

Office Work

Learning Objectives

In this unit, you will learn how to:

- Talk on the phone
- Make & change appointments/arrangements
- Talk with associates

Background Information

General office skills may include answering phones, faxing, basic computer skills, as well as customer service skills. Effective communication concerning these skills at workplace is extremely important to smooth and efficient business operation. There are mainly two types of communication: verbal communication (such as meetings, phone calls, speech, one to one feedbacks, etc.), and non-verbal communication (such as written or printed emails, etc.). Communication at workplace should be clear, concise and specific. In addition, there should be effective use of body language at workplace. Good communication skills will help to establish a better working relationship where as poor workplace communication skills will have negative effects on business relationships and may result in decreased productivity.

Starting Up

Read the following tips and decide which are DOS (✓) and which

are DON'TS (×). Compare your answers with a partner's and explain your choices.

When you answer the phone in the office ...
<input type="checkbox"/> pick it up after the first ring
<input type="checkbox"/> pick it up after three or more rings
<input type="checkbox"/> immediately ask who is calling and what they want
<input type="checkbox"/> say your own name
<input type="checkbox"/> say your company name and/or department
<input type="checkbox"/> just say "Hello?"
<input type="checkbox"/> have a pencil and paper ready so that you can take notes
<input type="checkbox"/> try to sound friendly and helpful
<input type="checkbox"/> speak quickly so that the call is soon over
<input type="checkbox"/> speak clearly and slowly
<input type="checkbox"/> smile
<input type="checkbox"/> use the speaker phone

Oral Workshop

A. Talking on the Phone

Dialogue 1 – Asking to speak to someone

Diana is making a call to Mr. Brown of Deep Blue Office Supply.

Operator: Good morning, Deep Blue Office Supply.

Diana: This is Diana Wong from MAP Advertising. I'd like to speak to Mr. Brown, please.

Operator: Is that Michael Brown or Tony Brown?

Diana: I'm not sure. I want to talk to someone about the maintenance of laser printers.

Operator: Then you need to speak to Tony Brown. He's with After Sales Department. I'll put you through.

Diana: Thank you.

Mr. Brown: Hello, Tony Brown.

Diana: Hello, Mr. Brown. This is Diana Wong from MAP Advertising. I called last week about the laser printer.

Mr. Brown: Sorry, can you spell your name, please?

Diana: It's W-O-N-G. Diana Wong, from MAP Advertising.

Mr. Brown: Oh, yes. I remember.

Diana: We bought 5 laser printers from you two weeks ago, but one of them doesn't seem to work properly, and we also have some questions on maintenance.

So I'm calling to see whether it's possible for you to send someone to help.

Mr. Brown: All right. Would tomorrow suit you?

Diana: That'll be great. I'm in the office all day.

Mr. Brown: So I'll send over an engineer around 10:00 in the morning.

Diana: Thank you very much, Mr. Brown.

maintenance

维修, 保养

put through

接通电话

laser printer

激光打印机

Dialogue 2 – Leaving and taking messages

Peter Jackson of FBJ Marketing wants to speak to Paul Richards of BIG Supermarket.

At the first attempt, he dials the wrong number. At the second attempt, Sara Lee, Paul's secretary answers the phone.

Andy: Hello, Marketing Department. Can I help you?

Peter: Hello. May I speak to Paul Richards, please?

Andy: I'm sorry. You've got the wrong number. But he does work here. I'll try and put you through. In future his direct number is 5558770.

Peter: Didn't I dial that?

Andy: No, you rang 5558790.

Peter: Oh, sorry to have troubled you.

Andy: No problem. Hang on a moment and I'll put you through to Paul's extension.

Peter: Thanks.

Sara: Good morning, Paul Richards' office, Sara Lee speaking.

Peter: Oh, hi. This is Peter Jackson from FBJ Marketing. Could I speak to Paul, please?

Sara: I'm afraid Paul is on a training course.

Peter: Do you know when he'll be back?

Sara: I'm afraid he won't be back until tomorrow, but if it's urgent I can get a message to him this afternoon.

Peter: I'd really appreciate that. Could you tell him I called because I need to check the budget for supermarket promotion this coming weekend?

Sara: OK. You'd like to check the budget for supermarket promotion this weekend.

Peter: That's right.

Sara: I'm afraid I didn't catch your name.

Peter: It's Peter Jackson from FBJ Marketing.

Sara: Thank you, Mr. Jackson. I'll make sure he gets the message this afternoon.

Peter: Thank you very much.

Sara: You're welcome. Goodbye.

Peter: Bye.

extension	电话分机	appreciate	感谢
budget	预算	promotion	促销
catch	听清楚		

Practice

1. You are asked to call a client who you have never either talked with or met before. Speak to him/her and introduce yourself, explain the purpose of your call.
2. You are with After-Sales Department. Someone calls and asks to speak to Cathy, a sales representative in Sales Department. You either offer the caller the right extension number or help put him/her through to Cathy.
3. You ring up Mr. Blare and invite him to attend a cocktail party in honor of your newly-appointed CEO next Friday, 6:30 p.m. at Crystal Hotel. As Mr. Blare is in a meeting, you leave a message to his secretary and ask Mr. Blare to call back to confirm with you.
4. You leave a message to Mr. Cook, the sales manager of ABC Company, asking him to airmail you some samples by the end of the week.
5. Suppose you have booked a two-week holiday in Singapore. You receive a call about a change of departure date from Sunrise Holidays—a travel agency. As you are about to attend a meeting in two minutes, you arrange to call back.

sales representative	销售代表	cocktail party	鸡尾酒会
in honor of	为了向某人表示敬意		
newly-appointed	新任命的		

B. Handling Appointments/Arrangements

Dialogue 1 – Making arrangements

Robert Bush of HBC Trading is calling Tina Stone to discuss the arrangements for his trip to New York next week.

Tina: Hello, Tina Stone speaking.

Robert: Hello, this is Robert Bush from HBC Trading.

Tina: Hi, Robert, nice to hear from you. How's everything?

Robert: Great. You know, I'm planning to come to New York next week.

Tina: Really!

Robert: Yes. I'll have a meeting with a client in Boston on Tuesday next week. I was hoping we could arrange to meet up either before or after.

Tina: So you have to be in Boston on Tuesday? That's the 7th.

Robert: That's right. Now, I could stop over in New York on the way in — that would be Monday. Would that be possible?

Tina: Ah, I'm afraid I won't be in the office on Monday.

Robert: Uh-huh, well, the other possibility would be to arrange it after Boston on my way home.

Tina: When do you plan to leave Boston?

Robert: Could be either Tuesday or Wednesday morning, but I would like to catch a flight back to London on Wednesday evening.

Tina: OK. Well, it would be best for us if you could fly in on Wednesday morning. I'll be able to pick you up at the airport, and then we could show you the new trade center.

Robert: That sounds good. But do you think you could fax me an itinerary for the day that's Wednesday the 8th?

Tina: No problem.

Robert: Thank you. Then I'll see you next Wednesday. Goodbye.

stop over (中途) 短暂停留

pick up (开车) 接人

itinerary 行程, 旅行日程

Dialogue 2 – Changing an appointment

Justin Wong is calling Mr. Smith's office to change his appointment. Mr. Smith's assistant Mary answers the call.

Mary: Good morning, Mr. Smith's office. Can I help you?

Justin: Good morning. This is Justin Wong from J & J Footwear. I have an appointment with Mr. Smith at 2:30 p.m. tomorrow afternoon, but I'm sorry I can't keep our appointment because I'll be sent to attend an urgent meeting at the HQ.

Mary: Would you like to cancel it?

Justin: No. I wonder if it's convenient to put it off.

Mary: Could you hold on for a minute, Mr. Wong? I'll just look in the diary. So, when's convenient for you?

Justin: Later this week if possible. I gather he's away the following week.

Mary: Yes, that's right. He's on a business trip overseas.

Justin: I need to see him before he goes away. So would Friday afternoon, the same time be okay?

Mary: Friday afternoon ... let me see ... Sorry, but Mr. Smith won't be free until 3:00 p.m. Would 3:30 p.m. be all right?

Justin: Yes, that's fine with me. Thank you very much.

Mary: So, Mr. Wong, your appointment with Mr. Smith is rescheduled at 3:30 Friday afternoon.

keep an appointment	守约	HQ = headquarter(s)	总部
put off	推迟	gather	猜想
reschedule	将……改期; 重新安排		

Practice

1. You and your partner work in the same company but in two different departments. You would like to have a short meeting regarding work sometime next week. Call him/her to arrange a time for you two to meet either in your office or your partner's.
2. Your company is planning on a launching ceremony for a new product. Talk with your team members and work out the arrangements.
3. You have arranged to meet a colleague from one of your subsidiaries. Explain that you cannot keep the appointment, give a reason, and then suggest an alternative time.
4. You call a colleague to tell her the meeting has been put off until tomorrow, but she is not in. Leave a message to her secretary.

launch	(产品)上市	subsidiary	子公司
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C. Talks at Work

Dialogue 1 – Receiving a guest

Allan Johnson from ABC Trading comes to visit Mr. Eastwood by appointment. Tracy, the receptionist, receives the visitor at Reception, and contacts Mr. Eastwood's secretary Daisy.

Allan: Good morning.

Tracy: Good morning. Can I help you?

Allan: Yes. I have an appointment with Mr. Eastwood at 10:00 a.m.

Tracy: Mr. Eastwood from Marketing Department?

Allan: Yes.

Tracy: May I have your name please?

Allan: I'm Allan Johnson from ABC Trading.

Tracy: Thank you. Please take a seat while I'm contacting Mr. Eastwood's office for you.

Daisy: Mr. Eastwood's office.

Tracy: Hello, Daisy. This is reception. Mr. Johnson is here for his 10 o'clock appointment with Mr. Eastwood.

Daisy: Oh, yes, Tracy. Mr. Eastwood is expecting him.

Tracy: I'll send him up then.

Daisy: Thanks.

Tracy: Mr. Johnson, would you please go to Room 216 on the second floor? It's the first on your right. Mr. Eastwood is expecting you.

Allan: Room 216, second floor.

Tracy: Yes. The stairs are on the left.

Allan: Thanks a lot.

expect

等待

Dialogue 2 – Requesting and offering help

Adam and Jason are colleagues. Adam asks Jason for help.

Adam: Hi, Jason, are you very busy right now?

Jason: Not really, no.

Adam: Do you think you could help me with my computer? There seems to be a problem with my network.

Jason: Oh, it's not just with your computer. I think the entire network is down for upgrades. It should be back up in an hour.

Adam: Oh, no, that'd be too late. I need the budget documents from the company network share.

Jason: Don't worry. I have a copy of that on my computer. Do you want it now?

Adam: You do? Can I get a copy?

Jason: Sure. But I have to put it on a USB flash disk for you since the network is down.

Adam: That would be great!

Jason: Do you have one?

Adam: Er ... no, I forgot to take it off my computer after I finished last night at home.

Jason: Never mind. Use mine.

Adam: Sorry to trouble you.

Jason: Oh, that's no big case. OK, it's saving now. Here you go.

Adam: Thanks a lot. You really saved me a great deal of trouble.

Jason: No problem. I'm glad I could help.

upgrade	升级	network share	网络共享
flash disk	闪存盘		

Dialogue 3 – Giving instructions

Sandy is newly employed and does not know how to use the software. Her supervisor Jason Lewis is telling her what to do.

Jason: Hi, Sandy, how are you settling in?

Sandy: Just fine, thanks, Mr. Lewis. I really appreciate you taking the time to help me out with this software.

Jason: Sure. Now, let's get started. Could you tell me if you've worked with this program before? That will help me figure out how to proceed.

Sandy: I've done a little work with it, but not much. To be exact, I have read some books on it, but never run it myself.

Jason: Well, I think it's a good idea to have the manual at hand.

Sandy: Yes, you're right. So, what do I do now?

Jason: Just click on the button in corner. Be sure to enter the password you created. You can write it down somewhere just in case you forget. But very importantly, you need to keep it in a very safe place.

Sandy: I got it. What do I do next?

Jason: Well, what you need is to select the network you want to work with, and you're all set.

Sandy: Great. And do I just click on print icon to print out reports?

Jason: You'd better go to File-Print from the menu, just to make sure you select the right printer as we have three printers connected to different computers.

Sandy: I see. Thanks a lot. May I trouble you if I have further questions?

Jason: Sure. I'd love to help.

proceed

进行

manual

手册

icon

图标

Practice

1. You have an appointment with someone. You arrive 30 minutes earlier than the scheduled time. Talk to the receptionist and ask if it is possible to bring forward the appointment.

2. You are new to the company. Ask one of your colleagues to proofread the English report you've just finished before handing in.

3. You are expecting an EMS parcel at the entrance of your company. As you are stuck in the negotiation, ask a colleague to pick up the package for you.

4. You explain to the new staff the regulations at your company, which may include working hours, dress code, sick leave, etc.



Language Focus

Talking on the Phone

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hello, this is ... calling from• Could I speak to .., please?• I'd like to speak to ..., please.• Could you put me through to ...?• Can you give him/her this message, please?• Can I leave a message for ...?• I must have dialed the wrong number. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Could I ask who's calling, please?• Who shall I say is calling?• I'm afraid he/she is not available at the moment. Would you like to leave a message?• I'll make sure he gets the message.• Can you call back later?• Could you hold the line a moment, please?• I'm afraid you have the wrong number.• Thank you for calling. |
|---|---|

Making Appointments/Arrangements

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I'd like to make an appointment with ...• I'd like to arrange ...• Does ... suit you?• Shall we make it ...?• Did you have a time in mind?• When is the best/convenient time for you? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tuesday suits me very well.• Tuesday is fine for me.• I'm sorry but I can't make it then.• I'm afraid I'm busy then.• I prefer a meeting in the afternoon. |
|--|--|

Changing Appointments/arrangements

- Could we postpone/put off ... to ...?
- I'm sorry I can't keep our appointment because ...
- I wonder if it's convenient to change our appointment from ... to ...?
- I'm afraid we have to cancel ...because ...

Requesting Favors

- Can you spare a few minutes?
- Could you do me a favor?
- I've got a favor to ask you. Could you ...?
- Would you mind if I ...?

Offering to Help

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can I give you a hand?• Would you like a hand with ...?• Is there anything I can do for you?• Would you like me to ...?• Would you like me to help you with that?• I'd be happy to ..., if you'd like.• If there is anything I can do to help, please let me know. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes, please. Thanks a lot.• I'd appreciate that.• I can't thank you enough.• That's very nice/thoughtful of you.• No, thanks. I think I can manage that.• That's very kind of you, but I prefer to do it myself.• I think I'd prefer to do that myself because ...• Yes, I will. |
|--|---|



Extended Activities

Role-play

Task 1

Student A: You are the assistant to Ms. Baker, the General Manager. You have already

arranged a meeting for Ms. Baker to see John Miller, a consultant from S & M Management Consultancy. However, Ms. Baker has to be away on business to deal with some emergency and won't be able to keep the appointment. Phone Mr. Miller's office and cancel the appointment.

Student B: You work for S & M Management Consultancy. One of your colleagues, John Miller, is out of the office at the moment. Answer the phone for him and take a message if necessary.

Task 2

Student A: You are the general manager of Global Trading, an international company. You are to invite a world-renowned expert on project management to give some lectures to your employees. Make a phone call and extend your invitation.

Student B: You are a well-known expert on project management. You're invited to give some lectures at Global Trading, an international company. You need to decide whether to accept or decline the invitation. If you choose to accept, settle the details; otherwise, give a reason for not being able to deliver the lectures.

Task 3

Student A: You are Mr. Johnson's assistant. Answer the phone calls for your boss as he is not in the office.

Student B: You are Tony White, Managing Director of ABC Corporation. You would like to invite Mr. Johnson, President of BHP Trading Company, to attend a business banquet next Friday, 6:30 p.m. at Hilton Hotel. Ask Mr. Johnson to ring your office at 6377-5988.

Student C: You are Sara, head of Sales at The Pearls. You would like to know whether Mr. Johnson, President of BHP Trading Company, has signed the Sales Confirmation. If so, fax to 5235-6730 first, and then courier it to you.

Student D: You are Jack Jones, Development Manager at The Pearls. You are returning Mr. Johnson's call. Since you are out of town, Mr. Johnson can reach your mobile at 13389774128.

Student E: You are Bruce Lee, Director of Sales and Marketing at The Pearls. You would like to invite Mr. Johnson, President of BHP Trading Company, to visit your showroom. The latter part of next week would be best for you. You can be reached at 6230-8966, ext. 1543.

banquet

宴会

courier

快递 (文件)

showroom

商品陈列室

Task 4

Group work: Work in groups of 3~5. One of you acts as the manager of After-sales Department, one as a new employee, and the others the staff of the department. The manager shows the new employee around the office and introduces him/her to the other colleagues.

Discussion

Topic 1

What do you think is difficult about making a first-time call to a stranger?

What are the important points to consider when you have to take a message?

Topic 2

What makes a good team? Work with your group members or partners and make a list of necessary characteristics of a good team. Explain why you think these are of great importance.

Topic 3

You work as a receptionist. Someone wants to see the general manager with no prior appointment. How do you deal with the matter tactfully?

tactfully

婉转地



Related Information

Keys to Successful Workplace Communication

The following keys will help you unlock the door to successful communication not only at work, but also in all your relationships.

- Personal contact is important. People relate to one another better when they can meet in person and read each other's body language, so they can feel the energy the connection creates. If personal contact is not possible, the next best way to connect is

by talking on the telephone.

- Develop a network. No one achieves success alone. Make an effort to become friends with people in different departments within your company, meet new people in your community, and look for experiences or interests you have in common.
- Always be courteous in your communications with others. Courtesy lets people know that you care. The words “Thank You” show that you appreciate a person’s efforts. Try saying, “Would you please...” instead of just “Please...”.
- Be consistent and clear in your workplace communications. Consistency builds trust. Asking “Did I explain this clearly?” will assure that people can understand what you say.
- Compromise decreases the tension associated with conflict. Ask “What is best for the company?” so that co-workers will not take the conflict personally.
- You cannot hold a person’s interest if you have nothing interesting to say. Here are some of the ways you can learn to be an interesting communicator. Read your hometown paper daily. Read industry literatures so that you can know what is going on in your industry. Rehearse telling a few short personal stories about your interesting experiences.
- Listen to what others are saying and show interests in the conversation. Listening demonstrates respect and admiration. Make your conversation like a game of tennis and keep the ball going back and forth.

courteous 有礼貌的

compromise 妥协

tension 矛盾; 紧张气氛

Supplements for Reflections

Phone Etiquette

Courtesy is as important in speaking over the phone as in talking to people face to face.

Calling on the Phone

A person should always be certain of the number he is dialing to avoid disturbing someone unnecessarily. If you do reach a wrong number, it is important to say “I’m sorry, I dialed the wrong number.” before hanging up.

When you talk on the telephone, remember to maintain your voice quality and express yourself clearly and concisely. The person at the other end of the phone cannot see your facial expressions or gestures and the impression he receives depends on what is heard.

concisely 简洁地

Answering the Phone

The most proper way to answer a telephone is “Hello.” When the telephone is answered by someone other than the head of the office and someone says, “May I speak to Mr. X, please?” he or she should say, “Just a moment, please.” If Mr. X is unable to come to the phone, the correct reply is “Mr. X can not come to the phone now. May I have your name, and he will call you back as soon as possible?”

If you must put the telephone down during the conversation, do it gently, and when you hang up, do it gently. DO NOT slam the receiver down!!! The person at the other end may still have the phone close to his ear, and then a sudden sharp bang can be hurtful as well as rude.

Transferring a Call

Transferring calls on the phone at work is part and parcel of any business but it’s amazing how damaging bad practice in this regard can be when it comes to how outsiders perceive a company. Therefore, it’s important to practice good professional etiquette when it comes to call transfers.

Listen to the caller. One of the most important aspects of phone work is to listen to what the caller is saying and that means not interrupting. Sometimes you may instinctively know within a matter of a few seconds that you’re going to need to transfer the call to somebody else, but don’t be tempted to interrupt — hear the caller out.

Check that the person you’re going to transfer to is available. The caller might have been waiting in a queuing system for quite some time before being transferred; therefore, if you need to transfer the call, make sure that the person you’re going to put through to is available.

It is good etiquette to ask the caller first if it’s OK to put them on hold to check if the person’s available. If they agree, make sure you come back to the caller at least every minute telling them that you’re trying to connect them and whether they would mind continuing to hold. If the caller decides not to hold any longer, give them the name and the number of the person they should ask for when they call back.

perceive 注意到

etiquette 礼仪

instinctively 本能地；凭直觉地

Common Telephone Courtesy Hints

Make sure of the correct number so as not to risk disturbing strangers.

Make sure that your conversations with busy people are as brief as possible.

Time your calls so as not to interfere with the work schedule of those you call.

Make business calls well before the close of the office hours.

When the number you are calling is not answered quickly, wait long enough for someone to put aside what he or she is doing. It is very annoying to have been disturbed just to pick up the telephone and find the caller has hung up.

When transferring calls, phrases such as “I’m putting you through to...” or “I’m going to connect you to...” are far better than saying “I’m going to transfer you to...” as the latter often causes anxiety amongst callers who sometimes feel as though they could be accidentally cut off at this point.

put aside 忽视；忘记

Questions

- What are inappropriate times to make business calls?
- What are some commonly-found bad phone habits? What else do you find in mobile phone calls?
- Suppose a caller has been put through to several persons who have not been able to assist and the caller does not wish to be transferred anymore. In situations like these, what do you do?