



# 5

# Customer service

## Learning objectives in this unit

- Talking about customer service
- Dealing with customers
- Reassuring and sympathizing
- Using direct and indirect questions when dealing with customers

## Case study

- Dealing with customer service problems

## Starting point

- 1 Discuss a good and bad experience you have had of customer service when buying a product.
- 2 Was your impression of the product affected by the service?

## Working with words | Customer service

- 1 18▶ Listen to a woman talking on a radio show about a customer service encounter and answer questions 1–4.

- 1 What was the woman's problem and was it resolved?
- 2 Does she have a positive or negative view of the shop's customer service?
- 3 Do you think she will use the shop again?
- 4 Did the shop assistants make the right decision? Why or why not?

- 2 Read some of the comments about the encounter posted on the show's website.

1 I suppose you could support the assistants' 'go by the rules' attitude. But, as a store owner myself, I think it's wrong to quibble about a couple of minutes; staff are there to be **courteous** and **responsive**, and I wouldn't be happy if that happened in my store. It's so much easier and more cost-effective to keep an **existing** customer than to find a new one. My personal rule of thumb is: a **satisfied** customer might tell a friend, a **dissatisfied** customer will complain to everyone they know.

2 Of course you want to meet the customer's needs and you don't want to lose **loyal** customers by appearing **uncaring**, but the customer must also understand that

- a) hours are posted for a reason
- b) employees have lives outside the shop, and
- c) for security reasons, once the tills are closed, no one is allowed in the shop.

3 I work in a bank where we've introduced an unpublicized rule which really helps to foster customer loyalty. The doors officially close at 5.00, but they let anyone in until 5.10. The feedback we get from the cashiers is very positive; by letting people in, we exceed the expectations of customers who arrive just a little late, and no one really expects to be let in if they arrive after 5.10.

4 This is actually a management failure, though everyone seems to be blaming the shop assistants. If I were the owner, I'd tell the staff that in a situation like this, they should try and find a solution. I'd point out the importance of customer satisfaction and I'd give them the power to make decisions – with examples of what they can and can't do. And I'd make sure they understood the effect of **attentive** and **efficient** service as well as **discourteous** and **sub-standard** service on potential customers – and their regular ones.

5 I agree with the last post. Management need to regularly measure customer satisfaction and make sure service quality is part of everyone's work experience. **High-quality** customer service is all about bringing customers back. And about sending them away satisfied so they give positive feedback about your business to others, who may then try the product or service you offer for themselves and in their turn become **repeat** customers.

**3 Work with a partner and answer questions 1–3.**

- 1 Say what the main points of each post are and whether you agree or disagree with it.
- 2 Which post do you agree with most?
- 3 Can you think of a better solution to the problem?

**4 Match the adjectives in bold in the posts to these definitions.**

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1 not sympathetic: _____                 | 7 happy with something: _____      |
| 2 polite / impolite: _____ / _____       | 8 of a very good standard: _____   |
| 3 helpful: _____                         | 9 faithful and supportive: _____   |
| 4 not as good as normal: _____           | 10 returning: _____                |
| 5 well organized: _____                  | 11 not happy with something: _____ |
| 6 reacting quickly and positively: _____ | 12 present: _____                  |

**5 Which of the adjectives in 4 describe**

- 1 customer service?
- 2 customers?

**6 Use some of the adjectives in 4 to write another post for the radio show website.**

**7 Complete the questionnaire by matching 1–7 to a–g.**

### Customer service questionnaire

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 What do you do to meet ... _____                      | <b>a</b> feedback about service from your customers?              |
| 2 What new procedure might help you to exceed ... _____ | <b>b</b> customer satisfaction and service quality?               |
| 3 In what ways do you measure ... _____                 | <b>c</b> existing customers or to win new ones?                   |
| 4 Have you introduced ... _____                         | <b>d</b> your customers' expectations of the service you provide? |
| 5 Do you think it is easier to keep ... _____           | <b>e</b> customers to your competitors?                           |
| 6 How do you try and get ... _____                      | <b>f</b> your customers' needs and keep them satisfied?           |
| 7 How do you avoid losing ... _____                     | <b>g</b> any unpublicized rules to improve customer service?      |

**8 Work with a partner. Ask and answer the questions in 7 about your own company or a company you know.**

» For more exercises, go to Practice file 5 on page 110.

**9 Work in small groups. Decide on the five most important factors in good customer service.**

*Example: Try to meet your customer's needs with efficient and attentive service.*

**10 Write a customer service feedback questionnaire. Think of six questions to find out how customers view your company and whether they are satisfied with the service that is provided.**

*Example: Tick the words that best describe your experience of this company.*

- uncaring
- sub-standard
- courteous
- efficient

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# Business communication skills

## Context

JC Office Supplies is an international company located throughout Europe. Departments are centralized in certain countries, e.g. Internal Procurement is based in Poland, so employees have to deal with internal customers as well as their external clients.

## Exchanging information | Dealing with customers



- 1 Who are your internal customers? Do you treat them differently to external customers?
- 2 19▶ Read the *Context*. Listen to three phone conversations workers at JC have with both internal and external customers and complete these forms.

1

### PROCUREMENT DEPT. INTERNAL ORDER FORM

Name: Paola  
 Dept: <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 Country: Italy  
 Order for: <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 Order no.: <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 Approval date deadline: <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 Notes: <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

2

### IT HELP DESK CALL LOG

Caller: Johann  
 Country: Denmark  
 Problem: <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Action: <sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3

### CUSTOMER SERVICES COMPLAINT FORM

Customer: Donna Fitzpatrick  
 Company: <sup>8</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 Order no.: 560H  
 Complaint: <sup>9</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Action: <sup>10</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- 3 19▶ Listen again. For each conversation, make a note of the phrases the speaker use to

- 1 make an initial request for information about the problem or situation
- 2 ask further questions to establish the facts about the problem or situation
- 3 clarify / check the facts and information
- 4 promise action
- 5 refer to time or deadlines.

»» For more exercises, go to Practice file 5 on page 110.

## Tip | by and until

Use **by** to refer to a deadline or the latest date when something must be finished.

*I need the report **by** Friday.*

Use **until** to refer to a period of time to do something in.

*We have **until** Friday to finish the report.*

**4** Work with a partner. You are going to deal with a phone call from an internal customer. Student A, turn to File 36 on page 146. Student B, use the information below. Read your information and take turns to make and receive the call. Make sure you

- request information about the problem or situation and establish the facts
- clarify the information and check that it is correct
- promise action.

**Student B**

1 You work in the Sales Department and call the Communications Department.

**Problem:** the dates for your business trip have changed.

**Further information:** you need the original flight cancelling and a new one booking; this also applies to the hotel.


**Deadline:** by next week.

2 You work in the Travel and Logistics Department and receive a call from an internal customer.

**Action to promise:** email new details as soon as you have them.

**5** Work with a partner. Decide what phrases the caller and receiver might use in these situations. Then take turns to make and receive a call.

- 1 A team leader from Operations calls Human Resources. The employment contracts for two new workers are needed by the end of the day – there's already been a delay of six weeks.
- 2 The Communications Officer from a company calls a printing company. The company magazine hasn't arrived and it is due to be sent out to employees tomorrow.

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## Practically speaking | Reassuring and sympathizing

**1** 20▶ Listen to four short conversations at work. What has happened in each situation?

**2** 20▶ Listen again. How does the first speaker ask about the situation in each conversation?

**3** Which is the best response to each situation, a or b? Why?

- 1 a Forget it.    b I know it's hard at first, but you'll soon find your feet.
- 2 a I'm sure you did the best you could.    b It sounds as if you don't care.
- 3 a You did the right thing.    b How awful!
- 4 a You couldn't have done any more.    b Oh no!

**4** 21▶ Listen and check your answers.

**5** Work with a partner. Have similar short conversations using these situations (or ones of your own). Refer to the *Useful phrases* on page 134.

- a difficult interview
- an argument with a colleague
- a long negotiation about a new company policy
- a tough presentation to a new client
- a call to a customer to say a product has been discontinued

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## Key expressions

### Requesting information

What seems to be the problem?  
How can I help (you)?  
What can I do for you (today)?

### Establishing the facts

Can / Could you tell me when ...?  
Can / Could you explain exactly what the problem is?  
Can / Could you give me ...?  
Talk me through (it / what happened).

### Clarifying / Checking facts


Let me get this straight ...  
What you're saying is ...  
You mean ...?  
If I understand you correctly, ...  
Could I just clarify what you're saying?

### Promising action

I'll look into it straightaway.  
What I'll do is ... and ...  
I'm going to have to look into this.  
I'll get back to you (shortly).  
Once I've / As soon as I've ..., I'll call you back.

### Referring to time / deadlines

by (Friday) at the latest  
by tomorrow / lunchtime / the end of the week  
in time for the deadline  
as soon as  
shortly

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» Phrasebank

## Language at work | Direct and indirect questions

**1 Match the indirect questions (a–e) from audio 19▶ to the equivalent direct questions (1–5).**

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| a Can you tell me when you sent it to us?        | 1 Why is it doing this? ____         |
| b Could you explain exactly what the problem is? | 2 How long will it take? ____        |
| c Do you know why it's doing this?               | 3 Have you got an order number? ____ |
| d Can you tell me if you've got an order number? | 4 When did you send it to us? ____   |
| e Could you let me know how long it will take?   | 5 What exactly is the problem? ____  |

**2 When might you use an indirect question rather than a direct question? How do you change a direct question into an indirect question?**

» For more information and exercises, go to **Practice file 5** on page 111.

**3 Work with a partner. Think of two direct and two indirect questions to ask for each of these situations.**

*Example:* You want to see the store manager to make a complaint, but he is out.

*When will the manager be back? / Do you know when the manager will be back?*

- A customer is calling about an ongoing complaint. You need to know which of your colleagues the customer spoke to last time.
- You are arranging a delivery for an important client. You want to know whether morning, afternoon or evening would be the most convenient time for delivery.
- A customer is very agitated and upset. You can see that something is wrong, but it is difficult to understand what she is trying to say.
- You are waiting at a station for a train that is over an hour late. You think it may have been cancelled and go to the information desk to find out.
- A customer is calling about a faulty product. It may still be under guarantee, so you need to find out how long the customer has had it.

**4 Work with a partner. Student A, turn to File 11 on page 139. Student B, use the information below. Think about what questions you need to ask to get the information you need. (Use a mix of direct and indirect questions as appropriate.)**

### Student B

- You work in a travel agency in Amsterdam. Use this information to answer your partner's questions about flights to / from New York and hotel accommodation.

10.00	Depart Amsterdam (AMS)	Tue 20 Mar	Delta 81	€980 rtn
13.25	Arrive New York (JFK)	Duration: 8 hr	Direct flight	
17.40	Depart New York (JFK)	Fri 23 Mar	Delta 80	
06.45	Arrive Amsterdam (AMS)	Duration: 8 hr 5 min	Direct flight	

### Park Central Hotel

Location: across from Carnegie Hall, one block from Broadway, two blocks from Fifth Avenue

Cost: €1,060 for three nights (accommodation only)

- You are staying at a hotel in Prague. Ask at Reception for suggestions for things to do in the city. Find out about:
  - places of interest
  - opening hours
  - cost of entrance
  - how to get there

## Tip | Using different types of question

Use indirect questions

- to open an enquiry or change to a new topic of enquiry
- to establish a level of politeness
- to ask for sensitive or complex information.

Use direct questions

- to ask follow-up questions
- to be more focused or direct
- to ask for simple factual information.

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## Dealing with customer service problems

### Background

#### Differing expectations of customer service?

CBE Brasilia supplies companies around the world with first-class coffee beans. One of its clients is Kool Kaffee, a chain of popular coffee shops, originating in Germany, but now doing business in most German-speaking countries as well as a few of its eastern European neighbours. Recently, Kool Kaffee has experienced a problem with one of its Internet orders with CBE Brasilia.

- 1 March – a bulk order of coffee beans was made.
- 2 April – delivery arrived but Premium Selection and Midnight Espresso beans were missing; there was no documentation from CBE concerning the order – only the documents on the package from the shipping company.
- Kool Kaffee called customer services immediately. They were polite and friendly but said there was no record of the order being placed. Further calls were made to customer services on 4, 10, 11 April. An email was sent 16 April.
- Kool Kaffee called again on 18 April and were told there was no record of the order or of their communication with the company since the incomplete delivery.
- CBE Accounts Department was contacted. They found a receipt and details of a delivery with the signature, 'dot.com'. However, this receipt was for the same goods but for Kool Kaffee CH – the Zurich office, which made a purchase on the same day.

### Discussion

- 1 What's your opinion of the way that CBE Brasilia dealt with the situation? Could it have dealt with the problem more effectively? Could the problem be related to the different expectations each culture has of customer service?
- 2 **22▶** Listen to José Buenadir from CBE Brasilia describe the problem and how it was resolved.
  - 1 Was this a satisfactory resolution to the problem? Why or why not?
  - 2 What lessons should the company learn from this situation?
  - 3 What changes could it make to improve its customer service?

### Task

- 1 Work with a partner. Student A, turn to File 13 on page 139. Student B, turn to File 33 on page 145. You are going to make two phone calls each: one to an internal customer and one to an external customer. Read each situation and then make and receive the calls.
- 2 Form two groups, Student As and Student Bs.
  - 1 Consider the two situations where you received the call. Which course of action did you promise your client? Turn to File 48 on page 149 and work out your score.
  - 2 Do you agree with the score and

### The Expert View

Expectations of what constitutes good customer service are always influenced to a degree by cultural values. So a disagreement between two businesses over a customer service issue may be as much about different expectations and attitudes as about the business issue itself. If one party believes they are dealing with the problem in an acceptable way, it may be difficult for them to understand why the other party is not satisfied with their response. When dealing with a customer service enquiry in an international context, it's important always to consider what outcome the other person is looking for. What are they really concerned about, and what do they expect to happen?

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## Case study

## File 11 | Unit 5

### Language at work, Exercise 4, page 34

#### Student A

- 1 You are at a travel agency enquiring about flights to / from New York and hotel accommodation for a business trip. You want to leave a.m. 20 March and return p.m. 23 March. Find out about
  - departure and arrival time of flights
  - cost of flights
  - recommended hotels
  - hotel location and cost.
- 2 You work in Reception at a hotel in Prague. Use this information to answer your partner's questions about things to do in Prague.

**The Grand Tour of Prague:** see all the most important sights of Prague (starting in the Old Town Square)

- Includes a tram ride and 'Walks of Prague' CD
- Daily at 11.00 a.m. and 2 p.m., lasts 4 hours
- Price: CZK450

**Prague Castle:** largest ancient castle in the world with several museums

- Take tram no. 22 or 23
- Open 9 a.m.–4 p.m.
- Price: entry to courtyards and gardens is free; entry to all castle museums is CZK350

**Trade Fair Palace:** Gallery of modern art – four floors of art exhibitions

Take tram 5, 12, 14, 15 or 17

Open 10 a.m.–6 p.m. from Tuesday to Sunday

Price: CZK100 to CZK250.

## File 12 | Unit 7

### Case study, Task, page 47

A management consultant was engaged to give advice, he suggested

- reviewing and, if necessary, rewriting their business plan to have available for potential investors
- looking for possible investors
- focusing on improving production in terms of price, speed and volume in order to be able to supply bulk orders
- actively looking for business partners – attend events, etc.
- focusing on marketing and PR activities.

James and Natalie followed all the advice and this resulted in

- generating investment capital – €348,000
- moving manufacturing to China – faster, cheaper and better quality
- increasing profit margin to 76% as a result of the previous decision
- ensuring the company can supply on demand
- winning an award for Young Entrepreneur of the Year.

## File 13 | Unit 5

### Case study, Task, Exercise 1, page 35

#### Student A

- 1 **Situation:** you work in Marketing and recently ordered a print advert to be placed in an international magazine. You have noticed some errors which must be corrected before the ad goes to print. Your superior is angry and wants confirmation that things can be amended asap. Call your advertising agency about the changes.  
**Problem:** misspelled name: not *Katherine* but *Katerina* / wording – change contact information to: [chocorollo@dandp.com](mailto:chocorollo@dandp.com) / ad to appear twice monthly, not weekly  
**Deadline:** by Thursday (today is Tuesday)
- 2 **Situation:** you work in Marketing in the Lisbon office. Your company is decentralized – departments are responsible for own office area and finances. You are holding an international meeting in the Barcelona office and need to reserve two meeting rooms and equipment. Call to discuss your needs.  
**Problem:** two weeks ago, you were quoted €1,000 for the rooms – is this correct? / need a quote for the use of two data projectors and videoconferencing equipment / must have room rental agreement forms and confirmation for your procurement department asap  
**Deadline:** next Wednesday (today is Thursday)
- 3 **Situation:** you work in Marketing in a French confectionery company. You're responsible for marketing events and ensuring the necessary promotion material is available for the region Europe West. You have a lot of events currently taking place so some of your material is out of stock. You receive a call from a colleague from PR in Denmark. Make a note of the problems and clarify any information that isn't clear.  
**Action:** decide which course of action you can promise.
  - a Call back later today after checking what's in stock.
  - b You need time to calculate stock and see if you can get any material back from neighbouring countries. Call back next week.
  - c You're expecting a delivery of merchandise at the end of next week. You could send some material when it arrives – it'll reach Denmark in 10–12 days and is only merchandise.
- 4 **Situation:** you run a successful translation agency, working with mostly European languages. You receive a call from a client about an urgent matter. Make a note of the problems and clarify any information that isn't clear.  
**Action:** decide which course of action you can promise.
  - a Accept the translation immediately before you've contacted the translator (specialist languages are big money and there's an added charge for short notice translations).
  - b Promise to send an offer by this afternoon and confirm if the translator has time by this evening.
  - c Promise to call back / email all details by lunchtime tomorrow.

## File 31 | Unit 15

Business communication skills, Exercise 5, page 93

### Student A

1 You are the appraisee. Discuss your personal performance over the past year with your appraiser, using this information.

Achievements / Failures	Explanation / Comments	Requests for resources / Advice
+ Presented new office procedures at Europe-wide meeting	This was my first presentation. Very nervous.	
+ Organized a regular office meeting - brought great results: more communication and cooperation in office	If management attended regularly - been even better	Ideas for ensuring management attend
- Dropped out of company English course	Stayed if teacher spoken my language	
- Turned down PA job offer	'Better' job, but not much more pay	Other chances for promotion?

2 Change roles. You are the appraiser. Conduct the appraisal interview. Comment and ask questions as appropriate to complete this form.

Achievements / Failures	Explanation / Comments	Requests for resources / Advice
+ Organized successful kick-off meeting for international salespeople - v. happy with this		<i>Offer: to get more work like this, possibly a transfer to international department?</i>
+ - Rejection of trainee mentoring scheme - extremely disappointed		<i>Could look at budget again for next year</i>
-		

## File 32 | Unit 14

Case study, Task, page 89

### Student A

The biggest problem was time-wasting. When PCR arranged teleconferences and called at the scheduled time, only half the participants had been there. PCR employees regularly had to wait 30 minutes or longer until they all turned up. Occasionally PCR employees were called and put through to teleconferences which hadn't been scheduled. They didn't want to refuse as these conferences provided an opportunity to follow up on unanswered questions, and any direct contact was very important. However, these unscheduled calls often meant the PCR employee was participating in a teleconference on the way to work and being bombarded with questions which they hadn't prepared for.

## File 33 | Unit 5

Case study, Task, Exercise 1, page 35

### Student B

1 **Situation:** you work in Graphics in an advertising agency. There are a lot of campaigns starting at the moment. You receive a call from a customer. Make a note of the problems and clarify any information that isn't clear.

**Action:** decide which course of action you can promise.

- You promise all changes can be made in time for the deadline.
- You need to check details with the magazine publishers and try to change things with them – ad has already been sent! Will get back to customer by the end of the week.
- It's too late to make any changes as the ad has been sent; the ad was sent for proofreading to your client weeks ago so it isn't really your fault.

2 **Situation:** your company is decentralized, so every department is responsible for its own office area and finances. You are the PA for Marketing and you coordinate the booking of meeting rooms, equipment, etc. and issue offers and invoices for use of the rooms by other departments. It's a busy time of year. You receive a call from a colleague in Lisbon. Make a note of the problems and clarify any information that isn't clear.

**Action:** decide which course of action you can promise.

- Check everything's free, but also check options from other departments and send new quote by the end of the week.
- Deny giving the original quote and ask for the information again in writing. You'll reply some time next week.
- Check all rooms and equipment are free and send a new quote by this afternoon.

3 **Situation:** you work in Denmark in the PR department of a confectionery company. You've been invited to a local school to talk about nutrition. Call Marketing in France.

**Problem:** none of your PR literature is suitable for children. You need

- 350 free merchandise, e.g. hats, pens, badges
- 400 free sample products – chocolate / biscuits, etc.
- 450 information folders with recipes, quizzes, etc.

**Deadline:** talk in two weeks' time

4 **Situation:** you work in a company PR Department. You have received a press release which needs to be translated into Urdu. Call your translation agency.

**Problem:** 1,000 words approx. over 5 pages – some graphs which need titles translating too / financial text – need translator who is familiar with this type of text / need an offer before work can commence

**Deadline:** by tomorrow



## File 34 | Unit 15

Case study, Task, page 95

### Maximuscle

Zef Eisenberg didn't hire an expensive PR agency to deal with the bad press. He invited journalists to the company and spoke to them – showing all the necessary certificates and documentation about his product. This led to him getting a few million pounds of free advertising through the newspaper articles and, as a result, his company took off again. The only negative effect of this was that he didn't have enough stock to cope with the demand. Maximuscle grew exponentially and Zef soon had to find a strong management team to lead the company through the fast expansion. A couple of years later, Zef decided to make his product more appealing to a wider range of consumers. He relabelled the product, making it clearer and less technical. He then did some brand advertising and finally began securing good relations with national chains.

### Innocent Drinks

One holiday weekend, they loaded up a van and took the drinks round 50 delicatessens and health shops in their local area. They gave four boxes free to the companies and told them to contact them if they sold. Forty-five of these shops called to order more. The Innocent team then went back to the distributors and gave them a box, telling them how many retail outlets had requested the product. Five years on and 10 million sales later, Innocent drinks are in shops across the country and word is spreading. But despite the overwhelming growth, until last summer, Innocent hadn't spent a penny on advertising. An effective marketing ploy is to distance itself from the big corporates and provide an alternative, 'student' image.

Innocent also gives away drinks to the homeless, plants trees, encourages recycling and donates to the third world, while its entire staff are treated to a snowboarding trip every year, awarded £2,000 for the birth of each child and invited to apply for a £1,000 scholarship to achieve something they've always wanted to do.

## File 35 | Unit 13

Case study, Task, page 83

### Student B

#### Myspace.com

Founded: 2003 Users: 100 m

What is it?: Social networking site / friend-making shop

Who started it?: Tom Anderson / Chris DeWolfe

#### Approximate statistics / facts:

- More page visits in UK than the BBC website
- Growing by 240,000 a day
- 4th most visited website in the world
- Many attractions: adverts, events and chance to upload music
- 2.2 m new music bands have used site
- 2005: website bought by media tycoon Rupert Murdoch for \$580 m

## File 36 | Unit 5

Business communication skills, Exercise 4, page 33

### Student A

- 1 You work in the Communications Department and receive a call from an internal customer.  
**Action to promise:** look into problem / call back tomorrow.
- 2 You work in the Customer Services Department and phone the Logistics Department.  
**Problem:** a customer needs its goods earlier than expected.  
**Further information:** a loyal customer has asked if their goods can be sent a week earlier – is this possible?  
**Deadline:** need to let the customer know by tomorrow afternoon at the latest.

## File 37 | Unit 3

Language at work, Exercise 4, page 22

- 1 **Student A:** You were unexpectedly called away from the office and left a list of tasks for your colleague to do. It is now 4 p.m. and you are back in the office. Ask your colleague about the tasks on the 'To do' list.  
**Student B:** Decide which two tasks you have done on the 'To do' list, when they were done and what exactly you did. Decide which two tasks you haven't done and think of an explanation why.
- 2 **Student B:** Your colleague has asked you attend a conference in Madrid on his / her behalf. This morning you gave your PA a list of things to organize for the trip. It is now 4 p.m. Ask your PA about the tasks on the 'To do' list.  
**Student A:** Decide which two tasks you have done on the 'To do' list, when they were done and what exactly you did. Decide which two tasks you haven't done and think of an explanation why.

## File 38 | Unit 10

Case study, Task, page 65

### Student B

Favour	Name of person agreeing to favour
Help me with next year's budget – I don't have much time.	
Contact the IT company to set up the internal network – I don't have time.	
Borrow your secretary until I've appointed a new one for myself.	

Favours you must refuse to do:

- Lend one person from team to move to another department – on a temporary basis.
- Give two of your offices to your colleague.
- Buy a pool of software licences.

## File 48 | Unit 5

Case study, Task, Exercise 2, page 35

### 1 (Student B)

- a 2 points. This is very generous of you but might backfire! You are also working with the magazine which may have its own deadlines – don't promise anything until you're certain you can meet your promise.
- b 6 points. Very sensible. You're giving yourself enough time to make sure everything's possible – you can always contact the client sooner if you have the information.
- c 4 points. This is quite harsh but if it's not your job to deal with the problem, pass it on to someone who can deal with it more effectively.

### 2 (Student B)

- a 6 points. You're keeping your options open – also for the client. This is a good strategy, especially if you fear your department is already booked out.
- b 2 points. Stalling your client isn't going to help anyone. If you don't have any rooms available, admit it early enough to negotiate an alternative.
- c 4 points. Very efficient – but are you certain you'll have enough time to look into this and also find alternatives if your rooms are fully booked?

### 3 (Student A)

- a 4 points. Your colleague will at least have an immediate answer but if you don't have the stock, the problem hasn't been solved. You'll probably still have to look at option b after this.
- b 6 points. You're winning yourself valuable time here and also going out of your way to help your colleague get the material they need. Very customer-oriented!
- c 2 points. Waiting until the last minute isn't going to help you or your colleague and also means you still have the problem to deal with later rather than sooner. In the meantime, surely there is something else you can do to help as the final solution won't be satisfactory for your colleague.

### 4 (Student A)

- a 2 points. This is risky, greedy and can easily backfire! Once you've accepted the translation you must find a translator; and your reputation could be compromised if you don't find a good one.
- b 6 points. You're doing exactly what the customer wants: sending an offer first. In the meantime, you can contact your translator. The company can still turn down the offer if necessary, but will respect you for your professionalism and continue working with you in other capacities.
- c 4 points. This is rather 'last minute' but will give you time to contact your most reliable translator(s). If a client wants something done by a tight deadline, they have to be willing to work to your deadlines too.

## File 49 | Unit 14

Case study, Task, page 89

### Doing business in Malaysia

**Concept of time** Predominantly Malaysia is made up of a mixture of Malays, Indians and Chinese. Which nationality you're working with determines whether deadlines and punctuality are important. Malays tend to be less strict about punctuality and deadlines than Indians and Chinese. It's important to know which nationality the decision-maker and organizer is as this will determine whether meetings are planned or just take place without prior warning, and whether appointment times are strictly kept.

**'Yes' meaning 'no'** Loss of face is an important issue in Malaysian culture. For example, when a trainer asks a group if they understand, the group will say 'yes', even if they don't. It may only be when the trainer is alone with a trainee that the trainee will ask about a point not understood. To do this in front of the group would be to lose face. Direct answers, particularly negative ones, are avoided in order to prevent disagreement and preserve harmony (two very important aspects of Malaysian culture). Therefore it often takes time to get feedback.

**Hierarchy and decision-making process** Hierarchy is extremely strong within organizations. There is normally one person at a meeting who can make the decisions and other participants are expected to give their opinions only when asked by their superior.

**Relationship building** This is an important aspect of doing business. Business relationships take time and one should not rush things. If a business partner needs longer to work through a contract or try out a product, so be it. If a contract has been signed, one shouldn't expect that to be the business finalized. There will probably be a lot of discussions and decision-making behind the scenes, which will eventually be discussed together with the new business partner.

## File 50 | Unit 10

Case study, Task, page 65

### Student D

Favour	Name of person agreeing to favour
Fly to Brussels and take part in kick-off meeting instead of me.	
Buy a pool of software licences – to save money.	
Share your department's coffee machine – budget is empty.	

Favours you must refuse to do:

- Share your department's data projector.
- Lend your secretary to your colleague.
- Give a name of a financial controller.