

## 2 Making arrangements



- 1 Listen to the recording. Two colleagues, Bob and Lara, need to meet because a third colleague, Leon, has resigned. As you listen, write the details of the appointment they make in Bob's diary.

**March**

14 Monday  
*Visit GAP installation*

15 Tuesday  
*FAX report Tuesday evening to 081 299 225*

16 Wednesday  
*Ravesi 10:30*

17 Thursday  
*Meeting R4 16:00*

18 Friday  
*14:00 phone Cresson*





- 2 Here Vladimir Kramnik from Moscow calls Joanna Hannam of Swallow Exports Ltd., in London. He wants an appointment with Ms Hannam. Complete the details of the arrangement made in Ms Hannam's diary.

May	June
27 Monday	3 Monday
28 Tuesday	4 Tuesday
29 Wednesday	5 Wednesday
30 Thursday	6 Thursday
31 Friday	7 Friday
1 Saturday	8 Saturday
2 Sunday	9 Sunday

3 Compare the two recordings.

- Identify three ways in which Ms Hannam's secretary offers to help Mr Kramnik.
- Comment on the performance of the staff working for Swallow Exports.
- What style differences are there between the two conversations in 1 and 2 above? Why are they so different?

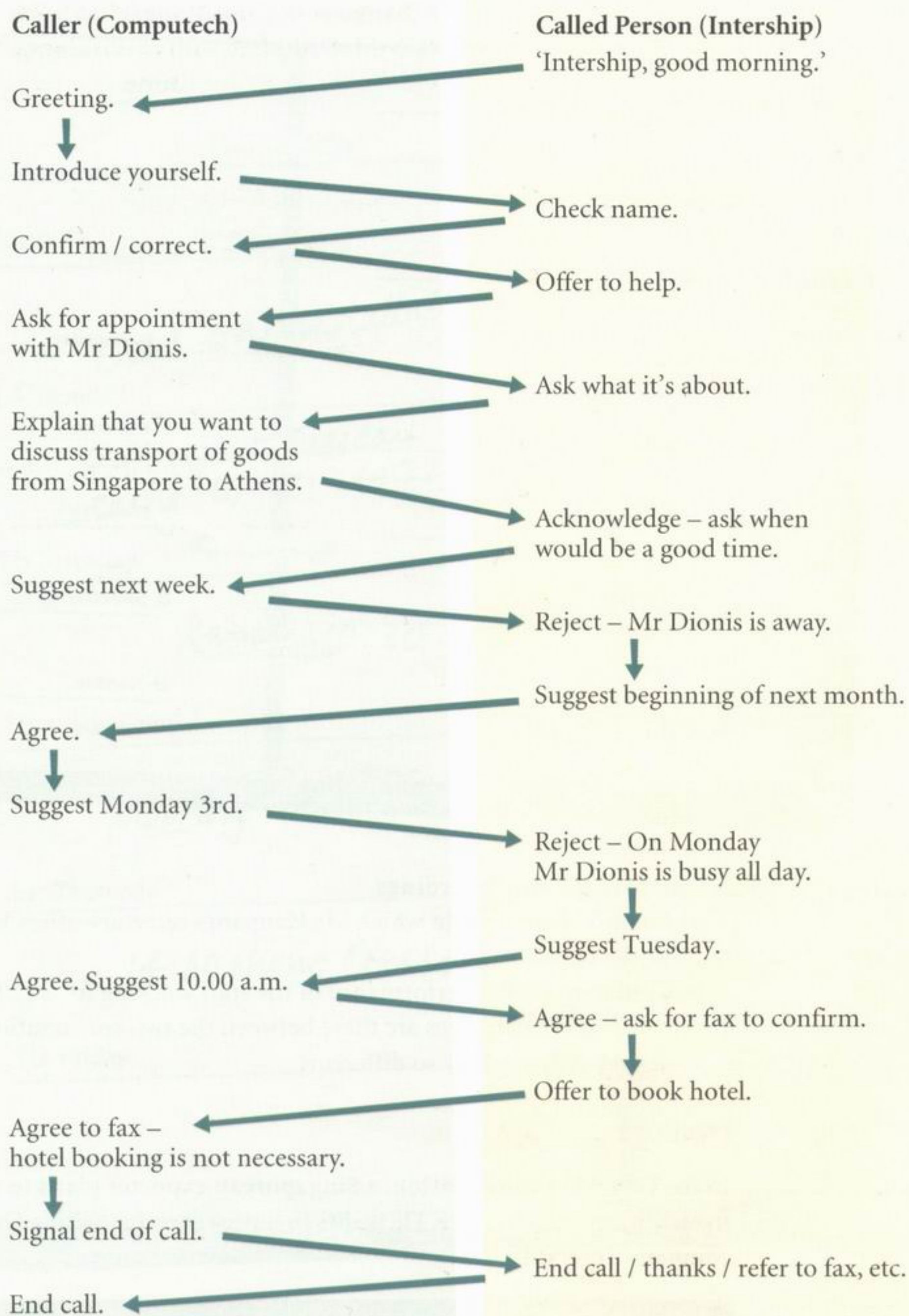
Practice 1

In the following conversation, a Singaporean exporter plans to send goods from Singapore to Greece. He wants to have a meeting with a Greek shipping company, Intership.





Suggest suitable phrases for each step in the conversation, then practise the dialogue with a colleague.



Now listen to the recording of a model answer.

## Practice 2

Sending a fax after a telephone conversation is an important way to check that there has been no misunderstanding in the conversation. Many companies also like to have written confirmation of things agreed by telephone.

Use the template below to write a fax confirming the arrangements made in the Computech/Intership conversation.

### **COMPUTECH ARCOS**

Lorong One Toa Payoh  
Singapore 1253  
Telephone: ++65 350 574

**Fax: ++65 250 552**

Fax to: Mr Dionis (Intership S.A.)

Fax Number:

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From:

Date:

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Message

## 3 Changing arrangements



1 Listen to a conversation between two colleagues, John and Paula. Note:

- details of the original arrangement
- reasons for change
- the new arrangement.

2 a) How would you characterise the style of this conversation?

- Why is it like that?





- 3 Listen again to the conversation between John and Paula. Note the four part structure of a conversation about changing arrangements. Complete the missing words from the key phrases below:

(1) reference to original arrangement

'We're \_\_\_\_\_ today ...'



(2) Statement of problem → Need for change

'I'm \_\_\_\_\_, I really can't \_\_\_\_\_.'



(3) Fixing new arrangement

'Can we \_\_\_\_\_?'



(4) Confirmation

'See you \_\_\_\_\_.'

### Role play 1

Work in pairs. Student A should turn to File card 9A. Student B should use File card 9B.

### Role play 2

Keep to the same A or B. Student A should turn to File card 10A. Student B should look at File card 10B.









## 4 Ending a call

- 1 You will hear a recording of Catherine Welsh, a Communications Consultant, talking about telephoning and, in particular, ending phone calls.



Before you listen, suggest what she *might* say about the following:

- ways to avoid misunderstandings
- a way to check that there's nothing left to say
- the importance of small talk
- ways to get off the phone when the other person keeps talking and you are very busy.

-   2 Now listen to what Catherine actually says. Compare her suggestions with what you suggested above. Discuss these and other suggestions.
-   3 Hans Rossler is an Export Manager for a German company in Munich. An agent, Hassam Akhtar from Morocco, is planning to visit him. You will hear two versions of how Hans ends a phone conversation with Hassam. Notice how they are different.
- What is wrong in the first version?
  - Which key phrase is in the second ending that was not in the first one?
-   4 Listen to the next recording of a conversation between two colleagues, Celia Walton and Gerd Hoffmann, who work for a Swiss toy manufacturer.
- What is Celia's problem?
  - How does she resolve it?

### Practice 3

Sit back-to-back with a colleague and have a telephone conversation about any small talk topic. One of you should try hard to keep the conversation going. The other should politely try to get off the phone.

Reverse roles and repeat the exercise.

### Transfer 1

Work in pairs, A and B, to devise and practise two role plays. First, each of you should think about your own work or real life situation. Choose a situation where you need to call someone to arrange a meeting. Explain the situation to your partner. Then practise first one conversation, then the other. Remember to end the call appropriately.

### Transfer 2

Next time you have to arrange a real meeting by telephone, use the language and recommendations made in this unit. Prepare the call, think about the call structure (see Skills Checklist) and think about how to end the call.



## Language Checklist

### Telephoning (2)

#### *Stating reason for a call*

I'm ringing to ...

I'd like to ...

I need some information about ...

#### *Making arrangements*

Could we meet some time next month?

When would be a good time?

Would Thursday at 5 o'clock suit you?

What about July 21st?

That would be fine.

No, sorry, I can't make it then.

Sorry, I'm too busy next week.

#### *Changing arrangements*

We've an appointment for next month, but ...

I'm afraid I can't come on that day.

Could we fix an alternative?

#### *Confirming information*

So ...

Can I check that? You said ...

To confirm that ...

Can you / Can I confirm that by fax?

#### *Ending a call*

Right. I think that's all.

Thanks very much for your help.

Do call if you need anything else.

I look forward to ... seeing you / your call /  
your letter / your fax / our meeting.

Goodbye and thanks.

Bye for now.

## Skills Checklist

### Telephoning (2)

#### *Voice*

- speed
- clarity
- volume

#### *Structure*

- background information
- key information
- repetition, emphasis and confirmation
- possible confirmation by fax

#### *Style*

- formal / informal
- cold call / new contact / established contact
- in-company vs. customer  
supplier  
outside agent
- colleague / friend / business associate / public
- company image

#### *Structure of a call*

##### **Beginning**

introduce yourself

get who you want

small talk

state problem / reason for call

|

##### **Middle**

ask questions

get / give information

confirm information

|

##### **End**

signal end

thank other person

small talk

refer to next contact

close call

check that there's nothing else to say



# 5 Unfortunately there's a problem ...

→ Cross-cultural communication on the telephone (2)

→ Problem solving on the telephone

→ Complaints

## 1 Cross-cultural communication on the telephone (2)

1 The following text gives some advice about telephoning between different cultures. Before you read it, quickly answer these questions about the organisation of the text:

- a) What is the picture about?
- b) How many paragraphs are there?
- c) How many main points are probably in the article?

2 Read the text, then mark the sentences that follow as True (T) or False (F).

In some countries, like Italy and Britain, conversation is a form of entertainment. There is an endless flow of talk and if you break the flow for a second someone else will pick it up. In other countries there is a higher value placed on listening – it is not only impolite to break in but listeners will consider what has been said in silence before responding.

5 Finland and Japan are examples.

If you are talking to people who are also speaking English as a foreign language, they are likely to leave gaps and silences while they search for words or try to make sense of what you have just said. So be patient and try not to interrupt, as you would hope they would be patient with you.

10 Every country has its own codes of etiquette. For example it is common for Anglo-Saxons to use first names very quickly, even in a letter or fax or telephone call. Such instant familiarity is much less acceptable in the rest of Europe and Asia where even business partners and colleagues of many years' acquaintance address each other by the equivalent of Mr or Mrs and the last name or job title.

15 So stick to last names unless you specifically agree to do otherwise. Don't interpret the other person's formality as stiffness or unfriendliness. On the other hand, if business partners with an Anglo-Saxon background get on to first name terms straightaway, don't be surprised.





Above all, one should remember that people do not usually mind if their own codes  
20 are broken by foreigners as long as they sense consideration and goodwill. This is much more important than a set of rules of etiquette.

Adapted from *Faxes, phones and foreigners* by kind permission of British Telecommunications plc.

- a) For the British and the Italians it is normal to interrupt the other speaker during the conversation.
- b) A special importance is attached to listening in Japanese and Finnish cultures.
- c) One should interrupt and try to help speakers who may have difficulty in saying what they want to say.
- d) It is unusual for Americans and British to use first names early in a business relationship.
- e) It doesn't matter if you break certain social rules if it is clear that you are sensitive to other people.
- f) Etiquette is the critical point in telephoning between different cultures.

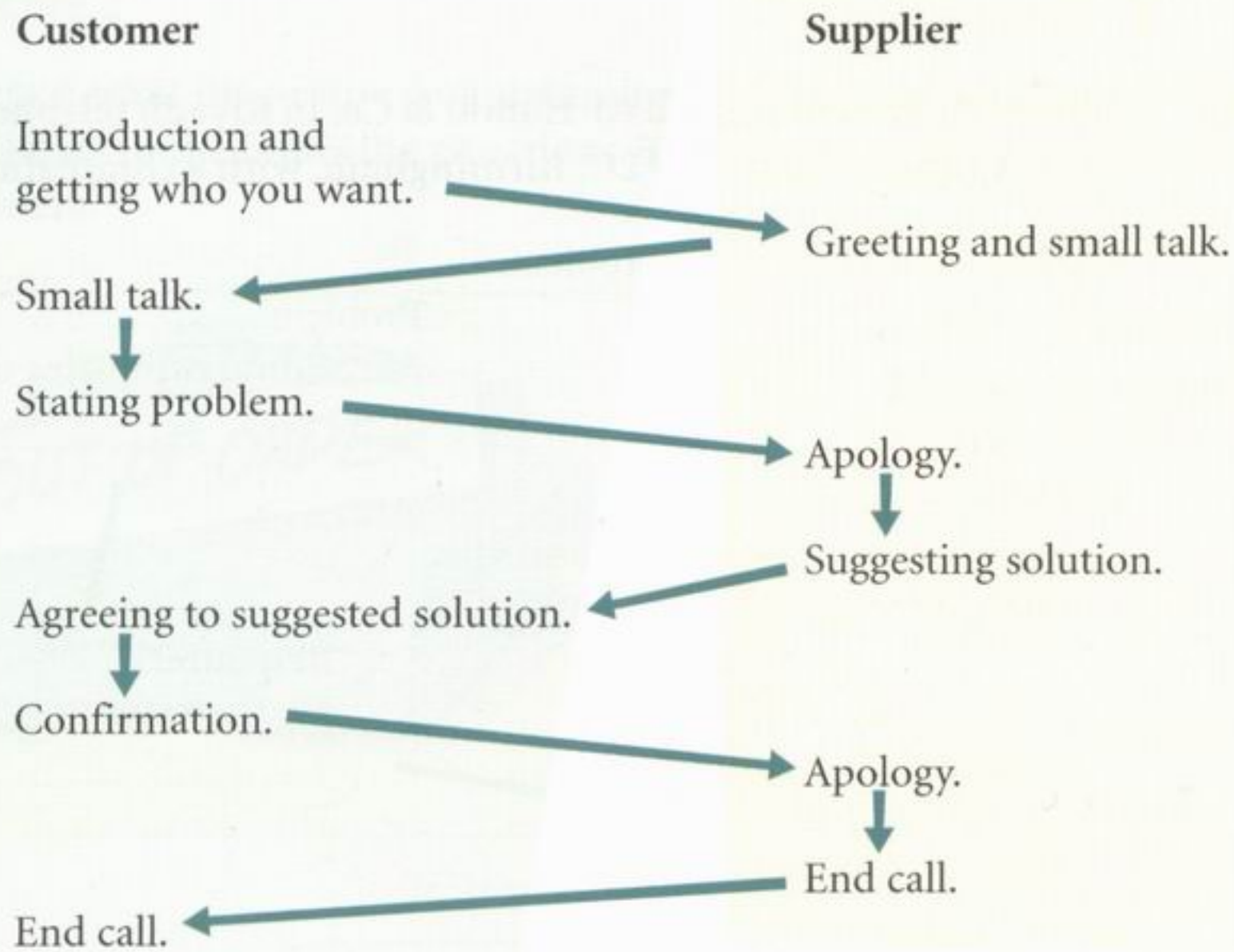
3 Which do you think is the most important point?

## 2 Problem solving on the telephone



- 1 Lee Summerfield is a telecommunications equipment retailer from Los Angeles. Listen to the recording of a conversation he has with a supplier, Yoshinaga Takafumi. He works for AKA Company, a Japanese telephone systems manufacturer.
  - a) Identify the problem and the suggested solution.
  - b) Listen again. Do you think Yoshinaga Takafumi provided good customer service? In what ways?
  - c) Notice how the conversation follows the structure shown here:





### Practice 1

Work in pairs, A and B. Create a dialogue based on the prompts below. A is the Client Services Manager of Keene Investments who calls B, a financial adviser. A is B's boss.



**Eric/Erica King (A)**

**Charles/Charlotte Heppel (B)**

Introduce yourself and say there's a problem.

Answer the phone.

Respond – explain problem: A client – Sandra Henson – has phoned. She expected CH to visit yesterday. No one came.

Respond – ask what?

Respond appropriately. Ask CH if (s)he wrote with details of the visit.

Respond – the client has made a mistake. The appointment is for *next* week.

End call (small talk).

Yes. Offer to call Sandra Henson.

End call.



Now listen to a recording of a model answer.