

4

- A Excellent, I'll email you with the details. Would you be interested in any of our other services?
- B I look forward to seeing you on Tuesday, then.
- C Can I just check the spelling of that?

## Get speaking



1

You are the customer relations manager for Marlow Construction. Look at two of your diary entries for next week and then make the phone calls to confirm your appointments. Play the audio CD to start. When you hear the beep, pause and respond.

Wednesday 10 a.m. *Giovanni Fabro, 40 Findon Street – discuss Westdene Hospital building contract*

Thursday 3 p.m. *Joy Lee, 20 South Road – update on Queen's Hotel building project*

### The call to Giovanni

- 1 Greet him, say who you are and where you work, and ask how he is.
- 2 Respond to Mr Fabro's question and explain the reason for your call.
- 3 Check that you have the correct address.
- 4 Ask him to spell it for you and make notes accordingly.
- 5 Thank him and end the call politely.

### The call to Joy

- 6 Greet her, say who you are and where you work, and ask how she is.
- 7 Respond to Ms Lee's question and explain the reason for your call.
- 8 Respond appropriately and suggest an alternative time to meet.
- 9 Respond appropriately and end the call politely.



2

Think about your workplace. You have a meeting booked on Monday at 4 p.m. with Valerie Auguste. Play the audio CD to start. When you hear the beep, pause and respond. Remember to be flexible, suggesting an alternative time or a telephone conference where appropriate. You start.

### Cultural note

When making or receiving a business call, you may be expected to engage in some small talk at the beginning of the conversation. Look again at Robbie Taylor's two conversations to see how he makes his telephone partners feel at ease by using the phrase *How are you?* The answer should be brief and positive (even if this is not, in fact, the case), for example, *Very well.* or *I'm fine, thank you.* You may wish to reciprocate by asking, *And you?*

# 7

## Making a complaint on the telephone

*I'm afraid I need to make a complaint.*

### USEFUL TIPS: When making a complaint, keep the following points in mind:

- Make sure you are speaking to the person who is in a position to help you. Ask questions to check who exactly you are talking to and take notes.
- Stay as unemotional as possible. Blaming the person you are calling will not help. Separate the problem from the person. Be firm, but polite.
- State the problem clearly and calmly. Include as much relevant detail as possible, including names, times, places, previous contacts, and so on.
- State exactly what you want the person you are calling to do.
- Check when you can expect results/feedback from the person you are speaking to.

### Conversation



#### Andrea King is phoning Alpine Executive Events to make a complaint.

Receptionist: Alpine Executive Events Ltd, London. Priti Makesch speaking. How can I help you?

Andrea K: Good morning, my name is Andrea King. I'm the HR manager for Carabella Hotels. **Could I speak to your supervisor, please?**

R: Can I ask what it's regarding?

AK: **I need to make a complaint.**

R: I'll just put you through to Mr Mendip. One moment, please.

George M: Good morning, Ms King. How can I help?

AK: Good morning. **Could you tell me your name and position, please?**

GM: Of course, my name's George Mendip and I'm responsible for customer relations.

AK: Thank you, Mr Mendip. **I'll just make a note of that.** I hope you can help me. I'm currently attending your team-building training course in Wales with a team of our managers.

GM: The 'Big T' course. Very popular.

AK: Well, **I'm afraid I'm not satisfied with** the performance of your trainer, David Llewellyn.

GM: Oh dear. What seems to be the problem?

AK: He's very unhelpful and doesn't explain himself properly.

GM: How do you mean?

AK: Well, he talks extremely fast and makes all the instructions very complicated. And if you ask him a question, he just says he's already explained it. I tried to talk to him about the problem, but he didn't take me seriously at all. The situation is entirely unsatisfactory.

GM: I see... Well, I'm sorry to hear that, but I'm not sure what I can do.



AK: **I'd like you to** telephone Mr Llewellyn immediately and explain that we want much clearer explanations and support for tomorrow's tasks.

GM: Well, OK, I could give him a ring.

AK: And **could you let me know when you have** spoken to him, please?

GM: Yes, I will.

AK: **When will you get back to me?** Do you have my number?

GM: I think so... Yes, I do. I'll get back to you by, um, the end of today.

AK: Many thanks. I really appreciate your help on this.

GM: Not at all.

## Understanding

Match the following strategies to the corresponding sentences from the telephone conversation.

Confirm when your expectations will be met.

Make sure you're speaking to the person who can help you.

Set out your expectations to solve the problem.

State your complaint.

Strategy	Sentences from the telephone conversation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could I speak to your supervisor, please?</li> <li>• Could you tell me your name and position, please? I'll just make a note of that.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I need to make a complaint.</li> <li>• I'm afraid I'm not satisfied with...</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'd like you to...</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could you let me know when you have... ?</li> <li>• When will you get back to me?</li> </ul>

## Saying it accurately

**1** Unscramble the words to form sentences to use when making a complaint.

1 this product / satisfied / I'm sorry / with / not / to / I'm / that / say

.....

2 appears / this product / with / problem / There / to / a / be

.....

3 not / all / this service / I'm / with / at / happy

.....

- 4 seem / concerns / to / regarding / There / be / some / this / product  
..... ?
- 5 replace / Please / you / could / it  
..... ?
- 6 today / ensure / you / replacement / that / sent / the / Would / is  
..... ?
- 7 email / me / sent / when / Would / has been / be / to / able / you / it  
..... ?
- 8 can / you / expect / I / When / hear / to / from  
..... ?

**2 Underline adjectives that might be useful for making a complaint and describing a product or service.**

damaged	poor	so-so	unsatisfactory
defective	passable	indifferent	unsuitable
delayed	high quality	unacceptable	
disappointing	inadequate	unprofessional	
tolerable	mediocre	unreasonable	

**3 Rank these adverbs according to how forceful they make a complaint.**

*The situation is **entirely** unsatisfactory.* (forceful)

*The situation is **somewhat** unsatisfactory.* (not so forceful)

absolutely	quite	somewhat	entirely
altogether	rather	totally	
considerably	slightly	utterly	
extremely	completely	very	

**4 Using the prompts, make complaints and set out your expectations as to how each problem can be resolved. Follow the example.**

conference venue (forceful complaint)

*I'm not at all happy with the conference venue because it's **entirely inadequate** for our needs. **Please could you** find an alternative venue right away?*

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1 latest sales figures (not so forceful) | 4 accounts system (not so forceful) |
| 2 latest delivery (forceful)             | 5 new catering company (forceful)   |
| 3 budget for the new project (forceful)  |                                     |

## Saying it clearly



**1 Listen to these forceful complaints, noting the syllable stress.**

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1 It's <u>absolutely</u> unacceptable.   | 4 It's <u>entirely</u> unsuitable.    |
| 2 It's <u>altogether</u> unreasonable.   | 5 It's <u>utterly</u> inadequate.     |
| 3 It's <u>completely</u> unprofessional. | 6 It's <u>totally</u> unsatisfactory. |

- 2** Listen again to the sentences and repeat them.

## Saying it appropriately



- 1** It's very important that you remain calm when making a complaint. Do not blame the person you are speaking to. Listen to the following speakers and decide whether their complaints are phrased appropriately or inappropriately.

speaker 1	appropriately	inappropriately
speaker 2	appropriately	inappropriately
speaker 3	appropriately	inappropriately
speaker 4	appropriately	inappropriately
speaker 5	appropriately	inappropriately



- 2** Listen to the complaints, now phrased appropriately, and repeat them.

## Get speaking



You are the CEO of a small firm, Rickmans and Co., and you have been badly let down by your IT support company, Lettermans International, so you telephone to complain. First, read about the problem and your proposed solution. Then play the audio CD to start. When you hear the beep, pause and respond.

### The problem

Lettermans have recently installed new IT systems, which your employees are finding very difficult to master because they received insufficient training. Also, Lettermans agreed to provide a 24-hour support line and this has proved unreliable.

### Your proposed solution

You would like Lettermans to provide additional training for employees and ensure that their support line is staffed 24 hours a day, as agreed.

- 1 Explain who you are, where you work, and whom you would like to speak to.
- 2 Explain the reason for your call.
- 3 Ask for the speaker's name and position.
- 4 Make a point of writing down her name and say that you hope that she can help.
- 5 Explain the exact nature of your complaint, using an introductory phrase and a suitable adjective and adverb.
- 6 Explain how she can improve the situation.
- 7 Ask her to let you know when the problem has been addressed.
- 8 Check when this will be.
- 9 Thank her for her help.

# 8

## Dealing with a complaint on the telephone

*Oh dear, I'm sorry to hear that.*

### USEFUL TIPS: When dealing with a complaint, keep the following points in mind:

- Let the caller express their complaint. Don't interrupt, but try to get all the details. Take notes.
- Once they have finished complaining, summarize the complaint, clarify any unclear details and show empathy.
- Apologize. Do not try to make excuses but provide an explanation if the customer requests one.
- State what you are going to do to resolve the situation.
- Tell the customer when they can expect results/feedback.
- Stay calm with the customer at all times. Separate the problem from the person.

### Conversation



**Tony Hopps is phoning Kelly Masterman at Argonaut Mediterranean Cruises to make a complaint.**

Kelly M: Argonaut Mediterranean Cruises Ltd.

Tony H: Ah, this is Tony Hopps here. Is that Kelly Masterman, the general manager?

KM: Speaking.

TH: Ah, right. Well, you listen here, Ms Masterman. I've just arrived home from one of your eastern Mediterranean cruise ships – Queen of the Waves – and I'm not at all happy. I've got a whole list of complaints.

KM: **Oh dear, I'm sorry to hear that.** Let me just get a pen and I'll note them down. Right, **can you give me the details?**

TH: Well, first of all, we booked an expensive cabin on the outside of the ship. But there was a problem with that cabin and there were no others available on the outside. So we had to have one in the middle of the ship and my wife spent three days feeling really seasick. Then, for the buffet lunch, it was supposed to be an all-you-can-eat buffet, but when we got there at 2 p.m. we found that there were only a few bits of cheese and salad left for us. And then, in the programme for Saturday evening, it said there was a fancy-dress party. So we dressed up, but we found that everybody else was just in jeans and T-shirts. It was so embarrassing!

KM: Oh, **you must have felt terrible!**

TH: Yes, we did. And finally, I sent my costume to the ship's laundry to be cleaned and it got lost. That really was the last straw!

KM: **So, let me just recap.** In a nutshell, you didn't get the cabin you ordered, the buffet lunch was finished by the time you got there, the fancy-dress party listed in the programme didn't take place, and your costume was lost.

TH: That's right.

KM: Well, first of all, we're not going to try to pass the buck here, so **we would like to apologize to you for** these problems. This is what I propose: I'm going to call the ship and see if I can find out what was going on. Can I call you back in 20 minutes?

TH: Um... yes, that's fine. Do you have my number? It's...

TH: Tony Hopps speaking.

KM: Hello, Mr Hopps. It's Kelly Masterman here. I spoke to the ship's first officer. It seems that the porthole in your cabin was broken by the previous passenger and water was coming in. But he apologized for not explaining what the problem was to you. **I'm afraid we can't refund the** whole cost of the trip, but we can refund you the extra cost for the cabin that you didn't have.

TH: Hmm, that doesn't seem much. And my fancy-dress costume?

KM: On our website you can find a document for insurance claims. Send in the form and **we'll deal with that within a week**. But, as I said, **we are really very sorry for these difficulties**. So, **we would like to offer you a** 10 per cent discount the next time you book an Argonaut holiday **as compensation for** the problems you had. Is that acceptable to you, Mr Hopps?

TH: Well, er, yes, I think that sounds reasonable.

## Understanding

Kelly Masterman took some notes during her phone call with Tony Hopps. Complete her notes.

### *Tony Hopps – Queen of the Waves*

#### Complaints:

- *cabin problems:* .....
- .....
- *buffet lunch:* .....
- .....
- *programme changes:* .....
- .....
- *laundry:* .....
- .....

#### Proposed action:

- *refund:* .....
- .....
- *insurance claim:* .....
- .....
- *discount:* .....
- .....

## Saying it accurately

**1** Match the two halves of the sentences, following the example.

- |   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| 1 | Could you bear with me for 10 minutes... | A | ...gets done by the end of the week.                  |
| 2 | I'm terribly sorry for the...            | B | ...for our part in this.                              |
| 3 | I can imagine...                         | C | ...problems that you're experiencing.                 |
| 4 | I propose that...                        | D | ...have been dreadful.                                |
| 5 | I'll make sure that it...                | E | ...we offer you some sort of compensation.            |
| 6 | That must...                             | F | ...exactly what happened?                             |
| 7 | Could you tell me...                     | G | ...while I get to the bottom of what went wrong here? |
| 8 | I do apologize...                        | H | ...that was terrible.                                 |

**2** Put the sentences from *Saying it accurately 1* in the correct category, as shown in the example.

To show regret/empathy ..... .....
To find out what the problem is 1G ..... .....
To apologize ..... .....
To propose a solution/to promise action ..... ..... ..... .....

**3** Read the telephone conversation again. Find more sentences to add to each of the categories in *Saying it accurately 2*.

## Saying it clearly



**1** Listen to these sentences, noting how the key words are stressed to make the speaker's meaning and intention clear.

- 1 I'm terribly sorry for the problems that you're experiencing.
- 2 I propose that we offer you some sort of compensation.
- 3 I'll make sure that it gets done by the end of the week.
- 4 I do apologize for our part in this.



**2** Listen again to the sentences and repeat them.

## Saying it appropriately



**1** Listen to two versions of this extract from a telephone call and answer the questions.

Oh dear, I'm sorry to hear that. Let me just get a pen and I'll note them down. Right, can you give me the details?

1 Which version is more effective, the first or the second version?

2 Which words describe the most effective version?

A concerned

B distracted

C annoyed

D apologetic

E polite

F bored



**2** Listen to the sentences from *Saying it accurately 1* and repeat them, copying the appropriate tone.

## Get speaking



**1** Listen to four speakers making complaints. Respond to them, using expressions from *Saying it accurately 1* and *2*. Play the audio CD to start. When you hear the beep, pause and respond.



**2** You run a catering company, Simply Delicious Food. Your telephone is ringing and complaints are coming in. Play the audio CD to start. When you hear the beep, pause and respond.

1 Express regret that there's a problem and find out exactly what the person is unhappy about.

2 Express empathy for the problem.

3 Summarize the problem for them.

4 Apologize for the problem and promise that you will take action on the points raised.

5 Propose a solution and check that this is acceptable for your client.

6 Propose a more substantial solution and check that this is acceptable.

7 Respond to the request and finish the call politely.

**3** Think about your workplace. What kinds of complaints do you deal with on a regular basis? How would you respond to them, using at least one phrase from this unit?

# 9

## Running a face-to-face meeting

*So, let's get started.*

### USEFUL TIPS:

- Go through the agenda at the start of the meeting and check no items are missing.
- Ensure good timekeeping during the meeting, making sure that participants stick to the agenda and don't get sidetracked.
- Control the discussion, making sure all participants contribute where relevant and that no one person dominates the whole meeting.
- Summarize key decisions at the end of each agenda point.

### Conversation



**Janette is having a meeting with her team – Fabian, Lucy, and Tony – to discuss the rollout of a software program.**

Janette: Everybody is here now. **So, let's get started.** Now, we're here to discuss the rollout of the new SAP customer relationship program. You are the people who'll have to implement it and we need to decide what you need for the rollout. **So, let's look at point number one on the agenda: resources. Fabian, would you like to start?**

Fabian: Right, at the moment there's a shortage of human resources to...

J: ...so by the time everyone has finished the training course, we should be OK. **So, to sum up point number one,** we've agreed that Lucy will arrange training sessions for the rollout team together with SAP and I'll talk to Human Resources about finding more SAP specialists.

Lucy: Thanks.

J: Good. **Let's move onto the next point: budget. Tony, that's your field.**

Tony: Well, I'm afraid that we have a very limited budget for this project, which means that we really have to be imaginative about how we allocate resources...

F: ...Does that mean training will be cut? Because look at the problems we had last year with the database. I spoke to Billy West in the data centre and he said that there was a problem with the —

J: **Can I stop you there, Fabian? Let's not get sidetracked.** Let Tony tell us what exactly is planned and then we can...

J: ...the meeting has been very useful. We all have our action points to deal with and we know the next steps. **How does everybody feel about that?**

T, L, and F: Fine. OK. Good.

J: Great! **So, that wraps up everything for today.** Thanks very much for all your ideas. Anybody want to go to lunch?