms below.

*have to don't have to must are allowed to have got to
mustn't needn't don't need to hasn't got to can't*

- 1 had to: _____
- 2 didn't have to: _____
- 3 could(n't) / was(n't)/were(n't) allowed to: _____

» For more information and exercises, go to **Practice file 11** on page 123.

4 Work with a partner. Ask and answer questions about your obligations at work using *Do you have to ...?* or *Can you ...?*

- paying for phone calls
- working at weekends
- signing in and out of the office
- taking holiday at any time
- recording use of the office photocopier
- carrying an identity card
- working at home
- taking time off in lieu for working overtime

5 Work with a partner. Choose two of these problems that you have experienced. Explain what the problem was and how you resolved it, using the past modals.

- forgetting an appointment
- missing a train / flight
- running out of money
- forgetting a ticket / passport
- missing a work deadline
- sending an email to the wrong person
- losing an important document
- having a car breakdown / accident

6 Work with a partner. Choose one of the topics below (or one of your own) and draw up a list of guidelines. Prioritize the guidelines according to their importance. Then present your guidelines to another pair.

- making a complaint about your superior at work
- making a good impression at an interview
- health and safety procedures at work
- arranging time off
- dealing with a difficult customer

Solving a communication problem

Background

New procedures at FWZ

FWZ is a company specializing in flight planning and flight optimization software. It has expanded rapidly and over the last few months has found its clients (airlines) are not only based in Europe, but the US and Asia too. This means shift work has had to be introduced into the small Support Department due to the time difference between its working hours and those of its

different customers. Measures have had to be taken regarding the communication procedure because the team of ten employees seldom meets together as a group now. A system has had to be devised for dealing with client queries and problems via email. The task has been to determine who does this, and when, and how jobs are prioritized.

Discussion

- 1 What internal communication problems might a company face when it is expanding rapidly?
- 2 What communication problems could occur when your working day is nine hours ahead or behind that of your clients'?
- 3 **46▶** Listen to Robert Turner, head of the Support Department, talking about the new procedures FWZ has developed to deal with communication from clients.
 - 1 Do you think the prioritizing system will work at FWZ?
 - 2 What will be the benefits of using the new software for dealing with customer communication?



Task

- 1 Work in groups of four. Turn to File 24 on page 143 and read the information.
- 2 Your task is to decide on a possible procedure so that communication with clients is easier, and more efficient for clients. Discuss the problem and create a procedure to present to the rest of the class. Consider the following points.
 - Who prioritizes jobs?
 - How are they prioritized (i.e. which type of calls / emails are most urgent)?
 - How do the employees on a different shift know what's urgent when they arrive at work?
 - When are emails checked?
 - What happens to the queries / emails after someone's read them?
 - What happens to phone calls? Are they documented? How?
 - Who checks that jobs have been done?
 - How do the employees on the different shifts know when the jobs have been done?
- 3 Each group presents their procedure to the class. When you are listening, ask for clarification as necessary and make notes under the following headings for each group's procedure.
 - How does the communication flow work?
 - How easy is the implementation?
 - Other details / notes
- 4 Decide as a class which procedure should be implemented and why.

The Expert View

Managing customer service effectively in an international context and across different time zones requires established procedures, and the ability to respond quickly to customer needs around the clock. A key human resources priority for such organizations is the development of team members who can manage the increasing complexity of running a global service. While they may recruit top-level managers from outside the organization, developing the skills of existing key workers is a priority to ensure consistency, and an in-depth understanding of the business. It is essential that staff are encouraged and helped to acquire a global mindset, cross-cultural experience and the relevant business insights.

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File 23 | Unit 11

Business communication skills, Exercise 3, page 68

Procedures for a teleconference

- Make sure room and equipment are available.
- Have a technician on hand in case you have technical problems (and can't solve them yourself).
- Make sure there's an agenda and this has been emailed to the participants ahead of time – the same applies for any documents you may want to refer to.
- Do a roll call – check who is there.
- Encourage participants to state their name before speaking.
- Speak loud and clearly – avoid background noise like rustling papers, mobile phones, coffee cups, scraping chairs.
- Stick to the agenda – keep participants' contributions short.
- Clarify and check everyone understands.
- Summarize points whenever necessary, especially before any decisions are made.
- Encourage the KISS acronym (keep it short and simple).
- Call people by name and location – *Chris (from Milan) what do you think?*
- Vary the tone of your voice, to keep people interested, and be enthusiastic.

File 24 | Unit 11

Case study, Task, Exercise 1, page 71

An international company is responsible for the check-in systems at airports. There are eight employees in the Technical Support Department and shift work has been introduced. This has been divided into four shifts, with two employees on each shift (four teams of two). In order to make the shift work fair, shifts are rotated, so that each week an employee's shift changes to the later time. This means the same two people do one shift for only one week at a time before it changes. As the team is made up of both new and existing employees, none of the clients are allocated to one particular employee – the employees work for all clients and the team leader distributes the tasks, queries and problems among them as they arise.

The problem

When clients email or call, they never know who they will deal with or if the member of staff will have knowledge of their specific problem. The emails and calls are generally to report problems or bugs, or to ask for support. It is essential that these are prioritized so the most urgent problems are dealt with immediately.

File 25 | Unit 10

Case study, Task, page 65

Student A

Favour	Name of person agreeing to favour
Lend me one person from your department for my team – temporary measure.	
Give me some contact names to add to my client mailing list.	
Share a data projector – my finances are too tight to buy one.	

Favours you must refuse to do:

- Help with next year's budget.
- Help organize an 'office warming' party.
- Substitute colleague at meeting in Brussels.

File 26 | Unit 13

Business communication skills, Exercise 6, page 81

Student A

	Facts and figures	Comments
No. people surveyed	Just over 4,500	
Type of people	1	2
Survey results		
read blogs	80%	Ads will reach a lot of people
read blogs once a week	3 % (approx. ⁴)	
read blogs weekly for business information	5	6
read weekly on technology topics	57%	
pass on information or content from blogs	70% (approx. 3,150)	Word-of-mouth advertising will be useful
indicate that blogs influence their purchase decisions	7	8
are thinking of starting their own blogs	32%	Growing market!