

- 3 John: I could even throw in free delivery.
 A Jean: Not interested.
 B Jean: I'm really sorry, but that's not going to work.
- 4 John: Oh, come on... This isn't an offer that comes along every day.
 A Jean: I'm sorry, but it's out of the question.
 B Jean: Look, I've already said no, haven't I?



? When saying no politely, you need to sound sincere. Listen to the following speakers and decide who is using an appropriate tone.

speaker 1	sincere	insincere
speaker 2	sincere	insincere
speaker 3	sincere	insincere
speaker 4	sincere	insincere
speaker 5	sincere	insincere



? Listen to the sentences, this time said in an appropriate tone, and repeat them.

Get speaking



1 You are speaking to a sales representative at a trade fair. Play the audio CD to start. When you hear the beep, pause and respond suitably.

- 1 Say no politely and explain that you don't have the budget to purchase additional software this year.
- 2 Say no politely and explain that you can't change company budgeting policy.
- 3 Say no strongly but politely and say goodbye.



2 You are speaking to another sales representative. Play the audio CD to start. When you hear the beep, pause and respond, saying say no politely to all her suggestions. Try to use all three strategies outlined in *Useful tips*.

Cultural note

Saying no comes more easily to business people in some cultures than in others, for example in Northern Europe where people tend to be direct. To some ears though, this directness may sound rude.

In contrast, in some countries people rarely say no, so a 'maybe' is commonly interpreted as a no. Elsewhere in the world though, a 'maybe' constitutes a real possibility of a 'yes'. This can lead to a breakdown in communications between business partners and waste a lot of time unnecessarily.

So, always try to be clear about your intentions, but remain polite at all times.

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The successful job interviewer

What makes you suitable for this job, do you think?

USEFUL TIPS: When interviewing for a job, there are four main areas to ask about:

- work history
- personality
- suitability for the company and the specific job
- goals and ambitions.

Note that it is not appropriate to ask the candidate questions about race, age, marital status, or sexual preferences. These questions are potentially discriminatory.

Conversation



Mansha Khan is attending an interview for a sales position.

Chris H: ...and so your online résumé was very interesting and that's why we asked you to come for an interview. I'm responsible for all human resources issues here at Bergerbild and my colleague here, Georgina Harris, is head of the sales department, which is where we currently have a position free.

Georgina H: Hello, nice to meet you.

Mansha K: Hi, nice to meet you too.

CH: Fine. So Mr Khan, **what do you know about our company?**

MK: A lot! You're involved in big overseas infrastructure projects in South-East Asia, for example, and among other things you are currently bidding for...

CH: ...and the Kuching metro project was very successful. But coming back to you, Mr Khan, **what do you feel has been your biggest achievement to date?**

MK: Well, I introduced a new process for prioritizing customer visiting schedules for our department and in six months, we managed to increase sales by about 22 per cent. My manager was very pleased!

CH: Hmm, I can understand why. So, **why would you like to leave your current job?**

MK: Well, the sales position that you are offering would give me opportunities to work internationally. At the moment I'm just based in Seattle.

GH: I see. But **what makes you suitable for this job, do you think?**

MK: I've been very successful so far in sales and I think that I can offer a good service to your customers.

CH: Interesting point. **What is good customer service, in your view?**

MK: Definitely the most important skill is the ability to listen to what...
...but of course learning is a never-ending process for anybody in business.

GH: Very true. Now, **what are your weaknesses, would you say?**

MK: Well, my mom criticizes my untidiness around the house, but I guess you don't mean that. Hmm, I suppose I'm not very good at making sure all the paperwork involved in sales is completed quickly. You know, I prefer to be out there, going on to the next customer. But of course, I know it has to be done. I'm trying to improve.

GH: Well, you are quite young, aren't you?

MK: I'm 26.

CH: Right. Now, **what are your goals for the next five years?**

MK: I hope that I can also take on responsibility for organizing other salespeople in the future. I see myself in a management position when I have more experience and can share that experience with other salespeople.

GH: OK. Now, **what are your salary expectations?** For this sales position, I mean?

MK: Well, I'm sure that a mixture of...

Understanding

1 Look again at the four interview areas outlined in *Useful tips*. Write them alongside the corresponding questions from the interview.

- work history
- personality
- suitability for company and role
- goals and ambitions

To find out about the candidate's:	Questions from dialogue
	• What are your weaknesses, would you say?
	• What are your goals for the next five years?
	• What do you feel has been your biggest achievement to date? • Why would you like to leave your current job?
	• What do you know about our company? • What makes you suitable for this job, do you think? • What is good customer service, in your view?

2 The interviewers say one potentially inappropriate thing. What is it?

Saying it accurately

1 Complete the sentences with a word from the box.

challenges	rewarding	see	hire	current
yourself	independently	situation	greatest	right

- 1 Why should I you for this job?
- 2 Do you prefer to work or as part of a team?

- 3 Tell me a bit about
- 4 Tell me about a where you worked well under pressure.
- 5 What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- 6 What has been most about your current job?
- 7 What major have you faced in your current role? How have you handled them?
- 8 What's your salary?
- 9 Where do you yourself in five years?
- 10 Why do you think that you're for this job?

2 Complete the conversation with questions from *Understanding 1* and *Saying it accurately 1*. In places, more than one answer may be correct.

- Mary: (1)
- Yiannis: Well, I think that I'd be suitable for the position because I've had lots of relevant experience in my previous roles. Also, I think I'd be a good fit for the company.
- M: (2)
- Y: Quite a bit. I know that it's the second largest advertising company in the country and that you employ over 500 staff.
- M: That's right. Now, tell me a bit about yourself.
(3)
- Y: Hmm, interesting question. Well, I'm very hard-working and incredibly creative, as you can see from my portfolio. But, on the downside, I'm also a bit of a perfectionist, so I find it hard to let go of a project sometimes. But I'm working on that!
- M: OK. And (4)
- Y: That would have to be when an advertisement that my team developed was nominated for Best Local Ad of the Year. It was great to get some acknowledgement for all our hard work.
- M: Uh-huh. (5)
- Y: Well, I've enjoyed working for a small company and learned a lot, but I'd really like the opportunities that are offered by working for a large company, for example, the chance to pitch to big clients.
- M: Right, so (6)
- Y: I'd like to be working as a senior advertising executive with a number of great campaigns under my belt.



3 Listen to the conversation from *Saying it accurately 2* to check your answers. Remember that in places, more than one answer may be correct.

Saying it clearly



- 1** Listen to these questions, noting how the underlined syllables are stressed.

- 1 What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- 2 Why would you like to leave your current job?
- 3 Why do you think that you're right for this job?
- 4 What are your goals for the next five years?

- 2** Listen again to the questions in *Saying it clearly 1* and repeat them.

Saying it appropriately

- 1** It is very important that you only ask questions that are appropriate and professional. Tick the questions that would be appropriate in an interview.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Tell me about your typical working day. | 6 Are you older than 40? |
| 2 What's your star sign? | 7 How would your friends describe you? |
| 3 Do you go to church? | 8 Are you a Hindu? |
| 4 What is your greatest weakness? | 9 Do you come from China originally? |
| 5 Are you single? | 10 What's your greatest achievement to date? |



- 2** Listen to the seven interview questions from *Understanding 1* and repeat them, copying the speaker's interested and enthusiastic tone.

Get speaking



You are interviewing someone for the position of assistant. Play the audio CD and follow the cues. You start.

- 1 Welcome the candidate and ask him about his suitability for this position.
- 2 Respond in an encouraging manner and then ask about his strengths and weaknesses.
- 3 Respond in an encouraging manner and ask him to give you an example of when he multitasked in his current job.
- 4 Respond in an encouraging manner and ask him about his reasons for leaving his current role.
- 5 Respond in an encouraging manner and ask him about his goals and ambitions for the next five years.
- 6 Respond in an encouraging manner and end the interview.

Would you consider employing this person for the job? Why/Why not?

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The successful interview candidate

So, tell me about yourself.

USEFUL TIPS:

- Answer questions fully. Avoid very short answers.
- Be sure about the details on your *résumé*, and be prepared to talk about your achievements and experience in depth.
- Research the background of the company or organization.
- Listen carefully to the questions you are asked. Answer them with relevant information.

Interviews



Karl Everett from Bergerbild is interviewing people for different positions in the European sales team.

1

Karl: **I see from your *résumé*** that you have web design experience as well as in sales.

Candidate 1: Yes, that's right.

K: Hmm. That could be interesting for the development of our Internet presence in Europe. Our website is very US-oriented at the moment.

C1: Well, it's something I really enjoy doing. In my current job I was part of a team that did a redesign of the company website and I learned a lot.

K: What software can you work with?

C1: Well, I can use Dreamweaver, which is the classic web design tool of course, but I've also got experience of using...

2

K: So, **do you think you can make a useful contribution** to this company?

Candidate 2: Oh, yes.

K: I see.

C2: Yes.

K: Is your previous experience suitable for this position?

C2: Hmm. Yes. Yes, definitely.

K: And you don't think it would be difficult moving into a management position?

C2: No, I don't think so.

K: Really?

C2: No, not at all.

K: Right.



3

K: Perhaps you could tell me, **what do you know about this company?**

Candidate 3: Well, I know you have been very active in India over the last five years with the Mumbai City Transit System. What was it now? A two billion-dollar contract to provide not only the trains but also all the electronic equipment for the system, I think.

K: Yes, quite a difficult project. We had a lot of trouble with subcontractors.

C3: Yes, I understand it was very challenging. But in the end the project was completed on time and within budget. So you must have been pleased with the final result.

K: That's true and, of course, it is an excellent reference project for us...

4

K: Now, could you tell me, **what are your greatest strengths and weaknesses**, in your opinion?

Candidate 4: Hmm, that's an interesting question. Well, I think my greatest strength is that I never give up. In my experience, in order to win a customer you just have to really go on and on looking for a way to give them what they want and then you get the sale.

K: True. And what about weaknesses?

C4: Well, I need to improve my team player skills. Like many salespeople I don't like sharing customer information with other salespeople, but sometimes it makes the customer angry when he or she gets a visit from two different salespeople with different products from the same company. So, I realize it's necessary to share information, but it isn't easy for me to put this into practice.

K: Right. Well, here at Bergerbild, teamwork is very important.

C4: Yes, yes, I agree. I'm just telling you what I think is my greatest weakness. And I'm working on it.

5

K: So, perhaps you could tell me, **what has been your biggest achievement to date?**

Candidate 5: Oh well, I took part in this quiz competition a few years ago when I was at university. I was the head of the team and we got to the final of the national tournament. And we only just missed out on the top prize. So, there we were in the final round and the other team came from Cambridge —

K: Sorry, I meant more in the way of —

C5: and we both had eighteen points each and the question came up 'What are the main tributaries of the Volga?' Now I knew that.

K: I meant what was your biggest achievement at work?

C5: Oh, sorry, yes. Um, well, in my current job we have a team which takes part in quiz competitions in pubs and last year we got to the finals. There we were, facing a team from a pub in Cambridge when...

Understanding

Answer these questions about the five candidates.

Candidate	Would you hire this candidate?	Why/Why not?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Saying it accurately

1 Match the interview questions with the appropriate strategies to answer them.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 So, could you tell me about yourself? | A Always answer this question with a 'yes' and back it up with examples of times where you have demonstrated your ability to work as part of a team. |
| 2 Why do you want this job? | B Answer by emphasizing the positive aspects of your character that other people may have noticed. |
| 3 How would your colleagues describe you? | C Answer to show that you are ambitious but not overly ambitious. Make sure that your answer implies that you envisage that you will still be working for the target company five years from now. |
| 4 How do you cope with working under pressure? | D Answer with care. If you say you have no weaknesses, then you are clearly lying. But, don't choose anything too serious that will make the interviewer lose interest in you. Instead, mention a small weakness, relevant to your work, which you are trying to improve. |
| 5 What is your greatest strength? | E Don't give your life story. Simply give relevant facts relating to your education and work experience. |
| 6 What's your greatest weakness? | F Explain how the target position relates to your own experience, personality, and goals. |
| 7 Are you a team player? | G Make sure that you choose a strength that is relevant to a work situation. |
| 8 Where do you see yourself in five years' time? | H Emphasize the positive aspects of your character that might emerge in a pressurized situation. |

2 Tick the words you might use to describe your strengths during an interview.

conscientious
creative
dependable
determined
diplomatic
enthusiastic
experienced
fair

logical
loyal
methodical
motivated
practical
reliable
resourceful
trustworthy

Saying it clearly



- 1** Listen to the adjectives from *Saying it accurately 2*. Underline the syllable stress, following the example.
- 2** Listen again to the adjectives from *Saying it accurately 2* and repeat them.

Saying it appropriately



Listen to the audio CD. Decide in each case which candidate gives the most appropriate response to the question.

question 1	candidate 1	candidate 2
question 2	candidate 1	candidate 2
question 3	candidate 1	candidate 2
question 4	candidate 1	candidate 2
question 5	candidate 1	candidate 2
question 6	candidate 1	candidate 2
question 7	candidate 1	candidate 2
question 8	candidate 1	candidate 2

Get speaking



- 1** Think of your own line of work and the kind of interview you might attend. Play the audio CD to start. When you hear the beep, pause and respond suitably.
- 2** Write another five questions you might be asked at an interview. Then practise answering them. Record yourself for review, if possible.

Cultural note

There are non-verbal ways of making a good impression in an interview. Always dress appropriately. In most lines of business, conservative dress is the safest option. Remember to use appropriate body language. Greet your interviewers with a smile and a firm handshake (where appropriate) and, if you're being interviewed by a panel of people, try to make eye contact with all of them as you answer the questions.

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Carrying out performance reviews

How do you feel about your performance this year?

USEFUL TIPS: The purpose of the performance review is for the line manager to review what the employee does, evaluate how well they perform, and discuss objectives for the next year.

The line manager should:

- discuss the scope of the job, for example the job description, the employee's responsibilities, and any changes to them.
- find out the employee's opinion of their performance, and then present their own assessment supported by evidence.
- set SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timed – objectives for the coming year.

Conversation



Caterina Black, a senior manager at Chesham Pharmaceuticals, is giving one of her team leaders, Edward Ward, his annual performance review.

- Caterina: So, first of all, I'd like to check if we're on the same page regarding your responsibilities. You supervise the sales staff for the whole south-eastern region, you're a member of the European sales committee, and you coordinate the cooperation between the production team and marketing. **Have I missed anything?**
- Edward: Don't forget, I'm captain of the company's basketball team as well!
- C: Of course not! Especially after you won the Intercompany Cup in April. **Would you like to add anything else?**
- E: No, I think that's covered pretty much everything.
- C: Good. So, **how do you feel about your performance this year?**
- E: Well, quite good. I hit all my sales targets we set in last year's review.
- C: Yes, that's true. **My impression is that** you enjoy that part of your work most.
- E: Hmm, well that is my main responsibility.
- C: Quite right. However, working together with the production department is very important and **I've observed that** the cooperation between marketing and production hasn't really improved. We still seem to have the same problems that we had last year.
- E: I'm not quite sure what you mean.
- C: Production still complains about lack of advance information from us.
- E: Well, they are just so inflexible.
- C: I quite agree. But the bottom line is, we have to work together. So, **I would like you to establish a** job rotation scheme. I want two salespeople to spend six months in production and two people from production to replace them in our sales team. That way, both departments will get a better idea of what needs to be done.
- E: Oh... but they won't know any of our customers!
- C: Well, you'll have to train them. **I expect you to organize this by** the end of the month.