

Advice on business communications

(This worksheet is designed to supplement Market Leader Upper Intermediate New Edition Unit 1, but will work with any Business English lessons on “communications”)

Pick one of the situations below and ask your partners' advice (explaining your problem in more detail and with fuller sentences).

- An American boss who keeps telling you to relax
- Suddenly finding out that the gesture you have been using for the number two is rude to all your British colleagues
- A boss who only has an Elementary level in your shared languages
- Working in a French company and never knowing how to pronounce or spell people's names
- Your boss receiving complaints about your telephone manner
- Being asked to give a presentation on communication skills to this year's new recruits
- Always mixing up 15 and 50, 16 and 60 etc when people dictate numbers to you
- Being asked by your American boss “What are you looking so guilty about?” when you are not feeling guilty at all
- Rivals for promotion who are much more articulate than you
- Long and rambling emails from your boss
- Everyone saying that you are too direct or even rude, even though you followed the new company policy on succinct memos
- Your colleagues being too susceptible to persuasive salesmen and so often choosing the wrong suppliers
- Being naturally reserved but getting a new role that involves lots of networking
- Not understanding your Australian colleagues' jokes
- Latin colleagues who are happy digressing from the agenda of the meeting, which drives you nuts
- Someone on a technical support helpline who uses loads of technical jargon
- A colleague who uses abbreviations and emoticons you don't understand
- Leaving meetings without really getting what the main point was
- Being blamed for a breakdown in communication that resulted in lost business

Useful language for giving advice

You should start the presentation at the set time, even if some people still haven't arrived

If someone comes in late, **my suggestion is to** stop your presentation until they have sat down

I recommend telling people to keep all questions until the end because otherwise you will never finish your presentation

It's best to make eye contact with the audience as you speak to them

It's generally a good idea to pause after each section and check if everybody understood

I would advise you to tell as many jokes as possible to keep people interested

If there is silence from the audience, **I would suggest** asking them if everything is okay

When you want to show you are really getting serious, **my advice would be to** take off your jacket and roll up your shirt sleeves

If I were you, I'd finish at the set time even if there are still questions from the audience

If I was in your place, I'd watch people's body language carefully and be worried if people cross their arms

Whatever you do, smile all the time

You'd better wear bright colours to get everyone's attention.

If it was me, I'd sit on the edge of a desk to show your "relaxed but attentive" attitude.

If I were in your position, I'd chat with people as they come into the room before you start.

Have you thought about asking particular people to ask you a question? **That's what I would do** to get the Q and A session started.

Why don't you give the presenter a round of applause when they finish the presentation? **In my opinion,** it's the most polite thing to do.

You could try writing all measurements in metres and feet so that everyone in the audience can understand.

Make sure you aim your talk at the most important person in the room.

One idea is to write your presentation out in full and then just read it out to your audience

What do you think about the advice about presentations in the example sentences above?

What are the strongest sentences above? Would you change any of them to softer advice?

Is there any other advice you would give?