Communicating in Business English 2

Transcripts

**[Track 0-00]**

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**[Track 1-01]**

W1: Did you see the memo that’s circulating the office?

M1: Do you mean the one about attending the meeting tomorrow? Yeah, I saw it.

W1: It’s our first time trying this **town** **hall**-style meeting format. I’m interested to see how it will go.

M1: Me too. I guess we’re supposed to discuss and brainstorm ideas for better sales and marketing approaches.

W1: I was planning to meet a client outside of the office tomorrow afternoon, but I rescheduled it because I really want to join this meeting.

M1: Yeah. But I’m curious what the level of **participation** is going to be like. Will they encourage certain people to speak, or will we all take turns? I wonder how it will work.

W1: Well, with so many people attending, I guess the length of the meeting will be at least a few hours. I’m sure there will be plenty of time for everyone to participate.

M1: Yeah. Hopefully, we can all **limit** digressions and keep on track so that the meeting is productive.

W1: Right. Since we will be there for a few hours, I just hope we have **refreshments**.

**[Track 1-02]**

W2: Good morning, everyone. Thank you for being here, and welcome to this brainstorming discussion about improving our sales strategies and techniques. As you know, there are several internal matters that we need to **sort out**. Therefore, there are a lot of items on the agenda for today’s meeting, and I’d like to ask all the participants here today to share your ideas. I’ve nominated Ken to be secretary for the meeting. He’ll be responsible for **writing up** the notes for today’s meeting, so please make sure you speak clearly.

We’re scheduled to **close** this meeting at 4:30 today. To help everyone focus and think clearly, we’ve got plenty of refreshments. Also, we’ll adjourn at 11:30 for an early lunch, and we’ll resume at 1 o’clock. As a special treat, I’ve ordered lunch from everyone’s favorite Chinese restaurant. Hopefully, that’ll help us all have a very productive discussion today. **Alright**, let’s get right to things and kick off the meeting by sharing some recommendations for new sales strategies.

**[Track 1-03]**

W2:So, how are you planning to start the meeting tomorrow?

M2: Well, I think we have a few pretty serious items on the agenda, so I plan to let everyone know right away that we need to **get down to business**.

W2: That sounds like a good idea. Oh, by the way, Russell asked me to let you know in advance that he sends his **apologies** for his absence. His son is sick, so he won’t be able to make it.

M2: Alright, thank you for letting me know. I’ll be sure to mention that to everyone.

W2: So, what’s on the agenda for tomorrow?

M2: Well, the main **objective** is to find ways to improve our safety protocols. The initial item is about the fire we had in the warehouse last week. We need to discover exactly how that happened.

W2: Yeah, we’re lucky no one was seriously hurt.

M2: Exactly! We need to discuss how to put added safety measures in place, even if it means **allocating** more resources.

**[Track 1-04]**

M1: Did you see the email about tomorrow’s meeting?

W1: You mean the one about the new management style? Yeah, I saw it. To be honest, I’m a little nervous about it.

M1: Really? How come?

W1: We’re supposed to share our opinions about the new management style, and I think it could be a problem. I don’t want to be too **direct** when I share my opinion, though. It might hurt our supervisor’s feelings.

M1: Yeah, I know what you mean. I’m not entirely convinced that this new system will help us focus on our work and improve **efficiency**.

W1: Yeah, I second that. At the last company I worked for, we tried this management style, and it was a total disaster. But how do we tell the supervisor tomorrow at the meeting?

M1: Well, we could try to **understate** things a bit. So instead of saying that we think it will be a total disaster, we can say that, from the worker’s perspective, we aren’t completely convinced it will be very good. There may be **a bit** of a problem with it. And then we can try to explain why.

W1: I’m definitely in favor of trying that.

**[Track 1-05]**

W2: There’s no easy way to deal with overdue accounts.

M2: Yeah. And speaking of which, if I could just offer my opinion, I think we should set up a committee to **reformulate** our accounting procedures and change our accounting software. I’ve often had to clarify our company’s policy on payment options for clients. Some of the procedures are not very clear in company documents. The software is also really outdated and hard to use.

W2: That’s a good point. However, I think we may be getting a bit sidetracked. I’d like to stick to our **primary** topic of discussion for this meeting. Accounting and client payments are related but a bit outside this meeting’s agenda. I do think the accounting issue is an important point to iron out. **As we’re short on time,** though, let’s try to **revisit** it at the end of this meeting or add it to the agenda for the next meeting. For now, though, let’s focus our discussion on customer relations. Is there anyone we haven’t heard from yet?

**[Track 1-06]**

W1: That’s why I think we can increase our sales figures next quarter if we allocate additional resources to the South American market.

M1: Excuse me, may I **jump in** here?

W1: Sure, go ahead.

M1: I’d like to **develop** a point that was only touched on momentarily. As Mr. Diaz brought up a few minutes ago, it could also be a huge benefit to focus on the Southeast Asian region.

W1: **That’s a good point**. Perhaps that’s worth considering a bit more as well. What did you have in mind, Mr. Diaz?

M2: Well, I think there's definite growth potential in the Southeast Asian region—namely, the Cambodian, Thai, and Vietnamese markets. Our products are perfectly suited to consumers in those countries.

W1: Southeast Asia does seem like a good region to expand into. I'm just wondering if we can fulfill the different needs of both Southeast Asian and South American clients at the same time.

W2: A few of the suggestions we’ve heard **superficially** acknowledge these different needs. But I think if we explore the differences a bit more, we’ll find a way to meet the needs of all the clients in both regions.

**[Track 1-07]**

M2: So, let me just stop here to make sure everyone is **following along** with me. Are there any questions?

W2: Could you expand on that last point **somewhat**?

M2: Sure. I know the data can be a little difficult to interpret. But, basically, what it’s telling us is that we should form a task force to examine the market. If the task force believes that market conditions would support it, then we should start considering mass production of this product.

W2: OK. So, if I understand you correctly, you think that we need concrete data to support manufacturing this new product, is that right?

M2: Yes, that’s exactly right.

W2: **Do you plan to** put together the task force?

M2: I could do that, but it doesn’t have to be me. It’s just vital that we get more information about the market before we make an investment this big.

W2: Who will lead this task force?

M2: That’s an important question, but before we **converse** more about the task force, let’s continue on with the rest of the items on the agenda.

**[Track 1-08]**

M1: I wish we had more time to spend brainstorming ideas, but it’s starting to get a bit late.

W1: Yeah, I think before we get seriously behind schedule, we should try and come to a **final** determination on the next step. We’ve come up with a lot of good ideas in this meeting, but now we need to talk about implementing some of these ideas.

M1: If possible, I’d really like to see an outline of all of the ideas from this meeting before deciding on which ones to implement and which ones to **reject**.

W1: I’m also in favor of that **proposition**. We need some time to analyze these ideas.

M1: Right, I think we can all agree to that. But just to be sure, let’s put it to a **vote**. The proposition is to analyze an outline of all the ideas brainstormed from today’s meeting. Can I get a show of hands? All who are in favor? All who are opposed? OK. It looks like the idea carries.

W1: Great. Karl will type up the minutes from today’s meeting and make an outline for each idea we discussed.

**[Track 1-09]**

M2: Alright, well, I think that covers everything we set out to **accomplish** at today’s meeting. Is there anything else anybody wants to look into before we wrap things up here?

W2: I just want to say that I think our meeting culture has improved a lot. We used to have a lot of inefficient and unproductive meetings with **pointless** discussions that took forever. But, now, our conversations are much more stimulating and focused.

M2: I second that. I think having a copy of the agenda sent out to everyone a day in advance has really helped to make everyone more prepared. OK, so let’s just quickly go over what we discussed today before we adjourn. Karen, you’re **in charge of** preparing the marketing ideas for the new spring season product lineup. And Ryan, you’re responsible for typing up the meeting minutes and sending a copy to everyone.

W2: Can we schedule a meeting for Karen to present her marketing ideas?

M2: How about a week from today?

W2: Great. I’ll confirm the exact time and location by tomorrow.

M2: It was a pleasure meeting with you today. Let’s **call it a day**, folks.

**[Track 1-10]**

M1: Thank you for making it to this meeting **on time**, everyone. We’ve got a lot to talk about, so let’s get right down to business. As you know, we’ve identified a pretty **massive** problem with the computer servers in our office.

The main objective on today’s meeting agenda is to make sure we understand the cause of the problem we’re **facing** and then to come up with an adequate solution. Sometimes problems like this seem clear, but there are also hidden, underlying issues. We need to carefully scrutinize this to make sure we understand what this problem is a result of. We then need to brainstorm solutions for how we can confront the root of the problem. We need to think of ideas that won’t put off any of our project deadlines if possible.

It’s really vital that we get ahead of this problem in time to implement whatever solution we come up with before the long holiday. So let’s get right into it. What do you think the problem with our servers **is due to**?

**[Track 1-11]**

W1:I’d now like to invite your suggestions for how we can improve our sales strategy and performance in overseas markets.

M1: I think we should **reconsider** trying to advertise and sell our own products in some overseas markets.

W1: So do you think we should drop our plans to expand into certain markets?

M1: No, I don’t think that would be a wise decision either. I’ve got a contingency plan I’ve been working on. I still don’t have all of the details ironed out yet, but I think it’s a pretty **rational** plan. Basically, I think we need to **implement** a strategy of expanding our overseas business by working together with local distributors who know the markets, have the connections, and can help us advertise and sell our products more effectively.

W1: That sounds like an ingenious idea!

M1: The downside is that it will lower our profit margin because we’ll need to share a percentage of the profits with our local distributors. But overall, I still think we’ll increase our sales and profits, so it’s a win-win.

W1: I like it! We need to set concrete objectives in terms of sales targets, but if we can get this plan **approved** by upper management, I think we can meet our ultimate objective.

**[Track 1-12]**

W2:It’s my first time trying to plan a remote meeting, and I don’t know where to begin. The first problem is that all of the **attendees** are in different time zones.

M2: Oh, there’s a website where you can enter the locations of all the attendees and the date you want to have the meeting, and it automatically **generates** a table of possible meeting times.

W2: Oh, that’s great!

M2: Yes, and after you confirm the meeting time, you can input the attendees’ contact information, and it will also automatically send them a **notification** with all the meeting details.

W2: Great! But I’m also worried about distractions during the meeting. I don’t want loud noises, people doing other work, and stuff to hurt our progress.

M2: You could give all the attendees a role. Put one person in charge of all the technical duties, another in charge of taking notes, another in charge of making files accessible, and so on.

W2: That’s an ingenious idea. Another thing I’m worried about is technical problems. I hope nothing goes wrong.

M2: Well, the most common issue is having **a bit of a lag**. If that happens, just let everyone know to be a little more patient, and it should be fine.

**[Track 1-13]**

M1: So, are you ready for your first overseas business trip?

W1: Yes, I am. And I’m feeling excited to go. However, I’m a little worried about the big meeting at the end of the trip.

M1: Really? Why are you worried about that?

W1: Well, you know. Expectations for how to behave and what to say can be different in foreign cultures. I don’t want to make loads of mistakes and seem **unprofessional**. You’re a bit of an authority since you’ve been to meetings in lots of different countries. Do you have any good tips?

M1: Well, I think it’s always better to be on the more conservative and formal side, to begin with. That way, you won’t risk offending anyone. And don’t worry, you’ll start to feel more **relaxed** once you get to know their expectations.

W1: Yeah, that sounds good. I guess I’ll have to get to know their culture a bit more before I start feeling comfortable.

M1: Right. Just keep a professional **demeanor**, and you won’t run into any problems. You can also ask **Mr.** Svensson, our business partner there, to give you some cultural tips.

**[Track 1-14]**

W2: I have to organize my first online meeting with our business partners from overseas. Would you mind helping me?

M2: Sure, I’d be happy to. So have you already set all of the **agenda** items?

W2: Yes, and now I’m trying to assign **roles**, like who will chair, who will be the secretary, and so on.

M2: I think it might be a good idea to ask people to RSVP as well.

W2: Right. Another thing I’m thinking about is sending an email to everyone outlining some basic etiquette for online meetings. What do you think about that?

M2: I think that’s a good idea because online meetings and offline meetings are different, and you have different cultures participating in this meeting.

W2: Exactly. Another good idea would be to let everyone know about the **functionalities** of the software and tools you’re using. That way, everyone is clear about how to use them.

M2: Great idea.

W2: I guess the last thing would just be to make sure the meeting time is OK for everyone since people are in different parts of the world. That way, people in different time zones can be **on time** for the meeting.

**[Track 2-01]**

M1: I have a contract negotiation coming up this week, Linda. I’d like your help preparing some of the **documentation**. I also think it might be a good idea for you to sit in to see the procedure.

W1: That sounds very interesting, and I’d be delighted to help. Who’s the other party we’re negotiating with?

M1: It’s with one of our suppliers. The company wants to renegotiate the contract we signed with them two years ago.

W1: What kind of **deal** did they say they’re looking for?

M1: Well, I didn’t speak with them directly. I was just informed that they want to renegotiate their contract with us. They didn’t specify much beyond that. But I think it’s **likely** that they want a higher fee.

W1: What makes you think that?

M1: The original contract was negotiated with a framework that was created by the old management. It’s a pretty **one-sided** deal, with most of the advantages going to us. So I’m guessing they’re looking for a deal with more mutual benefits.

W1: Well, I’m definitely looking forward to learning a bit more about how to bargain during a negotiation.

**[Track 2-02]**

M2: You seem pretty confident entering into these delicate negotiations. Do you have experience negotiating **with** the other party?

W2: No, not really.

M2: I heard that they want to renew their contract with us but with a few changes to the conditions. They’re demanding exclusivity. I heard they also want the laws of the contract switched from our **jurisdiction** to theirs.

W2: Well, they’re a small, independent company, and they depend on commission from us. So I’m confident because I’m sure we can come up with a mutually beneficial agreement.

M2: What are you planning to offer them?

W2: My preliminary plan is to listen to their demands but reject them. Then I plan to offer them a **license** for exclusivity for certain products.

M2: That may be tempting, but what if they don’t agree to that?

W2: Then I’ll maneuver and agree to switch the jurisdiction of the contract.

M2: Have you discussed this with management?

W2: Yes. They said if the other party rejects my second offer, then I’ll have to **break off** negotiations so we can set a new strategy and resume talks later.

**[Track 2-03]**

M1: Good afternoon, Rachel. It’s nice to see you again. We appreciate you making the trip all the way here. Let us know if you need anything during your stay. You’re our **guest**. Allow me to introduce Alexi Ivanov. He’s the head of logistics. He’ll be sitting in on our negotiations and monitoring things from a logistics perspective.

W1: Delighted to meet you, Mr. Ivanov.

M2: Likewise. Please, call me Alexi. Let me **take** your coat for you. Can I get you some coffee or tea?

W1: Yes, some coffee would be great, thanks. So, Vlad, I heard Karina took over as **director** of personnel here at your company.

M1: That’s right. She left sales and is now leading the personnel department. So how are your kids doing?

W1: Very well, thank you. William is in college now and is learning how to golf.

M1: Oh, golf, huh? Interesting. I love golf. So, you must be an avid golfer as well, **then**?

W1: Yes, that’s right. We should play sometime.

M1: Yeah, that’d be great! Ah, here’s your coffee. So, shall we get down to business?

**[Track 2-04]**

W1: May we start by **recapping** the agenda for today’s negotiation?

M1: Certainly. I think that would be a good idea.

W1: Great. So as you can see, there are two items on the agenda for today’s negotiation. First, we’ll be negotiating a new five-year distribution contract between our two companies. The second item is about exclusivity. And if you look under item two, there’s a note about the regions where the exclusivity is **applicable**.

M1: Right, so the overarching objective for today is to continue our alliance and delineate any areas where we can improve mutually beneficial terms.

W1: That’s right. We’ll go ahead and have you give your opening statements for each item. Then Josephine will give a presentation fleshing out our terms. I’ve asked Rudy to take the minutes for today’s negotiation, and we’ll provide those to you as soon as possible.

M1: How much time do you think this negotiation will **require**?

W1: I think it will take about three hours. If it goes longer, **we could** stop for a break. So, is there anything else to chip in, or shall we kick things off here?

**[Track 2-05]**

W2: So, let me first explain to you our company’s **profile** and basic history. We’ve been in business for thirty-five years now. Until recently, our company’s interest had been chiefly in traditional energy production. However, we’re currently in the process of a major shift in direction. Our core focus will be **renewable** energy solutions going forward. Most of our activities are conducted in Central and Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, South America, and Africa. As you can see from the brochures I’ve laid out for you, we have a number of renewable energy solutions. Our investments in renewable energy technologies over the past ten years have helped us effectively shift our company’s trajectory toward long-term growth. Despite possessing some of the best new energy tech, this sector is not yet that **lucrative**. But that’s quickly changing, and we believe now is the optimal time for companies like yours to make sizable investments in this sector. **Hence**, we’re looking for a long-term partner to make a large 20% investment in our company and grow together with us. So, do you have any questions before I proceed?

**[Track 2-06]**

W2: So, if I may summarize your company’s position, the new contract would require us to agree to terms that guarantee a higher quarterly order.

M2: That’s **indeed** correct. As you can see from the figure we’ve calculated, in order to continue delivering to you at the current discounted rate, we need a minimum order threshold of 10,000 units per quarter.

W2: Of course, we’re considering the position your company is in. However, there are certain factors that need consideration from our end as well. For example, we have to **take into account** the decline we’re expecting in sales next year, so the discounted cost of the order is not of paramount importance to us.

M2: So, from your point of view, the discounted shipping rate is not an integral part of this negotiation. The overall cost is more of a deciding factor. Did I paraphrase that accurately?

W2: Absolutely. So, now that it’s clear where we stand and that we’re **strictly** focused on the total cost, would it be possible for us to focus more on contemplating a new rate at a different minimum threshold?

M2: Certainly. But **it’s difficult to say** at the moment what the new figure will be. We need time to go over our calculations again and come up with a new rate.

**[Track 2-07]**

W1: Let me see if I have this correct. Ideally, you’d like to **revise** the terms of the contract to reduce the number of units you receive per quarter. And you’re prepared to pay a higher price per unit to make that happen.

M1: Yes, that’s our preferred scenario. We want to avoid having a lot of excess **stock** in our warehouse. Do you think you can go along with this?

W1: At the **outset** of this discussion, I thought you were more concerned about a lower price, but now I see your position a little differently. I think we could go about this in a multitude of ways. We can do what you’re asking, but I think I have an alternate idea that’s ultimately more of what you’re looking for.

M1: What would this counterproposal involve?

W1: So for the first two quarters, we can give you a lower volume at a slightly higher price. Then we can review the amount of stock you have left in your warehouse. If you have the ability to increase your order volume, we can ship more and lower the price per unit. That way, you can deal with your storage issue and possibly save more in the third and fourth quarters. How does that sound?

M1: **That sounds great**!

**[Track 2-08]**

M2: So, what do you think of our offer for funding?

M1: Well, it’s not a bad offer. But if you recall, we have a **precondition** of at least 15%. Your offer only gets us to 8%.

M2: Right. I’d need to go to the board to get approval for anything 10% or above. I’m not sure they’ll **sign off** on that, to be honest.

M1: Well, we don’t have a lot of time. But what if you were to take it to the board to see if they’ll grant it?

M2: I’m pretty sure they’ll refuse. I have an alternate idea that might work, provided that you’d consider slightly **reducing** your prerequisite figure of 15%.

M1: We might be willing to do that. What’s your idea?

M2: I could increase our offer to 9% without having to consult the board, and I know another partner who I’m sure would be interested. I could invite them into the deal and secure an additional 5% for you. Would you be willing to work with us and one of our partners to get to fourteen?

M1: Yes, I think that would work. **As long as** your partner doesn’t try to negotiate a different rate, it’s a deal.

**[Track 2-09]**

W2: Well, it seemed for a while like we might have reached an impasse, but we were able to find some **common ground**. Perhaps now we can take a look at the terms in the rest of the contract. I just want to make sure there are no other points where it seems like we’ll be unable to meet the conditions.

M2: Right. I’m glad we were able to come to a **reasonable** compromise there. I just want to preface the rest of the discussion by reassuring you that our commitment is to getting this deal done.

W2: I can’t think of any other potential problems we’ll encounter. But if we do, I think we can work them out as well.

M2: I agree. **I’m sorry** to raise another objection right away, but what about this clause that states it’s not your company’s responsibility in the case of failure to deliver orders on time?

W2: I’m willing to negotiate that clause as long as your demands aren’t unrealistic.

M2: Once we achieve agreement on this clause, I think all of the obstacles will be **resolved**.

**[Track 2-10]**

M1: Alright. I think that just about ties up all the **loose ends** with the contract.

W1: After your company draws up the final contract based on the new terms we’ve agreed on, I’ll have my superiors go over it before we officially finalize it.

M1: Of course. And it’s probably a good idea to have the **legal** departments of both sides run over the contract again, just to be sure.

W1: I was a bit surprised at how fast we made progress to reach the final step, but I’m glad it was easy to agree on so much in such a short time.

M1: Yes, the terms were very **detailed**, so I thought this negotiation might take a long time. Luckily, all the details seemed to help us to award you this contract more quickly.

W1: Well, it’s great to be doing business with you as well. I hope the way this negotiation concluded reflects the type of relationship our companies will have going forward.

M1: I think we’ve put together a good deal that benefits both sides. So we’ll prepare that contract and have it to you **within** a week.

**[Track 2-11]**

W2: So, we’ve looked at this from all angles, and I think we’ve diagnosed the problem. It looks like the change in government **rules** on imports has caused our previous agreement to be less profitable. We feel that our existing agreement should be renegotiated to take into account these new circumstances.

M2: Well, we’d prefer to handle this without having to renegotiate or change our existing contract.

W2: We’ve considered this from your point of view, and **we understand** it may not be ideal to renegotiate, but we don’t see any other alternative solutions. We’re open to other suggestions, of course. However, for now, that seems to be the only solution.

M2: Very well, we won’t **stubbornly** insist on honoring the original agreement, then. However, we’d like to make sure the renegotiated agreement is worthwhile for us as well.

W2: Of course. Just as we did with the first agreement, we’ll ensure that our **collective** interests are considered.

**[Track 2-12]**

W1: So, how did your negotiation with that tough new client go?

M1: It went well. We got a bit **bogged down** early on, but I was able to break the deadlock by offering a longer contract period.

W1: Ah, so you kept a little something up your sleeve then, huh? Good work!

M1: I was a bit worried because they seemed to be **on the fence** to begin with, but they warmed to the idea after I explained the benefits.

W1: That’s great. So you **clinched** the deal?

M1: Yes. Even though I didn’t give in to their request for a better rate, they conceded and accepted our offer.

W1: Nice! You stuck to your guns and pulled this one off.

M1: Yeah. I’m just really glad that things didn’t end up in a **stalemate**. It seemed that way in the beginning, but we got there in the end.

**[Track 2-13]**

M2: I heard you’re going on a business trip to conduct a negotiation. Where are you going?

W2: Vietnam. I’ll be one of the **negotiators** involved in ironing out a proposition to form a partnership with a distributor over there.

M2: Do you have much experience in negotiating with **Vietnamese** businesses?

W2: Not really. I think formality is going to be the biggest issue for me in these negotiations.

M2: It probably won’t be too difficult to adapt your normal negotiating tactics. Just show them how interested we are in collaborating with them, and it should be fine.

W2: They’ve probably studied American culture and expect me to employ certain strategies during the negotiations. I plan to keep my strategy pretty **conservative**, though.

M2: Keeping your cards close to your chest, huh? That sounds like a good plan.

W2: Yeah. I also heard they like to **entertain** their guests by taking them out for dinner after work each night. So I should be able to build a strong relationship with them outside of the negotiations as well.

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**[Track 2-14]**

M1: So, are you all prepared for the negotiation with our American partners tomorrow?

W1: Yes, I think so. I’ve **gathered** and read all of the documentation, so that helps.

M1: Have you established a framework, procedure, and structure for how the negotiation will go?

W1: We have, but we also want to give our partners a chance to contribute to that, so we’ll discuss it with them before we begin. The boss wants us to treat them like guests, so we’re planning to go out for coffee first and have some **small talk**.

M1: That’s nice. What’s the timetable for the negotiations?

W1: We’re planning to iron everything out over a three-day period.

M1: If there’s not too much bargaining or too many **counterproposals**,we might be able to finish up before that.

W1: Well, from what I understand, this is an extremely lucrative deal for both us and them, so it should be a win-win.

M1: Yeah, it’s nice when the other side’s **interests** line up nicely with ours.

**[Track 3-01]**

W2: Alright, it’s time for your **performance** evaluation. Honestly, your sales performance this year was wonderful. You achieved all of the targets that were set, and I think you did an excellent job. So instead of reviewing the performance, I’d like to take this time to give you some **coaching**. I think you can improve your results next year if you focus on the informal side of the relationship you have with your clients.

M2: Yeah, that’s true. I guess people are a bit more honest when they communicate with someone who they’re familiar with.

W2: That’s exactly right. Also, if you have a good social relationship with your clients, you can usually expect more dependability from them.

M2: Hmm, I think that means I’ll have to be more dependable too.

W2: That’s right. You can only expect to get whatever you give in a relationship. It’s important to remember that your personal reputation and **image** are at stake when you have an informal social relationship with your clients.

M2: Do you have any tips for how to socialize and make better relationships?

W2: Well, one good way is to learn what **motivates** your customers.

**[Track 3-02]**

W1: Good afternoon. My name’s Jennifer O’Connell. I have an appointment with Mr. Scott Miller at 3:30.

W2: Hello, Mrs. O’Connell. Mr. Miller is just **finishing up** a conference call at the moment. Please take a seat, and I’ll let you know when he’s available. Alright, Mrs. O’Connell, you may go in now.

M1: How do you do, Mrs. O’Connell? And, sorry, I didn’t catch your name.

W1: Oh, right. Sorry. I forgot you two haven’t been acquainted yet. Mr. Miller, this is my personal assistant, Jordan Kinley.

M1: Pleasure to meet you, Mr. Kinley. So, would you two **care for** something to drink?

W1: Yes, two black coffees, please.

M1: So, if you have enough free time, I hope you can look around our beautiful city before you head back.

W1: Yes, there are a few attractions we plan to **check out** during our visit.

M1: How was the flight coming here, by the way?

W1: It was fine. I thought I might be late because the flight was delayed by the awful weather back home. But the pilot somehow **managed** to make up the time.

**[Track 3-03]**

W1: This coffee shop is wonderful. Thanks for bringing me here.

W2: My pleasure, Nancy. So, Max tells me you joined the company recently.

W1: That’s right. I started applying for jobs about six months **ago**,and I got hired here about three months ago.

W2: What did you do before that?

W1: Before that, I worked as a freelance consultant.

W2: Really? I heard **consultants** earn great salaries. Why did you quit that?

W1: **Originally**, it was really great. But, eventually, it became too stressful moving from job to job. I wanted steadier work. And I’ve found the work I’m involved in now is very interesting and exciting.

W2: You’re working in quality control, is that right?

W1: That’s right. I communicate a lot with our **client base** to get their feedback on our products. So I still get to go outside the office and meet lots of new people. That was one of the things I really liked about the consulting job.

W2: That’s great. I’m glad to hear you’re enjoying it.

**[Track 3-04]**

M1: Sorry for the interruption. That was my son, William, calling. He and his wife are going to have a baby soon, so they were just letting me know about their most recent checkup at the hospital. Seems little William, **Jr.** is doing alright.

W1: Oh, wow! That’s exciting news. Is this your first grandchild?

M1: Yes, it is!

W1: Well, congratulations on becoming a **grandparent**! Has your son been married long?

M1: He got married two years ago. I think he's enjoying being a husband.

W1: Oh, that’s nice. Do you have any other children?

M1: Yes, I also have a daughter. She’s still **single** and studying at university. What about you? Are you married? Do you have any kids?

W1: I’m engaged. No kids yet, but I definitely want to have children someday. I’m planning to **get married** next spring.

M1: Spring is a great season for a wedding. My cousin got married in spring. She and her husband had a beautiful outdoor wedding.

**[Track 3-05]**

W2: So, did you grow up in this city?

M2: Actually, I was brought up in a region just outside the city. My parents owned a home **near the coast**. But I still consider this city to be my hometown. I moved here to attend university, and I’ve been here ever since. In all my years here, I’ve seen this city grow a lot.

W2: I’ve heard that lots of people are moving out of the city and into the **suburbs** nowadays.

M2: They sure are! The place where my parents’ home used to be is full of beach houses and luxury housing **developments** now. Every year there’s more and more construction on the outskirts of town. Housing prices are up, too. The value on the house my parents had would be double today what they paid for it originally.

W2: Well, with the **average** salary in this area not being that high, people might not be able to afford to buy a home in the suburbs or near the coast anymore.

M2: That’s right. The coast is great to visit, but even to rent, the cost is just too high. So I’m satisfied staying here in the city.

**[Track 3-06]**

M1: So, how do you spend your free time?

W1: Most weekends, my husband and I work around the house or go shopping. But we both enjoy tennis. Sometimes we play at the tennis **court** by our house.

M1: Oh, you’re a tennis fan! Did you catch the last Wimbledon tournament?

W1: No, I didn’t. I like playing tennis, but I’m **not a fan** of watching it on TV.

M1: I understand. I love golf, but I don’t care much for watching it on TV. In fact, I brought my new set of **clubs** with me. I’ve heard some of the best golf courses in the country are in this region. I’m looking forward to playing a few holes.

W1: My husband is a golfer as well. We actually have a small cottage near a golf course by the coast. Maybe you and he could go there. It’s very nice there.

M1: Yes, that would be wonderful. I’ve heard the coast is beautiful this time of year as well. One of my hobbies is **photography**, so I’ll have to bring my camera as well.

W1: That would be great. After golf, you can enjoy some of the best seafood in the state at one of the local restaurants.

M1: That’s perfect. I love seafood!

**[Track 3-07]**

M2: So, how was your last vacation?

W2: It was great. My family and I **booked** a hotel near a ski resort in Austria.

M2: Oh, nice. What was the area like?

W2: The place we stayed had marvelous **scenery**. There were a few museums not too far from our hotel and a castle that was picturesque. After that, we traveled over to the city and spent some time there.

M2: How did you get there?

W2: To the city, you mean? We rented a car and **drove** there. There were a lot of sights to see on the way.

M2: So, you took **a road trip**, huh? That sounds like a fun trip. How was the city?

W2: A little touristy, but it was nice. It’s very lively and cosmopolitan.

M2: Did you take any tours?

W2: No, not really. We aren’t really big fans of those guided tours. We prefer to go on little excursions and go wherever the wind takes us.

M2: Yeah, same here. Well, that sounds nice. I could use a vacation myself. I need to get away.

**[Track 3-08]**

M1: Do you think this **recession** will get much worse?

W1: **On the contrary**, I see signs of a recovery. The inflation rate has been steadily declining. And the unemployment rate is also low.

M1: But I’ve also heard reports that lots of companies will continue outsourcing over the next few years. That will certainly slow the unemployment recovery, with jobs going offshore and all.

W1: That may be true, but I don’t think the recession is the cause. Companies are **restructuring** and laying people off who are in redundant positions. And they’re also downsizing further, so they need fewer permanent staff members on the payroll.

M1: Well, the recession may or may not be the cause, but the unemployment numbers will still be affected by it.

W1: That’s true. I’ve also heard that the central bank is considering raising the **interest rate**. That will lead to less liquidity and won’t help the recovery either. So perhaps the recovery will take more time than I thought. But I don’t think it will get too much worse.

M1: I think we have a somewhat similar forecast of the situation.

**[Track 3-09]**

W2: So, are you ready for your upcoming business trip overseas?

M2: I hate traveling for business. I **always** seem to come down with something.

W2: I’ve heard it’s easy to catch **a cold** on a flight.

M2: Yes, I caught a cold two years ago. I think it was from flying.

W2: What about last year’s business trip? Did you suffer from anything then?

M2: On my last business trip, I got **food poisoning**.

W2: That’s terrible! What happened?

M2: At first, I thought it was just a fever, so I went to the doctor. But we found out it was food poisoning. It’s because I’m allergic to certain seafood, and I accidentally ate some. Luckily, he gave me a **prescription** that worked great, and I could still get some work done.

W2: Maybe you should visit a pharmacy here before you depart for your trip and buy plenty of medicine. Then you won’t have to worry.

M2: That’s a good idea.

**[Track 3-10]**

M1: Once in a while, after work, a group from the office goes out to a nice **establishment**. I was wondering if you’d like to join us tomorrow evening.

M2: I'd love to, but tomorrow I'll actually be out meeting some clients. So I might arrive fairly **late**.

M1: OK. No problem. Do you know where the Italian restaurant down the street from our office is? The one across from the police station?

M2: No, I’m not sure where it is.

M1: No problem. I can send the **directions** to your smartphone.

M2: Great. By the way, what should I wear to this place? Is it an upscale restaurant?

M1: No, not at all. It’s very relaxed. I think business casual should be fine.

M2: OK. And how late do you usually stay out? I might have to arrange a babysitter because I think my wife has a work event as well.

M1: We don’t usually stay out too late. Everyone will probably head home around 9 o’clock or so.

M2: **So, that’s** at about 6 p.m. tomorrow at the Italian restaurant across from the police station, right?

M1: Right, and I’ll send you those directions right now.

**[Track 3-11]**

M1: What should we get as a **starter**?

W1: I’d like to try the stuffed eggplant and grilled zucchini to get started.

M1: That sounds delicious.

W1: And what do you want to order as your **main course**?

M1: The spicy lamb chops look really good. I think I’ll go with that. How about you?

W1: I think I’ll get the pan-fried salmon with dill garnish.

M1: That looks good. And let’s take a look at the dessert menu later if we want more to eat.

W1: Oh, I already saw the lemon pie on the way in. I love sweet and **sour** desserts, so I’m going to have to get some after the main course.

M1: That sounds pretty good, but I’m more of a fan of chocolate. I saw their chocolate cake on the way in too.

W1: Well, I guess we both know what we’ll be getting for dessert, then.

M1: Yeah. Let’s order it all at once and ask the waiter to include **gratuity** in our bill.

W1: Sounds like a plan. Could you pass me the water, please?

**[Track 3-12]**

M1: Look at the time! I’d better get a move on soon! **Otherwise**, I’ll miss my flight.

M2: Alright. Well, it’s been delightful working with you over the past few days. I think we made some important **breakthroughs**, and I enjoyed your company.

M1: Likewise. I learned a lot while I was here. I think the accomplishments we’ve made during this trip will be advantageous to both of our companies in the future.

M2: I agree. I’m sure we’ll reconnect again soon. You have my business card with my email address. **Keep in touch**.

M1: Thanks. I will. I think I handed out all of my business cards, but I’ll email you as soon as I return, and you’ll receive my contact information.

M2: Sounds good. Alright, I hope you have a safe and **pleasant** trip back!

M1: Thank you. Goodbye!

M2: Bye.

**[Track 3-13]**

M2: Welcome back to the office. How was your business trip to Asia?

W2: **Well**, it was interesting, to say the least. I enjoyed learning about another culture. And I learned a little bit about our culture as well.

M2: Was their **behavior** a lot different than ours?

W2: I don’t know. Some things are quite similar, but other things were obviously different. For example, when greeting some of the workers from their office, I gave them a small kiss on the **cheek**. I don’t think they took it as rudeness.

But I could just tell they have different attitudes about personal space, as well as gender.

M2: That’s kind of funny. Did anything else interesting happen?

W2: When we were leaving, they gave us each a nice gift. They were **genuine** and showed us a lot of hospitality. I really wanted to express our gratitude by offering a gift of our own. However, we didn’t have anything to give them in return because we didn’t know they were going to do that. Maybe they weren’t expecting anything. I’m not sure. But when they come to visit us in six months, I’ll prepare some gifts for them.

**[Track 3-14]**

W1: Hey, how are you? It’s been a while since I saw you on my last business trip, so I thought I’d **reach out to** you and say hi.

W2: Thanks for **keeping in touch**! We’re doing well here. We’re currently working on booking our booth and hotel and stuff for the upcoming international trade show in Frankfurt.

W1: Oh, that sounds great! There are so many sights to see around the city. How long will you be there for?

W2: We’ll be there for a week. Five days on business and two days for pleasure.

W1: Nice. It sounds like you’ll have some free time, then. Sometimes it’s nice to go off the beaten path a little bit. The countryside there has some amazing **scenery** as well.

W2: Yeah. I don’t want to get too far off the beaten path, though. I might end up **missing** my flight!

W1: Right. Well, it was great to reconnect. I hope you have a safe and pleasant trip. Bye!

W2: Thanks. Bye!

**Activity File**

**[Track A1-01]**

W1: OK. Let’s begin.

Welcome, everybody. I’d like to start today’s meeting by introducing one of our closest business partners, the CEO of Standard Heavy Industries, Mr. Fonzo De Tours. He’s traveled all the way from France to be here today, so let’s give him a warm welcome.

I’m afraid Wendy from sales cannot be here today. She’s overseas on business, but she sends her best regards to us all. Our objective today is to discuss ways that we can further our business interests and cooperation with Standard Heavy.

If you take a look at the agenda I sent out last week, you’ll see a number of items to be discussed.

Firstly, we’ll take a look at domestic projects that we can cooperate more with Standard Heavy on.

Secondly, we’ll discuss the same thing but for international projects, specifically in the Southeast Asian region.

Thirdly, we need to discuss possible mergers and acquisitions of smaller companies.

Finally, we’ll open the meeting up for any further brainstorming and set the agenda for the next meeting.

I would like to finish this meeting by 5 p.m. We have a dinner planned with Mr. De Tours afterward, so we need time to get to the restaurant.

So let’s get right into it.

**[Track A1-02]**

Narrator: 1

W2: Sorry, if I could just jump in here. I think we've only looked at this superficially, and it's worth talking about in much more detail.

Narrator: 2

M2: Excuse me, could I jump in here?

Narrator: 3

M1: I think we are forgetting...

W1: I really believe that…

M2: Sorry, can I just...

**[Track A1-03]**

Narrator: 1

W1: For this year's team building day, I think we need to do an activity which will help our team work better under stress.

Narrator: 2

M1: I really think we always rush into product development too quickly. Our planning and ideas need to be stronger.

Narrator: 3

M2: Our new product has sold well in the domestic market, so it'll definitely be popular overseas as well. Let's go ahead and begin marketing it internationally.

**[Track A2-01]**

Narrator: 1

M1: Good morning, Amir. It's great to finally meet you in person.

Narrator: 2

M1: So, Amir, this is the team I've been hearing so much about. Could you introduce me to everyone?

Narrator: 3

M1: My daughter has actually been living here for the last two years. She's studying architecture over at the City University.

**[Track A2-02]**

W1:

Narrator: 1

W1: Having discussed your aims and objectives, I think it would be best to post five pieces of unique promotional content on social media every week.

Narrator: 2

W1: A cost of $0.10 per engagement on your social media posts is definitely doable.

Narrator: 3

W1: To get the results that you require, we'd need you to commit to a minimum spend of $170,000 per year.

**[Track A2-03]**

W2: Here’s the strategy I want you and your team to employ during the negotiation. First of all, don’t move too quickly into the negotiation. Let the other side speak first. You listen and improvise as they talk. Proceed with what they say and don’t reveal our position. Be sure to hold bargaining points back for later in the negotiation. It’s OK to concede a little bit. The most important thing is that we reach an agreement.

**[Track A3-01]**

Narrator: 1

M1: Hello, my name is Mr. Li. I have an appointment with Ms. Meyer in the marketing department. Could you let her know I'm here, please?

Narrator: 2

W1: Welcome to YJG Corp, Mr. Suarez. We're so glad to have you here. Let me introduce myself. My name is Ms. Laurent.

Narrator: 3

W2: So, Brendon, I hear this is your first visit to Lisbon. I bet the weather is much hotter than you're used to. What do you think of the city so far?

**[Track A3-02]**

Narrator: 1

M1: Hi, my name is Francis Bower. My wedding will be taking place next spring. My parents are looking forward to attending the ceremony. My mom's brother will also be there with his wife and kids.

Narrator: 2

W1: Hey, I'm Tracy. My family name is Han. I've just finished high school, and I don't have a boyfriend. I'm really excited to start college this year. I'll have to leave home, though, as the university is in a different city. I don't have any siblings, so I'm worried my parents will get lonely.

Narrator: 3

M2: My name's Amir. Let me show you a photo of my family. That's my mom, my sister, and me. My dad's not there because he sadly passed away when I was very young. My sister is married and has three sons now. I often take them to play soccer on the weekend.

**[Track A3-03]**

Narrator: 1

W1: The economy is so bad these days, and more and more people are losing their jobs. My company is also struggling. We will have to get rid of one-third of our staff and move to a smaller office to survive.

Narrator: 2

W2: Manufacturing our product domestically is not very economical, so my company has decided to move to Thailand. Costs are much lower there. We are also planning to pay a Vietnamese company to produce one of our products.

Narrator: 3

M1: We are having a great year. Since we changed the structure of our business, we have been getting more and more money from investors. We now have more consumers than our competitors, and our share price has gone up dramatically.

**[Track A3-04]**

W2: Hi, Lisa,

As you know, you'll be taking Ms. Omarov out for dinner tomorrow night. Remember we need to make a good impression, so have a long think about where you're going to take her.

I've heard that she's a very fussy eater. She won't eat anything that's too spicy, and she really hates loud and crowded places. Apparently, she loves both fish and meat dishes, so don't go to a vegetarian or vegan restaurant. She won't eat anything raw, though, so sashimi isn't a great idea either.

She may want to do something after the meal, so think of somewhere interesting to take her. Oh, and don't forget to bring her a small gift.

Anyway, I'll leave the details to you.

Thanks,